

POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW

Reporting Officers: Head of Democratic Services and Electoral Services Manager

SUMMARY

1. Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, as amended by the Electoral Administration Act 2013, the Council has a statutory duty to conduct a regular review of its polling districts and polling places. The current review must be completed by 31 January 2015. The last such review was completed in 2011.
2. The aim of the review is to seek to ensure that:
 - (a) all the electors in the borough have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances; and
 - (b) so far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places are accessible to all electors, including those with disabilities.

RECOMMENDATION: That, with the aim of ensuring a consistent level of provision of 3 Polling Places per ward wherever possible, the proposed polling arrangements within the Borough, be approved.

INFORMATION

3. The aim of the exercise is to make voting convenient to electors, providing places that are well located within communities, avoiding road safety hazards and using any existing boundaries (i.e. open space land, railway lines etc) but with an eye to economising where possible – particularly in view of the number of electors who now choose to vote by post.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

4. To ensure clarity in discussing issues arising from the review the following definitions are used:
 - **polling district**; 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.
 - **polling place**; 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.
 - **polling station**; the actual area where the process of voting takes place, and must be located within the polling place designated for the particular polling district.

REVIEW PROCESS

5. Public Notice of the review was published at the Council Offices, in Hillingdon People, on the council website, and sent to all Councillors, the three local MP's, various residents associations, community groups and libraries. Views were

invited from residents, local political parties and councillors as well as such persons as the Council thinks have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability. Documentation provided included ward maps showing polling station locations as well as polling boundaries and also the electorate served by each polling area. The consultation concluded on 31 December 2014.

6. There is no requirement to change existing arrangements if it is felt that these are suitable, but consultation must take place so that the process is seen to be open and fair and any decision to make no change must be clearly supported by a reason, such as that the current arrangements are considered satisfactory.
7. The Returning Officer must comment on all existing polling stations and any proposed or possible new ones. His comments were included in the consultation documents issued.
8. The final stage of the review is for Council to consider all the proposals and comments received, approve and then publish the results of the review. The completion of this review does not preclude reviewing polling places further should circumstances change e.g. a better venue becomes available or an existing polling place is no longer available.
9. The responses received are all listed in the appendices by Ward and one general response is included at Appendix A.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10. The costs of the public consultation were met from existing budgets. The net effect of the proposals would produce a reduction of approximately £2,500 on polling location hire and staffing costs. It is only local elections where this cost is met by the authority.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11. The Representation of the People Act 1983, as amended by the Electoral Administration Act 2013, places a duty on all local authorities to review all polling districts and polling places every five years. This report seeks to give effect to this duty.

EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

12. The aim of the exercise is to make voting convenient to electors, providing places that are well located within communities, avoiding road safety hazards and using any existing boundaries.
13. The review is based on the number of electors on the current register of electors. The borough currently has 74 polling districts. Each polling district should serve approximately equal numbers of electors and polling locations should be 'logical' i.e. electors should not have to travel past another polling place to get to their own and none should be shared by different wards.

14. This exercise does not allow the movement of ward boundaries. Any issues relating to this would be dealt with as a different exercise. This is merely to determine whether the electors in each ward are best served by the current polling arrangements.
15. An additional element in this year's review has been the effect of Individual Elector Registration (IER) upon overall elector numbers. Pilots have shown that IER can, initially, result in a decrease in the number of people registered. Although the full effect of IER on elector numbers in Hillingdon will not be known until late 2015, the publication of the most recent register in December 2014 (the first such since the IER process commenced) has already seen a reduction of 4416 people registered to vote in a Parliamentary election in comparison with the figure used in the initial consultation.
15. The Wards where the consultation has produced proposals for change, or are exceptions to the principal of having three Polling Places per ward, are summarised below. The detail of all wards is attached as an appendix. Maps showing all the proposed polling stations are available as a background document, in the Group offices and on the Council website.

Ward	Recommendation
Botwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the electorate size and high voting turnout, there are grounds for retaining 4 polling districts in this ward • HB2 - Albert Hall, Albert Road - relocate to Hayes and Harlington Community Centre as used at last election. • HB4/HB5 - combine at Wood End Park School, Judge Heath Lane.
Brunel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UA3 - relocate to Bishopsholt School instead of St John's Church. • UA4 - remove Salem Baptist Church Hall, Uxbridge Road, and redistribute electors in the following roads to UA2, Walter Pomeroy Hall Royal Lane: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cherry Grove, Morello Avenue, Stella Close, West Drayton Road, White Heart Avenue, Barncroft Close, Barwick Drive, Glasshouse Close, Harlington Road, Hooper Drive and Little London Close, with the balance to UA3, Bishopsholt School, Royal Lane. • Move electors in the following roads from UA3 to UA2, Walter Pomeroy Hall, Royal Lane: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amberley Way, Concorde Close,

Ward	Recommendation
	<p>Cornfield Close, Hillingdon Road, Ivybridge Close, Kingston Lane, Merryfields, Orchard Way, Park Road East, The Greenway, Turnpike Lane and Whitehall Road.</p>
Charville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HC2 Hewens College, Hewens Road - relocate to Hayes End Library
Eastcote and East Ruislip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the electorate size and high voting turnout, there are grounds for retaining 4 polling districts in this ward
Heathrow Villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HD2/3 Cherry Lane School, Sipson Road - combine into single station • HD4 Sipson Christian Fellowship, Sipson Lane - close and combine with HD2
Northwood Hills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RE4, Northwood Library, Potter Street, - remove and redistribute the electors between RE1, Hillside School, Northwood Way and RE3, Harlyn Primary Nursery School, Tolcarne Drive, using Pinner Road as the natural boundary (Pinner Road electors going to RE3 along with those roads south of Pinner Road, all roads north of Pinner Road relocating to RE1).
South Ruislip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UE1 South Ruislip Christian Fellowship - electors in the following roads to be relocated to UE2: Bourne Avenue, Cedar Avenue, Great Central Avenue, Manor Gardens, Primrose Gardens, Priors Gardens and South Park Way • UE2 South Ruislip Youth Centre - relocate to South Ruislip Library • UE3 Ruislip Gardens Primary School, Stafford Road - in keeping with the principle of having three Polling Places per Ward, close and relocate to UE1.
Uxbridge North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of the former RAF site would suggest the need to retain 4 polling areas at this stage. • UF1, Hermitage Primary School, Belmont Road - relocate to Christ Church, Redford Way.

Ward	Recommendation
Uxbridge South	UG1, Uxbridge Centre, The Greenway - remove and redistribute the electors between UG2, Whitehall Infants School, Cowley Road and UG4, Cowley Meeting Hall, using the boundary of High Street and Cowley Road in UG1 to move either south to UG4 or north to UG2.
West Drayton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size of the electorate and the development at the former RAF site suggest that four polling stations should be retained for this Ward. • HG1, 2nd West Drayton Scout Hall, Rowan Road - relocate to the Meadows Community Centre, Wise Lane. • HG1 and HG2 - relocate the electors in the following roads from HG1 to HG2, St Catherine's Church Hall, Money Lane: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avenue Close Brooklyn Way Catherines Close Church Close Church Rd Copse Close Frays Close Mill Close Mill Rd Money Lane Pippins close St Martin's Rd St Martin's Close The Common The Green Wren Drive • HG1 and HG2 - relocate the electors in the following roads from HG2 to HG1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rowlheys Place Stainby Close
West Ruislip	<p>Officers have explored the possibility of an alternative location for RF3 at the Air Training Corps HQ, Ickenham Road. Pending final agreement, then electors in the following roads would move from RF2 to RF3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barnwood Close, Beaufort Road, Blenheim Crescent, Cordingley Road, Harwell Close, Ickenham Close, Ickenham Road (part) and Lysander Close

Ward	Recommendation
Yiewsley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="517 192 1382 253">• UH2 Yiewsley Baptist Church Hall, Colham Avenue - relocate to Yiewsley Library, High Street.

BACKGROUND PAPERS: Various written responses to consultation; maps of all polling locations

**General submission from Hayes and Harlington Constituency Labour Party
London Borough of Hillingdon Labour Group**

Hayes and Harlington CLP and Hillingdon Council Labour Group welcome the opportunity to participate in the review of electoral wards Polling Districts. However, we are somewhat concerned that the proposals circulated by the Returning Officer appear, on paper at least, to be part of yet another cost saving exercise by the local authority rather than a meaningful review of the current arrangements. We believe that the proposed arrangements will not lead to any meaningful savings but WILL make voting for a large number of electors more difficult and certainly less convenient.

Whilst we will, in the main, concentrate on the proposed arrangements for the Hayes and Harlington Constituency it is important to consider the arrangements as a whole.

Note: The grid below assumes that PDs sharing a single polling place counts as a single PD

Ward	Current No. PDs	Council Proposed No. PDs	Results Summary
Barnhill	3	3	No Change
Botwell	4	3	Minus 1
Brunel	4	3	Minus 1
Cavendish	3	3	No Change
Charville	3	3	No Change
Eastcote & East Ruislip	4	4	No Change
Harefield	3	2	Minus 1
Heathrow Villages	4	3	Minus 1
Hillingdon East	3	3	No Change
Ickenham	3	3	No Change
Manor	3	3	No Change
Northwood	3	3	No Change
Northwood Hills	4	3	Minus 1
Pinkwell	2	2	No Change
South Ruislip	4	3	Minus 1
Townfield	3	3	No Change
Uxbridge North	4	4	No Change
Uxbridge South	4	3	Minus 1
West Drayton	4	4	No Change
West Ruislip	3	3	No Change
Yeading	3	3	No Change
Yiewsley	3	2	Minus 1
Total Number of PDs	74	66	Minus 8

From the figures shown above it can be assumed that there is an aim to limit wards to 3 or less polling districts, that only 3 wards will have 4 polling districts and despite the large number of new homes built across the borough NO proposals have been made to increase the number of polling districts within a single ward.

Whilst we do not see it as our responsibility to comment on polling arrangements for wards outside of our constituency we are amazed that it is proposed to remove the polling district for Ruislip Gardens in the South Ruislip Ward and also to the removal of UA4 in the Brunel ward. These changes will dramatically affect the electors in these areas and we wish to assure the current ward Councillors for these wards that all of our Labour Councillors will support them if they seek to make amendments to the proposals for these wards.

The Returning Officer states in his letter that the aim is 'locate all of our Polling Places a convenient distance from the majority of electors homes, easy to find, and easily accessible to all'. This is not demonstrated when, for example, the proposal suggests the removal of Polling District HB2 (Botwell Ward) when the accessibility to the new proposed polling place is anything but convenient to any of the electors living within the current HB2 Polling District.

Generally it is clearly believed, and demonstrated, that convenient polling places near to where the majority of electors live voting turnout figures are likely to be higher.

We, as a Constituency Labour Party, along with the Labour Group, have carefully considered the proposals and have also consulted with electors. We believe that our detailed proposals, detailed below, are fair and are clearly justified. We endorse the proposal to merge polling districts that share a suitable and convenient, to all, single polling place and have, therefore, only made proposals to amend the council's proposals where there are valid and supportable reasons to do so.

We propose the following

Ward	Current No. PDs	Labour Proposed No. Pds	Results Summary
Botwell	4	4	Retain HB2
Heathrow Villages	4	5	Retain HD4 and create new PD for Cranford Cross
Pinkwell	2	3	Create 1new PD
Townfield	3	4	Create 1new PD

We are convinced that the proposals, we are submitting, are fair and equitable and will help the electors involved in being able to vote in a convenient polling place near to where they live .

This submission is supported by the councillors for the four named wards and fully supported by the Labour Group.

NB: - further, detailed responses are contained in the following appendices relating to Botwell, Heathrow Villages, Pinkwell and Townfield Wards.