

EMPLOYMENT AND GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING**Monday, 3rd November, 2014**

Present:-

Councillor Elliott (Chair)

| | | |
|-------------|--------|---------|
| Councillors | Blank | King |
| | Gibson | Simmons |

*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

**16 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS' INTERESTS
RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

No declarations were received.

17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bradford and Fanshawe.

18 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 JANUARY 2014**RESOLVED –**

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 30 January, 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**19 MINUTES OF COUNCIL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE HELD
ON 23 JANUARY, 15 MAY AND 13 AUGUST 2014**

The Minutes of the meetings of the Council Health and Safety Committee held on 23 January, 15 May and 13 August 2014 were submitted.

***RESOLVED –**

That the Minutes be received and noted.

20 **REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES IN THE BOROUGH OF CHESTERFIELD (EC000)**

The Democratic Services Manager submitted a report in relation to the statutory review of polling places and polling districts, and to seek approval to the proposed changes.

The review had begun with the Council drawing up its proposals and publishing notice on 25 July 2014 at its offices and on its website stating that the review was to be held.

The Returning Officer for North East Derbyshire constituency was consulted but had no comments in relation to the wards of Barrow Hill and New Whittington, and Lowgates and Woodthorpe.

It was noted that electors had the right to make representations and details were published in the press, on the council's website and through the Community Assemblies on how people could view the proposals and make representations. Consultation on the proposals had also taken place with the Chesterfield Equalities and Diversity Forum.

Comments were sought from Members of Parliament for the constituencies affected by the review, and from borough councillors, parish councils and local political parties and election agents.

The review had been based on the electoral team's knowledge of the existing districts and places, informed by comments made by the public, owners of premises used as polling stations, views of councillors and feedback from presiding and inspecting officers in recent elections.

A number of cases had been identified where the situation was not ideal and efforts had been made to address some of these in the review. A full audit of current polling stations was undertaken on 22 May, 2014, from which the draft proposals were drawn up.

A total of 10 comments were received from councillors and members of the public in support of current and proposed arrangements.

Regard to accessibility issues for people with disabilities was given in line with the Electoral Commission guidance. All polling places are accessible 'so far as is reasonable and practicable'. Adjustments are made when

appropriate such as providing ramps to assist voters confined to wheelchairs.

It was recognised that not all polling stations are completely accessible to all voters, for example there are some where adequate parking very close to the entrance may not be available or the ramped access may still have a lip or threshold to cross.

In a number of locations it had only been possible to use mobile polling stations which have more limited accessibility. It has been recommended to change the polling stations to fixed locations and as such the number of mobile units had been reduced from four to one in these proposals.

A summary of the proposed changes was appended to the report.

It was commented that the surface of the land where the mobile unit is positioned at Hady Lane, St Leonards had improved, so it was hoped previous difficulties with the land becoming 'boggy' would be avoided.

It was queried whether the use of public houses could be off-putting to voters however it was reported that no such complaints or concerns had been raised in the past and although pubs were not a preferred choice, in some areas there were no suitable alternatives.

***RESOLVED –**

- (1) That the proposals arising from the 2014 review of polling places and polling districts detailed in Appendix 1 of the report be approved.
- (2) That the Returning Officer be authorised to designate different polling places for those where there are currently concerns should this prove possible.

21 **INTRODUCTION OF INDIVIDUAL VOTER REGISTRATION UPDATE (EC000)**

The Democratic Services Manager submitted a report on the progress of the transition to Individual Voter Registration (IER) and to outline plans to deliver IER prior to and following the publication of the first IER register on 1 December 2014.

Individual voter registration was introduced in England and Wales in June 2014 replacing the household system of registration. In addition people could register to vote online for the first time.

The transition began with a data matching exercise to compare existing elector's details with the details held on the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) database. Where they were matched, electors did not need to re-register, however those whose details did not match would need to re-register.

The report outlined the process by which the data matching process was carried out. Initially 69,702 records of electors were matched, which was 85.66% of the total register. Those whose details did not match with the DWP data were then compared against local data, ie Council Tax, so they could be matched and not be required to re-register.

This process enabled a further 6041 electors to be confirmed, increasing the total to 75,743 confirmed electors, 93.08% of the register. The remaining 5632 people were invited to re-register under the new system. These people would remain registered until December 2015, unless their entitlement to registration changes, eg they move house, but they will be unable to vote by Post or by Proxy if they do not re-register.

The report detailed the elements of the write-out process to all electors, confirming their registration status.

An update on the latest response figures since the introduction of IER was given at the meeting.

It was advised that although the total number of registered electors had reduced, the register was more accurate.

Work was to continue on data matching and data mining to improve the accuracy of the register, including seeking access to other data sets by which the details of electors could be confirmed.

Details of the current and proposed engagement strategies were reported. It was also hoped to promote the use of electronic communication, including the new facility to register online, to provide a more effective and up-to-date customer database.

Promotion of electoral registration was to be targeted to young people through specific activity, including through secondary schools and Chesterfield College. Nursing homes had also been visited to facilitate ongoing registration of elderly residents and notification of residency changes.

Raising public awareness was to continue using numerous communication channels, with an intention to target under-represented and hard to reach groups.

The report outlined how the canvass was to be conducted in Autumn 2015, and detailed proposals for a 'mini-canvass' of all households to be carried out in January 2015.

Proposed changes to the guidelines and national code of conduct for political parties on handling applications for registration, absent vote applications and postal ballot packs were also reported. The key changes were for campaigners not to handle completed forms due to the type of personal data required, and to encourage electors to register online or to contact the elections office directly. Further details were to be circulated to political groups once the new code of conduct had been published.

***RESOLVED -**

That the progress made to date in relation to the transition to Individual Electoral Registration, and the ERO's approach to delivering and maintaining a secure, accurate and up to date electoral register in compliance with his statutory duties, be noted.

22 ZERO HOURS POLICY (EC130)

The Human Resources Officer submitted a report seeking approval for the introduction and implementation of a new Zero Hours Policy.

The Council did not previously have a policy regarding the Council's position on the use of zero hours contracts. The Council is committed to fair treatment of its workforce regardless of their different contractual arrangements. This policy was developed to formalise this commitment in relation to zero hours contracts.

An initial draft policy had been considered by the Policy Working Group, and comments on the draft had been sought from Trade Unions and

managers. Responses to the consultation were summarised at appendix B to the report. The draft had been amended as a result of the comments received.

The draft policy was presented to and approved by the Policy Working Group and by the Council Joint Consultative Committee on 15 October, 2014.

***RESOLVED –**

That the Zero Hours Policy, as attached to the Report, be approved to take immediate effect.

23 SMOKING POLICY (EC130)

The Human Resources Officer submitted a report seeking approval for the implementation of a revised Smoking Policy.

The Council's smoking policy had been in place since 1988 with the most recent revision having taken place in 2007.

The proposed changes to the policy were in response to the introduction and popularity of electronic cigarettes. The review was also an opportunity to refresh the policy and to provide more detailed guidance to employees and managers on issues relating to smoking at work.

An initial draft policy had been considered by the Policy Working Group, and comments on the draft had been sought from Trade Unions and managers. Responses to the consultation were implemented where appropriate.

The draft was presented to and approved by the Policy Working Group and by the Council Joint Consultative Committee on 15 October, 2014.

***RESOLVED –**

That the revised Smoking Policy, as attached to the report, be approved to take immediate effect.

24 FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY (EC130)

The Human Resources Officer submitted a report seeking approval for the implementation of a revised Flexible Working Policy.

The proposed changes to the policy were in response to a change in legislation as of 30 June 2014. This extended the statutory right to request flexible working after 26 weeks employment service to all employees. This previously applied only to parents and carers.

The draft policy was presented to and approved by the Policy Working Group and by the Council Joint Consultative Committee on 15 October, 2014.

***RESOLVED –**

That the revised Flexible Working Policy, as attached to the report, be approved to take immediate effect.