

## **AMENDMENT TO POLLING PLACE FOR HOCKLEY CENTRAL WARD**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of a necessary amendment to the Polling place for Hockley Central following the loss of the Evangelical Church Hall as a polling station in that ward and to seek approval to the action taken.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 Under the Representation of the People Act 1983 Rochford District Council must designate a polling place for every polling district within the District. In special circumstances, an adjacent polling district may be appointed as the polling place if no suitable polling station can be identified within a polling district.
- 2.2 At a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee on 14 February 2002 approval was sought and given to the proposal to designate the whole of the geographical area of each polling district as the polling place. The only exception was Rayleigh Central ward which, because of difficulties in identifying a suitable polling station within its geographical boundaries, included Whitehouse, Lodge and Central wards as the designated polling place. A similar problem has now arisen in Hockley Central ward.

### **3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 An annual review of polling stations is undertaken by the Elections Officer to determine the contact details and availability of the polling stations for elections during the year. Following this year's review, notification was given by the bookings officer for the Evangelical Church Hall in Greensward Lane, Hockley that this building would no longer be available for use as a polling station because the Church elders had decided to sell the building.
- 3.2 Hockley Central ward has 5063 electors served by two polling stations, the Hockley Parish Hall, Southend Road (2526 electors) and the Evangelical Church hall (2537 electors) in Greensward Lane. The Parish Hall is not large enough to cope with a combined station for such a large electorate. The only other potential Church Hall is also sited on Southend Road and is therefore too far from the northern half

of the ward. The only suitable alternative in the vicinity is Greensward College, Greensward Lane, although this is sited in Hockley North ward and therefore in another polling place.

- 3.3 Because of the timetable for elections it was necessary to reach a decision as to a new location for the polling station without delay to allow for the printing and delivery of poll cards to contested areas in good time prior to the closing date for postal vote applications.

#### **4 RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

- (1) That the action of the Corporate Director (Law, Planning & Administration), in the special circumstances outlined above, in approving Greensward College as a polling station for Hockley Central, be endorsed.
- (2) That the geographical area of Hockley North ward be designated as an additional polling place for Hockley Central ward. (HAMS)

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**Background Papers:** None

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