

 Licensing & Regulatory Committee 8 October 2018		Agenda Item No. 4
Title	Relocation of Polling Stations	
For further information about this report please contact	Graham Leach Democratic Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer 01926 456114 graham.leach@warwickdc.gov.uk	
Wards of the District directly affected	Milverton & Kenilworth Abbey	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number		
Background Papers		

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	No
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	No
Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken	No

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	1/10/2018 1/10/2018	Andrew Jones Chris Elliott
Head of Service		
CMT		
Section 151 Officer	28/9/2018	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	1/10/2018	Andrew Jones
Finance		
Portfolio Holder(s)		Andrew Mobbs
Consultation & Community Engagement		
None		
Final Decision?		Yes
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 The report brings forward proposals to move two polling stations within Warwick District at the request of the current designated sites. The report also seeks delegated authority for any future changes.

2. **Recommendation**

- 2.1 That polling station for Polling District KAB6 in Kenilworth Abbey Ward be moved from Priors Field School on Clinton Lane to a temporary cabin in the car park of the Queen & Castle Public House on Castle Green.
- 2.2 That polling station for Polling Districts KWMV2a, WMV2 and WMV5 be moved from Brookhurst Primary School on Ullswater Avenue to the Gymnasium at Trinity School on Guys Cliffe Avenue.
- 2.3 That Council delegates authority to the Chief Executive (as Returning Officer), in consultation with the respective Ward Councillors and Chairman of Licensing & Regulatory Committee to relocate of Polling Stations in between the five year statutory review.

3. **Reasons for the Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Committee will recall previous discussions that the Chief Executive (as Returning Officer) aims to move polling stations away from schools because of the impact this can have on managing such sites safely and because of the impact on childcare arrangements by parents if the school has to close for the day.
- 3.2 Priors Field School in Kenilworth had been designated as a polling station for many years as it provided the only suitable accommodation within that polling district. This has presented an increasing challenge for the school staff in the requirements for safeguarding the children. Owing to the layout of the school its decision has been to close the school each time an election took place. This was generally accepted by the school for scheduled elections in May as these could be planned for in advance and parents were provided sufficient advance warning. However, following the additional referendum and election in two consecutive years significant protests were made by both the school and parents for a number of reasons. This led at Kenilworth Town Assembly to a motion being passed seeking to have the polling station moved.
- 3.3 Following discussions with the Head Teacher of the School a number of potential options were considered. Following site inspections by officers, and meetings with landlords the best option available is to locate a temporary building in the car park of the Queen & Castle public house. The Management of the premises and brewery are supportive of this proposal and have agreed to enter into a licence to allow the use of part of their site as a Polling Station.
- 3.4 Similarly, Brookhurst School has requested not to be used as a polling station. Brookhurst is not an ideal location and there were complaints at the 2017 General Election about the access used to the site. The Council informally approached Trinity School and it is keen to have the polling station at the school. While this is replacing one school with another it is considered on balance to be a good location but with improved access, the school feels hosting the polling station can be managed safely without the need to close.

- 3.5 These proposals will leave polling stations in the following schools: Telford School, Lillington Nursey, St Mary's Catholic School, Warwick and Woodloes School. All of these present challenges for finding alternative locations within appropriate buildings in the polling district. Officers will continue to review these but without the use of further temporary buildings (for which locations are equally difficult to find in the respective Polling Districts and are costly) or new developments in these areas, a solution is unlikely to be found.
- 3.6 The Council is required by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 to review its polling stations within a 16 month time period starting in the October after the previous review was completed five years previously. This review is just being started by Warwick District Council with a view to completing no later than February 2020. However the law permits polling stations to be moved in between these reviews as is necessary, so long as they meet the necessary requirements. It is considered that the relocation of polling stations in between this time should be delegated to the Chief Executive as Returning Officer in consultation with the Ward Councillors and the Chairman of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee. This allows for both any temporary moves for a by election or also permanent moves until the next review.

4. **Policy Framework**

4.1 **Fit for the Future (FFF)**

The Council's FFF Strategy is designed to deliver the Vision for the District of making it a Great Place to Live, Work and Visit. To that end amongst other things the FFF Strategy contains several Key projects.

The FFF Strategy has 3 strands – People, Services and Money and each has an external and internal element to it. The table below illustrates the impact of this proposal if any in relation to the Council's FFF Strategy.

FFF Strands		
People	Services	Money
External		
Health, Homes, Communities	Green, Clean, Safe	Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Improved health for all Housing needs for all met Impressive cultural and sports activities Cohesive and active communities	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Area has well looked after public spaces All communities have access to decent open space Improved air quality Low levels of crime and ASB	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Dynamic and diverse local economy Vibrant town centres Improved performance/ productivity of local economy Increased employment and income levels
Impacts of Proposal		
None	None	None

Internal		
Effective Staff	Maintain or Improve Services	Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> All staff are properly trained All staff have the appropriate tools All staff are engaged, empowered and supported The right people are in the right job with the right skills and right behaviours	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Focusing on our customers' needs Continuously improve our processes Increase the digital provision of services	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Better return/use of our assets Full Cost accounting Continued cost management Maximise income earning opportunities Seek best value for money
Impacts of Proposal		
None	None	None

4.2 **Supporting Strategies** – The report does not relate to any supporting policies or strategies.

4.3 **Changes to Existing Policies** – The report does not propose any changes to existing policies.

5. Budgetary Framework

5.1 The report does not impact on the budgetary framework for the Council.

5.2 The Committee should be aware that the cost of relocating the polling station in Kenilworth will cost significantly more (circa £3000 per election) than the previous charges incurred when using the school. This is because the licence to use the land at the Queen & Castle will be greater in cost than the rent paid to Priors Field School and in addition to the licence there will be cost of renting the temporary building and associated utilities. However this cost will be recharged to the relevant election.

6. Risks

6.1 There is a risk of using the car park at the Queen & Castle, in that even with the licence agreement in place there may be times when the Council cannot be accommodated, for example if building works are being undertaken on site. However, this should only be a risk for non-scheduled elections and it is anticipated a good working relationship with the premises will mitigate against this risk being realised.

7. Alternative Option(s) considered

7.1 The Returning Officer is entitled by law to mandate public authority schools (this excludes private schools, colleges, universities and academies) to be used as polling stations. However, exercise of this power has been avoided where possible by the Returning Officer as he recognises the impacts of using a school for a polling station.