

**Blaby District Council
Council**

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| Date of Meeting | 28 January 2025 |
| Title of Report | Polling Place Review- Croft and Huncote This is not a Key Decision and is not on the Forward Plan |
| Lead Member | Cllr. Terry Richardson - Leader of the Council |
| Report Author | Elections and Governance Manager |
| Strategic Themes | Enabling our communities and supporting our vulnerable residents |

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for revised polling places for voters in Croft and Huncote.

2. Recommendation(s) to Council

- 2.1 That the revised polling places for the polling districts set out in the report be approved.

3. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 3.1 The local authority has a duty to review their polling districts, places and polling stations to ensure that electors have accessible facilities for voting when an existing venue becomes unavailable.

4. Matters to consider

4.1 Background

Both Huncote Primary School and Croft Primary School have indicated to the Returning Officer that they are no longer able to accommodate use as a polling station. Whilst schools are legally obligated to provide facilities for voting upon request, it is the view of the Returning Officer that where possible alternative locations to schools should be sought where use of the school would cause significant disruption. It is therefore necessary to locate alternative places for voting for electors in Croft and Huncote.

A 'polling district' is a geographical subdivision of an electoral area such as a county division or a district ward within which a polling place is designated.

A 'polling place' is an area or building in which a polling station is usually located, usually it is a street within the polling district.

It is the duty of the Council to approve any changes made to a polling districts' polling place, and the responsibility of the Returning Officer to allocate a polling station located within that polling place.

4.2 Proposal(s)

The Returning Officer has conducted a full review of the alternative venues within the relevant polling district and proposes the following changes:

| Polling District | Existing polling place | Existing polling station | Proposed polling place | Proposed polling station |
|------------------|------------------------|--|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Q1, Q2 (Croft) | Brookes Avenue, Croft | Croft Community Centre, Croft Primary School, Brookes Avenue, LE9 3GJ | Winston Avenue, Croft | Mobile unit located at Croft Pavilion |
| Y (Huncote) | Denman Lane, Huncote | Huncote Community Centre, Huncote Primary School, Denman Lane, LE9 3BS | Narborough Road, Huncote | St James the Greater Church Hall |

Croft:

Voters in Croft have historically voted at Croft Primary School, however following the recent General Election the school highlighted safety concerns and requested that an alternative venue be sought. No other venue within the area was identified as appropriate for voters, and it is therefore proposed that a mobile unit be sited at the Winston Avenue car park located at the Croft Pavilion. The Returning Officer is aware of Croft Parish Council's intention to build a new village hall near this site in the near future (subject to planning permission) and it is therefore intended that this could accommodate the polling station in future. A mobile unit can accommodate the number of voters within the area and meets accessibility requirements.

Huncote:

Huncote Community Centre at Huncote Primary School now houses a permanent nursery, and use of the venue in future would result in the nursery closing on polling day. An alternative venue was therefore sought, with St James The Greater Church Hall identified as a good alternative for voters. The venue has good disabled access, good transport links and is of a sufficient size for the number of electors. Being located on Narborough Road, the Church is a clearly identifiable building for voters running through the heart of the village.

4.3 Relevant Consultations

- Ward members for Croft and Huncote- no concerns were raised at the proposals
- Croft Parish Council- the Council confirmed that they were happy to accommodate a unit at Croft Pavilion
- The Deputy Returning Officers

4.4 Significant Issues

4.5 In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities and there are no areas of concern.

5. Environmental impact

5.1 No Net Zero and Climate Impact Assessment (NZCIA) is required for this report.

6. What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

6.1 Hire of a mobile unit is more costly than the hire of a permanent venue, and therefore polling station costs will increase as a result of the proposal.

6.2 Costs associated with the hire of venues are met by the Central Government Electoral Claims Unit for national polls, Leicestershire County Council at County elections and at Parish elections the cost is covered by the Parish Council. At District elections, the cost must be covered by Blaby District Council.

7. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

7.1

| Current Risk | Actions to reduce the risks |
|--|--|
| New polling station location – electors not knowing where they should go to vote | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Poll Cards will include details of the new polling station and will include text to highlight the change.- Local publicity and the use of social media prior to election day. |

8. Other options considered

8.1 Other potential polling station venues were considered, however none were deemed to meet the requirements for accessible voting and were therefore disregarded.

9. Appendix

9.1 None.

10. Background paper(s)

10.1 None.

11. Report author's contact details

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