

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

## LICENSING, HEALTH AND SAFETY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

25 NOVEMBER 2015

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>POLLING STATIONS</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>Greasby, Frankby &amp; Irby Moreton West &amp; Saughall Massie Pensby &amp; Thingwall</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR ADRIAN JONES (Resources: Finance, Assets and Technology)</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>No</b>

### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides details of necessary changes required in relation to three polling places within the Borough and seeks approval of suitable alternatives and changes.
- 1.2 Relevant changes are in the Recommendations set out in the Appendix.

### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The Council has a duty under the Representation of the People Act 1983 to divide Wirral Borough into Polling Districts and to designate Polling Places for each Polling District.

### 3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 The Council is under a statutory duty to ensure a polling place exists in each of its polling districts.

### 4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 No other options were considered.

### 5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Ward councillors have been consulted

### 6.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

- 6.1 There are none.

## **7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

7.1 There are none.

## **8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

8.1 The financial implications have been set out within the main body of this report.

## **9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The legal implications have been set out within the main body of this report.

## **10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

~~(a) Yes and impact review has been sent to the Equality and Diversity Co-ordinator.~~

~~(b) No because there is no relevance to equality.~~

(c) No because of another reason which is:

The Review included use of the Electoral Commissions Evaluation Checklist which addresses equality and diversity issues relevant to Polling Districts, Places and Stations.

## **11.0 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no such implications.

## **12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are no such implications.

## **13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S**

13.1 That the Committee agrees to all the recommendations set out in the Appendix.

## **14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

14.1 The Council has a statutory duty to ensure there is a polling place accessible to all Electors in each of its polling districts.

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# APPENDIX

## Details of Changes to Polling Places

### 1. Greasby, Frankby and Irby Ward

#### District PA:

The current polling place is Greasby Infant School in Barker Lane. The attached letter has been received from the Chair of Governors requesting that an alternative location is used as a polling station for future elections.

Of the four suggestions made in the letter, three were dismissed out of hand as they were outside the boundary of the polling district.

The fourth, Our Lady of Pity Church Hall in Mill Lane was inspected and found to be suitable for use as a polling station. There is a bus stop immediately opposite the front of the proposed polling station. The exit from the car park to Mill lane is somewhat obscured by a sandstone wall but is adequate if care is exercised.

The Shrewsbury Diocese is agreeable to the use. The charge has yet to be determined.

#### Acting Returning Officer's Comments:

The Local Elections (Principal Areas) (England and Wales) Rules 2006 Schedule 3 Part 3 Chapter 1 General Provisions provide that the returning officer may, free of charge for the purpose of taking a poll use a room in a school maintained or assisted by a local education authority or a school in respect of which grants are made out of moneys provided by Parliament to the person or bodies responsible for those schools.

The returning officer is not obliged to use a school and can opt to use alternative premises, meeting the costs associated if, in all the circumstances it is a reasonable decision to arrive at. Clearly if all schools were successful in making requests not to be polling stations in the future the costs of elections would increase considerably, especially if mobile polling stations had to be used.

The current venue remains the most suitable venue for use as a polling place and the fact that the governors and parents do not like the use that the returning officer makes of the school is not a sufficient reason to agree to use alternative premises.

#### Recommendation:

That the status quo should continue

## **2. Moreton West and Saughall Massie Ward**

### **District YC:**

The current polling place, Foxfield School has closed and is no longer available as a polling station. Various locations have been examined but all but one would involve the hire of a portable building.

The offer of the use of The Rainbow Café room in the Moreton Baptist Church is the best solution presented. The premises, which have off the road parking have been inspected and are satisfactory for use as a polling station. Tellers will have the use of the café in the front foyer in which to sit whilst performing their activities, subject to the discretion of the premises managers.

The Church Deacons have suggested a rent of £500. This is in line with similar premises and by no means the most expensive payment made for a private hall. The charge is also considerably less than the hire of a portable building.

### **Acting Returning Officer's Comments:**

The premises are suitable for purpose and provide a suitable polling place for the electors of the polling district.

### **Recommendation:**

The Rainbow Café room of Moreton Baptist Church should be the polling place for the YC polling district of Moreton West and Saughall Massie at the District Council Election on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2016 and at all future elections thereafter.

## **3. Pensby and Thingwall Ward**

### **District FB:**

Members have been previously advised of the closure of the current polling place, The Methodist Church in Seven Acres Road. We were able to arrange for the church to remain available for the General Election on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015. Recent enquiries of the Methodist Church confirm that the church at Seven Acres Road will be sold by May 2016.

Thingwall Recreation Centre (off Sparks Lane) has been assessed as offering a viable alternative venue in spite of the fact that the driveway is approximately 100 yards long and is only wide enough for single file traffic.

The manager has advised that this does not cause problems and users are aware of the rights of way. There is also a traffic calming hump at the end of the driveway that would need to be made more visible for any

pedestrians. There is also pedestrian access to the venue via Barnsdale Avenue.

There would be a hire charge of at least £200 but possibly higher as this is the figure discussed for 2015.

**Recommendation:**

That Thingwall Recreation Centre Sparks lane be designated as the polling place for polling district FB.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS/REFERENCE MATERIAL**

### **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Minute 21 – Licensing, Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee</b>	<b>25<sup>th</sup> February 2015</b>
<b>Minute 15 – Licensing, Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee</b>	<b>28<sup>th</sup> January 2015</b>
<b>Minute 8 – Licensing, Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> November 2014</b>
<b>Minute 19 – Licensing, Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee</b>	<b>22<sup>nd</sup> January 2014</b>