

## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Council  
**Date:** 22 January 2014  
**Report for:** Decision  
**Report of:** Chief Executive

### 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 Final Review Proposals for polling districts and polling places, as set out in Appendix 2 to this report, be approved by Council.**
- 2. That responsibility for the on-going review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations between the four yearly reviews be delegated to the Electoral Registration Officer in consultation with the Group Leaders.**

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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Extension:

### 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

## 1. Background

### Polling District and Places Review

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a duty for all polling districts and polling places to be reviewed every four years. The Council's first review was carried out in autumn 2007, and a subsequent review took place autumn 2011. Any amendments that are necessary are carried out on an annual basis.
- 1.3 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 included a new provision altering the timing of statutory reviews of Parliamentary polling districts and places. This means that all local authorities have a duty to complete a statutory review of their polling districts and polling places between 1 October 2013 and 31 January 2015. Subsequent reviews must be every five years within a sixteen month period beginning with 1 October 2018.
- 1.4 As a result of the legislative changes and requirements to manage the transition to Individual Electoral Registration from July 2014, the canvass for the Register of Electors 2014 was delayed and carried out over the winter period. The Register will be published on Monday 17 February 2014. Any changes resulting from this review of polling districts and places will take effect from the publication of that register.
- 1.5 The responsibility for designating polling districts is for the Council to determine. In drawing up polling district boundaries the Council must ensure that all electors in the area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances. The Council must also designate a polling place for every polling district. It is expected that this should usually be within the boundary of the polling district.
- 1.6 In designating polling places, the Council must:
  - a) Seek to ensure that all the electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
  - b) Seek to ensure that 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.
- 1.7 The polling station is the actual area where the voting takes place i.e. the room or area where electors cast their vote. The Returning Officer is responsible for designating the polling station which must be within the polling place agreed by the Council.
- 1.8 In drawing up recommendations for polling stations the Returning Officer has followed the guidance of the Electoral Commission in respect of arrangements for voters.

1.9 The following steps have been completed by the Council in conducting the review:

- The Council announced that a review was to take place.
- The Council consulted the Acting Returning Officers responsible for constituencies within the borough and asked them to make representations on existing and proposed polling arrangements.
- The Council published the Returning Officer's proposals and invited comments.
- Comments were sought from people who have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability.
- Comments were sought from the Head of Planning to understand the potential impact on Polling Districts of population increase.
- Representations were invited from elected representatives and political parties.
- Any elector was able to representations either online or in writing.
- All representations and comments have been considered prior to the recommendations being submitted to council for approval.

1.10 The Review commenced on the 1 October 2013. Interested persons or organisations had until Friday 8 November 2013 to put forward comments and suggestions.

1.11 As a result of this process, most of the arrangements were felt to satisfactory. However, the Returning Officer proposed a small number of changes to polling districts and polling stations. The proposals were published on 18 November and further comments were requested by the 12 December 2013. These proposals can be found on the Council's website at <http://www.trafford.gov.uk/about-your-council/elections/polling-district-and-polling-places-review.aspx>

1.12 Comments received as part of this second round of consultation are set out at Appendix 1. These have been carefully considered and it is proposed that the arrangements as set out in Appendix 2 - Scheme of Polling Stations - are approved. Most of the arrangements remain unchanged but the following ones are proposed:

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Changes Proposed and Comments</b>
Broadheath	<p>The normal polling station for 1BHF is the mobile polling station at St Andrews Avenue/Bridge Grove. However, Willows Primary School was used for the PCC election. It is proposed that we revert back to the mobile unit as this is more convenient for voters.</p> <p>Proposals about new polling districts in Broadheath were considered as part of the review but no changes are proposed at this stage following detailed analysis of footfalls and potential buildings. This will be kept under review.</p>

St Marys	The Avenue Methodist Church to be used as the polling station for polling district 1SMB instead of Woodheys Primary School. This venue has been assessed for suitable, accessibility, convenience and meets with the required standards.
Davyhulme East	Create an additional polling district in Davyhulme East (2DED) due to the high volume of electors in 2DEA and new polling building as Urmston Masonic Hall, Westbourne Road, Urmston. This venue has been assessed for suitable, accessibility, convenience and meets with the required standards.
Flixton	Use Flixton Junior School in 2FLC for the combined Local and European Election on 22 May 2014 then revert back to the Flixton Centre for future elections
Brooklands	Use The Life Centre as the polling station in 3BLA. This venue has been assessed for suitable, accessibility, convenience and meets with the required standards.

- 1.13 The following wards were highlighted for potential changes in the proposals issued in November but are not recommended for changes.

Ward	Comments
Hale Barns	The consultation proposed using All Saints Meeting Room for 1HBA. However, no immediate changes are proposed following representations about access due to building works. It is recommended that this is kept under review.
Stretford	It was suggested that we review some of the arrangements in the ward. However, following further consideration, no changes are proposed and current arrangements are satisfactory.

### Register of Electors

- 1.14 The revised Register of Electors 2014 will be amended to reflect the new polling districts following the annual canvass. The first register based on the revised electoral arrangements will be published on 17 February 2014, implemented for any elections that follow this.
- 1.15 The Electoral Registration Officer will monitor the actual elector increases on a yearly basis following the conclusion of the annual canvass.

### **Implications:**

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.