

# Item no.

Report to: **District Council of Easington**

Date: **6 March 2008**

Report of: **Joint Report of Head of Democratic Services and Administration  
and Polling Places Working Group**

Subject: **Polling Districts and Polling Places Review  
Changes to Polling Places**

Ward: **Murton East, Murton West, Seaham North and Thornley & Wheatley  
Hill**

## 1. **Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the approval of the Council in relation to proposals to change current polling places in Murton East, Murton West, Seaham North and Thornley & Wheatley Hill Wards.

## 2. **Consultation**

- 2.1 The appropriate District Ward and County Division Members, the Parish and Town Councils, local disability groups and the Council's Public Buildings Officer have been consulted and asked for any comments in relation to the proposals.

## 3. **Background**

- 3.1 A review of all polling districts and polling places was carried out during the latter part of 2007.
- 3.2 A Working Group was established to consider the Authority's proposals for new polling districts and polling places together with all comments received.
- 3.3 A report outlining the final proposals was agreed by Council on 23 November 2007.

## 4. **Position Statement**

- 4.1 Since the review was carried out and the report was agreed by Council in November 2007 changes have taken place and/or further representations have been received in respect of the following areas:

### 4.2 **Murton East Ward – Polling District B-1 Dalton Village**

- 4.2.1 We have been informed that Dalton-le-Dale W I Hall is to be demolished and a new hall is to be built on the existing site.
- 4.2.2 The Working Group have agreed on the proposal to use St. Andrew's Church for the May 2008 elections and until the new W I Hall is completed.

4.3 **Murton West Ward – Polling District D-1 Murton West No. 2:**

4.3.1 As circumstances regarding premises have changed, local Members have requested that polling place arrangements be re-considered for this area.

4.3.2 The Working Group have considered the proposals along with comments received and have agreed to change the current arrangements to enable electors from this polling district to vote at McNally House or a suitably sited portacabin in the McNally House area.

4.4 **Seaham North Ward – Polling District BA Seaham North No. 1:**

4.4.1 We have been informed that Seaham Catholic Club is no longer in use and it is unlikely that necessary repair works will be undertaken in the near future.

4.4.2 The Working Group have agreed on the proposal to use New Seaham Primary School, Byron Terrace as the polling place for this polling district.

4.5 **Seaham North Ward – Polling District BA-1 Seaham North No. 2:**

4.5.1 The polling place for this polling district is a suitable site on the East Shore Village development.

4.5.2 To enable flexibility in relation to the location of a polling place in this area, the Working Group have agreed that instead of 'a site on East Shore Village development' the polling place be 'the polling district'. This will allow for flexibility in the siting of a temporary polling station.

4.6 **Thornley and Wheatley Hill Ward– Polling Districts AK Wheatley Hill No. 1 and AL Wheatley Hill No.2:**

4.6.1 Representations have been received from local Members in respect of the use of Wheatley Hill Community Centre as a polling place for all electors in Wheatley Hill.

4.6.2 The Working Group have now considered the proposals along with all comments received and have agreed that there be two polling places in Wheatley Hill. For polling district AK the polling place will be Wheatley Hill Community Centre and for polling district AL the polling place will be Wheatley House.

5 **Implications**

5.1 **Financial**

5.1.1 There are none arising directly from this report. Appropriate funding will be made in Election Budgets for the provision of polling stations.

5.2 **Legal**

5.2.1 This review has been undertaken in accordance with the provisions contained within the Electoral Administration Act 2006.

5.3 **Policy**

5.3.1 None.

## 5.4 **LGR**

- 5.4.1 The report does not contain proposals which have specific implications in respect of Local Government Review other than establishing polling places which will continue to be reviewed and will ultimately transfer to the new Unitary Council.

## 5.5 **Risk**

- 5.5.1 A risk assessment has been completed and the necessary actions required to effectively manage the identified risks have been implemented.

## 5.6 **Communications**

- 5.6.1 When the proposals have been agreed details of the new polling places will be made available to the public. A publicity campaign will be undertaken and specific pre-poll information distributed before the 1st May elections.

## 6 **Corporate Implications**

### 6.1 **Corporate Plan Priorities**

- 6.1.2 It is considered that the proposals are consistent with the Council's corporate priorities and objectives. In particular, the proposals are consistent with:-

QS1 Council services which meet the needs of all of our communities.

QSS2 Easier access to local services

SFE2 A Council which takes an active and effective community leadership role.

### 6.2 **Equality and Diversity and Social Inclusion Implications**

- 6.2.1 The aim is to ensure that all electors have reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances and as far as is reasonable and practicable polling places are accessible to all electors including disabled people. This has been fully considered in producing these proposals.

### 6.3 **Service Plan Implications**

- 6.3.1 The proposals within the report contribute to Objective DSA.1 namely "Improve public participation in the electoral and democratic processes".

## 7. **Recommendations**

The Council is requested to agree to the proposals for new arrangements for polling places in Murton East, Murton West, Seaham North and Thornley & Wheatley Hill Wards.

### **Background Papers/Documents Referred to**

Electoral Administration Act 2006

Electoral Commission Circular EC28/2007

Minutes of Polling Places Working Group

KM/MC/ADM/GEN/080220  
22 February 2008