



**REPORT of
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE AND GOVERNANCE**

**to
COUNCIL
4 FEBRUARY 2021**

ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR 6 MAY 2021 – POLLING STATIONS

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To delegate authority to the Council’s Returning Officer to decide on an alternative polling station at the forthcoming elections in May 2021, in the event of any designated venues not being available for use.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That for the elections being held on 6 May 2021, the Council delegates authority to the Returning Officer to decide on a suitable alternative venue, should any designated polling station become unavailable.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 As required by Schedule A1 to the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA 1983) the last review of polling places took place in 2019.
- 3.2 At the time of writing this report, having given prior notice (at least two years) of the need to use all designated polling stations in May, the booking agents for sixteen polling stations have yet to confirm that we can use their premises. The Agents are being chased, but we cannot assume that their premises can be used until confirmation is received.
- 3.3 Of the responses received, one school has advised we cannot use their premises, with no reason given. An alternative, not far from the school has been approached, and we are hopeful that we will be able to use this in May. There is another polling station, which is available, but we would prefer to use another site in close proximity, which has ample car parking and has been used without problems for a number of years.
- 3.4 With polling day fast approaching, it is likely that the polls will take place on 6 May 2021, as prescribed last year. Therefore in order to deal with any other changes of polling stations, without delay, it is imperative that we can deal with these as quickly as possible so as not to delay the production of poll cards, which are scheduled for dispatch around mid-March 2021.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 We must ensure that all electors are able to cast their vote on polling day and know as soon as possible the polling station venue if that differs from the normal venue.

5. IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES

- 5.1 None.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – We must ensure that the elections are conducted in accordance with the election timetables.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – If necessary, it is important that we provide stations which are accessible to everyone.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – We could be challenged if we do not provide a polling station fit for purpose.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – A different venue may result in a different hire fee.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – No effect.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – No effect.
- (vii) **Impact on Strengthening Communities** – Ensuring those who can vote, are able to do so.

Background Papers: None.

Enquiries to: Paul Dodson, Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance and appointed Returning Officer.