



GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

REPORT

7 September 2011

Subject Heading:

Polling District Review

CMT Lead:

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Policy context:

To consider the results of the 2011 Polling District Review.

Financial summary:

There are no direct resource implications.

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Clean, safe and green borough	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellence in education and learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities for all through economic, social and cultural activity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Value and enhance the life of every individual	<input type="checkbox"/>
High customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUMMARY

The Electoral Administration Act 2006 required that a polling district and polling place review be carried out by the Acting Returning Officer in 2007 and every fourth year thereafter. The last review was carried out in 2007 and the 2011 review is now being undertaken. The aims of the review are as follows:

To ensure that:-

- (a) As far as possible polling places are accessible to all.
- (b) Polling places fall within the polling district wherever possible.

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- (c) The use of secondary schools be avoided where suitable alternative premises are available.
- (d) Account to be taken of justifiable complaints by electors, and any responses received from this consultation.

The timetable for the review, the list of those consulted, and any responses as a result of the review can be found under "Report Detail".

If agreed these changes will be incorporated into the register published on 1 December 2011, and the alternative polling stations will be used at the GLA elections on 3 May 2012.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the recommendations relating to changes to polling stations and polling districts contained within this report be accepted and that Council be invited to endorse those changes.

REPORT DETAIL

The timetable for the consultation was as follows:

4 January to 28 February 2011	Formulation of proposals by the (Acting) Returning Officer
Mid February	Calendar Brief
1 March 2011	Public Notice of commencement of the Polling District review
1 March to 12 April 2011 (six week consultation period)	Proposals deposited at all public libraries in the Borough, PASC and the Election Services Office, also on the internet. Direct consultation: list below.
14 to 28 April 2011	(Acting) Returning Officer to consider any representations and if necessary revise proposals
7 September 2011	Recommendations reported to Governance Committee to consider revised final recommendations
21 September	If agreed by Governance Committee final recommendations to be put before full Council. If not agreed report back to Governance and full Council at a later date.
1 December 2011	Publication of Register including any amended polling districts

Consultation was undertaken as follows:

- All elected representatives, political parties and relevant stakeholders were given notification of the review.
- Copies of the proposals were available for public inspection in all libraries in Havering, PASC, and at the Town Hall, with accompanying posters to inform the public of this.

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- Copies of the proposal were given to Havering Association of People with Disabilities, HAVCO, Age Concern and People First, with publicity given in their relevant newsletters or websites.
- An article publicising the review was published in Living.
- The Council's Access Officer was given a copy of the proposals

1. No responses to the consultation or complaints from voters were received in respect of the following wards:- Cranham, Emerson Park, Pettits, South Hornchurch and Upminster. *It is proposed that no changes are made to the existing polling districts or polling places in these wards.*

2. Brooklands Ward (Romford Constituency)

BL1 - Lombard Court: The previous polling station for this polling district, St John's Church Hall, Pretoria Road, is closed until a new buyer can be found. At the May 2010 elections Lombard Court was used for polling, however a Ward Councillor raised concerns about this venue, specifically the safety of the path leading to the station and the noise and inconvenience to the residents.

No alternative premises can be found within this polling district at the present time. Once the church is sold the new owners will be contacted to discuss whether they would be willing to allow the hall to be used for polling.

It is recommended that Lombard Court continue to be the polling place for polling district BL1 until the future of St John's Church is known, and to make no changes to the remaining polling districts or polling places BL2, BL3, BL4 and BL5.

3. Elm Park Ward (Dagenham and Rainham constituency)

EL1 – Scargill Infants School: Since the 2007 review, the polling place has been relocated from Scargill Junior School to Scargill Infants School.

It is recommended this change stands, and to make no changes to the polling places or polling districts for EL2, EL3 and EL4.

4. Gooshays Ward (Hornchurch and Upminster constituency)

GS2 – Harold Hill Library, Hilldene Avenue: Harold Hill Library is being used as the polling station for polling district GS2 as well as GS1 as the Old People's Club in Chippenham Gardens, which was previously the polling station, was closed due to vandalism. No other suitable premises within the polling district can be found at the present time.

Until a suitable alternative can be found for GS2, it is recommended to make no changes to the current polling places or polling districts GS1, GS2, GS3, GS4, GS5 and GS6.

5. Hacton Ward (Hornchurch & Upminster constituency)

HN5 – Elm Park Primary School: Elm Park Primary School has been built on the site of Ayloff Primary School, which was previously used as a polling station. Voters were temporarily redirected to Suttons Primary School; however now the new building is open polling should be relocated back to the former site.

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It is recommended Elm Park Primary School be the polling place for polling district HN5, and no changes be made to the remaining polling places or polling districts HN1, HN2, HN3 and HN4.

6. Havering Park Ward (Romford Constituency):

HP2 - Clockhouse Primary School/HP5 – North Romford Community Centre:

The Clockhouse Primary School Head Teacher and Board of Governors submitted a joint request that their school no longer be used as a polling station. This was made on the grounds that as a school and nursery with 700 children, closing the school both disrupts education and inconveniences parents. Election Services staff have visited the site to ascertain whether a part of the school could be used to avoid closure, but found nothing suitable.

The North Romford Community Centre falls within the boundary of HP2, but is currently used for polling district HP5 as no suitable location is available within the HP5 boundary.

The electorate of HP5, is small, currently 524 electors and could be relocated to the polling station used for HP4, St James' Church, which is large enough to accommodate two polling stations. It is therefore proposed that:

- a) Clockhouse Primary School is no longer used as a polling station.
- b) North Romford Community Centre is in future used as the polling station for HP2 instead of HP5.
- c) The voters in HP5 are redirected to St James' Church, which will also continue to be the polling place for HP4.
- d) The Boundary Commission is currently undertaking a Parliamentary Constituency Boundary review, which is proposing to use polling districts as the basis for future Parliamentary constituencies. This means, at present, polling districts cannot be altered. After the review has concluded, if possible, it is proposed that polling district HP5 be incorporated into HP4.

Please refer to Appendix A for maps illustrating the present and proposed arrangements.

It is recommended that the above proposals be agreed, with no changes to the polling places or polling districts HP1, HP3 and HP6.

7. Heaton Ward (Hornchurch and Upminster constituency)

HT1 - The Ingrebourne Children's Centre: Since the 2007 review, polling has been moved to the Ingrebourne Children's Centre as the Ingrebourne School closed down. The Children's Centre is on the same site as the school and initially could accommodate a polling station with minimum disruption. However, in the last year it has been refurbished and due to space restrictions they have indicated they no longer wish to be used as a polling station. Unfortunately no suitable alternative premises can be found.

It is therefore recommended to make no changes to the current polling places or polling districts HT1, HT2, HT3, HT4 and HT5.

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8. Harold Wood Ward (Hornchurch and Upminster constituency)
HW3 - St Peter's Church Hall: For the 2011 Referendum, polling in this district was relocated from the Ingreborne Centre to St. Peter's Church Hall directly opposite. It is a newer building, and caused less disruption to regular attendees of the Ingreborne Centre. No complaints were received about this change.

It is recommended that this change stands, and to make no changes to the polling places and polling districts HW1, HW2, HW4, and HW5.

9. Hylands Ward (Romford Constituency)
HY4 - The Albany School: The Head Teacher of The Albany School wrote to request the school not be used as a polling station. This is on the grounds that, as a secondary school, exam times often clash with polling day and they have concerns regarding Health and Safety when keeping the school open. However, the alternative suggested by them – the Wykeham School – does not fall within the ward boundary. No other suitable alternative premises could be located within the area.

It is therefore recommended to make no changes to the current polling places or polling districts HP1, HP2, HP3, HP4 and HP5.

10. Mawneys Ward (Romford Constituency)
MN6 – Crownfield School: Since the 2007 review, this polling station has been relocated from the main building into the Nursery Unit in order to allow the school to remain open.

It is recommended this change stands, and to make no changes to the polling places and polling districts MN1, MN2, MN3 MN4, and MN5.

11. Rainham and Wennington Ward (Dagenham and Rainham constituency)
RW1/RW5 - Parsonage Farm Primary School: The Head Teacher of this school plans to keep the school open on future polling days. There are also ongoing issues with voters trying to access the site by car as the school no longer has a car park and therefore the main gates are kept closed.

The Head Teacher has proposed moving the polling station to a different part of the school in the classrooms situated separately to the main building accessed via Allen Road, which does not have parking restrictions. If implemented, this will be monitored closely at the 2012 elections.

Please refer to Appendix B for maps illustrating the present and proposed arrangements.

RW2 – Brady Primary School: Since the 2007 review, Wennington Village Hall has closed and since 2009 voters have been redirected to Brady Primary School, which is also the polling place for RW3.

The future of the Village Hall is uncertain, however it is not proposed to make any changes to the polling districts at this review until the future of the Village Hall is known.

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It is recommended that the above proposals for Rainham and Wennington be agreed, with no changes to the polling places or polling districts RW3 and RW4.

12. Romford Town Ward (Romford Constituency)

RT1 - Romford Baptist Church Hall: This Hall was used as an interim polling place whilst the Central Library was closed for refurbishment. The Church hall has disabled access, and, unlike the library, disabled parking, and it is proposed that it remains in use as the polling station for this polling district.

RT2 – St Alban’s Church Hall: Since the 2007 review Manor Primary School has closed down. Polling was relocated to St Alban’s Church Hall in 2010 and no complaints have been received. It is proposed that it remains in use as the polling station for this polling district.

RT5 - Hylands Primary School: A Ward Councillor has written to express concern at the use of Hylands School now it has relocated. The new site allows vehicular access from Granger Way, and pedestrian access from Benjamin Close. The concern was for the residents of Benjamin Close, as cars approaching the school that way could not access the car park and there is no public parking on that road. The Councillor suggested using the Craigdale Centre or only allow access through Granger Way.

The Craigdale Centre has been approached but they have declined to be used for polling due to regular bookings. No other suitable venue can be found at this time.

Having visited the school and following discussions with the Head Teacher, it is proposed:

To keep the Benjamin Close gate open for access. If this gate was closed, voters familiar with the school who try to access this entrance on foot will have a very long walk to the other entrance, which would potentially result in elderly voters or those who have mobility issues losing their vote.

To print the address on the poll cards as:
Hylands Primary School
Granger Way (car access)
Benjamin Close (pedestrian access)
Hornchurch
RM11 1DA

Please refer to Appendix C for maps illustrating the present and proposed arrangements.

It is recommended that the above proposals for Romford Town be agreed, with no changes to the remaining polling places and polling districts RT3 and RT4.

13. Squirrel’s Heath Ward (Romford Constituency)

SQ4 - Ardleigh Green Church Hall: At present the polling station in this polling district is Ardleigh Green Church Hall, which has very limited parking. The All Saints Church across the road volunteered their hall for polling, as they have a car park which voters use on polling day if they cannot park at the Ardleigh Green Church Hall. The All Saints Church has a large car park as well as

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disabled access and is highly suitable for use as a polling station. It is recommended that this church be used in future elections.

Please refer to Appendix D for maps illustrating the present and proposed arrangements.

It is recommended that the above proposals for Squirrel's Heath be accepted, with no changes to the polling places or polling districts SQ1, SQ2, SQ3 and SQ5.

14. St Andrew's Ward (Hornchurch and Upminster constituency)

ST3 – Birnam Wood Pupil Referral Unit: Since the 2007 review, the polling station has been relocated from the Robert Beard Youth Centre to the building directly behind it, the Birnam Wood PRU.

It is recommended that this change stands, and to make no changes to remaining polling places or polling districts ST1, ST2, ST4 and ST5.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

Any increase in the amount of polling stations would incur additional costs in terms of building hire, equipment and polling station staff. The cost incurred from using Council maintained buildings is limited to covering heating, lighting and cleaning costs. These costs are met by the Council only when used for Council elections and by-elections.

Legal implications and risks:

There is a legal requirement to complete a full polling district review by 1st December 2011.

Human Resources implications and risks:

There are no HR implications in this report.

Equalities implications and risks:

The main purpose of the review is to ensure that polling stations are accessible to all.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none

