

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 every four years. The first such review took place in 2007.
- 1.2 This report informs members of feedback to the Polling District and Polling Stations Review undertaken within Brent this year and asks that a decision be reached on the future electoral arrangements for Brent.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 that Atlip Road, 6 Mount Pleasant and those properties in Ealing Road between the corner of Mount Pleasant and the Piccadilly underground line (Hayes Court, Windsor Court and a small number of other properties) be transferred from polling district NAL2 to NAL3 in Alperton ward.
- 2.2 that those properties in Allington Road and Kilburn Lane, currently in polling district HQP3 in Queen's Park ward, be transferred into polling district HQP5.
- 2.3 that polling districts NWC1 and NWC5 in Wembley Central ward, both of which use Copland School as a polling station, be merged into a single district.
- 2.4 that St Andrew and St Francis School replace the Learie Constantine Centre as the polling station for polling district CWG1 in Willesden Green ward.

- 2.5 that consideration be given as to whether polling districts CTO1 and CTO2 in Tokyngton ward be merged.
- 2.6 that polling districts CST5 and CST6 in Stonebridge ward on Hillside be merged and that the Stonebridge Hub be designated polling place for the new polling district.
- 2.7 that a new polling district be created in Stonebridge ward to include the properties in Abbey Road, Agate Close, Toucan Close and Twyford Abbey Road.
- 2.8 to note that an alternative to the Neasden Library building in polling district CDU1in Dudden Hill ward may be required.
- 2.9 that the polling places approved at this meeting be adopted for the Greater London Authority and London Mayor elections in May 2012.
- 2.10 that in the event of any polling station becoming unavailable before the May 2012 elections, authority be delegated to the Democratic Services Manager to make any further changes required to the polling places and stations for these elections in consultation with the leaders of the three political groups on the Council.

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 every four years. Members are asked to make a decision on new electoral arrangements in time for any changes to be incorporated into the Revised Register for Brent being published on 1 December 2011.
- 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 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.

- 3.4 Notice of the consultation was sent to all members of the Council and to local political parties. In addition, Brent Association for Disabled People was invited to submit comments on the Council's existing electoral arrangements and, if they wished, to suggest alternatives. The consultation period ran from 1 August to 30 September 2011.
- 3.5 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 http://www.brent.gov.uk/home.nsf/News/LBB-1462
- 3.6 The Returning Officer's report noted a growing disparity in the size of polling districts ranging from 371 to 3939 electors as at 1 June 2011. Moreover Brent has a larger than average number of polling stations per elector in comparison with other London boroughs. Appendix A shows the ratio of electors per polling station for all London boroughs.
- 3.7 His report made recommendations for some of the smaller districts and indeed larger ones which are beginning to outgrow the capacity of the polling station location. A summary of the Returning Officer's proposals and comments received during the consultation period follow.

3.8 Alperton Ward

While the existing polling stations are considered suitable, polling district NAL2 currently has 3970 electors. It is considered prudent to transfer the following properties into the neighbouring district NAL3 whose electors vote at Alperton Community School:

Atlip Road (186 properties)

6 Mount Pleasant (1 property)

Those properties in Ealing Road between the corner of Mount Pleasant and the Piccadilly underground line (Hayes Court, Windsor Court and a small number of other properties (81 properties)

Although electors will have to cross Ealing Road to reach their new polling station, no elector will have further to travel as a result of the change.

No comments have been received in response to this proposal from the Returning Officer and it is recommended that it be put into effect.

3.9 Barnhill Ward

The current electoral arrangements for Barnhill ward are considered to be satisfactory and no changes to boundaries or polling stations are being proposed. No comments about the ward were received during the consultation.

3.10 Brondesbury Park Ward

The current electoral arrangements for Brondesbury Park ward are considered to be satisfactory and no changes to boundaries or polling stations are being proposed. No comments about the ward were received during the consultation.

3.11 **Dollis Hill Ward**

The current electoral arrangements for Dollis Hill ward are considered to be satisfactory and no changes to boundaries or polling stations are being proposed. No comments about the ward were received during the consultation.

3.12 **Dudden Hill Ward**

The current electoral arrangements are considered to be for the most part satisfactory. The Returning Officer's statement commented on the relatively small sizes of districts CDU2 and CDU3 whose polling stations are a temporary hut at St Catherine's Church, at the corner of Dudden Hill Lane and Tanfield Avenue, and Northview School. Turnout tends to be low at the school which may be the result of its location.

The Returning Officer suggested that these two districts might be merged. One of the ward Councillors, Councillor Hirani, has however argued for the retention of the existing arrangements. He has written that "to remove any [polling stations] would introduce a further barrier to democratic participation. We should be encouraging people to vote in elections and removing any polling stations in areas would have the reverse effect."

Clearly any alteration that would deter electors from voting should be avoided and members may feel that the present arrangement should remain.

Neasden Library has been used as a polling station in CDU1 polling district in recent elections. If the building is not available for use at future elections, the option is a temporary hut will be situated adjacent to the library building.

3.13 Fryent Ward

The current electoral arrangements for Fryent ward are considered to be satisfactory and no changes to boundaries or polling stations are being proposed. Councillor Jim Moher, a ward councillor, has responded to the consultation agreeing that the existing arrangements are suitable.

3.14 Harlesden Ward

The current electoral arrangements for Harlesden ward are considered to be satisfactory and no changes to boundaries or polling stations are being proposed. No comments about the ward were received during the consultation.

3.15 Kensal Green Ward

The current electoral arrangements for Kensal Green ward are considered to be satisfactory and no changes to boundaries or polling stations are being

proposed. No comments about the ward were received during the consultation.

3.16 Kenton Ward

The current electoral arrangements for Kenton ward are considered to be satisfactory and no changes to boundaries or polling stations are being proposed. No comments about the ward were received during the consultation.

3.17 Kilburn Ward

The current electoral arrangements for Kilburn ward are considered to be satisfactory and no changes to boundaries or polling stations are being proposed. No comments about the ward were received during the consultation.

3.18 Mapesbury Ward

The current electoral arrangements for Mapesbury ward are considered to be satisfactory and no changes to boundaries or polling stations are being proposed. No comments about the ward were received during the consultation.

3.19 Northwick Park Ward

The current electoral arrangements for Northwick Park ward are considered to be satisfactory and no changes to boundaries or polling stations are being proposed. Councillor Baker has stated that he believes the current boundaries and polling station locations are suitable.

3.20 Preston Ward

The current electoral arrangements for Preston ward are considered to be satisfactory and no changes to boundaries to polling stations or boundaries are being proposed. No comments about the ward were received during the consultation.

3.21 Queen's Park Ward

The current electoral arrangements are considered to be satisfactory. The Returning Officer suggested that polling districts HQP3 (polling station Kensal Rise School) and HQP5 (Moberley Sports Centre) could be merged. The merger has been supported by the Acting Returning Officer for Hampstead and Kilburn constituency, which includes the wards of Brondesbury Park, Kilburn and Queen's Park, who is of the view that polling district sizes in Brent are in many cases too small.

A local resident has counter-proposed that the districts should remain separate except that those properties in Allington Road and Kilburn Lane, currently in HQP3, be transferred into HQP5. Voting at Moberley would be more convenient for electors in these two roads who currently pass Moberley on their way to their own polling station. This suggestion is considered to be a more suitable arrangement and is being recommended to members in preference to the Returning Officer's original proposal.

The same resident has also proposed reinstating Mapes House on Winchester Avenue as a polling station for electors living near that location. While those electors are undoubtedly having to travel further to vote, the current polling station, Salusbury School on Salusbury Road, being in the centre of the district, is suitably located for all electors. Mapes House was not entirely suitable as a polling station because of problems with accessibility for wheelchair users as well as being at the northern end of the district. While undoubtedly convenient for electors in the vicinity of Mapes Hose, it would clearly be less so for other electors benefitting from the more central location of Salusbury School.

3.22 Queensbury Ward

The current electoral arrangements for Queensbury ward are considered to be satisfactory and no changes to boundaries to polling stations or boundaries are being proposed.

The ward councillors have referred to the ongoing building works at the Village School in Grove Park (polling district NQY6). The school has however confirmed that accessible accommodation will be available for use as a polling station until the new school is built.

3.23 Stonebridge Ward

Two proposals are being made for this ward. Councillor Long and a member of the public have asked that Stonebridge Hub be used instead of Stonebridge Primary school on Shakespeare Avenue. The Hub is willing for their premises to be used as a polling station and the school would no longer need to close on polling days.

Secondly, there are new properties around Toucan Close and Agate Close in polling district CST6. The current polling station for electors in these properties, Stonebridge Primary School, is more than 2 miles away. A church hall has been identified as a suitable alternative polling place. This venue in Brentmead Gardens, while actually in the London Borough of Ealing, is less than half a mile away from the properties under consideration. The Returning Officer at Ealing Council has been consulted and has no objection to the venue's use by Brent.

A third proposal mooted by the Returning Officer was the merger of polling districts CST5 and CST6 whose respective polling districts, Bridge Park and currently Stonebridge Primary School, are not far apart. Moreover CST5 has less than 700 electors and a merger would be reasonable in terms of the number of electors. No comments have been received in response to this proposal and it is proposed that the merger proceed.

3.24 Sudbury Ward

The current electoral arrangements for Sudbury ward are considered to be satisfactory and no changes to boundaries to polling stations or boundaries

are being proposed. No comments about the ward were received during the consultation.

3.25 **Tokyngton Ward**

The Returning Officer has proposed the merger of polling districts CTO1 and CTO2. CTO1 includes Danes and Empire Courts and will now include the new student accommodation being built at the College of North West London. While the current electorate numbers just 430 electors, the area is slightly cut off from the rest of the ward by the stadium and surrounding businesses.

It was considered by the Returning Officer that a merger with CTO2, whose electors vote at St Joseph's Social Club, would not be unreasonable for electors as the distance to the club would be 0.8 miles. However a ward councillor, Councillor Butt, has asked that the districts remain separate on the grounds that residents in CTO1 are unlikely to travel to St Joseph's Social Club and that they will effectively be deterred from voting.

Given the presence of the new student accommodation and the wish to encourage voting by young people whom research shows vote in smaller numbers, members may wish to retain the existing arrangement.

3.26 Welsh Harp Ward

The Returning Officer suggested the break-up of polling district CWH1, whose electors currently vote at a temporary hut in Mallard Way, by moving streets into CWH2 and CWH3.

Councillor Kataria, writing of behalf of the Welsh Harp councillors, has requested that the current arrangement should remain and that the suggested break up of CWH1 not proceed. CWH1 is a viable district with just under 1200 electors and electors have long been accustomed to voting at Mallard Way. In view of this, no change is proposed for this ward.

3.27 Wembley Central Ward

The Returning Officer has proposed the merger of polling districts NWC1 and NWC5, both of which have a polling station at Copland School. The division serves no useful purpose and removing it would achieve a net reduction of one polling station in the ward.

No comments have been received in response to this proposal and it is recommended that the two districts be merged.

3.28 Willesden Green Ward

The current boundaries in this ward are considered to be suitable. The Returning Officer reported that feedback after previous elections had favoured the use of St Andrew and St Francis School be used instead of the Learie Constantine in view of the former's more central location for electors. It is recommended that this change be approved.

No comments have been received in response to this proposal.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The cost of Council elections and by elections is met by the local authority. For all other elections, funding is provided either by the government or the Greater London Authority.
- 4.2 The total cost for the hire of premises at this year's referendum was almost £43,000. Temporary huts averaged out at £1020 each. In addition each polling station obviously has to be staffed by at least two persons and, in the case of huts, power, toilet facilities and ramps have to be provided. The total costs associated with the provision of polling stations in 2011 amounted to a little under £207,000, the average cost per polling station being £1335.50.
- 4.3 The recommendations in this report propose a net reduction of two polling districts which will create an estimated saving of around £2,700 at current prices in the cost of elections.in the 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.

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Peter Goss Democratic Services Manager

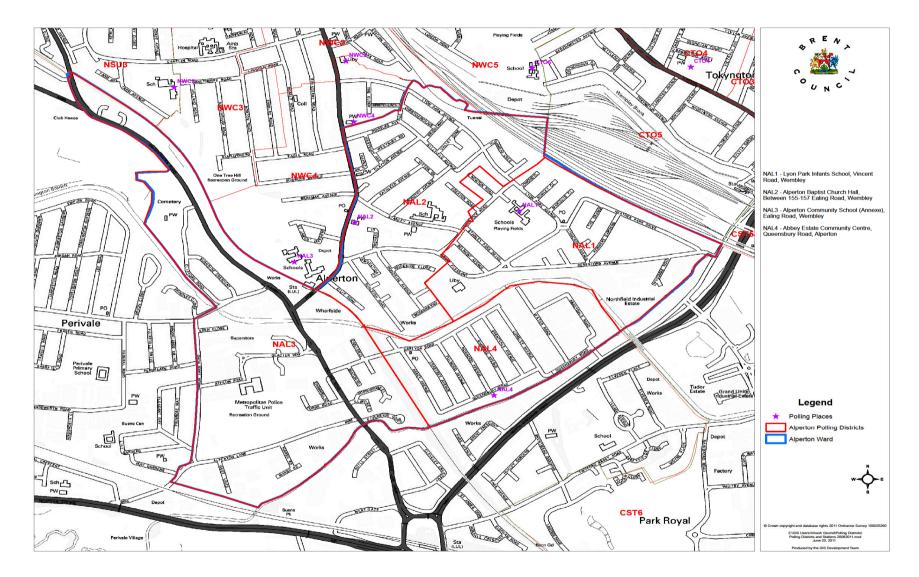
RATIO OF POLLING STATIONS TO ELECTORATE IN LONDON

London Borough	Electorate	stations	No of temporary huts used as polling stations	Electors per polling station	Rank
Barking & Dagenham	120,716	127	0	951	1
Barnet	226,581	160	10	1416	19
Bexley	172,086	122	10	1411	17
Brent	200,094	164	17	1220	7
Bromley	234,899	185	2	1270	9
Camden	148,155	84	0	1764	31
City of London	6,502	4	0	1626	27
Croydon	247,915	147	6	1687	29
Ealing	228,133	171	17	1334	15
Enfield	205,157	175	7	1172	3
Greenwich	163,388	124	10	1318	11
Hackney	147,904	78	0	1896	33
Hammersmith & Fulham	123,635	93	1	1329	13
Haringey	164,112	101	10	1625	26
Harrow	169,474	120	0	1412	18
Havering	180,074	132	0	1364	16
Hillingdon	192,921	154	1	1252	8
Hounslow	176,906	109	15	1623	25
Islington	139,814	95	0	1472	22
Kensington & Chelsea	104,021	96	4	1084	2
Kingston upon Thames	113,564	94	5	1208	5
Lambeth	206,892	121	0	1710	30
Lewisham	181,185	109	6	1662	28
Merton	141,710	117	1	1211	6
Newham	188,497	125	0	1508	24
Redbridge	194,191	135	2	1438	21
Richmond upon Thames	134,222	90	4	1491	23
Southwark	189,882	107	1	1775	32
Sutton	136,487	95	0	1437	20
Tower Hamlets	156,661	119	3	1316	10
Waltham Forest	174,281	131	0	1330	14
Wandsworth	225,920	171	0	1321	12
Westminster	141,643	120	0	1180	4
Totals	5,537,622	3,975	132	1393	

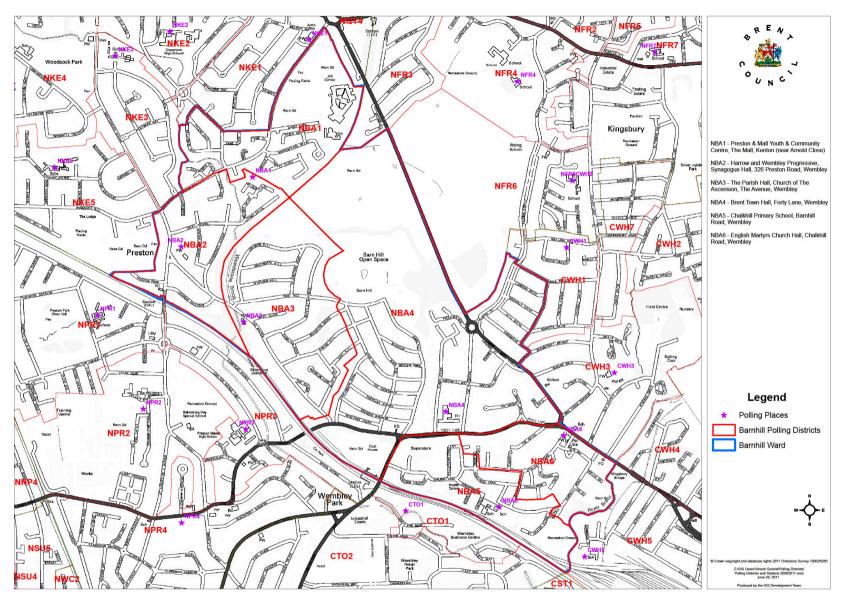
Source: Figures collated by the government to calculate funding for local authorities conducting the 2011 referendum

Appendix B

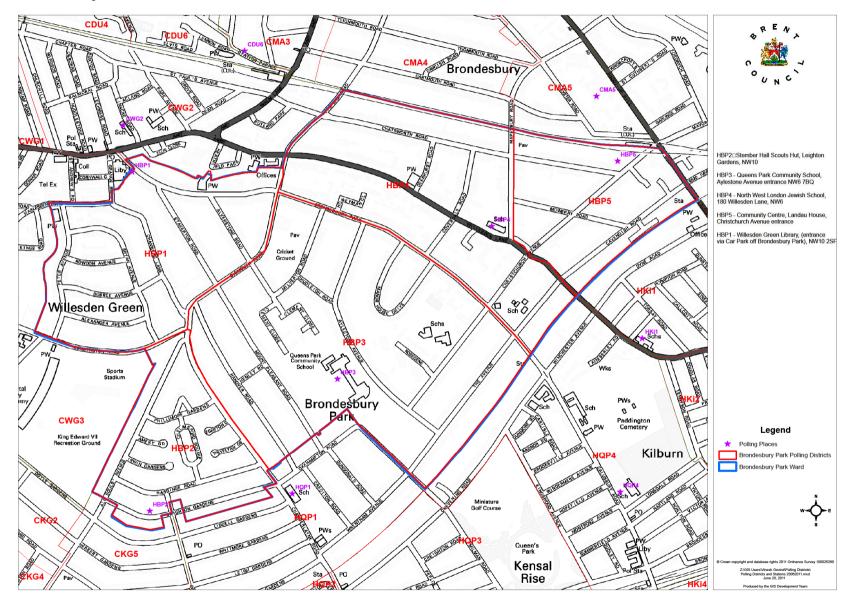
Alperton



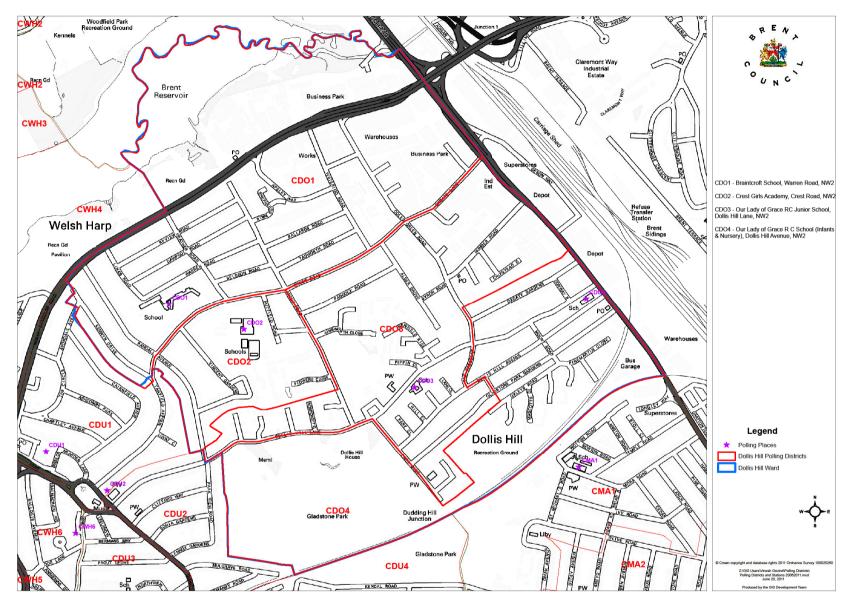
Barnhill



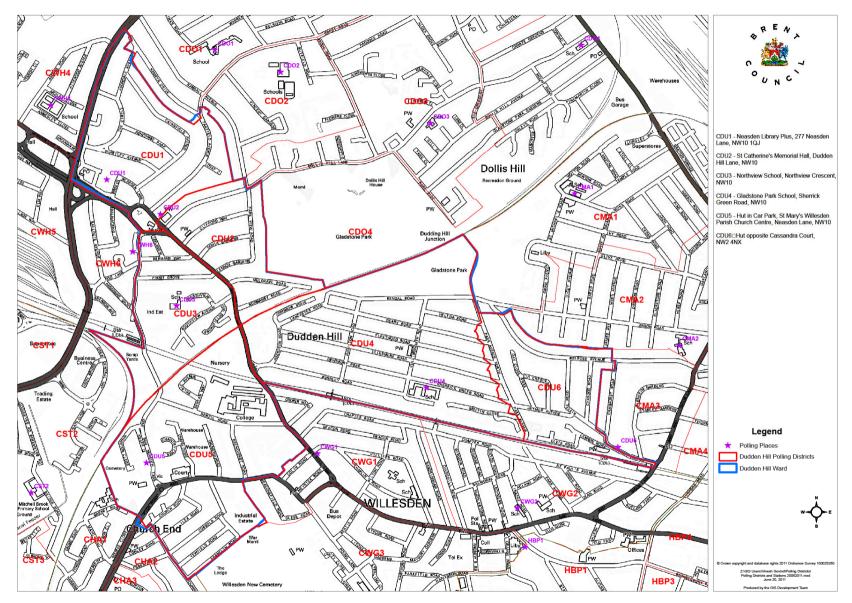
Brondesbury Park



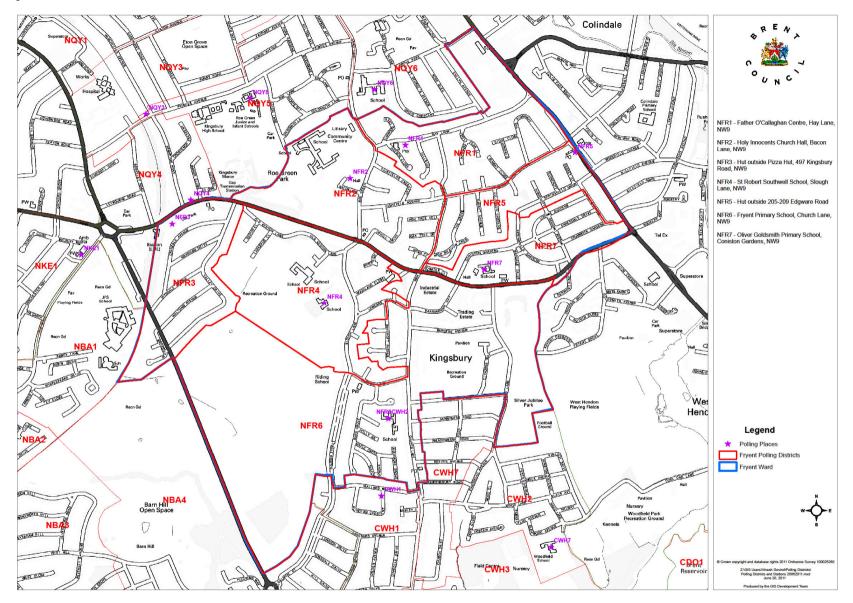
Dollis Hill



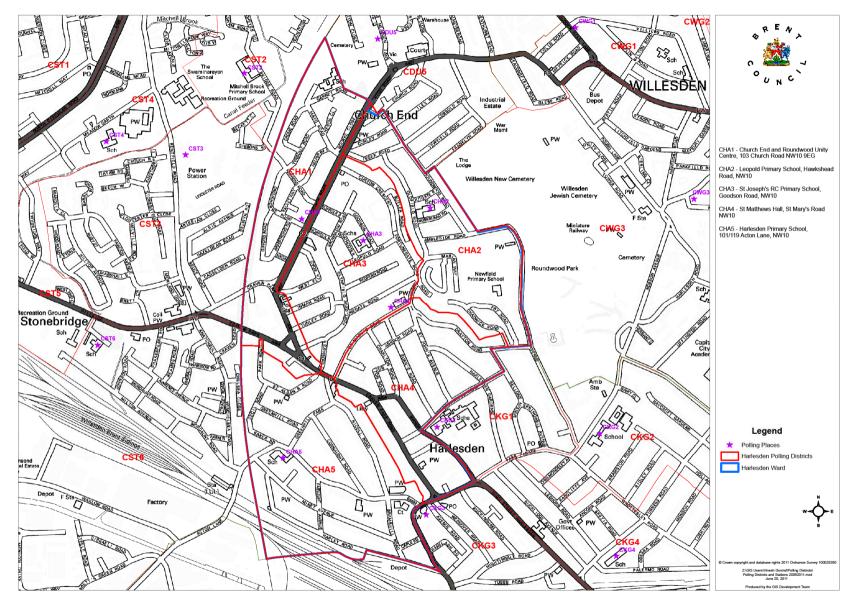
Dudden Hill



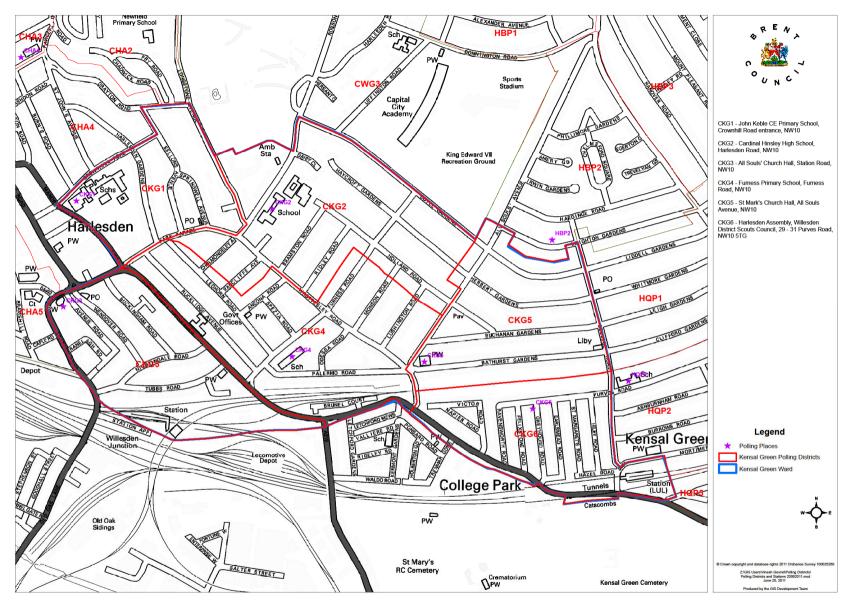
Fryent



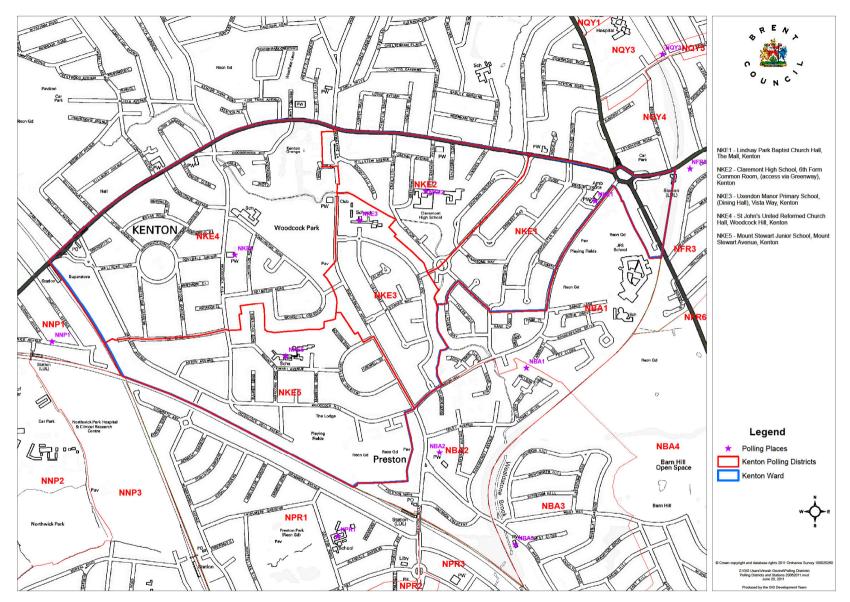
Harlesden



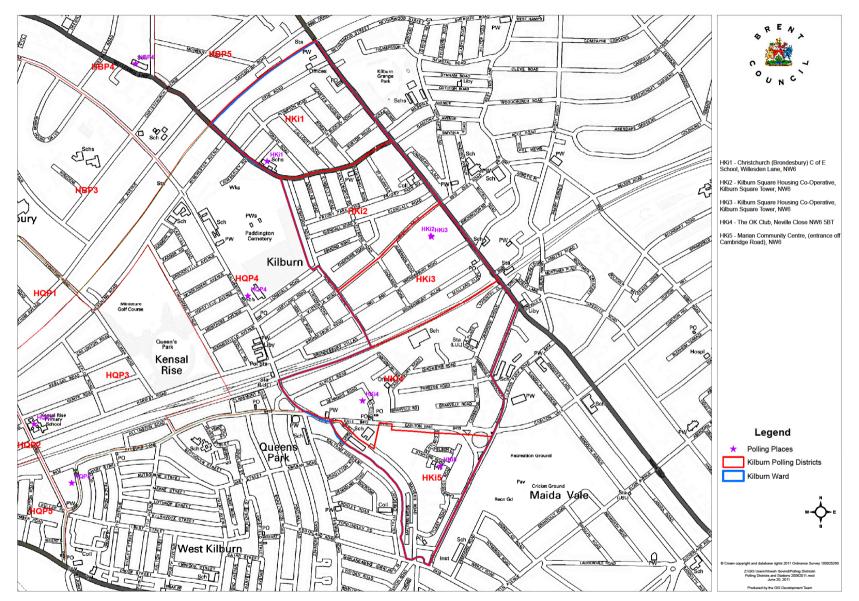
Kensal Green



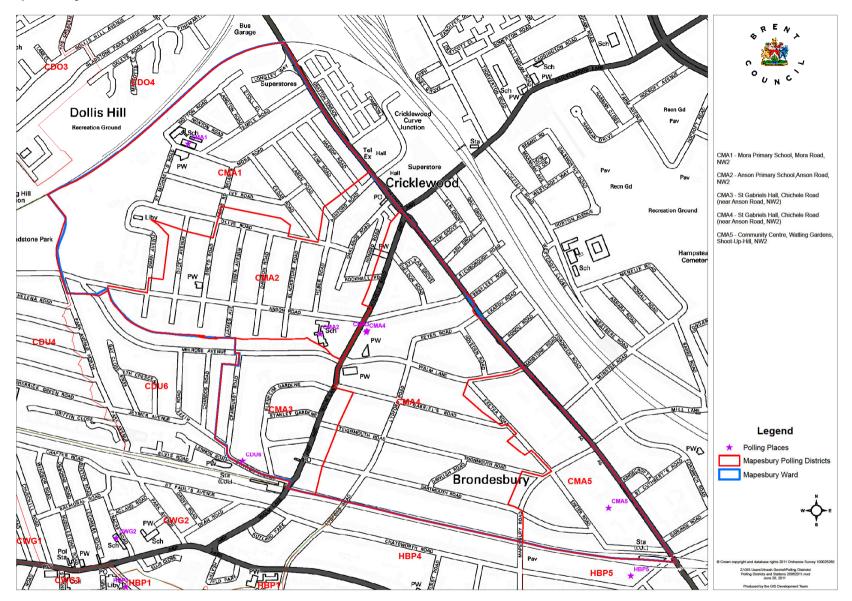
Kenton



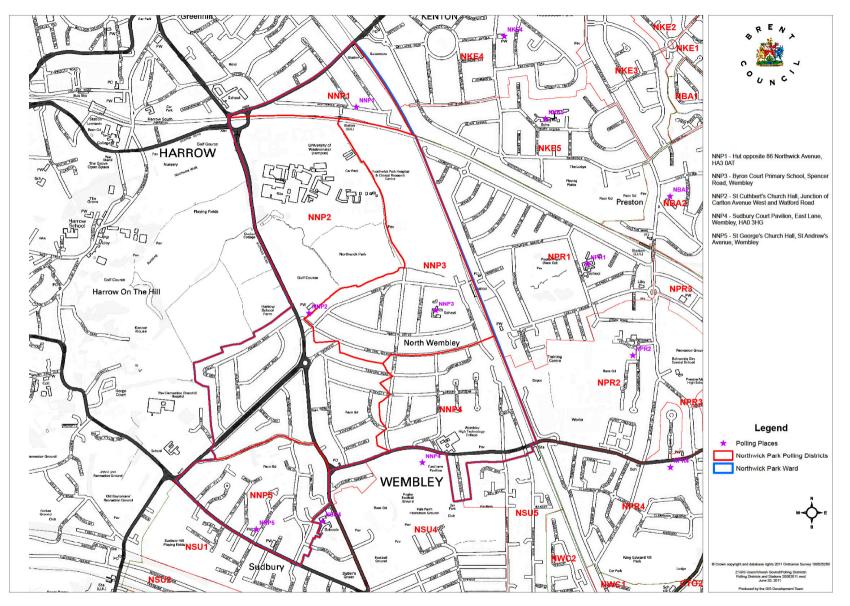
Kilburn



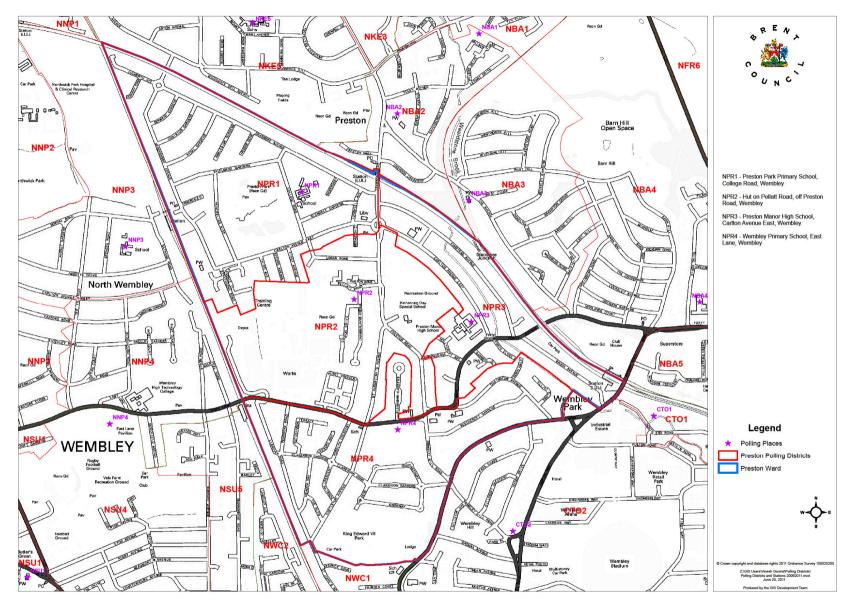
Mapesbury



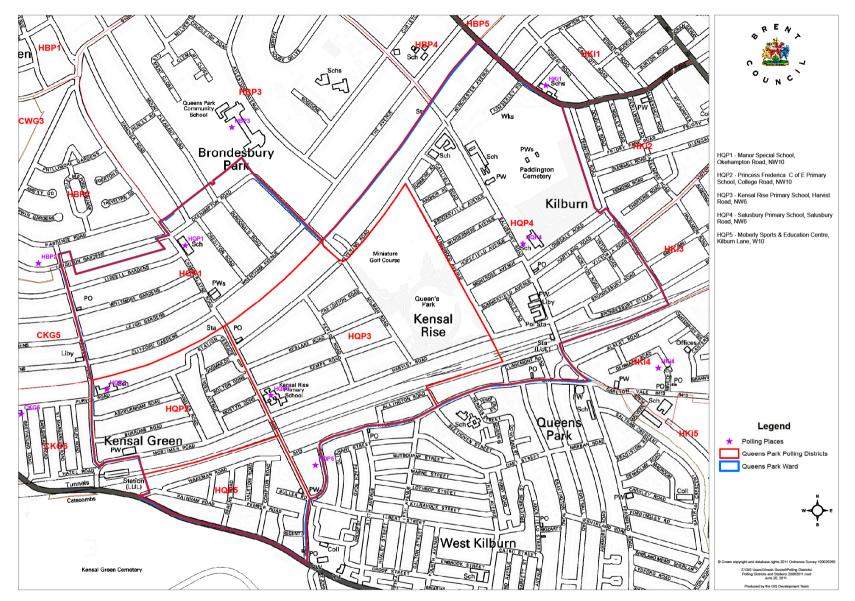
Northwick Park



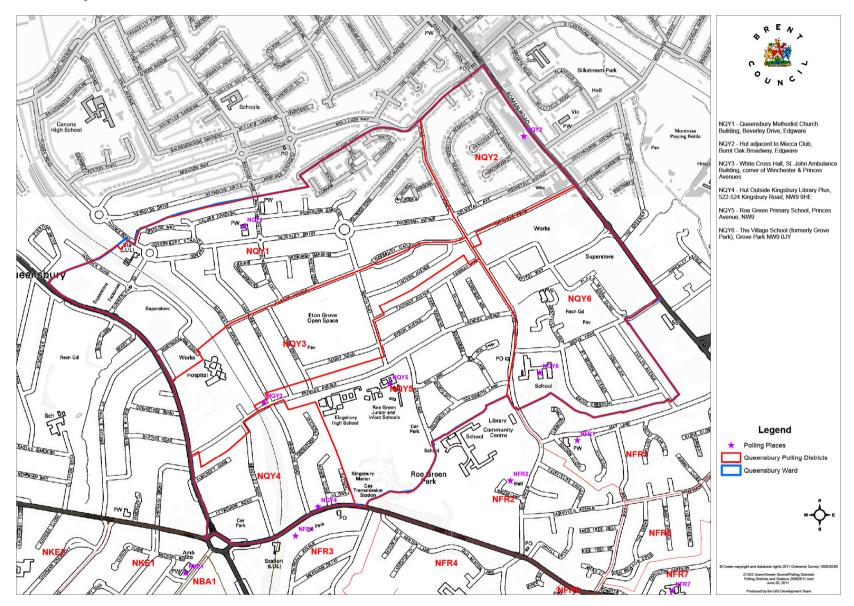
Preston



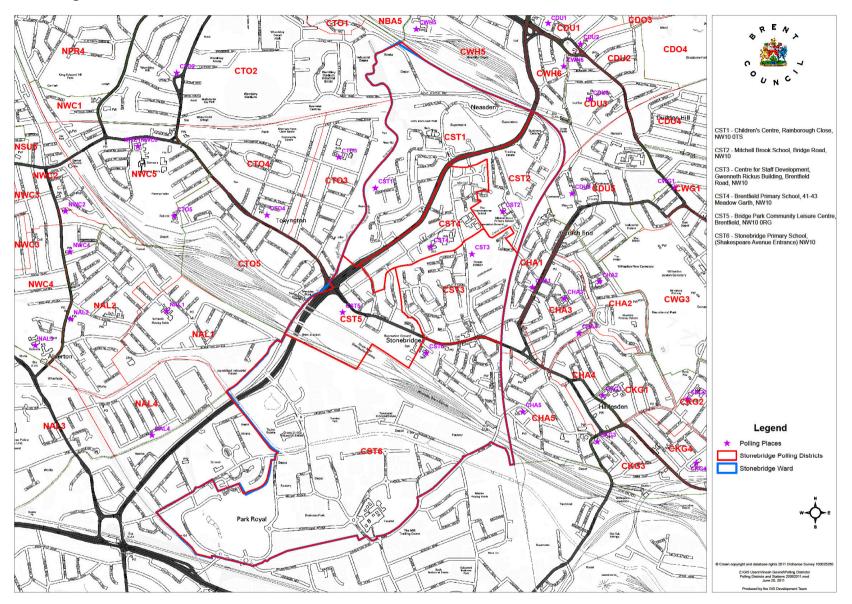
Queens Park



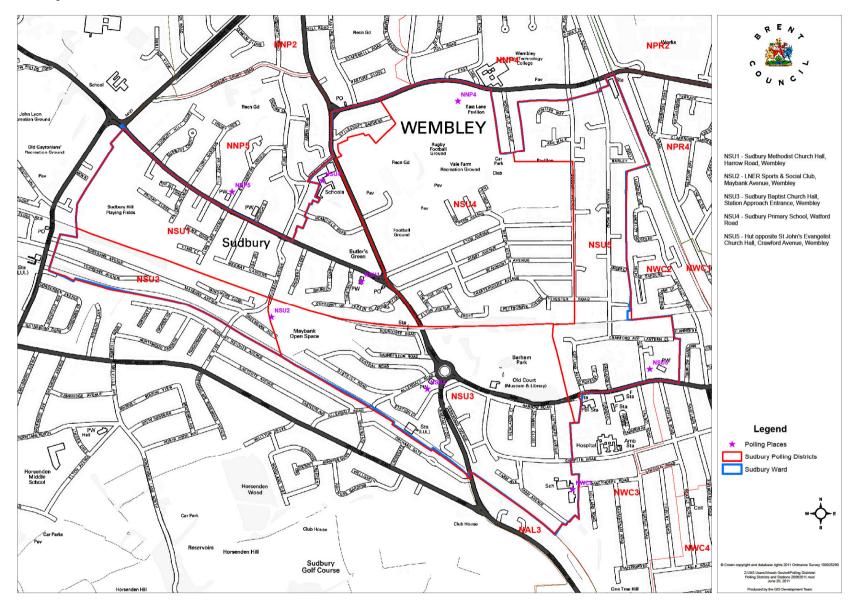
Queensbury



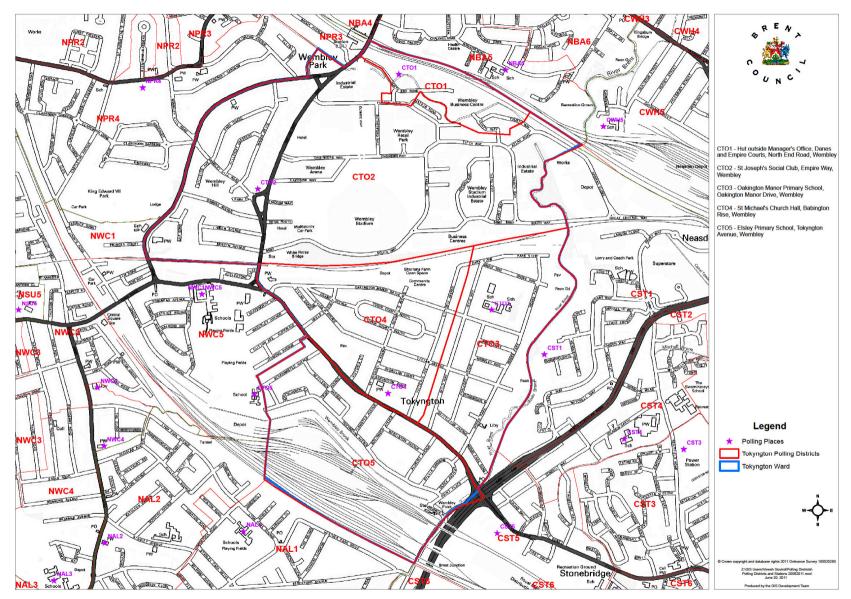
Stonebridge



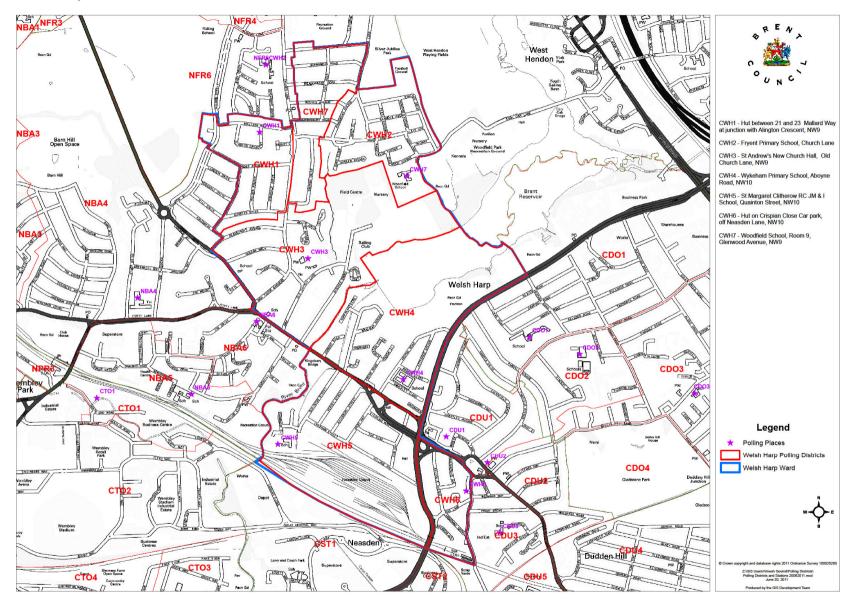
Sudbury



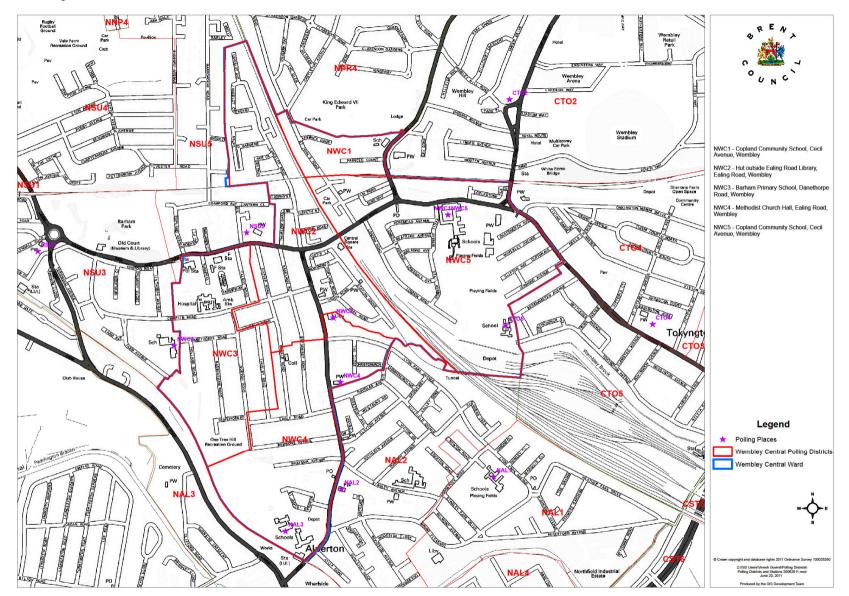
Tokyngton



Welsh Harp



Wembley Central



Willesden Green

