

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

COUNCIL, 17 NOVEMBER 2021

Subject Heading:	Polling District and Polling Place Review for Harold Wood Ward – HP6 - HU
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Policy context:	There are no direct policy implications.
Financial summary:	There are no direct resource implications.

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

Communities making Havering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Places making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connections making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUMMARY

The Local Government Boundary Commission has reviewed all of the Ward boundaries in Havering, which has subsequently seen the number of wards being increased from 18 to 20.

The London Borough of Havering has undertaken a review of all Polling districts, Polling places and Polling stations In accordance with the requirements of section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended by section 17 of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013).

The proposals from the review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations were presented to Governance Committee held on 25th August 2021 for implementation at the Local Government Elections being held on 5th May 2022. Governance Committee endorsed the changes and recommended their changes for approval by Full Council. The recommendations were agreed, subject to the issues raised by Councillor Goode who requested that:

The polling district HW1-HU and HW2-HU be revisited, and an alternative be investigated, to accommodate residents living on the North side of the A12, so as to avoid the need for electors to cross the dual carriageway.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council endorse the changes to the polling place and polling district for Harold Wood Ward HP6-HU set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

REPORT DETAIL

After careful consideration it is recommended that an additional polling district, HW6-HU, be created. This will enable those living north of the A12 within the proposed HW1-HU & HW2-HU polling districts, to attend Mead Primary School Polling Station.

Council should note that Mead Primary School is located outside of the ward, and is currently a Polling Place for Gooshays Ward, however it was felt that this would allow for electors to have reasonable facilities for voting, and would be much more accessible to electors.

In order to mitigate risk the premises would be divided to keep both polling stations sharing this venue self-contained and fully separated in different locations within the Polling Place.

Polling station staff allocated within this shared venue will receive additional training. An extra member of staff will be allocated to undertake a 'meet and greet' role to assist electors, along with additional signage

Electors located in the following roads will be allocated to Polling District HW6-HU:

<i>Alverstoke Road</i>	<i>Melksham Gardens</i>
<i>Barnsley Road</i>	<i>Melksham Green</i>
<i>Camborne Avenue (90 – 118)</i>	<i>Pearcy Close</i>
<i>Camborne Way</i>	<i>St Ives Close</i>
<i>Gooshays Drive (2-24 and 1-23)</i>	<i>St Neots Road (2-44 St Neots Road)</i>
<i>Harris Close</i>	<i>Wednesbury Gardens</i>
<i>Holt Road</i>	<i>Wednesbury Green</i>
<i>Melksham Close</i>	<i>Wednesbury Road</i>
<i>Melksham Drive</i>	

The Review Rationale

The parameters for the process of drawing the districts are:

There should be no more than 2,500 electors (excluding absent voters) allocated to a particular polling station as per the Electoral Commission Guidance.

Consideration has been given to projected elector ratios that were used as part of the Ward Boundary Review in relation to the size of venues.

To ensure all electors have reasonable facilities for voting, and as far as possible polling places are accessible to all electors.

Where current polling districts can continue as the major part of the new districts, and there are sensible reasons for continuing with existing arrangements, then this principle has been followed.

Suitable existing polling stations be used where possible.

To take into account natural boundaries for example railway lines, major roads and rivers.

Polling places fall within the Polling District wherever possible

The use of schools be avoided where suitable alternative premises are available.

Additional Information

Following each election, officers will undertake a review and specifically look at any issues that have arisen in relation to this Polling Station.

The aim of the review is to ensure that as far as possible polling places are accessible to all, and to review polling staff and elector feedback.

An on-going accessibility audit and checklist is completed for this venue at every election by the Presiding Officer and the Polling Station Inspectors, and any relevant information has been considered whilst undertaking this review. Mead Primary School is an existing Polling Place.

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's election reserve when used for Council elections or by-elections and by central government funding when used for national elections.

Legal implications and risks:

The Representation of the People Act 1983 section 18D requires that local authorities designate the polling places within the Parliamentary Constituencies. Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, Returning Officers have the right to use certain public buildings (including schools that receive public funds) for use as polling stations at elections.

Human Resources implications and risks: None.

Equalities implications and risks:

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to:

- (i) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex/gender, and sexual orientation.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

Council, 17 November 2021

In all situations, urgent or not, the Council will seek to ensure equality, inclusion, and dignity for all.

It has been reviewed to ensure that all eligible electors can access a polling station, and Staff receive equalities training as part of the mandatory Polling Staff training for each election.

The recommended Polling Station had an accessibility checklist and risk assessment, which was completed at the Greater London Authority elections held in May 2021.