

COUNCIL, 28 JANUARY 2015

REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

POLLING DISTRICT REVIEW

Governance Committee at its meeting on 14 January considered a report concerning Cranham Ward (Hornchurch & Upminster constituency). This had been requested by the Governance Committee at its meeting on 19 November 2014 when a Member had raised a concern about the polling arrangements for that Ward (Upminster Methodist Church Hall, Hall Lane) as he considered that its positioning was not conducive to residents' use.

In response to this objection, a further evaluation was undertaken to determine whether there were any viable alternative premises. Two options had been suggested:

1. Havering Sixth Form Centre, Wingletye Lane and
2. The Europa Music Centre, The Walk and Havering Music School, The Walk.

Both of these buildings are located within the St Andrews ward and are therefore outside of the ward and polling district. The review concluded that:

- With regards to the location of a polling station, Section 18(3) of the Electoral Administration Act states:

the polling place for a polling district must be an area in the district, unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the district;

- Moving to any of the proposed stations would result in approximately 55% of the electorate being required to travel further to vote in their polling station. Those in the north of the polling district would have a significant increase in how far they had to travel.
- The low turnout in this polling station was listed as a factor for changing the location. Almost 20% of voters in this polling district have, however, opted for a postal vote. 75% of these electors voted by post in 2014, bringing the overall turnout in polling district CM5 to 44%, higher than the overall average turnout across the borough.
- Upminster Church Hall is fully accessible to voters with disabilities. It is also of a suitable size to house a double polling station which is necessary as CM5 has the highest number of electors in the ward (2814).

- The Retuning Officer has to date not received any complaints directly from voters with regards to this polling station.

The Governance Committee accordingly recommends to the Council that the polling station identified in the original report (Upminster Methodist Church Hall, Hall Lane), be retained.