

Meeting of the Cabinet – 7th December 2011

Report of the Chief Executive

Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Access Arrangements

Purpose of Report

1. This report is part of the process of reviewing all polling districts and polling places in the Borough.

Background

2. The Electoral Administration Act 2006 substituted new sections into the Representation of the People Act 1983. This required each local authority to complete a review of the parliamentary polling districts and polling places within its area by the end of 2007. A further review must then take place every four years.
3. The current review formally began on 17th October 2011 with the release of a public notice, giving details of the review, inviting comments on the existing scheme and the Returning Officers proposals, from various stakeholders and interested parties.
4. Various guidelines were taken into account in drawing up the proposals. There are those required by law:
 - The council must seek to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
 - The council must seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place is accessible to electors who are disabled.

Other guidelines that are recognised as good practice, but may not always be possible:

- The polling place should be in its own district;
- Natural, well defined boundaries are preferred;
- All properties in a minor road or estate should be in the same polling district (unless the ward or constituency boundary makes this impossible);
- There should be an even spread of polling places;
- The polling district should be in the 'catchment area' for the polling place and no elector should have to pass another polling place to go to their own;
- The polling places that voters are familiar with are not changed unless there is a strong need to do so.

5. Attached at Appendix A is the consultation document setting out my proposals together with any representations that have been received.

Finance

6. Current electoral registration budgets are covering the costs of the statutory review. The proposals are not expected to impact on budgets for elections. No additional resources are required to carry out the review.

Law

7. Section 18C (1) Representation of the People Act 1983 requires that each relevant authority must complete a review of polling districts and places before 31st December 2007. Section 18C (4) states that the authority must complete a further review of each polling district and polling place in its area before the end of the period of four years starting with the completion of the previous such review.

Equality Impact

8. The aim of the review is to seek to ensure that
 - a. all the electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
 - b. so far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled.

Recommendation

9. It is recommended that Cabinet approve the proposed alterations to polling districts and polling places as detailed in Appendix A.

John Polychronakis

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John Polychronakis
Chief Executive

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List of Background Papers

Electoral Commission Circular EC19/2010