



General Purposes Committee

Monday 8 May 2017

Report from the Chief Executive and Acting Returning Officer

For Action

Wards affected:
Alperton, Dudden Hill, Kenton,
Kilburn

Review of Polling Places 2017

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 All local authorities must review their UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places at least once every five years. The last review of Polling Places took place in 2014 prior to the General Election in May 2015.
- 1.2 Normal practice prior to any election is to carry out an informal review of polling places across the borough, based on experience at the previous election and investigation into the availability of premises for the forthcoming election.
- 1.3 Brent last reviewed its Parliamentary polling districts and polling places in 2014 and was due to undertake the next statutory review of polling districts and polling places in 2018/19, in advance of the anticipated 2020 General Election.
- 1.4 On 18 April 2017, the Prime Minister, Theresa May MP, called an early general election for June 8 2017, thus not permitting such a review in Brent in time for the next General Election.

2.0 Recommendations:

- 2.1 That the polling stations listed below be adopted as temporary polling stations for the General Election on 8 June 2017:
 - NAL2: Alperton Baptist Church Hall be relocated to Alperton Community School, Ealing Road, HA0 4PW.

- CDU1: Christ Embassy be relocated to St Catherine's Church, Dudden Hill Lane, NW10 1QB.
- HKI4: The Royal British Legion be relocated to the OK Club, 45 Denmark Road, NW6 5BP.
- NKE4: The Haridham Temple be relocated to temporary polling stations in the Harrow District Masonic Centre car park, Northwick Circle, HA3 0EL.

2.2 That all other polling stations remain unchanged for this poll and until and the next statutory review of polling districts and polling places in 2018/19.

2.3 That in the event of any other polling places becoming unavailable before the June 2017 election, authority be delegated to the Acting Returning Officer to make any further changes required to polling places for these elections in consultation with the leaders of the political groups on the Council.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Any wards not listed below are unaffected by changes to the stations used for the last General Election and Referendum in 2016.

3.2 Polling districts, polling places and polling stations may be defined as follows:

A **polling district** is a geographical sub-division of an electoral area, i.e. a UK Parliamentary constituency, a European Parliamentary electoral region, a ward or an electoral division.

A **polling place** is a geographical area in which a polling station is located. However, as there is no legal definition of what a polling place is, the geographical area could be defined as tightly as a particular building or as widely as the entire polling district. Most commonly in Brent, it has been defined as the premises inside which voting takes place.

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.

3.3 If a building becomes unavailable before an election, the polling place can be changed by the local authority in accordance with their decision making arrangements.

3.4 Alpertown Ward NAL2

Alpertown Baptist Church has declined to be used as a polling station.

We are using Alpertown Community School, who have offered us their Ealing Road site, which has been used previously as a polling station. While the Ealing Road site is on the boundary of a neighbouring polling district, the site that falls within the district is being used for GCSE exams. Electors will not have access to the car park but we will inform them of this in advance.

3.5 Dudden Hill Ward CDU1

Christ Embassy is unavailable. We currently use St Catherine's Church Hall in a neighbouring polling district (CDU2) and will use that as a double station for this poll.

3.6 Kenton Ward NKE4

The Haridham Temple is undergoing major refurbishment and is therefore unavailable.

We have explored the following alternatives:

- St Gregory's High School – this has been used previously, but they have GCSEs taking place.
- There is a strip of land between the school and the park that we investigated placing a temporary station on but it is not suitable due to landscaping and accessibility concerns.
- No response was received from private letting agents with empty properties.
- There is a synagogue in Woodcock Park, just within the polling district boundary, but its location makes accessibility difficult.

We are therefore using Harrow District Masonic Centre. While not having a room available, the Centre has allowed us to set up two temporary stations in their car park. They are allowing polling staff to use the facilities in the building and are not charging for uses of the premises.

3.7 Kilburn Ward

The Royal British Legion has been demolished. We are using the OK Club, which has been used in the past.

4.0 Financial Implications

The costs of Parliamentary elections are met by central government.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 The Representation of the People Act 1983 requires the council to divide every parliamentary constituency or part thereof within its area into polling districts and that these be kept under review. The council must also ensure that all electors are given such facilities for voting as may be reasonable in the circumstances.

5.2 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 receive grants made out of moneys provided by Parliament. This includes academies and free schools. However, where possible we have avoided secondary schools as GCSEs are taking place.

6.0 Diversity Implications

6.1 Local authorities have a duty to review the accessibility of all polling places to disabled voters and ensure that every polling place, and prospective polling

place, for which it is responsible is accessible to disabled voters 'so far as is reasonable and practicable'.

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