

# Polling District and Places Review

**Cabinet**

**Date: 17<sup>th</sup> October 2018**

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Author: Leader of the Council  
Director of Law and Democratic Services  
Ward: St Andrews  
Parish Affected: St Andrews

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## **1. Purpose and Reasons**

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet's authorisation to
  - 1.1.1 Create a new polling district SAF within the St Andrews ward
  - 1.1.2 Re-adjust the boundary of SAB & SAC polling districts in St Andrews ward
- 1.2 The Borough Election earlier this year highlighted that a number of polling stations were inadequate owing to their location and the electorate size, many electors had difficulties reaching their polling station due to having to cross a major busy road and high electorate numbers needing to access several polling stations with only one car park in the proximity. It is also good practice to keep the location of polling stations under constant review in case venues cease to be available or suitable.

## **2. Recommendations**

Cabinet is recommended to request the Council to:

- 2.1 Endorse the recommended changes to Polling Districts within the St Andrews ward as follows
  - 2.1.1 That an adjustment to the polling district boundary for SAB and SAC, as shown in Appendix 1 and 3, be made to create a more convenient Polling District and Electoral Register for electors.
  - 2.1.2 That a new polling district SAF, as shown in Appendix 2, be made to create a more convenient Polling District for electors and a more balanced Electoral Register
  - 2.1.3 That a new polling place at The Jovial Monk, as shown in Appendix 3, be created for the SAC register.

### St Andrews Ward

- 2.2 The current SAC polling district sits either side of Thamesdown Drive and those on the SAC register (electorate of 3648) currently vote in a double polling station at Abbey Meads Primary School. The school does not have onsite parking for electors, therefore it is necessary to park at Abbey Meads Village Centre and walk a short distance to the station. However, the centre is also used by electors

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Sally Sprason, Direct Dial 3999, [ssprason@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:ssprason@swindon.gov.uk).



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visiting another polling station which potentially causes parking issues. In addition the location of the polling station, on the south side of Thamesdown Drive, causes difficulties for those electors living in SAC properties on the north side of Thamesdown Drive to reach.

- 2.3 To alleviate these problems it is felt that the current polling district of SAC should be adjusted and split to:

2.3.1 Move selected streets into polling district SAB enabling electors to vote at Bridlewood School. This polling station is situated on the same north side of Thamesdown Drive to those streets with good access and parking facilities, making it more convenient and easier for electors to reach. It would also help create a balanced register with an electorate of 2225. See Appendix 1 for proposed SAB street list.

2.3.2 Create a new polling district SAF, consisting of those streets currently in SAC to the south of Thamesdown Drive. The polling place for the SAF polling district will continue to be at Abbey Meads Primary School. However as it would be a single station for an electorate of 1353 any previous issues should be resolved. See Appendix 2 for SAF street list.

- 2.4 A polling place for the streets remaining in polling district SAC would need to be sourced and The Jovial Monk pub has been identified as a new polling place. The Elections Team have undertaken a site visit to The Jovial Monk which has a large room with disabled access and is conveniently located in the Neighbourhood Centre providing good car parking facilities. The owner has confirmed she is happy for the premises to be used as a polling station making it a suitable venue. During the consultation period Justin Tomlinson, MP suggested that a number of streets be moved from polling district SAB to SAC as there is not a direct route to the SAB polling station (Bridlewood School) for those electors meaning they have to drive a long loop pass The Jovial Monk, to reach the station. Therefore it would be more convenient for them to vote at The Jovial Monk. This would be a single station with an electorate total of 2219. See Appendix 3 for proposed SAC street list. During the consultation period St Andrews Parish Council also resolved to support Justin Tomlinson's comments on this review.

## 3. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

### Financial and Procurement Implications

- 3.1 The costs of the additional polling place at The Jovial Monk would be approximately £500.



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## Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 3.2 Legal and Human Rights implications have been taken fully into account in the preparation of this Briefing Note and it is believed the recommendations are compatible with Convention rights.

## All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 3.3 No other specific implications were identified during the preparation of this report.

## Diversity Impact Assessment

- 3.4 A Diversity Impact Assessment has not been completed in relation to this report. Good practice has been implemented through good and appropriate consultation in relation to all proposals. Good inclusion practice has been implemented when considering changes in polling venues to ensure they are accessible for voters. This demonstrates our duty to advance equality of opportunity.

## Risk Management

- 3.5 Risks were considered when looking at the possibility of moving to an alternative polling place. It is believed there are no unmitigated risks. For example new polling places were visited and assessed regarding their suitability for use as a polling station.

## **4. Consultees**

- 4.1 The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.
- 4.2 The Corporate Management Team are consulted in respect of all reports.
- 4.3 The Member of Parliament for Swindon North has been consulted.
- 4.4 Ward members have been consulted.
- 4.5 The Parish Council has been consulted.

## **5. Background Papers**

- 5.1 None

## **6. Appendices**

- 6.1 Appendix 1- SAB map and street list
- 6.2 Appendix 2- SAF map and street list



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6.3 Appendix 3- SAC map and street list

**7. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan**

7.1 This is not a Key Decision as the final decision will be taken by the Council.