

## **Addition to the Report on the review of Polling Places – Cabinet 19 Oct**

The report refers to the risk of premises becoming unavailable and just such a situation has arisen since it was written.

### **Wentworth & Dearne Constituency Silverwood Ward (Polling District NE) March Flatts Community Centre**

On the 6 October, the Clerk to Thrybergh Parish Council advised that he had heard that March Flatts Community Centre was closing. The leaseholder had not indicated this during the review's enquiries about future availability of premises. EDS were unaware of any intention to close the centre and it proved impossible to contact the leaseholder over the next few days. On 13 October, an electoral services officer contacted Councillor Pat Russell who was able to provide more information. She confirmed that the centre had closed and that the leaseholder had emailed her shortly before a ward surgery was scheduled advising her that the centre would close that day and would no longer be available.

Returning Officer recommendations for this polling district are therefore revised as follows:

Subject to a full inspection, confirmation of availability and suitable arrangements for gaining access on polling day; Staple Green Community Centre should be the designated polling place for polling district NE. The centre is located near to March Flatts Community Centre and this solution would minimise inconvenience to the voters. An external inspection carried out on 13 October appears to indicate that the building is suitable but more detailed enquiries are required. If further enquiries reveal that the Staple Green Centre should not be designated as a polling place, voters should be reallocated to polling district ND which has Thrybergh Parish Hall as its polling place.

### **Dealing with issues of non-availability or emergency outside the statutory review process**

The council constitution currently contains a delegation to authorise changes to polling stations to the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal & Democratic Services) in consultation with ward members. The 2011 review of polling places and districts has revealed an increased risk with regard to the availability of premises and it would now be advisable to reconsider the delegation.

### **Recommendation**

That power to authorise changes to polling places or districts be delegated to the Returning Officer or duly appointed Deputy Returning Officer. The Returning Officer will give regard to Electoral Commission guidance and (except if it is impracticable because of an emergency situation) will consult ward members, political parties and the candidates who contested the most recent election for the relevant electoral area.

*Mags Evers*  
*Electoral Services Manager*

*13 October 2011*