

Governance Committee
6 FEBRUARY 2023

Present: Councillors: Philip Circus (Chairman), Tony Bevis, Ray Dawe, Christian Mitchell, Kate Rowbottom and David Skipp

Apologies: Councillors: Peter Burgess, Michael Croker and Sam Raby

GO/8 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

GO/9 **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

GO/10 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

GO/11 **INTERIM REVIEW OF POLLING PLACES AND CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT**

Councillor Philip Circus, Chairman of Governance Committee, stated that an interim review of polling stations for the 4 May 2023 elections had been required because of changes since the last full review in 2019. The disruptive impact of the COVID-19 lockdowns on children's education had led to a number of schools being reluctant to close on polling day and alternative venues had been identified, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report. Members had agreed at a previous meeting of the Committee that it was reasonable to avoid using schools to avoid disruption.

It was noted that Parish Councils had raised no objections during the consultation on the proposed changes.

Councillor Circus confirmed that a full review of polling stations, which was required by January 2025, was scheduled to take place.

Members discussed the third recommendation, which proposed a change to the constitution to allow for temporary changes to polling stations as required without having to seek the Committee's approval.

Councillor Tony Bevis proposed that the new wording for the constitution, as set out in 4.2 of the report, should be included in the recommendation to Council for ease of reference and to allow full transparency. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Ray Dawe.

RESOLVED

- (i) To approve the revised schedule of polling places (i.e., geographical area, usually the building) and polling stations (i.e., actual area where the process of voting takes place) for elections on 4 May 2023, as set out in Appendix 1, following the consultation carried out this year.
- (ii) To delegate authority to the Returning Officer, in consultation with Ward Members, to make temporary changes to the schedule of polling places and polling stations for all elections and, if approved;

TO RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- (iii) To approve the proposed amendment to the constitution at Paragraph 3.5.1, namely:

“1(a) Will, in consultation with relevant Ward Members, redesignate new Polling Places, where such becomes unavailable or unsuitable before an election.”

and if approved authorise the Monitoring Officer to make the required changes to the Constitution.

REASON

To ensure that polling places and polling stations are relevant and fit for purpose.

GO/12 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 5.56 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN