

Minutes



Listening Learning Leading

OF A MEETING OF THE

Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee

HELD AT 6.00 PM ON TUESDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2021

AS A VIRTUAL MEETING

Present

Lynn Lloyd (Chair)

David Bartholomew, Maggie Filipova-Rivers, Elizabeth Gillespie, Mocky Khan and David Turner

Officers

Susan Baker, Steven Corrigan and Margaret Reed

11 Apologies for absence

None.

12 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2019 as a correct record and agree that the chair signs them as such.

13 Declarations of interest

Councillor Khan declared an interest in agenda item 6 as a trustee of the King Alfred Community Centre. He stated that he would not take part in the discussion or voting on anything relating to the centre under that item.

14 Public participation

No members of the public had registered to address the committee.

15 Urgent business and chair's announcements

The chair provided general guidance on the procedure for virtual meetings and advised there were no items of urgent business.

16 Temporary changes to polling stations due to Covid 19

The committee considered the report of the head of legal and democratic on proposed changes to polling places for the May 2021 elections to provide a more Covid secure environment.

The committee was advised that officers have been working on measures to provide for safe elections in May 2021. An element of this work involved reviewing the suitability of the designated polling places, in light of the current circumstances, to establish whether venues are large and spacious enough to enable social distancing to be maintained, whether there are multiple entrances to provide for a way in and out and whether there are opportunities to maintain air flow within buildings. Paragraph 5 of the report set out proposed temporary changes to address issues identified with a number of polling places.

In response to questions, officers confirmed that officers are risk assessing all polling places and measures would be implemented to ensure that polling stations would be safe venues for voting including appropriate signage to ensure social distancing, one way routes where possible, face coverings and shields for election staff, the provision of hand sanitiser and additional pencils and additional staff to manage the flow of electors into the larger and busier polling places. Electors would, via national and local campaigns, be requested to wear face coverings when in a polling station and encouraged to bring their own writing implement.

The committee was advised that officers had identified the cricket/recreation pavilion in Clifton Hampden as a possible polling place in the event that, as set out in the report, the Village Hall is unavailable. Officers advised that those included on the NHS Shielded Patient List would be contacted about voting options for the May 2021 elections. In response to a question, officers confirmed that new additions to the list would also be contacted.

The committee agreed to make the proposed changes, to authorise the returning officer to make any later changes required to address safety concerns and to note the changes agreed under delegated powers.

RESOLVED: to

1. approve the temporary proposed changes to polling places set out in paragraph 5 of the report of the head of legal and democratic for the forthcoming elections to be held on 6 May 2021;
2. note the temporary polling place changes agreed by the returning officer under delegated powers set out in paragraphs 6 to 11 of the report for the forthcoming elections to be held on 6 May 2021;
3. authorise the returning officer, in consultation with committee members and the ward councillors, to allocate appropriate polling places where the need arises for the elections on 6 May 2021;

4. authorise the returning officer, in consultation with committee members and the ward councillors, to allocate appropriate polling places where the need arises for any other elections, by-elections, referendums and polls during 2021.

17 District wide community governance review

The committee considered and agreed a proposal, set out on the agenda, to defer the consideration of a timetable for a district wide community governance review until there is greater clarity on the government's proposals for local government reform, including unitary authorities. The committee noted that if the Devolution and Local Recovery White paper was not published in the Autumn of 2021 it would be necessary to proceed with a review to ensure any changes agreed could be implemented for the elections in May 2023.

The meeting closed at 6:45pm

Chair

Date