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Council

24 January 2017

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities – Councillor A. Khan

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Martin Reeves, Chief Executive

**Ward(s) affected:**

All Wards

**Title: Polling District and Polling Place Review**

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

This report details amendments to the polling district and polling place review scheme which was approved by Council on 13 October 2015. The amendments are required due to some of the locations no longer being available and comments received at the polls in May and June 2016. The Electoral Arrangements Advisory Panel and Ward Members have been consulted and a consultation document was published on the Council's website as required by legislation.

**Recommendations:**

- 1) That Council considers and approves the revised polling district and polling place scheme, as detailed in the report, and
- 2) That if any further polling places become unavailable prior to the election that the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader and the appropriate Ward members may make amendments to the scheme as required.

**List of Appendices included:**

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|-------------|---|
| Appendix 1: | Proposed revisions to the polling district and polling place scheme.  |
| Appendix 2: | Maps detailing the suggested polling district boundaries for Henley Ward, Holbrook Ward, Lower Stoke Ward, Upper Stoke Ward and Woodlands Ward with the future proposed polling district names. |
| Appendix 3: | A report detailing the suggested roads/properties to be moved from one polling district to another.   |
| Appendix 4: | The Acting Returning Officer's recommendations regarding polling stations.  |

**Other useful background papers:**

Polling District and Polling Place Review – report to Council 13 October 2015:

<http://moderngov.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s25745/Polling%20District%20and%20Polling%20Places%20Review.pdf>

Polling District and Polling Place Review – Update Report to Council 14 January 2014.

<http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s14623/Polling%20District%20Polling%20Place%20Review.pdf>

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

Yes – Although this report has not been considered elsewhere, the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities - Electoral Arrangements Advisory Panel has reviewed and provided advice on the proposed changes.

**Will this report go to Council?**

Yes – 24 January 2017

## **Report title: Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Section 18C(5) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA 1983) places a duty on all UK local authorities to review their polling places following parliamentary and other elections. The Council conducted its full review from 1 October 2013 and approved its revised scheme in January 2014 and October 2015.
- 1.2 During the polls held in 2016 some issues arose in relation to some of the polling place locations and some of the venues no longer being available, which has meant that certain areas have had to be reviewed again.
- 1.3 Officers have also reviewed the provision of portacabins as polling stations and sought alternatives where possible to ensure easy access to the polling station for all voters, whilst ensuring polling stations are available in a suitable location.
- 1.4 Section 18B of the RPA 1983 states the authority must designate the polling places for the polling districts in its area. Paragraph 25 of Schedule 1 to the RPA 1983 states that the Returning Officer must provide a sufficient number of polling stations, shall allocate electors to those polling stations, and those polling stations shall be in the polling place for that district.

### **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1 All the information relating to the Polling District and Polling Place Review was published on the Council's website for 4 weeks from 11 November 2016.
- 2.2 Ahead of the consultation period all proposed polling stations were contacted to establish if they were available and still suitable. All proposed locations are appropriate for use as polling stations.
- 2.3 Ward Councillors were also given the opportunity to consider the suggestions for alternative polling stations and polling district boundaries. No adverse comments were received to the proposals. The three Parish Councils within the City were also consulted on the proposals during the consultation period. No adverse comments were received to the proposals.
- 2.4 Attached at Appendix 1 are the proposed amendments to the polling district and polling place scheme. It:-
  - confirms the current polling place and issues identified
  - recommends the future polling place for the polling district
- 2.5 Attached at Appendix 2 is the map detailing the suggested polling district boundaries for Bablake, Holbrook, Upper Stoke and Woodlands Wards with the future proposed polling district names.
- 2.6 Attached at Appendix 3 is a report detailing the suggested roads/properties to be moved from one polling district to another.
- 2.7 Attached at Appendix 4 is a report containing the Acting Returning Officer's recommendations regarding polling stations.
- 2.8 Council is recommended to approve the revisions to the scheme detailed in the report. It is also recommended that delegation be given to the Chief Executive following consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader and the Ward Members to make any amendments to the scheme which may be required on the run up to the election in May 2017.

### **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1 The Review has taken into account comments received following the May 2016 elections and June Referendum and comments from ward councillors. No additional comments were received following the publication of information relating to the Polling District and Polling Place Review on the Council's website.

### **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1 A revised register of electors will need to be published on 1 February to take account of changes to polling districts, pending approval of the revised scheme.

### **5. Comments from Executive Director of Resources**

- 5.1 Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

- 5.2 Legal implications

Section 18C(1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA 1983) places a duty on all local authorities to review their parliamentary polling districts and polling places within 18 months of a Parliamentary Election. That requirement was met by the completion of the review approved by Council on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2014. Paragraph 25(1) of Schedule 1 to the RPA 1983 states that the Returning Officer must provide sufficient numbers of polling stations and allot electors to those polling stations.

### **6. Other implications**

- 6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?**

An effective polling district and polling place scheme supports the Council Plan priority to encourage active communities and empowered citizens.

### **6.2 How is risk being managed?**

The key risk associated with this report is related to electors not being aware of where they should go to vote if their polling station has changed. This is being dealt with by sending poll cards to all electors in the run up to an election.

### **6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

None

## 6.4 Equalities

When assessing the location of polling places, accessibility issues have been included to ensure that all proposed polling stations have full access to voters with disabilities.

## 6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

### Report author:

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Martin Reeves	Chief Executive	Chief Executives	11/01/17	16/01/17
<b>Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)</b>				
Councillor Abdul Khan	Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities		16/01/17	16/01/17