

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>COUNCIL</b> <b>27 JANUARY 2020</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACE REVIEW</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Jo Negrini, Chief Executive and (Acting) Returning Officer</b> <b>Seth Alker, Head of Electoral Services</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:</b> An effective polling district and polling place scheme supports the council priority to encourage strong and involved communities, by enabling the electorate to effectively engage in the democratic process. <a href="#">Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022</a>	
<b>FINANCIAL IMPACT:</b> There are no financial implications arising from this report.	
<b>KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.:</b>	
<b>1. RECOMMENDATIONS</b>  It is recommended:	
1.1	To approve the amendments to the existing schedule of polling districts set out in Appendix A.
1.2	To approve the revised schedule of polling places set out in Appendix B.
1.3	To delegate to the (Acting) Returning Officer authority to approve an alternative polling place in the event that any polling place becomes unavailable or found to be suitable in the run up to an election and to make this change on a permanent basis following the election.

## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 This report sets out the proposed changes to the polling districts and polling places used at Parliamentary and Local Government elections following a compulsory periodic review of existing arrangements required by the Representation of the People Act 1983 and the Electoral Administration Act 2013.
- 2.2 Because to the significant changes to the voting arrangements for many electors as a result of the Ward Boundary changes in 2018, the proposals are designed to retain, as far as possible, the current network of polling places and polling districts for the majority of electors to minimise disruption.
- 2.3 The proposals are designed to try to ensure in line with Electoral Commission's guidelines, no more than 2,500 electors are allocated to each polling station. and that polling places are convenient and easily accessible for electors.
- 2.4 The proposals have taken into account the representations received during the consultation period.
- 2.5 The review took into account the expected electorate figures arising from new build and developments where currently known.

## **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Representation of the People Act 1983 and the Electoral Administration Act 2013 require each local authority to undertake periodic compulsory reviews of polling districts and polling places for UK Parliamentary elections every five years. In accordance with these Acts, this review had to be completed by 31 January 2020.
- 3.2 The last compulsory review took place in 2014-15. There was a non-statutory review of polling districts and polling places in 2017 prior to the introduction of new local government wards in February 2018.
- 3.3 Polling districts are geographical areas created by sub-dividing the Croydon electoral area into smaller parts for voting. Each polling district must be allocated a polling place which is a building or area in which the polling stations will be situated.
- 3.4 Although the statutory requirement is to review the polling districts and places used at parliamentary elections, they will also be used at Local Government elections and any future referendums. Polling district boundaries will therefore not cross existing Parliamentary constituency or Local Government ward boundaries.
- 3.4 A physical assessment of all existing and proposed polling places was made to access their suitability including their suitability for electors with disabilities.
- 3.3 The (Acting) Returning Officer published proposals for the future polling districts and polling places on Monday 5 August 2019. The principles underlying these proposals were:
  - 3.3.1 To seek to ensure that all electors in the borough have such

- reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
- 3.3.2 To retain, as far as possible, the current network of polling places and polling districts for the majority of electors to minimise disruption to voters.
  - 3.3.3 To ensure that where possible, in line with Electoral Commission's guidelines, no more than 2,500 electors are allocated to each polling station.
  - 3.3.4 To ensure, as far as practicable, that polling places are accessible to people with disabilities.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To split existing polling district FFD2 down the centre of Wellesley Road. The eastern section of the district to remain as FFD2 with a new polling place located at Bedford Hall, Wellesley Road. The western section of the district to become a polling district FFD6 with its polling place at St Michael's Parish Church Hall, Poplar Walk.
- 4.2 To re-draw the current boundaries between KLY1 and KLY4 and KLY2 and KLY4 polling districts to allow electors living in properties near to the top of Kenley Hill to vote at the polling station at Hayes Primary School, Hayes Lane instead of at stations at the bottom of the hill.
- 4.3 To merge polling districts NPH2 and NPH3. At the General Election on 12 December 2019 polling stations for both districts were located in the British Legion Memorial Hall, London Road. A single polling station would work better for electors and polling station staff. Merged Polling district to be named NPH2. Current NPH4 Polling District to be renamed as NPH3. Current NPH5 Polling district to be renamed NPH4.
- 4.4 To merge polling districts OCN1 and OCN3. The designated polling place for both districts is Bradmore Green Library, Bradmore Way. A single polling station would work better for electors and polling station staff. Merged Polling District to be named OCN1. Current OCN6 Polling District to be renamed as OCN3.
- 4.5 To designate St Edmunds Church Hall, Mitchley Avenue as the new polling place for polling district POR4 replacing existing polling place Riddlesdown Lawn Tennis Club, Lower Barn Road. This is considered to be more convenient for the majority of electors in the district and is reverting to the polling place for the district prior to the Ward Boundary changes in 2018.
- 4.6 To split existing polling district SHN3 with the most northern part of the district becoming part of SHN2 polling district, and the rest becoming part of SHN7 polling district so that current polling place for SHN3 at Monks Orchard Primary School would no longer be required. Expanded SHN7 polling district to be renamed SHN3.
- 4.7 To designate Shirley Parish Hall, Wickham Road as the new polling place for polling district SHN5 replacing existing polling place at Shirley Library, Wickham Road. This is considered to be more convenient for the majority of electors in the district.

- 4.8 To make changes to existing polling district boundaries between SCN5 and SCN6 and SCN3 and SCN4 polling districts to make them clearer.
- 4.9 To re-draw the current boundary between TNH2 and TNH3 polling districts so that electors in the eastern section of the existing TNH2 polling district no longer have to make an awkward journey the polling place at Elim Pentecostal Church, Mersham Road. They will vote at St Albans Church Hall, Whitehorse Lane.
- 4.10 To correct historical errors where properties are in the incorrect Polling District on the electoral register will be addressed and properties and electors moved to the correct Polling Districts – detail is contained in Appendix A.
- 4.11 To formally designate polling places where an alternative polling place has been established since the 2017 Review:
  - 1.1.1. ADE3 - The Public Library, Ashburton Learning Village
  - 1.1.2. CPU2 - The Chevening Hub, Upper Norwood Recreation Ground
  - 1.1.3. FFD1 – Church of 7<sup>th</sup> Day, Clarendon Road
  - 1.1.4. NAN3 – Temporary Polling Station, outside 183-219 Dunsfold Way
  - 1.1.5. OCN3 (currently OCN6) – Tollers Residents Meeting Room, Temporary Community Centre
  - 1.1.6. PHW2 – St Matthews Church Main Hall, Chichester Road
  - 1.1.7. WDN7 – Wandle Park Café, Wandle Park

## **5. CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The (Acting) Returning Officer published the proposals on Monday 5 August 2019 seeking the views and comments of electors, interested parties and any persons with expertise in access to premises for persons with any type of disability.
- 5.2 The proposals were open to a consultation period which ran from Monday 5 August 2019 to Monday 2 September 2019.
- 5.3 The consultation document provided background and details of the review, including the proposed polling district and polling station scheme. During the consultation period the (Acting) Returning Officer's proposals were also published on the council's website.
- 5.4 In total **10** submissions were received during the consultation period.
- 5.5 All Ward Councillors, MPs, and representatives of other local political parties were directly contacted regarding the review seeking comments as part of the consultation process.
- 5.6 The submissions were reviewed in the context of the principles of the review and best meet the criteria.
- 5.7 A summary of the submissions received can be found at Appendix C.

## **6 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 1.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report

Approved by – Lisa Taylor Director of Finance, Investment and Risk

## **2. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 2.1. Section 18C of the Representation of the People Act (RPA) 1983, as amended by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, requires the Council to carry out a review of polling districts and polling places in its area within a period of 16 months of 1 October 2013 and then within a period of 16 months from the 1 October of every fifth year after that. The last compulsory review was carried out in 2015. The current review is required to be started and completed within the period 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020. The review must be carried out in accordance with Schedule A1 of the RPA which requires the Council to publish its proposals and consult and seek representations from certain prescribed people. Electors may also make representations.
- 2.2. Once the review is completed the Council must publish its decision together with correspondence and representations made in relation to the review and other prescribed information.
- 2.3. The Electoral Commission has issued guidance on the review of Polling Districts Polling Places and Polling Stations.
- 2.4. This requirement does not prevent a local authority from conducting a review at any time. It is sometimes necessary that interim reviews need to be conducted outside the compulsory period.
- 2.5. A Polling District is a geographical area created by the sub-division of an electoral area i.e. a UK Parliamentary constituency, a European Parliamentary electoral region, a Ward or an electoral division.
- 2.6. A Polling Place is a geographical area in which a polling station is located. There is no legal definition of what a Polling Place is; it could be defined as tightly as a particular building or as widely as the entire polling district.
- 2.7. A Polling Station is the actual area where the process of voting takes place and must be located within the Polling Place designated for the particular Polling District.
- 2.8. The Council's functions relating to a review of polling districts and places are designated by law as non-executive functions and so cannot be discharged by the Leader or Cabinet. Save where Council has delegated responsibility for approving changes to Polling Districts and Polling Places to a committee, sub-committee or an officer responsibility for approving such changes rests with full Council.

Approved by: Sandra Herbert Head of Litigation and Corporate Law for and on behalf of Sean Murphy Director of Law and Governance

### **3. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

- 3.1. There are no Human Resources implications arising out of this report

Approved by: Gillian Bevan on behalf of the Director of Human Resources

### **4. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 4.1. As far as is reasonable and practicable the polling places are accessible to the disabled. Where new polling places are being used, the accessibility has been assessed as being suitable by electoral officers.
- 4.2. Polling places will be kept under constant review and equality considerations will form part of the process.
- 4.3. For those less able to vote in person at a polling station the option of voting by post or proxy will be an option.

Approved by: Yvonne Okiyo, Equalities Manager

### **5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 5.1. None arising from this report.

### **6. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

- 6.1. None arising from this report.

### **7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION**

- 7.1. Contained in Section 4 Summary of Recommendations.

### **8. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

#### **13.1 WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?**

No

Approved by: Seth Alker, Head of Electoral Services and Mayor's Office

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**CONTACT OFFICER:** Seth Alker, Head of Electoral Services, Ext 47469

## **APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT**

### **Appendix A.**

Detail of the proposed changes to the existing scheme of polling districts and polling places

### **Appendix B.**

The scheme of proposed polling districts and polling place designations

### **Appendix C.**

A summary of the submissions received during the consultation period

### **Appendix D.**

(Acting) Returning Officer's report on existing arrangements and recommendations for changes: [https://www.croydon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/returning-officers-report3\\_1.pdf](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/returning-officers-report3_1.pdf)