



GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

19 November 2014

Subject Heading:	Polling District Review
CMT Lead:	Andrew Blake-Herbert
Report Author and contact details:	Melanie Adams Acting Election Services Manager 01708 432445 melanie.adams@havering.gov.uk
Policy context:	There are no direct resource implications.
Financial summary:	There are no direct resource implications.

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

Ensuring a clean, safe and green borough	<input type="checkbox"/>
Championing education and learning for all	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing economic, social and cultural activity in thriving towns and villages	<input type="checkbox"/>
Valuing and enhancing the lives of our residents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Delivering 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 2011 and the 2014 review is now being undertaken. The aims of the review are as follows:

To ensure that:-

- as far as possible polling places are accessible to all.
- polling places fall within the polling district wherever possible.
- account be taken of justifiable complaints by electors, and any responses received from this consultation.

The list of those consulted, and a summary of responses as a result of the review can be found under "Report Detail". The full timetable is set out in Appendix A and a copy of all responses is set out in Appendix B.

If agreed these changes will be incorporated into the register published on 1 December 2014, and the alternative polling stations will be used at the GLA elections in May 2015.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee recommend to Council that the changes to polling stations and polling districts set out in the Report be endorsed.

REPORT DETAIL

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.
 - 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 changes are proposed in the following wards, and no responses to the consultation or complaints from voters were received in respect of them: Elm Park, Emerson Park, Havering Park, Heaton, Mawneys, Pettits, Romford Town, Rainham & Wennington, Squirrels Heath, and Upminster.

It is proposed that no changes are made to the existing polling districts or polling places in these polling districts.

2. Brooklands Ward (Romford Constituency)

BL1 St John's Church Hall, Pretoria Road

The Church closed in 2010 until a new buyer could be found. From May 2010 to May 2012 Lombard Court on Poplar Street was used. Concerns

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about this location were raised in relation to the safety of the path leading to the polling station and the noise and inconvenience to the residents.

Since 2012 St John's Church Hall has reopened and the new owners have agreed that it can be used as a polling station, which it was in May 2014.

BL4 Rush Green Gospel Hall, Birkbeck Road

This polling place will be closed by the 2015 elections. We approached two alternatives in the area; St Augustine's Church on Rush Green Road declined to be used. We are therefore proposing to use Rush Green Community Centre, Rush Green Gardens in future elections.

It is recommended that the above changes for BL1 and BL4 be agreed, with no changes to the polling places or polling districts BL2, BL3 and BL5.

3. Gooshays Ward (Hornchurch & Upminster constituency)

GS4 Brookside Infants School, Dagnam Park Drive

The Governors of Brookside School have requested that MyPlace, Dagnam Park Drive be used as the polling station for GS4 to minimise disruption to the school.

While it falls within the adjoining polling district, it is a suitable venue and directly across the road from the school. We are proposing to trial MyPlace in 2015, and swap to there permanently should no complaints about the change be received.

It is recommended that MyPlace be used as the polling station for GS4, and no changes are made to the polling station or polling districts GS1, GS2, GS3, and GS5.

4. Cranham Ward (Hornchurch & Upminster constituency)

CM5 Upminster Methodist Church Hall, Hall Lane

A Ward Councillor has raised concerns that this polling station is too far away from the Dury Falls estate. However, the alternative proposed, Whittaker Hall, is located in a different ward and already used as a polling station. No suitable alternative can be found at this time.

It is recommended that no changes are made to the polling station or polling districts CM1, CM2, CM3, CM4 and CM5.

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. Harold Wood Ward (Hornchurch & Upminster constituency)

HW4 Methodist Church Hall, The Drive

One voter requested that the polling station in HW4 be looked at as it is not in the centre of the ward. However, no suitable alternative to the Methodist Church Hall could be found at this time.

It is proposed that no changes are made to the existing polling districts or polling places HW1, HW2, HW3, HW4, and HW5.

7. Hylands Ward (Romford Constituency)

HY1 – Holy Cross Church Hall, Hornchurch Road

Dukes Hall, the previous polling station in this polling district, has now closed. Holy Cross Church Hall was used in May 2014 and has agreed that the premises can be used for future elections. However, there are planned building works and they cannot guarantee that the hall will be ready in time for the 2015 election. An alternative will be sought out nearer the time should it look like the hall will not be ready for May 2015.

HY2 – Towers Infant School, Osborne Road

For the 2014 election Towers Junior School asked if we could relocate to the Infant School to minimise disruption. The Infant School accepted this proposal.

It is recommended that the above changes for HY1 and HY2 be agreed, and no changes be made to the current polling places for polling districts HY3; HY4 and HY5.

8. St Andrew's Ward (Hornchurch & Upminster constituency)

ST5 – Benhurst Primary School, Benhurst Avenue

There were two requests to not use the school as a polling station in future elections; one from the Head Teacher and one from a voter within the area. Having canvassed the area, and asked both respondents if they were aware of alternatives, we are unable to find a suitable alternative for the school at this time. Please note that Elm Park library was investigated as a possibility. However, it was not judged as a sufficient size to house two polling stations as required. It also literally backs on to a polling station in another ward, the Elm Park Assembly Hall, which could cause voter confusion.

It is proposed that no changes are made to the existing polling districts or polling places ST1, ST2, ST3, ST4 and ST5.

9. South Hornchurch Ward (Dagenham & Rainham constituency)

SX4: Newtons Primary School

The Head Teacher of Newtons Primary School has requested that an alternative location be found, in light of the fact that the May elections clash with testing. The Mardyke Community Centre on South Street was suggested as a possible alternative, which is a suitable venue and available for use.

It is recommended that The Mardyke Community Centre be used as the polling station for SX4, and no changes be made to the current polling places for polling districts SX1; SX2, SX3 and SX5.

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 or by-elections.

Legal implications and risks:

There is a legal requirement to complete a full polling district review by 31st January 2015.

Also the Council has a power to require that a school premise be used as a polling station by virtue of The Representation of the People Act 1983 Schedule 1 paragraph 22.

Human Resources implications and risks:

Any increase in polling stations requires more staff on election day.

Equalities implications and risks:

One of the main purposes of the review is to ensure that all eligible electors can access a polling station.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Appendix A

Timetable

1 – 30 June	Formulation of proposals by the (Acting) Returning Officer
26 June	Calendar Brief
1 July 2014	Public Notice of commencement of the Polling District review
1 July to 1 August 2014	Proposals deposited at all public libraries in the Borough, PASC and the Election Services Office, also on the internet. Consultation with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service Lead Member• Lead Member for Community Empowerment• Ward Councillors• Greater London Assembly Member for Havering & Redbridge• Members of Parliament for the Dagenham & Rainham; Hornchurch & Upminster; and Romford Constituencies• Members of the European Parliament for the London Region• Local Political Parties• (Acting) Returning Officer of Dagenham & Rainham Constituency• Registered Electors in the Borough• Persons who are considered to have particular interest in the premises or facilities used for voting• HAD• HAVCO• Age Concern• People First• Access officers
August – October 2014	(Acting) Returning Officer to consider any representations and if necessary revise proposals
12 th November	Recommendations reported to Governance Committee to consider revised final recommendations
26 th November 2014	If agreed by Governance Committee final recommendations to be put before full Council.

Appendix B

Copy of responses in full:

GS4: Brookside Infants School

Dave Allen, Clerk to Brookside Infant Governing Body:

The Governors of Brookside Infant School have asked if the polling station for their area to be switched from their school to across the road at MyPlace.

Please could you let me now if that is possible so I can report back or if there is anything else you need from me.

CM5: Upminster Methodist Church Hall

Cllr Clarence Barrett, Leader of the Opposition, Residents' Association

The only point I would like to make in respect of polling places is that there needs to be something on or near the Dury Falls estate for the Cranham ward. Their allocated polling place is the Upminster Methodist Church which is simply too far away.

HW4: Methodist Church Hall

Submitted by local resident

I am in Harold Wood Ward HW4. The Station is nowhere near the centre of this 'subward'. Only two of the five are conveniently located HW2 and 3. Is the location in HW4 being looked at? Is the caravan in use at one of the Stations?

ST5: Benhurst Primary School

Mr David Denchfield, Head teacher, Benhurst Primary School

Thank you for your letter regarding the Polling District Review. I am happy for the review to take place and for the school to be used as a Polling Station for the May 2015 election – do not hesitate to contact me should you require any additional information or need to make a site inspection.

I would formally like to give notice that after the 2015 election, Benhurst does not wish to be used as a voting station. I would be grateful if you could confirm this receipt of this request and its instructions.

ST5: Benhurst Primary School

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Submitted by local resident

I am responding to the review of voting facilities in the Borough. I live in Priors Park in Hornchurch and my polling station is usually Benhurst Primary School. As a venue this is accessible however, is there really a need for children to miss out on a whole day's schooling are there not other venues such as church halls etc that can be used??

SX4: Newtons Primary School

Lynn Lowe – Head teacher, Newtons Primary School

I am writing to inform you that we would prefer Newtons Primary school not to be used as a polling station on May 7th 2015. We are very concerned that the following week the children will be sitting their tests. There is also a Bank Holiday on Monday 4th May so it means that the children would lose 2 days of school within the week leading up to test week. Our school has just become Requiring Improvement following an Ofsted Inspection in June 2014 and will be expected HMI visits. We feel that we are in a vulnerable position and do not want to risk low results again. I hope you understand. Thank you.