

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

7 DECEMBER 2016

**REPORT OF THE DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE HELD ON
16 NOVEMBER 2016**

REVIEW OF ST MICHAEL'S SCHOOL POLLING STATION

Issue for Decision

To change the venue of a polling station in Fant Ward from St Michael's School to the Grange Moor Hotel in St Michael's Road.

Recommendation Made

That the venue of the polling station for Fant Ward (East) be changed from St Michael's School to the Grange Moor Hotel in St Michael's Road.

Reasons for Recommendation

On 16 November 2016 the Democracy Committee considered a proposal to change the venue of the polling station for Fant Ward (East) from St Michael's School to the Grange Moor Hotel in St Michael's Road.

The following reasons were given for the proposal:

- On a number of occasions the School has not been available for use as a polling station due to staff training days and holidays etc;
- When the School has not been available the Grange Moor Hotel in St Michael's Road has been used as the polling station for Fant Ward (East);
- The Grange Moor Hotel has good parking and facilities for disabled voters;
- The Grange Moor Hotel has been used successfully as a polling station in the past, and although it is smaller than the room used at the School it still functions as a polling station effectively;
- Following a site visit to look at health and safety concerns, it was confirmed that there is room for tellers outside the proposed venue and inside the venue if the weather is inclement;
- Moving to the Hotel will provide continuity and consistency for electors; and
- Consultation has identified that there is a need to move the polling

station to avoid disruption to the School and to pupils' education. If the proposal to move the polling station to the Hotel is approved, further investigations will take place at a later date to try and find an additional polling place to serve the electors in the Maidstone West area of the Ward.

Alternatives Considered and Why Not Recommended

Alternative venues have been considered (St Michael's Church Hall and Parish Rooms), but they are not available as they are to be used by a play group/nursery.

Another option would be to do nothing, keep the polling station at the School and deal with the School not being available as and when it happens. This is not considered to be the appropriate way forward for the reasons set out above.

Background Documents

None