



General Purposes Committee
27 February 2020

**Report from the Chief Executive and
Returning Officer**

Review of Polling Places 2020

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Non-key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Melanie Adams Electoral Registration & Services Manager Email: melanie.adams@brent.gov.uk Tel: 020 8937

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 2018. It came into force for February 2019 once agreed by the General Purposes Committee on 21 January 2019.
- 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 Since the 2019 polling district review, two national polls have taken place. Both were called at very short notice and we were therefore unable to undertake this informal review for either election.
- 1.4 The only scheduled elections for the life of the 2019 review are for the Greater London Authority, taking place on 7 May 2019. As a result of the Local Government Boundary Review, which has now come into force, a full formal review will be required before the 2022 Local Elections when the new boundaries come into force.

2.0 Recommendations:

- 2.1 That the polling stations listed below be adopted for the Greater London Authority elections on 7 May 2020:

NAL4: Abbey Estate Community Centre be relocated to a temporary polling station outside of the building, unless it is renovated in time for this election.

CDO2: Kingfisher Community Centre be relocated to a temporary polling station in the car park, unless the building is renovated in time for this election.

That all other polling stations remain as agreed in the 2019 Polling District review.

- 2.2 That in the event of any other polling places becoming unavailable before the May 2020 elections, authority be delegated to the 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 agreed by the 2019 Polling District Review. Should anything change prior to the meeting a verbal update will be provided.

3.2 Alperton Ward NAL4

Abbey Estate Community Centre

Due to a leak the building has sustained a significant amount of damage and is presently not fit for use as a polling station. There is space for a temporary polling station outside of the building.

3.3 Dollis Hill Ward CDO2

Kingfisher Community Centre

Due to a fire the week before polling this building could not be used for the Parliamentary election on 12 December 2019. A temporary polling station was placed in the car park. Should the building not be fit for use in time we propose doing this again.

- 3.4 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.

- 3.5 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.

4.0 Financial Implications

The costs of Greater London Authority elections are met by the GLA.

5.1 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 possibly we have avoided secondary schools as GCSEs are taking place.

6. Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

- 6.1 The relevant Ward councillors in Alperton and Dollis Hill have been notified of these changes with no objections raised from the responses received to date. Any further comments received, following publication of the report will be reported to the Committee.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1 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'.

8. Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

- 8.1 There are no direct human resources or property implications.

Report sign off:

CAROLYN DOWNS

Chief Executive & Returning Officer