

**Cheltenham Borough Council**  
**Council – 16 December, 2013**

**Review of Polling Districts, Places and Stations in Charlton Park Ward**

**Report of the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO)**

<b>Accountable member</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Jon Walklett</b>
<b>Accountable officer</b>	<b>Chief Executive, Andrew North</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	<b>Charlton Park</b>
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<p>The council has a duty to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable and to ensure that the polling stations are accessible to all electors including those with special needs.</p> <p>A consultation exercise has been completed for Charlton Park Ward and consideration has been given to the views put forward.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>That all electors in the current polling district EA continue to vote at Sacred Hearts Parish Hall, Moorend Road. These arrangements will be considered further as part of the full review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations to be carried out during summer 2014 and any changes that are agreed will be implemented before the Parliamentary election in May 2015.</b></p>

<b>Financial implications</b>	<p>There are no financial implications.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Des Knight, des.knight@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 264124</b></p>
<b>Legal implications</b>	<p>This review has been carried out in accordance with the Representation of the People Act 1983 and the Electoral Commission Guidance. A compulsory review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations will be carried out in 2014 as required by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Peter Lewis, peter.lewis@tewkesbury.gov.uk, 01684 272012</b></p>
<b>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</b>	<p>There are no HR implications.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Richard Hall, Richard.hall@cheltenham.gcsx.gov.uk, 01594 812462</b></p>

<b>Key risks</b>	<b>There is a risk that some electors living in the far north of polling district EA may be unhappy that the polling place and polling station has not changed.</b>
<b>Corporate and community plan Implications</b>	There are no community and corporate plan implications
<b>Environmental and climate change implications</b>	
<b>Property/Asset Implications</b>	<b>Contact officer: David Roberts@cheltenham.gov.uk</b>

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 Following a request from Councillor Klara Sudbury an interim review was undertaken to ensure that all electors in the Charlton Park Ward have reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable and to ensure that the polling stations are accessible to all electors, including those with special needs. Councillor Sudbury suggested that the electors in polling district EA be moved from voting at Sacred Hearts Parish Hall, Moorend Road to voting at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Thirlestaine Road.
- 1.2 A full review of all polling districts, places and stations within the Borough will be undertaken during the summer in 2014.

## **2. Responses from interested parties**

- 2.1 Following the closing date for the review, as well as the Acting Returning Officer's formal comments, correspondence was received from two other sources.
- 2.2 The first correspondence was from an elector in polling district EA who strongly objected to the proposed change and requested that the current arrangements are maintained.
- 2.3 The second correspondence was from an elector in polling district EA who thought the proposal to designate a new polling district sound, but was concerned that the proposal to vote at Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints in Thirlestaine Road was not. The elector suggested that the new proposed polling district of EA vote at a portakabin in the car park at Sandford Park Lido (see paragraph 6 below).

## **3. Response from the Acting Returning Officer (ARO)**

- 3.1 **Polling District EA** – Sacred Hearts Parish Hall, Moorend Road has been used as a fully accessible polling station for a number of years. Although I have not received complaints from electors, concerns have been raised by Councillor Sudbury regarding the distance electors living to the north of the ward have to travel to cast their vote.
- 3.2 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Thirlestaine Road for the electors living to the north of the ward is more than adequate to house a polling station. It has very good disabled access and the church also has its own parking. This would require the polling district to be split.
- 3.3 Those electors living in the roads listed below would continue to vote at Sacred Hearts Parish Hall, Moorend:-
  - Charlton Gardens
  - Charlton Lane
  - Cirencester Road
  - Evelyn Close
  - Greatfield Drive
  - Greenhills Close
  - Moorend Road
  - Sandy Lane
  - The Avenue

A new polling district for these electors would be created.

## **4. Reasons for recommendations**

- 4.1 Having considered the correspondence, there seems to be no strong support for the proposed change.
- 4.2 There are a number of bus routes that would enable electors to the north of the polling district to travel to Sacred Hearts polling station.
- 4.3 The facility to vote by post exists for those who have difficulty accessing the polling station.
- 4.4 There is a large car park at Sacred Hearts Parish Hall.
- 4.5 The Elections Office has no record of any complaints from electors in this polling district with regard to the location of the current polling station. Electors in the far north of the existing polling district EA have been voting at Sacred Hearts Parish Hall since 2002.
- 4.6 The percentage turnout for EA in 2011 and 2013 was higher than the average turnout for Cheltenham (figures in brackets). The percentage turnout at the polling station for current polling district EA at the 2011 Referendum was 44% (41%), at the 2012 Borough Council elections was 30% (31%) and at the 2013 County Council elections was 34% (31%).
- 4.7 A full review of all polling districts, polling places, and polling stations will be undertaken during the summer of 2014.

## **5. Alternative options considered**

- 5.1 The siting of a portakabin in the car park of Sandford Park Lido was investigated and the following costs would be incurred.

To site a portakabin	£65.00
Hire of portakabin	£360.00
Installation of ramp	£117.50
Delivery and Collection of portakabin	£240.00
Connection to and disconnection from power supply	£146.50
Poll Clerk	£150.00
Total	£1079.00

- 5.2 This would be a second portakabin sited in the car park, reducing the number of available car parking spaces. The car park is pay and display, it is also used by people visiting / attending the hospital.
- 5.3 A further review of the polling district would be required.

## **6. Consultation and feedback**

- 6.1 A consultation exercise was carried out and proposals and comments on the review were requested. Views were requested from the following:
  - MP for Cheltenham
  - Borough Councillors for Charlton Park Ward

- County Councillor for Charlton Park Ward
- Party Election Agents
- Charlton Kings Parish Council
- Cheltenham and District Carers and Families

## 7. Performance management – monitoring and review

7.1 The Electoral team always undertake an informal review of polling stations after each election to identify any issues which may arise from time to time.

<b>Report author</b>	<b>Contact officer: Kim Smith, kim.smith@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 774948</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	1. Risk Assessment

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
	If the polling station changes, elector unsure of location of polling station	Director of Commissioning	27 November	1	1	2	A	Poll Card with note highlighting Polling Station location may have changed. Helpline and contact details on poll card	Next election	Electoral Registration Manager	Divisional risk register
	If the polling station changes electors who have always voted at Sacred Hearts Parish Hall may be unhappy with change	Director of Commissioning	27 November	1	1	2	A	All comments will be considered when full review is undertaken during Summer 2014.	December 2014	Electoral Registration Manager	Divisional risk register
	Electors in the far north of polling district EA may be unhappy that their polling station has not changed	Director of Commissioning	27 November	1	1	2	A	All comments will be considered when full review is undertaken during Summer 2014. Continue to seek more convenient location for polling place	December 2014	Electoral Registration Manager	Divisional risk register