

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2018/19 – REPORT NO: 218

ELECTORAL REVIEW PANEL

REPORT OF:

Chief Executive as (Acting) Returning Officer

Contact Officer:

Lee-Marie Grant, Head of Electoral Services

020 8379 3713

Lee-marie.grant@enfield.gov.uk

Agenda – Part 1	Item:
Subject: UK Parliamentary Polling District and Polling Review 2019	
Wards: All	
Key Decision No: Not applicable	
Cabinet Member consulted: Not applicable	

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report:

- 1.1. Reviews the key aspects of the current polling districts, polling places and polling stations.
- 1.2. Seeks the Panel to review the (Acting) Returning Officer's recommendations for the current buildings/locations to be designated as polling stations for use in future elections.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That the Electoral Review Panel notes the key issues identified by the (Acting) Returning Officer and makes any necessary recommendations to him for consideration for implementation at future elections, including the London Mayoral and Assembly elections to be held on Thursday 7 May 2020.
- 2.2. That the Panel considers and then adopts the list of proposed polling stations for any unscheduled elections held in the remainder of 2019 and the GLA in 2020.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a number of changes to the Representation of the People Act (RPA) 1983 in respect of the way in which reviews of polling districts and polling places must be undertaken.

The last compulsory review took place in 2015. A review must then be carried out every four years thereafter. Enfield council is now undertaking a review of all the polling districts and polling places, which must be completed by 31 January 2020.

- 3.2 Section 18B (4) of the RPA 1983 states that in conducting a review of polling places the authority must:

a) seek to ensure that all the electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.

b) seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places they are responsible for are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled, and when considering the designation of a polling place, must have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons.

In addition, the polling place for a polling district must be within the area of the district unless special circumstances make it necessary to designate an area either wholly or partly outside of the polling district.

- 3.3 The Panel will be aware that London Borough of Enfield is required to sub-divide its area into polling districts for the purposes of parliamentary elections and to designate polling places for each of those districts. In doing so, the authority must seek to ensure that all electors have reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances and have regard to the needs of electors who are disabled.

4. Notice review of polling districts and polling places.

- 4.1. On the 8 April 2019 the Notice Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places will be published on the website and displayed on the notice board outside the Civic Centre and in all libraries within the borough. The Notice welcomes all comments from residents, local community groups, MPs, Councillors and any other interested persons within Enfield borough on the proposed polling place schedule.

- 4.2. The consultation period of 8 weeks is for any recommendations and comments on the (Acting) Returning Officer's proposals for the current polling districts and places to be used for the next coming elections.

4.3. The consultation timetable is shown below for information:

Task	Timetable
Preliminary risk assessment visits of current Polling District, places and stations	14 February 2019 – 1 April 2019
Publication of Notice of Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places	Monday 8 April
Consultation Period	Monday 8 April – Monday 3 June (8 weeks)
Electoral Review Panel (1 st Meeting – welcome comments and recommendations)	Tuesday 16 April
Amendments to (A)ROs recommendations	Week of the 3 June
Electoral Review Panel (Final meeting – Seek approval to amended proposal)	Week of the 10 June
Notification to voters (on any changes to polling places)	Confirmation letters – June/July 2019

5. Conducting the review

On behalf of the (Acting)Returning Officer, Electoral Services have conducted a review of all existing polling places and districts. These risk assessment reviews have been carried out by experienced Polling Review Inspectors, using the Electoral Commissions risk assessment checklist for each polling place.

5.1 There were several factors that were considered when the initial review was undertaken on the existing polling places which included, location, size, availability and accessibility. The reviews include detailed inspection of the following key areas:

- Main entrance (into building) including ramp access and steps
- Disabled Access
- Parking facilities
- Kitchen and toilet facilities

- Fire exists
- Internal and external lighting

5.2 The (Acting) Returning Officers recommendations considered the following considerations:

- Look to reduce the number of Schools/Nurseries used
- Look to identify polling places and additional buildings to form part of Election Risk Register for reserve polling stations in an event of loss of a polling place.

Please refer to **(Appendix B)** for current statistical information relating to the number of in person voters allocated to each polling place.

5.3 It should be noted that for the purpose of taking the poll in England and Wales, the (Acting) Returning Officer is entitled to use free of charge schools maintained or assisted by a local authority as well as those schools that received grants made from monies provided by Parliament.

6. Summary of recommendations

6.1. The (Acting) Returning Officer recommends that the 106 polling places and 110 polling stations remain unchanged. The preliminary risk assessment concluded that 3 more additional temporary buildings are required due to the following factors:

- Ongoing works in the Ponder Ends ward area, which has resulted in a polling place being relocated
- Concerns with patient service delivery
- Security concerns

6.2. Polling District

6.2.1. No changes have been identified by inspectors as being necessary to polling district boundaries. This will be reviewed again once the review of Enfield's ward boundary consultation is completed.

6.3. Polling Place

6.4. The Panel is asked to review the (Acting) Returning Officer's recommendations for the proposed polling place scheme to be used in future elections.

6.6 The polling inspectors have risk assessed all 106 polling places and have recommended 5 changes to be made to the current polling place scheme. These changes are as follows:

Enfield Highway

1st Enfield Scout Hut polling place

At the May 2018 elections we previously used the 1st Enfield Scout Hut as a polling station. We did not receive any reported issues with the use of this polling place. However, our preliminary risk assessment identified that the building was not DDA Compliant (Disability Discrimination Act 2005).

The (A)RO recommendation is to use **Enfield Highway Community Centre** as an alternative polling station place for the next scheduled election. This polling place is located directly beside 1st Enfield Scout Hut and has passed the preliminary risk assessment. **(Pictures are available on request)**

To view the map location of the proposed new polling place, please refer to **Schedule 1**

Grange

The Formont Centre polling place

There were no reported issues with the use of The Formont Centre at the May 2018 elections, however, the centre manager did request that they would prefer that we hire a portacabin and use their car park instead of their patient assessment room. They have received a 5% increase of patients using their facilities. Closing the use of this facility for one day will cause major problems with patient service delivery.

The (A)RO recommends that we hire a **portacabin** and situate this in their car park. Additional security will be deployed to co-ordinate parking for the electors. Please note that the polling place location remains unchanged. **(Pictures are available on request)**

Southgate Green

Walker Primary School polling place

This building will not be accessible due to the planning decision for a new build. (A)RO has been advised that works will commence from July 2019. (A)RO therefore recommends that we use Christ Church Southgate as an alternative polling place. **(Pictures are available on request)**

To view the map location of the proposed new polling place, please refer to **Schedule 2**

Ponders End

The Qube polling place

We have previously used Ponders End Library for this area but there is currently on-going building work in the immediate area. Although we have been advised that the new library will be open in 2021. The Qube was used in 2018 with no reported

issues. The preliminary review identified that this building will be relocated from 202-204 High Street to Eagle House Car Park. The walking distance between the two points is a fair distance for electors to travel too. The inspector did visit two venues within proximity, which were:

1. Ponders End Technical Institute – High Street
2. Training Centre – Just off the High street on private road

The risk assessment of the above venues concluded that they were not fit for use as a polling place.

(A)RO recommends that a portacabin is required and to be situated near the entrance of Ponders End Recreational Grounds. **Please note** that the proposed temporary building would be in polling district ZLD to serve electors in ZLE. The distance would be minimal for the electors to travel too from the current location of 202-204 High Street. **(Pictures are available on request)**

To view the map location of the proposed new polling place, please refer to **Schedule 3**

Edmonton Green

Unity Hub @ Craig Park polling place

There were no reported issues at the 2018 May elections. The risk assessment reported no issues with using the nursery room. However, the inspector did identify an alternative large hall within the building that could accommodate the existing polling station. This would mean that the nursery could remain open on polling day as opposed to being closed.

(A)RO recommends using the alternative hall adjacent to the nursery as a polling station. Please note that the polling place location remains unchanged. **(Pictures are available on request)**

6.7 The risk assessment of all 106 polling places also flagged minor requirements, such as, additional signage, security guard to be present during polling day and additional lighting. These items will be fulfilled in preparation for the next scheduled elections.

The full review of the recommended Polling Stations to be used at the next scheduled elections can be found in **Appendix A**.

Summary

At the end of the consultation, I will collate all written comments from stakeholders relating to the (Acting) Returning Officers recommendations and will draft a final recommendation report with comments received for review and approval by the Electoral Review Panel. The approved polling place schedule will be used for the 2020 May elections and any unscheduled elections from June 2019. The final review meeting (depending on availability) will be scheduled for the week of the 10th June 2019.

The polling review inspectors were instructed to take internal and external pictures of each polling place. If you wish to receive photos of any polling place, please submit your request to me.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. To agree the schedule of proposed buildings to be used as polling stations in 2019/2020 elections.

7.2. Legal implications

7.2.1. The Council has duties within an existing legal framework to make arrangements for the division of its area into polling districts for parliamentary elections. The recommendation in this report to review these arrangements and implement improvements where appropriate will help ensure that the Council continues to meet its statutory obligations.

7.2.2. The Council has ongoing duties under the Equality Act to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including people with disabilities. Service providers are legally obliged to make any adjustment that it is reasonable for them to make to their procedures and premises to help disabled people to access services. This legislation covers polling stations.

8. KEY RISKS

8.1. Poor designation of polling districts and polling places could have an adverse effect on the administration of future elections, directly impacting on the electorate.

9. IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES

9.1. Fairness for all

9.1.1. In designating polling districts and polling places, the Council must ensure that all the electors in the constituency have reasonable facilities for voting.

9.2. Growth and sustainability

9.2.1. The designation of accessible polling districts and polling places ensures that the views of electors on issues such as growth and sustainability can be properly heard at elections through the voting process.

9.3. Strong communities

- 9.3.1. The designation of accessible polling districts and polling places ensures that communities are able to participate in the democratic process through voting and that the reasonable needs of the electorate are adequately provided for.

10. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. The designation of appropriate polling districts and polling places will assist the (Acting) Returning Officer in continuing to deliver high quality electoral services across the borough.

