

REPORT TITLE	CHANGE TO A POLLING PLACE IN BIDSTON AND ST JAMES WARD
REPORT OF	DIRECTOR OF LAW & GOVERNANCE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides details of the request to the Director of Law & Governance to change a polling place in polling district AF effective immediately.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Director of Law & Governance be recommended to agree that Christ The King Church be designated as the polling place for polling district AF (Bidston and St James Ward).

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** No other options were considered.

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** The Electoral Administration Act 2006 placed a duty on all local authorities to undertake a full review of their Parliamentary polling districts and polling places every four years.

- 3.3** The current polling place for polling district AF in the Bidston and St James Ward, is Priory C of E Primary School, Trinity Street, Birkenhead. Priory Primary School usually opens on polling day but due to the commencement of building work starting in April 2021 the current segregated access route for electors will not be able to be used. There is another suitable area identified within the school premises that would allow for the school to remain as the polling station, however this new area would require electors to access the school via the main entrance gates. Consequently, the school would not be able to adhere to the safeguarding and health procedures and as such the school would have no option but to close on 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 Christ The King Church, St Anne Street, 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.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** Christ The King Church have confirmed there would be a hire cost, but it is to be confirmed. The costs for Priory Primary School, in previous years, are £68.75 for caretaking and utilities.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** The Council is under a statutory duty to ensure a polling place exists in each of its polling districts as set out in paragraph 3.1 of this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

- 6.1** There are none arising from this report.

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

N/A

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