

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Subject Heading:	Individual Polling Place Review
SLT Lead:	Andrew Blake-Herbert
Report Author and contact details:	<i>Zena Smith</i> <i>Head of Committee and Election Services</i> <i>01708 431 585</i> <i>zena.smith@haverling.gov.uk</i>
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

People - Things that matter for residents -

Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy –

Resources - A well run Council that delivers for People and Place. - X

SUMMARY

The London Borough of Havering undertook a review of all Polling Districts and Polling Places 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 and the Elections Act 2022). This action fulfilled the council's duty to conduct a compulsory polling district and polling places review in the period of 1 October 2023 until 31 January 2025.

This report was agreed at Governance Committee on 13th November 2024 and ratified at full Council on 20th November 2024. Since this decision there has been a change within one polling district SQ3 – Squirrels Heath Ward.

The current polling station used for the polling district SQ3 is Gidea Park library, the library is no longer in use. The polling district has been reviewed for an alternative venue, and the recommendation is that Squirrels Heath school be used. Whilst it is acknowledged that the use of schools is not always ideal, it is the best solution within the district. I have been liaising with the school so that there is enough notice to use polling day as an inset day if they chose to do so.

REPORT DETAIL

This report seeks to approve the proposed changes set out in the report and if agreed, these changes will be incorporated into the register and will be ratified at the Full Council meeting being held on 21st January 2026.

When considering venues to be used as polling stations the following criteria should be taken into account.

- 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.
- To consider natural boundaries for example railway lines, major roads and rivers.
- Account is taken of justifiable complaints by electors, feedback from staff and any responses received from a consultation.

- Polling places fall within the Polling District wherever possible

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

Background Information

Under the provisions within the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, the previous statutory review was undertaken in 2024.

The 3 ward councillors for the Squirrels Heath Ward have been consulted and agree with this proposal.

This change of venue has been included in calendar brief for Member comment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Governance Committee endorse the changes to the Polling Place for Polling District SQ3 (Squirrels Heath Ward)

All other Polling districts and polling places remain unchanged.

If these recommendations are agreed that Full Council on 21st January 2026 approve the decision of the Governance Committee.

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: 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.

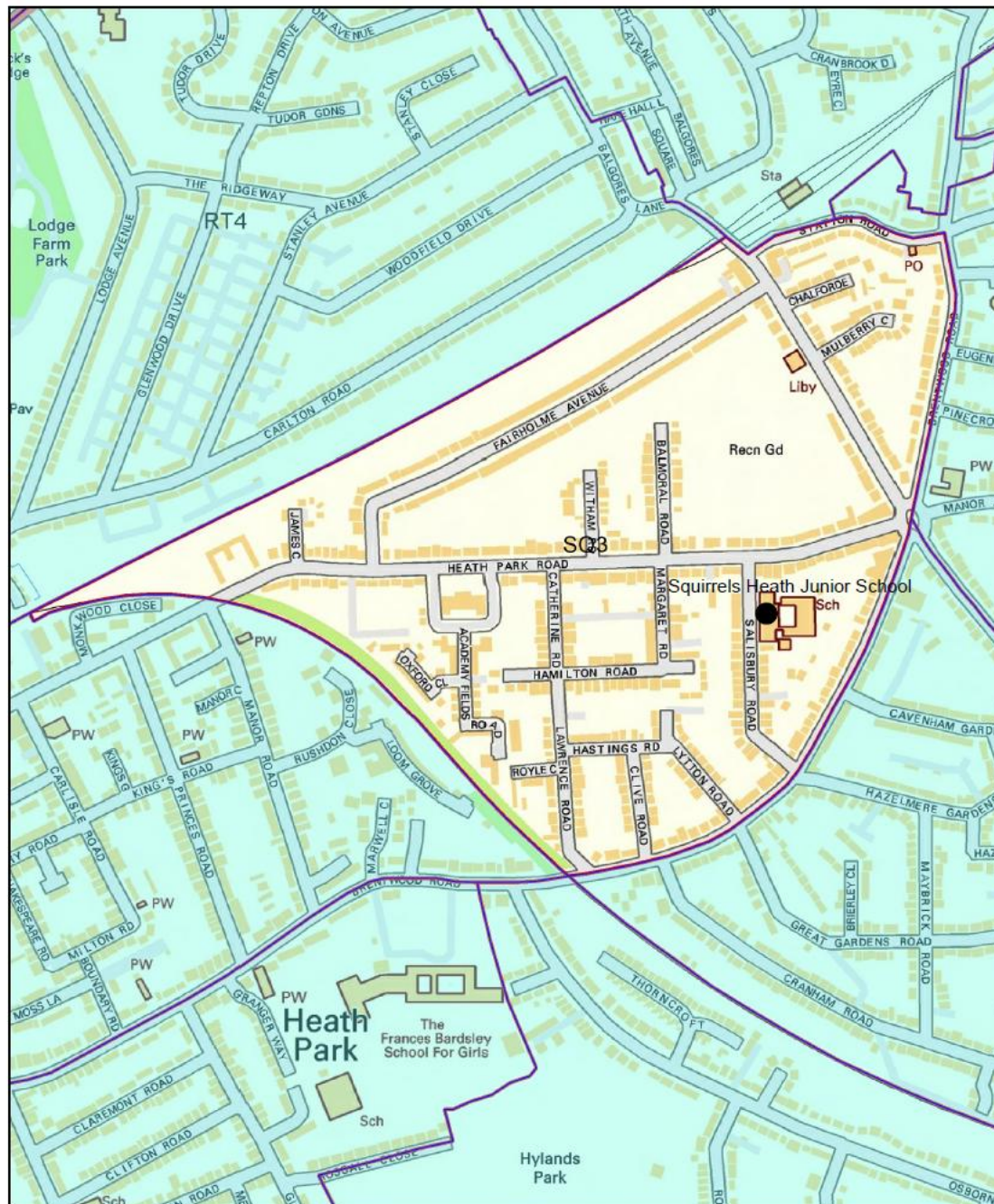
Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex/gender, and sexual orientation.

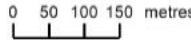
The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health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

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

The review looks to ensure that all eligible electors can access a polling station, and that Staff receive equalities training as part of the mandatory Polling Staff training for each election. I attach a map of the polling district for reference.

.



	
	Scale: 1:6500 Date: 26 June 2019 
	London Borough of Havering Town Hall, Main Road Romford, RM1 3BD Tel: 01708 434343 © Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 100024327