

REPORT TITLE	CHANGE OF POLLING PLACES
REPORT OF	CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides details of proposed changes to Polling Places for the Local Authority, Combined Authority and Police and Crime Commissioner Elections scheduled to take place on 6th May 2021.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Chief Executive agrees the change of polling places contained in this report effective immediately.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

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

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1** It has not been possible to review all 103 polling stations. Alternative venues have been visited where options could be identified within the polling district. Government guidance has directed Returning Officers to seek suitable alternative venues, if practically possible, to prevent schools being forced to close on 6th May 2021. Alternative venues were identified for nine schools; of the nine venues three have been deemed as suitable and the polling place has been moved from the school to the private venue.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1** 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.

3.2 Polling District BA (Birkenhead and Tranmere Ward)

- 3.3** The current polling place for polling district BA in the Birkenhead and Tranmere Ward, is Charing Cross Methodist Centre, 226 Claughton Road, Birkenhead. After contacting the polling stations, to determine availability for the elections being held on 6th May 2021, Electoral Services were advised that this building was permanently closed. It will not be available for 6th May 2021. An alternative venue has been identified as Wirral Multicultural Centre which is located just 0.4 miles away on Conway Street. This building has been inspected by Electoral Services and is considered suitable for the purposes of being used as a polling place and offers the most reasonable facilities for voting. Wirral Multicultural Centre have yet to confirm the hire charge. Charing Cross Methodist Church charged £500 at the previous election.

3.4 Polling District FD (Pensby and Thingwall Ward)

- 3.5** The current polling place for polling district FD in the Pensby & Thingwall Ward, is Pensby Children's Centre, Fishers Lane, Pensby, CH61 8SB. After contacting the polling stations, to determine availability for the May 2021 combined elections, Electoral Services were advised that this building was unavailable for use as it had been 'moth balled' as part of the asset management plan. An alternative venue has been identified as The Hope Centre, Fishers Lane, Pensby. The venue is located just 0.3 miles from Pensby Children's Centre. This building has been inspected by Electoral Services and is considered suitable for the purposes of being used as a polling place and offers the most reasonable facilities for voting. The Hope Centre will charge £260 to hire the venue; There was no charge for Pensby Children's Centre at previous elections.

3.6 Polling District JA (Eastham Ward)

3.7 The current polling place for polling district JA in the Eastham Ward, is Mendell Primary School, Allport Lane, Bromborough. Mendell Primary School currently closes on polling day and there is no other suitable area identified within the school premises that would allow the school to remain open during polling day. The latest Government guidance has directed Returning Officers to seek suitable alternative venues, if practically possible, to prevent schools being forced to close on 6th May 2021. An alternative venue has been identified as Bromborough Methodist Church, Allport Lane, CH62 7HW which is located just 0.1 miles away on Allport Lane. This building has been inspected by Electoral Services and is considered suitable for the purposes of being used as a polling place and offers the most reasonable facilities for voting. Bromborough Methodist Church have confirmed a hire cost of £300. The costs for Mendell Primary School, in previous years, are £86.00 for caretaking and utilities.

3.8 Polling District KB (Clatterbridge Ward)

3.9 The current polling place for polling district KB in the Clatterbridge Ward, is Poulton Lancelyn Primary School, Venable Drive, Clatterbridge. Poulton Lancelyn Primary School currently closes on polling day and there is no other suitable area identified within the school premises that would allow for the school to remain open during polling day. The latest Government guidance has directed Returning Officers to seek suitable alternative venues, if practically possible, to prevent schools being forced to close on 6th May 2021. An alternative venue has been identified as Holy Trinity Church, Chorley Way, Spital which is located just 0.3 miles away. This building has been inspected by Electoral Services and is considered suitable for the purposes of being used as a polling place and offers the most reasonable facilities for voting. There would be a hire cost of £300. The costs for Poulton Lancelyn Primary School in previous years is £89.64 for caretaking and utilities.

3.10 Polling District NB (Hoylake and Meols Ward)

3.11 The current polling place for polling district NB in the Hoylake and Meols Ward, is Hoylake C of E Primary School, Market Street, Hoylake. Hoylake C of E Primary School currently closes on polling day and there is no other suitable area identified within the school premises that would allow the school to remain open during polling day. The latest Government guidance has directed Returning Officers to seek suitable alternative venues, if practically possible, to prevent schools being forced to close on 6th May 2021. An alternative venue has been identified as The Parade Hoylake Community Centre, Hoyle Road, CH47 3AG, which is located just 0.3 miles away. This building has been inspected by Electoral Services and is considered suitable for the purposes of being used as a polling place and offers the most reasonable facilities for voting. There would be a hire cost of £282.50. The costs for Hoylake C of E Primary School in previous years is £20 for utilities.

3.12 Polling District RC (Heswall Ward)

3.13 The current polling place for polling district RC in the Heswall Ward, is Church of the Good Shepherd, Telegraph Road, Heswall. After contacting the polling stations, to

determine availability for the elections being held on 6th May 2021, Electoral Services were advised that this building is due to be demolished and then re-built and so will not be available. An alternative venue has been identified as Heswall Royal British Legion which is located just 0.3 miles away on Pensby Road. This building has been inspected by Electoral Services and is considered suitable for the purposes of being used as a polling place and offers the most reasonable facilities for voting. Heswall Royal British Legion have confirmed the cost to hire the venue is £900. The Church of the good shepherd charged £310 at the previous election.

3.14 Polling District VA (Wallasey Ward)

3.15 The current polling place for polling district VA in the Wallasey Ward, is Oldershaw Academy, Valkyrie Road, Wallasey. After contacting the polling stations, to determine availability for the elections being held on 6th May 2021, Electoral Services were advised that this building is unavailable for use as the sports hall is currently being used as a lateral flow testing area for staff and pupils. There is no other suitable area identified within the school premises that would allow the school to remain open during polling day. The latest Government guidance has directed Returning Officers to seek suitable alternative venues, if practically possible, to prevent schools being forced to close on 6th May 2021. An alternative venue has been identified as Oldershaw Rugby Club which is located just 0.2 miles away on Belvidere Road. This building has been inspected by Electoral Services and is considered suitable for the purposes of being used as a polling place and offers the most reasonable facilities for voting. Oldershaw Rugby Club are yet to confirm an exact cost to hire the venue. Although we use the Oldershaw Academy free of hire charge; there is a £200 charge for heating, lighting and caretaking hours for previous elections.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial implications are set out in paragraphs 3.3, 3.5, 3.7, 3.9, 3.11, 3.13 and 3.15 of this report. The financial implications will be met from the Elections Budget.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 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.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

6.1 None

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

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

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Ward Councillors have been consulted and are supportive of the proposals.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Electoral Commissions Evaluation Checklist, which addresses equality and diversity issues relevant to Polling Districts, Places and Stations, has been used.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are none arising from this report

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APPENDICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Representation of The Peoples Act (RPA) 1983

Sections 20, 29 and 31, Equality Act 2010.

Rule 20(1)(a), Principal Areas Rules 2006; rule 20(1)(a), Parishes and Communities Rules 2006; rule 22(1)(a), Mayoral Rules 2007; rule 22(1)(a), Combined Authorities Mayoral Rules 2017.

Rule 20(1)(b), Principal Areas Rules 2006; rule 20(1)(b), Parishes and Communities Rules 2006; rule 22(1)(b), Mayoral Rules 2007; rule 22(1)(b), Combined Authorities Mayoral Rules 2017.

Rule 23(3), Principal Areas Rules 2006; rule 23(3), Parishes and Communities Rules 2006; rule 25(3), Mayoral Rules 2007; rule 25(3), Combined Authorities Mayoral Rules 2017

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date