



Report for:	Council
Title of report:	Polling Place Review
Date:	23 November 2022
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Elliot, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	n/a
Appendices:	Minutes from Electoral Review Committee 26 October 2022
Background papers:	n/a
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

Report Author / Responsible Officer

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Corporate Priorities	Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery
Wards affected	Bovingdon, Flaunden & Chipperfield
Purpose of the report:	To consider the options for the arrangement and re-designation of the Polling Place within the LE polling district of the Bovingdon, Flaunden & Chipperfield ward.
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	That Council agree:

	<p>That the polling station for Bovingdon, Flaunden & Chipperfield ward, polling district LE, be moved from the Boys Brigade HQ at Felden Lodge, Hemel Hempstead to the Boxmoor Trust Centre, London Road, Hemel Hempstead and that</p> <p>the above polling arrangements be included in a revised Polling Place Order</p>
<p>Period for post policy/project review:</p>	<p>n/a</p>

1 Introduction/Background:

Boys Brigade HQ at Felden Lodge in Hemel Hempstead is a designated polling station and is currently on the market and therefore have advised the Council that the building will not be available as a polling station for the May 2023 elections.

Alternative sites have therefore been considered as a suitable relocation.

2 Key Issues

Current polling place

Currently electors within the LE polling district of the Bovingdon, Flaunden, Chipperfield ward are assigned to the Boys Brigade HQ as their polling place. There are approximately 1100 electors on this register, of which approximately 240 are postal voters and therefore are not required to visit the polling station.

The cost to hire this site is £360.

The building is unavailable to use for the May 2023 local Borough elections and therefore a suitable alternative site needs to be assigned.

Ward councillors for this area have been consulted and suggested that the Boxmoor Trust Centre could be looked at as an option.

3 Options and alternatives considered

The Boxmoor Trust Centre

The location has had a site visit and an assessment carried out. A number of factors were considered including, the location, its size, availability and accessibility. It concluded that the facilities available would be suitable to use as a polling station.

The entrance to the site is via London Road and into a very large car park. There is disabled access into the building and the room proposed to be used is on the ground floor, to the left of the main building.

Polling station staff would have the necessary facilities required for the 15 hour day.

All lighting has been checked and is deemed suitable.

The cost of the hire for the premises would be £600. This would be an additional cost of around £240 compared to the existing premises.

Bourne End Village Hall

This site is already a designated polling station for electors within the LD polling district of the Bovingdon, Flaunden, Chipperfield ward. There are approximately 325 electors on this register, of which 41 are postal voters and therefore are not required to visit the polling station.

The entrance to the site is via London Road and into a large car park. There is disabled access into the building and then the room proposed to be used is on the ground floor.

Polling station staff would have the necessary facilities required for the 15 hour day.

All lighting has been checked and is deemed suitable.

4 Consultation

The Returning Officer; Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services, Ward councillors; Leader of the Council, Leader of the Opposition party.

5 Financial and value for money implications:

The re-allocation of the polling place to a new building such as the Boxmoor Trust will result in some cost, but in the context of the cost of an election as a whole this is minimal. However the cost to move to an existing designated polling station would not incur any additional costs.

The provision of Polling Stations for elections is reviewed on a regular basis and the funding is overseen by the Electoral Commission and the Elections Claims Unit.

6 Legal Implications

A requirement of the Representation of the Peoples Act 1983 requires local authorities to regularly review its polling places and stations and recommend alternatives when necessary. Failure to assign electors to designated polling places would disenfranchise electors.

7 Risk implications:

Electoral matters require continual review to ensure that the democratic process operates effectively. A failure to provide polling places would result in huge reputational damage.

8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

There are no equalities or community impacts arising directly from this report. Both polling stations have been fully assessed and are fully accessible for all members of the public.

9 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)

There are no sustainability implications arising directly from this report.

10 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)

There are no council infrastructure implications arising directly from this report.

11 Conclusions:

After consideration, the Boxmoor Trust Centre would provide a more convenient alternative, compared to Bourne End Village Hall as it is slightly closer to the electorate concerned and provides very good facilities.

It will also provide added resilience to the Council as we will have another operational polling station available in case there are any other issues with polling stations in the future.

MINUTES
ELECTORAL REVIEW COMMITTEE
26 OCTOBER 2022

Present:

Cllr Williams (Leader)	Cllr Stevens
Cllr Anderson	Cllr Douris

Officers:

Michelle Anderson, Elections Team Leader

The meeting started at 7.30 pm.

1. MINUTES

There were no minutes to be agreed.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councilor's Griffiths and Hollinghurst.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest declared.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

5. POLLING PLACE REVIEW

M Anderson introduced the report and explained that the reason for the polling station review was due to the future sale of the Boys Brigade HQ. This was currently used as a polling station for the LE polling district, which was within the Bovingdon, Flaunden, Chipperfield ward.

Work had been carried out to look at the affected electorate and a site visit was carried out.

Consultation was undertaken with the relevant ward councillors and one suggestion was to look at using The Boxmoor Trust Centre.

M Anderson visited the site and a number of factors were considered including, the location, its size, availability and accessibility. It concluded that the facilities available would be suitable to use as a polling station.

Polling station staff would have the necessary facilities required for the 15 hour day.

All lighting has been checked and is deemed suitable.

It has therefore been recommended to use this location as the new polling station for polling district LE.

Questions and Answers

Councillor Stevens noted that drivers are unable to turn right out of the car park onto London Road and asked that signs are visible advising this.

M Anderson confirmed there was a sign already there which tells drivers to turn left out of the car park. DBC would display an additional sign on the gate at the exit point.

A Williams added that we can only advise drivers to do this and cannot police it.

M Anderson explained that once the decision had been agreed at Full Council, all affected electors will be notified in writing and next year's booking confirmed with the Boxmoor Trust Centre.

The Polling Place Order will be updated to reflect the changes.

Resolved:

1. That the option for the transfer of the polling place for the Bovingdon, Flaunden & Chipperfield ward, (polling district LE), from the Boys Brigade HQ to the Boxmoor Trust Centre be agreed and recommended to Council for approval.
2. That the proposed amendment be included in an updated Polling Places Order 2023 to be referred to Council for approval.

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm.