



**General Purposes Committee**  
13<sup>th</sup> November 2007

**Report from the  
Democratic Services Manager**

For Action

Wards Affected:  
ALL

**Review Of Polling Districts And Polling Places**

**1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 and the subsequent Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places Regulations 2006 require each electoral registration authority in England, Scotland and Wales to carry out a review of both its polling district boundaries and its polling places.
- 1.2 This report informs members of feedback to the Polling District and Polling Stations Review undertaken within Brent and asks that a decision be reached on the future electoral arrangements for Brent.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the polling station for polling district EKi2 in Kilburn ward transfer from the former College of North West London site to its new location in Glengall Road (para 3.7 refers).
- 2.2 That the polling station for polling district NPR4 in Preston ward be the Infants School Hall at Wembley Primary School in place of the Junior School equivalent at the same site (para 3.8).
- 2.3 That Church End and Roundwood Unity Centre, be the polling station at future elections for voters in polling district SHA1 in Harlesden ward in place of St Mary's C of E School on Garnet Road (para 3.13).

- 2.4 That electors living in Craven Park and Fig Tree Close in polling districts SHA3 and SHA5 be moved into polling district SHA1 (paras 3.12-3.14).
- 2.5 That electors living in Nicoll Road, New Crescent Yard and Acton Lane, who currently vote at St Matthew's Hall in St Mary's Road, be moved into polling district SHA5 and vote in future elections at Harlesden Primary School on Acton Lane (para 3.16).
- 2.6 That, subject to the consent of Bridge Park, this building be the polling station at future elections for voters in polling district SST5 in place of Our Lady of Lourdes School on Wesley Road (paras 3.18 & 3.19).

### 3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 and the subsequent Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places Regulations 2006 require each electoral registration authority in England, Scotland and Wales to carry out a review of both its polling district boundaries and its polling places. Although the law requires that this review be completed by the end of 2007, it is preferable for it to be concluded before the Revised Electoral Register is published on 30 November. If any polling district boundaries are altered after publication as a result of the review, the Revised Register would have to be re-published. This could cause confusion and inconvenience for members and political parties in their preparations for the forthcoming London Mayoral and Assembly elections on 1 May 2008.
- 3.2 Every local authority must carry out further reviews at four-yearly intervals following the first one taking place this year.
- 3.3 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.

- 3.4 The Council was obliged to give notice of the review and to consult with interested parties, including organisations with a particular interest and expertise in advising on access to buildings for people with different types of disability.
- 3.5 Notice of the consultation was sent to all members of the Council and to local political parties. In addition, Brent Association for Disabled People and Brent

Help The Aged were invited to submit comments on the Council's existing electoral arrangements and, if they wished, to suggest alternatives.

- 3.6 As part of the review, the Returning Officer for Brent was also obliged to prepare a report on arrangements for the authority. Following consultation with and visits to each existing polling station location, he has completed his report and his recommendations have been posted on the Council's website at [www.brent.gov.uk/elections.nsf](http://www.brent.gov.uk/elections.nsf)
- 3.7 The Returning Officer has recommended only two changes to the existing electoral arrangements. The first change being proposed is in Kilburn ward (polling district EK2) where the polling station location, the College of North West London in Glengall Road, has transferred to a new building directly across the road from its former site. A suitable room has been identified at the new site and is recommended to members as the new polling station location for this district.
- 3.8 The other change being proposed concerns polling district NPR4 in Preston Road. The Returning Officer recommends the substitution of the Infants School Hall for the Junior School equivalent at Wembley Primary School. There are extensive building works currently taking place at the site which render the Juniors Hall unavailable.
- 3.9 The Returning Officer attributes the small number of changes to the fact that the Council has always kept its polling station locations under review. Consultation with members and local political parties takes place before every major election and members are asked formally to confirm their approval of the proposed arrangements. This policy will remain in force notwithstanding the new statutory arrangements.
- 3.10 I am in agreement with both of the above proposals and I am recommending that you approve the changes for the two polling districts.
- 3.11 The success of this course of action may be reflected in the small number of comments that have been received in response to the consultation. In total, only two written comments have been received. An additional verbal comment was made concerning Stonebridge ward during the recent by-election in that ward. Although the comment has not been made in writing, it is included in this report as members may feel that there is merit in the suggestion.
- 3.12 The first written comment was received from Councillor Long and concerned Harlesden ward. Her comments are set out in full below:

**“SHA1 Polling District**

The current polling station is St Mary's School, Garnett Road. This is at the far end of the polling district and a distance from residential properties. I propose that the polling station should be the Unity Centre, Church Road. This is a highly visible building halfway down Church Road.

Given the location and size of the Unity Centre it could deal with a larger polling district. The polling station for SHA3, St Joseph's school

is not easy to find , I would propose that roads are moved from SHA3 to SHA1. In particular

Craven Park (from SHA2 and SHA3)

Fig Tree Close

Church Road (from SHA3)

West Ella Road (from SHA3)

Note: Having Craven Park in one polling district in Harlesden would make life so much easier, for Electoral Registration and politicians, currently it is in three PD's.

#### **SHA4 Polling District**

The polling station for SHA4, St Matthews Hall is at one end of the PD. On election day last year an officer said people were complaining about the distance they had to come. My concerns are with voters in New Crescent Yard, Acton Lane, Nicoll Road. They should be moved to SHA5.

If these roads cannot be moved to SHA5 the polling station should be moved to John Keble School. Although in Kensal Green it is a more central location for the PD.

These are my proposals/observations. If accepted I hope they would increase voter turnout.”

- 3.13 The polling station for SHA1, St Mary’s C of E School on Garnet Road, is at one end of the district whereas the Church End and Roundwood Unity Centre on Church Road is more centrally situated and on the main access road for many residents in the district. The Centre Administrator has confirmed that the Management Committee are willing for the premises to be used for voting. If the Centre agrees to its being used as a polling station, it is recommended that this location be the polling station for the SHA1 polling district at future elections.
- 3.14 Councillor Long also proposes that some roads be moved from other districts into SHA1. There are reasonable grounds for moving all of Craven Park into the same polling district, although part of it is in Stonebridge ward and is beyond the scope of this review. Fig Tree Close which is off Craven Park would also have to be moved. This would add around 230 electors to the 1030 electors currently registered in SHA1 district. SHA3 district would lose around 180 electors from an electorate of 2196 and SHA5’s electorate of 2222 would fall by around 50. The proposed change therefore would not cause any imbalance in the size of polling districts.
- 3.15 The other proposal for this polling district is that the boundary which currently runs along the centre of Church Road be moved eastward so that all of Church Road and West Ella Road be transferred into SHA1. The concern with this proposal would be that voters on the east side of Church Road and in West Ella Road would then have to cross a very busy road (where there are few crossing points for pedestrians) to reach their polling station. It is considered that their current polling station, St Joseph’s School, which can be reached from both Northcote and Goodson Roads, is equally convenient and safer for voters. It is recommended that these roads remain in their current polling district.

3.16 Councillor Long's final proposal is for electors in Nicoll Road, New Crescent Yard and Acton Lane, who currently vote at St Matthew's Hall in St Mary's Road, to be moved into polling district SHA5 and vote in future at Harlesden Primary School on Acton Lane. This would involve the transfer of around 180 electors and would not imbalance either of the affected polling districts. Polling district SHA4 currently has an electorate of 2050 and SHA5. It is accepted that the latter school would be more convenient for electors living in these roads and recommend that Councillor Long's proposal be adopted.

3.17 The only other written comment received was from Councillor Leaman.

"At the General Election, Local Election (2006) and Dudden Hill by-election I had cause to complain to you about the conduct of the centre before polling day. This centre has a habit of displaying Labour posters.

I'm not sure what can be done but I think the centre probably needs strong reminders about the need for neutrality."

I am aware that a complaint was made during the Dudden Hill ward by-election in May 2007. The community centre was immediately reminded of the necessity to avoid any election literature being displayed within its premises. When a visit was made there, no party political literature of any description could be seen. This building serves voters in both Mapesbury and Willesden Green wards and, notwithstanding the complaint referred to above, is considered to be a suitable polling station location. It is therefore not proposed that the centre no longer be used as a polling station. However I will ensure that the venue, like all others, is reminded of the need to maintain and demonstrate complete political neutrality.

3.18 The final comment received, albeit only verbally, was made by the Green Party candidate at the recent Stonebridge ward by-election. He reported that voters living in Conduit Way felt that their polling station was too far away.

3.19 Voters in polling district **SST5** vote at Our Lady of Lourdes School on Wesley Road which is at one corner of the district. It is accepted that this venue is remote from many electors in this district. A more convenient polling station location for electors in this district would be Bridge Park. Officers are in discussion with the Centre will report to your meeting on whether or not the building may be used as a polling station. It is recommended that, subject to a positive response from Bridge Park, this building be the polling station location for SST5 district at future elections.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from the proposals in this report. There are no proposals in this report to create additional polling districts but if extra polling districts were created requiring additional polling station locations, then there would be additional costs to the Council at elections funded by the Council. The cost of all elections other than Brent Council elections and by-elections are met either by the government or by the Greater London authority.

## **5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 The review referred to in this report is a legal requirement placed on the authority by the Electoral Administration Act 2006 and the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2006.

## **6.0 Diversity Implications**

6.1 The purpose of the review is to ensure that no elector is discouraged from voting because of any inconvenience placed in his or her way by the choice of polling station location in their area.

## **7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)**

7.1 None specific.

### **Background Papers**

Documents submitted during the consultation period of the Review of Polling Places and Polling Districts.

### **Contact Officer**

**Sean O’Sullivan, Electoral Services Manager**

Tel: (020) 8937 1370

E-mail: [s.osullivan@brent.gov.uk](mailto:s.osullivan@brent.gov.uk)

Peter Goss  
Democratic Services Manager