

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Council
Date: 27 November 2019
Report for: Decision
Report of: Chief Executive/(Acting) Returning Officer

Report Title

Polling District and Polling Places Review

Summary

The report sets out proposals to enable the Council to comply with its statutory duty to review all Parliamentary polling districts and polling places and to review all local government polling districts and polling places at the same time.

Recommendations

- 1. That the Review Proposals for polling districts and polling places, as set out in Appendix B to this report, be approved by Council.**
- 2. That authority is delegated to the (Acting) Returning Officer in consultation with the Group Leaders to identify and approve the use of alternative suitable buildings that could be used as a polling place, if necessary and in the event that any approved polling places become unavailable for use on the date of the election.**

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Nicola Quinn Senior Officer - Elections
Extension: 4005

Background Papers:

The background papers to this report are published documents. A summary of comments received as part of this process are included or referred to in this report

Implications:

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|---|---|
| Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities | These proposals indirectly link to all of the corporate priorities in that they seek to ensure that the electors of Trafford are able to vote. |
| Financial | There are no financial implications directly associated with this report. |
| Legal | The main body of this report details the provisions of relevant the Electoral Administration Acts in relation to polling district reviews. |
| Equality & Diversity | The proposals before Members have been assessed having regard to equality and diversity requirements. The Council's Equality and Diversity Manager has been consulted and is satisfied with that the proposals meet the Council's obligations in this regard. |
| Sustainability Implications | There are no sustainability implications directly associated with this report. |
| Staffing/ E-Government/ Asset Management | There are no staffing, e-government or asset management implications directly associated with this report. |
| Risk Management | There are no risks directly associated with this report. |
| Health and Safety | Issues of the health and safety of electors and polling station staff have been considered as part of this report. |

1. Introduction and purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the Council's proposals for the statutory review of polling districts and polling places.

2. Background

- 2.1 Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council has a duty to divide their area into polling districts, to designate polling places for those polling districts, and to keep their electoral arrangements under review.
- 2.2 The Electoral Administration and Registration Act 2013, introduced compulsory timescales for the completion of statutory reviews of parliamentary polling districts and polling, reflecting the requirements as set out in Fixed Team Parliamentary Act 2011. The Council completed its last review between October 2013 and January 2015 and therefore, in accordance with the 2013 Act, the Council's next review must be completed between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020.

3. The Designation of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations

- 3.1 The Council is responsible for the designation of polling districts within the borough. In the determination of polling district boundaries the Council must ensure that all electors in each area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
- 3.2 The Council must also designate a polling place for every polling district. This is usually with the boundary of the polling districts unless there are special circumstances e.g. lack of suitable buildings.
- 3.3 In designating polling places, the Council must seek to ensure that:
- all the electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances; and
- so far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places they are responsible for are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled, and when considering the designation of a polling place, must have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons.
- 3.4 The allocation of polling stations within polling places is not a Council function but is instead it is the responsibility of the (Acting) Returning Officer.
- 3.5 The polling station is the actual area where the voting takes place i.e. the room or area where electors cast their vote. The (Acting) Returning Officer is responsible for the designation of the polling station which must be in the polling place agreed by the Council.
- 3.6 In designating polling places, the Council utilises its powers under the Representation of the People Act 1983 when dividing constituencies into polling districts and also in dividing wards into polling districts at local government elections. Polling districts for local government elections are not automatically part of the statutory review. However the Electoral Commission advises that polling districts for UK parliamentary and local government elections should always be the same. It therefore follows that any review of parliamentary polling arrangements should be conducted simultaneously with one of local government arrangements, and with those for any other type of election for which provision is made for the designation of polling districts and polling places, for example, the Combined Authority Mayoral Election.

4. The Review

- 4.1 Notice of the review of polling districts and polling places was given on 3 July 2019 and information about the review, including details of the current polling stations were published on the Council's website, all Trafford Libraries and at Trafford Town Hall Reception.

As part of the public consultation process, the following were individually contacted:

- All Trafford Councillors
- Graham Brady MP Altrincham and Sale West Constituency

- Kate Green MP Stretford and Urmston Constituency
- Mike Kane MP Wythenshawe and Sale East Constituency
- Joanne Roney CBE the (acting Returning Officer for Wythenshawe and Sale East Constituency)
- Disabled Groups
- Trafford Partnerships
- Trafford Planning Department

Interested persons or organisations were invited to submit comments and suggestions.

- 3.3 Election Officers undertook visits to polling places during the consultation. The purpose of these visits was to assess the suitability of existing arrangements and identify alternatives where required.

4. The (Acting) Returning Officers Recommendations

- 4.1 During the consultation process throughout July and August 2019 a total of nine comments and representations were received by the Council. The comments and representations received are contained at Appendix A to this report.
- 4.2 The comments and representations received indicated that most of the arrangements were felt to be satisfactory and some concerned amendment to some of the existing polling places in particular, with a view to reducing the number of schools that are used as polling places.
- 4.3 Having carefully reviewed the comments and representations received, the (Acting) Returning Officer has proposed a small number of changes polling stations in particular, to address requests to reduce the number of schools that we use as polling places.
- 4.4 The (Acting) Returning Officer sought to identify suitable buildings for use as polling places, taking into consideration the following factors:
- Location and accessibility to electors within the polling district
 - Size – can it accommodate more than one polling station if required
 - Accessibility – is the building accessible to all those entitled to vote at the polling station
 - Availability – is the building readily available in the event of an unscheduled election
 - Facilities available in the venue including parking, heating, lighting, toilet facilities and security
 - Public buildings -the election rules allow the Returning Officer the free use of buildings maintained by the council including schools maintained by the authority and free schools. These will be identified in the first instance.
 - Private buildings – in the absence of suitable public owned buildings, churches, clubs and other private sector buildings conveniently located and accessible to electors are considered for designation as the polling place

- Mobiles – in the absence of any suitable public or private building in or adjacent to the polling district a mobile will be considered for designation as a polling place. Given the difficulties of heating, lighting, security, comfort of staff and electors, the negative reaction from residents living close to the site of a mobile and the significantly higher cost of locating a mobile polling station, these are considered only as a last resort.

4.5 The attached Appendix B sets out the (Acting) Returning Officer’s review proposals in full. The proposed changes to polling stations are specifically detailed at paragraph 4.11 below.

4.6 A summary of the (Acting) Returning Officer’s proposals:

- We currently use a total of 27 schools and as a result of the review we have identified alternatives polling stations for 12 school which means that, should the proposals be approved by Council, we could release at total of 12 schools ;
- Out of the remaining 15 schools we will be continuing to use, 10 are able to stay open on polling day and only 5 schools will be required to close on the day of elections.

4.7 In drawing up proposals for alternative polling stations the Returning Officer has followed the guidance of the Electoral Commission in respect of arrangements for voters.

4.8 The proposals have been considered by Group Leaders and the Elections Working Group.

4.9 The Council is requested to consider the proposals detailed in Appendix B and to approve the proposals incorporating any changes considered appropriate in order to fulfil the Council’s statutory duties in respect of relevant legislation.

4.10 To mitigate risks of disruption to the election process, the Council is also recommended to authorise the Chief Executive as (Acting) Returning Officer in consultation with the Group Leaders to identify alternative polling places to be used, if necessary, for any other polling stations unavailable on the date of the election.

4.11 It is proposed that the arrangements as set out in Appendix B are approved. Most of the arrangements remain unchanged but the table below sets out the (Acting) Returning Officer’s proposed changes to polling stations:

| Proposed changes to Polling Districts and Polling Stations | | | |
|---|------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Ward | Polling District | Current | Proposal |
| Altrincham | 1ALF | Altrincham Town Hall Market Street | Altrincham Library, 2 Pott Street, Altrincham, WA14 1AH |

| | | | |
|------------|------|--|--|
| | | Altrincham, WA14 1PG | |
| Bowdon | 1BDB | Bollin Primary School Apsley Grove, Bowdon WA14 3AH | St Luke's Church, Vicarage Lane, Bowdon, WA14 3BJ |
| Broadheath | 1BHB | Broadheath Primary School Sinderland Road Altrincham, WA14 5JQ | Broadheath Community Hall, 160 Sinderland Road, Altrincham, WA14 5JQ |
| Broadheath | 1BHC | Tyntesfield Primary School Alma Road Sale, M33 4HE | Woodheys Park Pavilion, Kenmore Road/ Woodhouse Lane, Sale, M33 4LP |
| Hale Barns | 1HBA | Elmridge Primary School Wilton Drive Hale Barns WA15 0JF | All Saints Church Hall, Hale Road, Hale Barns, WA15 8SP |
| Hale Barns | 1HBB | Well Green Primary School Briony Avenue Hale WA15 8QA | Well Green Lodge, Wellfield Lane, Hale, WA15 8NW |
| St Marys | 1SMA | Firs Primary School Firs Road Sale M33 5EL | Sale West Conference Centre, Room 3, Manor Avenue, Sale, M33 5JX |
| Timperley | 1TIC | Willows Primary School Victoria Road, Timperley WA15 6PP | Timperley Methodist Church, Stockport Road, Timperley, WA15 7UG |
| Village | 1VID | Broomwood Primary School Mainwood Road Timperley WA15 7JU | Broomwood Community Wellbeing Centre, Mainwood Road, Timperley, WA14 7JU |
| Gorse Hill | 2GHB | Gorse Hill Primary School Burleigh Road, Stretford M32 0PF | Gorse Hill Studios, Cavendish Road, Stretford, M32 0PS |
| Stretford | 2STB | Victoria Park Infant School Henshaw Street Stretford M32 8BU | Metros Sport and Social Club, Moss Road, Stretford, M32 0AH |
| Urmston | 2URC | Urmston Primary School Wycliffe Road Urmston M41 5AH | Urmston Library, 34 Urmston Way, Urmston, M41 0NA |
| Sale Moor | 3SAB | Lime Tree Primary School Budworth Road Sale M33 2RP | St Francis Church Centre, Budworth Road, Sale, M33 2RP |