

	<b>General Purposes Committee</b> 29 January 2018
	<b>Report from the Chief Executive and the Returning Officer</b>
<b>Review of Polling Places 2018</b>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	Alperton, Dudden Hill, Tokyngton, Kilburn, Northwick Park
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b> (only applicable for Cabinet, Cabinet Sub Committee and officer decisions)	YES
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	None
<b>Background Papers:</b>	N/A
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## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 All local authorities must review their polling districts and polling places at least once every five years. The last formal review of Polling Places took place in 2014 prior to the General Election in May 2015. Non-statutory reviews have taken place annually since 2014.
- 1.2 Normal practice prior to any election is to carry out a non-statutory review of polling places across the Borough, based on experience and feedback at the previous election and investigation into the availability of premises for the forthcoming elections, in this case the Local Elections in May 2018.
- 1.3 This report summarises the results of this non-statutory review, and puts forward suggestions for replacement polling stations as required.

## 2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That the polling stations listed below be adopted as polling stations for the Local Elections on 3 May 2018:

- NAL1: Lyon Park Infant School: use of nursery on Mount Pleasant Road instead of the main school.
- NAL2: Change from Alperton Community School back to Alperton Baptist Church, Ealing Road, HA0 4BY.
- CDU1 and CDU2: Use the main building in St Catherine's Church, Dudden Hill Lane, NW10 1QB.
- HKI4: Replace the OK Club with The Carlton Centre, Granville Road, NW6 5RA.
- CTO1: Replace the hut outside Amex House on North End Road with The Yellow Pavilion, Engineers Way, HA9 0EG.
- CTO4: Change from Oakington Manor Primary School back to St Michael's Church Hall, Babington Rise HA9 6SN.
- NNP3: Remain in Byron Court Primary School, Spencer Road, HA0 3SF. All electors will be informed that there will be no parking available at this polling place.
- NKE4: Remain in Harrow District Masonic Centre, Northwick Circle, Harrow, HA3 0EL.

2.2 That all other polling stations remain unchanged for this poll and until the next statutory review of polling districts and polling places in 2020.

2.3 That, in the event of any other polling places becoming unavailable before the May 2018 Local Elections, authority be delegated to the Chief Executive and Returning Officer to make any further changes required to polling places for the 3 May Local Elections.

## 3.0 Detail

3.1 Any wards not listed below are unaffected by changes since the last General Election held in June 2017.

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 **Alperton Ward NAL1**

Lyon Park Infant School could not offer us the main school as the school would have to be shut during polling day. The school has instead proposed their nursery on Mount Pleasant Road. A site visit to the nursery school has been conducted and no issues identified.

3.5 **Alperton Ward NAL2**

We have previously used Alperton Baptist Church as a polling station, but it was unavailable for the General Election in 2017, when we relocated to Alperton Community School. However, Alperton Community School is only willing to offer their Ealing Road site, which is on the boundary of another polling district, and there is no parking at the Ealing Road site. We will now be using Alperton Baptist Church as a polling station.

3.6 **Dudden Hill Ward CDU1 and CDU2**

As Christ Embassy (former Neasden Library, CDU1) is unavailable, St Catherine's Church in the neighbouring polling district (CDU2) will be used as a double station for this poll. As the previous room used is too small for this, the main church will be used and all religious icons will be screened off.

3.7 **Kilburn Ward HKI4**

The OK Club has been replaced with the Carlton Centre as the OK Club has limited disabled access.

Other options for this polling place were also explored:

- William Dunbar House – The community room in William Dunbar House is not suitable for use as a polling place. Access from the main door would mean leaving that door open all day, allowing access to the residents' elevator, as well as voters going past the door of someone's residence to get access to the room. There is no lighting and an uneven path to the outside of the building, meaning the exterior door is not suitable either.
- South Kilburn Studios – South Kilburn Studios will be demolished by May.
- Granville Centre – The Granville Centre is currently under renovation and it is unlikely that the site will still be under construction on polling day.

### **3.8 Tokyngton Ward CTO1**

The usual polling place is a hut outside Amex House. However, there is currently no suitable site due to ongoing building works. We therefore propose to use the Yellow Pavilion, which is just outside of the polling district in CTO2.

### **3.9 Tokyngton Ward CTO4**

We have previously used St Michael's Church Hall, but as this was unavailable during the EU Referendum and 2017 General Election, this polling place was relocated to Oakington Manor Primary School. As the church has now become available, it will be used as the polling place for the 3 May elections.

### **3.10 Northwick Park NNP3**

There is currently no parking at Bryon Court School due to building works. Electors within the polling district will be informed of this in advance through an insert in the Household Notification Letter being sent out on 23 February 2018.

Members may recall a historical polling district consisting solely of the university campus and the hospital accommodation and that the polling place was a social club on the site of the hospital. Turnout at elections in that polling district was regularly less than 10%, and the decision was taken to merge that polling district with its neighbour. As there can only be one polling place in a polling district, the proposal could only be implemented by amending polling district boundaries. This will be taken into consideration in the upcoming full review of polling districts and places in October 2018.

### **3.11 Kenton Ward NKE4**

In 2017 for the General election, the The Haridham Temple was not available. We therefore relocated to the Harrow District Masonic Centre. As this is a more suitable location, and they offer their space free of charge, we are using it again for the 2018 elections.

## **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The costs of the Local Elections will be met by Brent Council. It is anticipated that the costs of the proposed changes to polling place arrangements will be neutral, because the costs of the new polling place designations will not be greater than the costs of existing arrangements.

## **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 are kept under review. The council must also ensure that all electors are given such facilities for voting as may be reasonable
- 5.2 It should be noted that for the purpose of taking the poll in England and Wales, the 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 possibly, we have avoided secondary schools as GCSEs are taking place.

## **6.0 Equality Implications**

- 6.1 Local authorities have a duty to review the accessibility of all polling places and to ensure that every polling place, and prospective polling place, for which it is responsible for is accessible to disabled voters 'so far as is reasonable and practicable'.

## **7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

- 7.1 The Council regularly assesses our polling stations for suitability and accessibility, and survey large numbers of electors at every election. Feedback from electors, polling station staff and ward Members has been taken into account in drafting these proposals.
- 7.2 By law, local authorities must review their polling districts, polling places and polling stations at least every four years. The upcoming statutory review will seek comments on the suitability of current polling stations and for ideas about possible alternatives.

**Report sign off:**

**CAROLYN DOWNS**

Chief Executive and Returning Officer