

Report To:	COUNCIL
Date:	2 FEBRUARY 2023
Heading:	INTERIM REVIEW OF A SINGLE POLLING PLACE
Executive Lead Member:	LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
Ward/s:	SUTTON CENTRAL AND NEW CROSS
Key Decision:	NO
Subject to Call-In:	NO

Purpose of Report

This report sets out the proposals for a revised single polling place due to the future unavailability of the existing polling place. The draft change was previously reported to and approved by Council on the 1 December 2022 for a public consultation exercise.

Recommendation(s)

That the Council;

- a) Approves the change detailed in table 1 of this report
- b) Notes that the approved changes will take effect on 3 February 2023

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

To ensure that electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances and that, as far as is reasonable, polling places are accessible to all electors.

Alternative Options Considered

None. The risks associated with taking a decision not to relocate to a new venue has the potential to disenfranchise electors in the Sutton Central & New Cross Ward.

Detailed Information

A planning application has been received in respect of the fields to the rear of The Unwin Social Club, the commencement of building works associated with this application could impact the ability of electors to cast their vote.

Additionally, the additional consideration in respect of accessibility at polling places contained within the new Elections Act Regulations would not be supported should the polling place remain at The Unwin Club, this is due mainly to the access in and out of the building and the limited space available once electors are inside the premises.

Public consultation ran from 22 December 2022 to 19 January 2023, with hard copies also being made available at Sutton Library. No representations or objections were made during this period.

The proposals and a map identifying the site are included below:

Table 1 – Polling Place Change

Sutton Central & New Cross: SNX Proposed New Polling Place					
Polling District	Existing Polling Place	Electorate	Proposed Polling Place	County Division	Access Issues
SNX3	The Unwin Club	1,775	Polly Bowls Club	Sutton Central & East	No access issues
Comments: The proposed new venue offers better facilities for both staff and electors, including on-site parking, ramped access directly into the polling station and good lighting. There are good transport links and the track in the approach to the venue is in good repair for any electors choosing to walk to cast their votes. Additional outdoor lighting will be in situ on polling day.					

Implications

Corporate Plan:

Enable thriving, prosperous and self-sufficient communities where people shape their own futures. Ensure effective community leadership, through good governance, transparency, accountability and appropriate behaviours.

Legal:

A full review of polling places and polling districts will take place later in 2023 in line with legislative requirements. This interim review has been carried out to deal with an issue at a specific polling place in readiness for the District Elections in 2023. (RLD 20/01/2023)

Finance: If there is an additional cost of switching venue, this will be funded from the Elections Reserve. [PH 20/01/2023].

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	See above
General Fund – Capital Programme	N/A
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	N/A
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	N/A

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Potential disruption associated with the existing polling place used for this polling district. Additional pressures from the requirements of the Elections Bill Regulations.	Change of venue to negate this risk whilst maintaining good facilities for both electors and staff. The proposed new venue offers better facilities to meet the requirements contained in the new regulations when having regard to accessibility for all electors.

Human Resources:

There are no Human Resources implications arising from this report.

Environmental/Sustainability

There are no Environmental/Sustainability implications arising from this report.

Equalities:

The purpose of the review is to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances and that, as far as is reasonable and practicable, polling places are accessible to disabled electors.

Other Implications:

None.

Reason(s) for Urgency

Not applicable

Reason(s) for Exemption

Not applicable

Background Papers

None

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