

LICENSING & REGULATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 29 January 2019

Attendance:

Councillors

Mather (Chairman)

Izard
Becker
Bentote
Berry
Burns

Cook
Green
Laming
McLean

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Read

1. **DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS**

No declarations of interest were made.

2. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee, held on the 6 December 2018, be approved and adopted.

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Licensing Manager updated the Committee concerning improvements to the Council's Taxi Licensing Policy referred to as the "Tip Top Taxi" project. The Committee was advised that over time, factors influencing the existing Policy had changed, for example, environmental issues, vehicle specification and accessibility requirements. It was felt that now was an appropriate time to review all of the relevant issues. The Committee would be updated with progress at key stages of the project.

Patrick Davies addressed the Committee regarding agenda item six, "Polling Station Review", report LR516 refers. Mr Davies felt that the review of Polling Stations had not been publicised and consulted upon widely enough and sought some reassurance on this point. Specifically, he stated that although he had seen an article concerning the review in the local media, he questioned whether the local political party that he assisted had been made aware of it. Mr Davies also questioned the proposal within the report to move the polling station at the

Holiday Inn, Telegraph Hill to Cheriton Village Hall as he felt that the new location would make it more difficult for local residents to vote.

The Chief Executive, (attending the meeting in her capacity of Acting Returning Officer) responded by confirming that the review had been done in line with statutory requirements. The Electoral Services Manager provided an overview of the consultation and communication milestones which included:

- a press release and Council website update on 22 October 2018.
- email communication to all major political party agents, parish clerks and Councillors on the same day.
- a hard copy being left on the Council's reception.

Following conclusion of the consultation on the 16 November 2018, officers then:

- publicised all of the comments received on the Council's website in December 2018.
- publicised the details of this Committee meeting including all consultation comments on the 21 January 2019.

The Chairman advised Mr Davies that Officers would contact him to confirm the details of the communication with the specific local political party he had referred to.

4. **POLLING STATION REVIEW**

(LR516)

Officers introduced the report which set out the outcome of a review of polling places undertaken in accordance with the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013. A number of key points concerning the review were made, summarised below:

- that the purpose of the review was to provide accessible and convenient polling places across the district.
- that cost was not a major consideration for the review.
- that officers had reviewed many options and had travelled extensively across the district examining existing venues and potential new ones.
- that an evaluation and grading system was adopted in order to "score" each polling station from 1 to 3 (with 1 being most suitable)
- that a full communication plan would be rolled out to ensure residents were aware of locations ahead of the May 2019 elections.

The Committee was further informed that:

- Appendix A of the report contained the full list of consultation responses
- Appendix B identified the current polling places and
- Appendix C displayed the proposed new polling places.

Finally, the proposed changes were summarised as follows:

- that The Henry Beaufort school be confirmed as a permanent polling station.
- that the polling station at the Holiday Inn, Telegraph Hill be amalgamated with the polling place at Cheriton Village Hall.
- that the polling station at Drummond Close be relocated to Level 10 Church.
- that the polling station at The Valley be amalgamated with the polling place at St Luke's Church Centre, Mildmay Street.
- that the polling station at All Saints Church Denmead be moved to White Wings.
- that the polling station at Berewood School be retained.
- that the polling station at the Courtyard, Guildhall be retained for 2019 but Officers would continue to evaluate alternative options.

Members debated the report, the proposed changes and the issues connected with current polling stations. The following points were made:

- There was a number of concerns raised regarding facilities for Tellers, particularly in poor weather. Members advised that they felt this was especially an issue at Henry Beaufort School, Symonds Court, Colden Common Recreation Ground and Olivers Battery. Officers explained that they were sympathetic to the issues raised regarding Tellers but electoral guidance was that they should be located outside of the polling place and to not follow this guidance could give rise to a challenge. However, Officers were happy to discuss any concerns that Members had with the site owner and would take up the issues raised regarding Henry Beaufort school.

Officers responded to certain specific issues raised by Members as follows:

- the Common room at The Valley. This had been split into a dwelling which has made it difficult to continue to be used as a polling station.
- the Courtyard, Guildhall. In response to queries over costs, Officers advised that the venue operated on a commercial basis and so whilst it would be retained as a Polling Station, suitable alternatives would be evaluated.

RESOLVED:

- That having considered the information and for the reasons explained in report LR516 the polling districts and polling places set out in Appendix C be approved and adopted.
- That further consideration be given by the Acting Returning Officer (ARO) to the Friends Meeting House, Colebrook Street or St Lawrence Church Hall, Colebrook Street as an alternative polling place for polling district YS. Following consideration by the ARO that one of these locations be adopted for polling district YS if appropriate.

- That a further discussion be held with the Headteacher of The Henry Beaufort School to ensure the most appropriate access arrangements be secured and clearly communicated having regard to safeguarding considerations.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 7.15 pm

Chairman