

Report to: **District Council of Easington**

Date: **5 February 2009**

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

Subject: **Polling Places Review – Changes to Polling Places**

Ward: **Dawdon, Murton East, Murton West, Passfield, Seaham North and Thornley and 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 Dawdon, Murton East, Murton West, Passfield, Seaham North and Thornley and Wheatley Hill Wards.

2 **Consultation**

2.1 The Returning Officer and appropriate District Ward and County Division Members have been consulted on the proposals.

3 **Background**

3.1 Local Authorities are required to divide their areas into polling districts for the purpose of parliamentary elections, to designate polling places for these polling districts, and to keep these under review.

3.2 The last review of all polling districts and polling places was carried out during the latter part of 2007.

3.3 A Working Group was established to consider the Authority's proposals for new polling districts and polling places together with all comments received.

4 **Position Statement**

4.1 Since the last review changes have taken place in relation to some premises used as polling places and alternative arrangements have been considered.

4.2 ***Dawdon Ward – Polling District Dawdon No 2***

4.2.1 The Working Group have agreed on the proposal to use the new Seaham Trinity School as the polling place for this polling district in place of Camden Square Infants and Nursery School.

4.3 ***Murton East Ward – Polling District Dalton Village***

4.3.1 The Working Group have agreed on the proposal to use the new Women's Institute Hall as the polling place for this polling district.

4.4 ***Murton West Ward – Polling District Murton West No 2***

4.4.1 The Working Group have considered the proposal and comments received and have agreed to use Murton Community Primary School as the polling place for this polling district in place of McNally House which has now been demolished.

4.5 ***Passfield Ward – Polling District Passfield No 4***

4.5.1 The Working Group have agreed on the proposal to use the new East Durham College building as the polling place for this polling district, in place of the old college building.

4.6 ***Seaham North Ward – Polling District Seaham North No 2***

4.6.1 The Working Group have considered the proposal and agreed that St Mary Magdalene Parish Hall be used as the polling place for this polling district, in place of a portable polling station on the East Shore Village site.

4.7 ***Thornley and Wheatley Hill Ward – Polling District Wheatley Hill No 1***

4.7.1 The Working Group have considered the proposal and have agreed that All Saints Church be the polling place for this polling district, in place of Wheatley Hill Community Centre.

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 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 Details of the new polling places will be made available to the public.

6 **Corporate Implications**

6.1 **Corporate Plan Priorities**

6.1.1 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 DSA1 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 Dawdon, Murton East, Murton West, Passfield, Seaham North and Thornley and Wheatley Hill Wards.

Background Papers/Documents Referred to

Electoral Administration Act 2006

Electoral Commission Circular EC28/2007

Minutes of Polling Places Working Group