

CORPORATE COMMITTEE 14 NOVEMBER 2019

Report title: Polling Districts and Polling Places Review 2019

Wards: All

Portfolio: Cabinet Members for Voluntary Sector and Partnerships (job-share): Councillor Jim Dickson and Councillor Donatus Anyanwu

Report Authorised by: Andrew Travers, Chief Executive and (Acting) Returning Officer

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Report summary

The Council has conducted a review of all polling districts and polling places under the terms of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 which requires a review to be undertaken every five years. The purpose of the review is to ensure all polling districts, polling places and polling stations in the borough serve the needs of voters. The report recommends that the changes to five polling stations are agreed. The response from the Acting Returning Officer is set out in Appendix C.

The review is separate to the current Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) review of Lambeth Council's electoral arrangements and therefore changes to polling place and districts may be required once the Boundary Commission review has been completed.

Finance summary

The Council does pay a hire charge for polling stations and also pays staff on duty; there will therefore be a small increase in the polling station budget of £1,814 as two polling stations will become double stations therefore needing six additional members of staff.

Recommendations

1. To agree the following changes to the polling stations:
 - a) That the polling place for SOB, Jubilee Primary School, Tulse Hill, Brixton, SW2 2JE, be relocated back to Raleigh Park Centre, Arodene Road, SW2 2BH.
 - b) That Wyvil Primary School, Wyvil Road, London, SW8 2TJ (VCC) be designated as a double polling station.
 - c) That Longfield Hall, 50 Knatchbull Road, SE5 9QY (VED) be relocated to Minet Library, 52 Knatchbull Road, SE5 9QY.
 - d) That St Margaret the Queen Church (STD) be relocated to the Church Hall on the same site.

- e) That St Leonard's Church Hall, 8 Tooting Bec Gardens, SW16 1RB (SVB) to be designated as a double polling station.
 - f) That Hill Mead Primary School, Moorland Rd, Brixton, London SW9 8UE (NJD) be relocated to the Key Stage 1 building from the Key Stage 2 building.
 - g) That Park Campus Academy, Gipsy Rd, London, SE27 9NP (NNC) be relocated to Kingswood Lower Site, 55 Gipsy Road.
 - h) That the polling place for Jessop Primary School Jessop Primary School, Lowden Road, SE24 0BJ (NKC) is moved to the Children's Centre on the same site.
2. To note that the polling station for NND is Berridge Road Community Resources Centre, 13-17 Bridgetown Close, SE19 1JZ
 3. To adopt a new polling district and polling places scheme as set out in Appendix A.

1. CONTEXT

- 1.1 The Council has conducted a review of all polling districts and polling places under the terms of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013. The Act requires a review to be undertaken every five years; the last review was undertaken in 2014/15. The purpose of the review is to ensure all polling districts, polling places and polling stations in the borough serve the needs of voters.
- 1.2 The Returning Officer's proposals are based on the following considerations:
- Electoral Commission guidance regarding the number of electors allocated to a polling station;
 - Suitability of polling places for use as polling stations, a station should have a maximum of 2,500 voters;
 - All voters to have a relatively equal access to polling station; and,
 - Future changes to population.
- 1.3 The review is separate to the current Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) review of Lambeth Council's electoral arrangements. The LGBCE review may result in significant changes to electoral ward boundaries in Lambeth. Therefore, no polling district boundary alterations are proposed as part of the 2019 polling district and polling place review, as any inequalities in electorate totals for each polling district will be accommodated through the use of double polling stations where required.
- 1.4 The recommendations from this review are being presented to Corporate Committee as it is the committee responsible for the discharge of the Council's functions in relation to elections (Constitution, Part 2, How the Council Makes Decisions, Corporate Committee, page 30, Rule 13).

2. PROPOSAL AND REASONS

- 2.1 For many wards there are no proposed changes. The current polling places work well; feedback from candidates, agents and voters has only indicated a limited number of issues. The changes for the whole borough are set out in the recommendations and are set out in further detail with a map in Appendix A. The tables for each ward show the electorate as at September 2019.
- 2.2 The review began in August 2019. A letter was sent to all councillors, election agents and political parties, the contact for polling places and anyone who had given feedback over the past five years to ask for their views and alternative suggestions. Following the informal/preliminary consultation a formal consultation was published on 16 October with a closing date of 13 October 2019.

<https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/elections-and-council/elections/polling-district-and-polling-place-review-2019>

- 2.3 The following issues were considered:

Tulse Hill Ward

Holy Trinity Primary, Upper Tulse Hill, SW2 2JE (SOD)

- 2.4 Councillor Mary Atkins asked that the polling station for the residents of Cressingham Gardens Estate be moved from Holy Trinity to Jubilee Primary School. Jubilee School is on a bus route and was easier to get to than Holy Trinity School.
- 2.5 In reviewing Jubilee we found that the school is in a different polling district (SOC) and is already used as a double polling station for SOC. No change is being recommended. However, any

arrangement for residents of Cressingham Gardens will be reviewed following the LGBCE review as ward boundaries would have changed.

Jubilee Primary School, Tulse Hill, Brixton, London SW2 2JE (SOB)

- 2.6 The usual voting place for SOB, the Raleigh Park Centre, was not available for the European Elections in May 2019 due to change in ownership and the polling station was moved to Jubilee Primary School. The ownership of the building has been resolved and they have agreed for the centre to be used in future elections.
- 2.7 Recommendation: That the polling place for SOB, currently at Jubilee Primary School, Tulse Hill, Brixton, London SW2 2JE (SOB) be relocated back to Raleigh Park Centre, Arodene Road, SW2 2BH.

Brixton Hill Ward

- 2.8 Councillor Tiedemann asked for an assessment of the use of schools in this ward and in Coldharbour Ward. Schools were asked to assess whether they could remain open and alternative sites were reviewed.

Sudbourne Primary Hyter Road, SW2 (SQA) Brixton Hill Ward

- 2.9 Representations about the use of this school were also received from two stakeholders who were concerned about the closure of schools on children's education and the cost to parents of having to arrange child care.
- 2.10 The following alternatives were considered:
- Corpus Christie Church Hall, Trent Road – not large enough to accommodate a double polling station.
 - Corpus Christie School – the Key Stage 1 site (infant and nursery) would have to close for the day. Therefore use of this venue would still impact on parents and children and a change of venue could lead to voter confusion as electors are used to voting at Sudbourne School.
 - Civic Centre and Town Hall – there is no suitable accommodation and it is located at the edge of the polling district so would be less accessible to the majority of voters.
 - Sudbourne Primary school has indicated that it is willing to continue to be used as a polling station. It is centrally located in the polling district and easily accessible, therefore no change is being recommended.

Holmewood Nursery School, 66 Upper Tulse Hill, London, SW2 2RW (SQD)

- 2.11 Roupell Park Community Centre, Hyperion House, SW2 1HZ was explored as an alternative, it was found to be unsuitable as it is on estate road with no blue badge parking for people who do not live on an estate. No change is being recommended.

Richard Atkins Primary, New Park Road, London, SW2 4JP (SQC)

- 2.12 The school has confirmed that it will try to schedule an inset day when elections take place and has not received any complaints from parents. A visit was made to an alternative location in the district, All Saints Church Hall, 250 Lyham Road, but the hire cost was higher and the building not as conveniently located for voters.

- 2.13 No changes are being recommended Brixton Hill Ward.

Oval Ward

Henry Fawcett Primary School, Bowling Green Street, London, SE11 5BZ (VCA)

- 2.14 There is due to be an increase in the VCA district population due to the redevelopment of Oval Gas Works so voter numbers will be kept under review in case a double polling station is needed in the future and no change is being recommended.

Wyvil Primary School, Wyvil Road, London, SW8 2TJ (VCC)

- 2.15 The number of voters at this station has increased from 1,887 to 2,630. The threshold for designating a double station is 2,500 therefore Wyvil Primary School will be designated as a double polling station.
- 2.16 Recommendation: That Wyvil Primary School, Wyvil Road, London, SW8 2TJ (VCC) be designated as a double polling station.

Vassall Ward

Van Gogh Primary, Hackford Street, London, SW9 0RD (VEB)

- 2.17 Following a request from the school, the double polling station will move from the main hall into two music rooms, accessed through a separate entrance in Durand Gardens, therefore allowing the school to remain open.

Longfield Hall, 50 Knatchbull Road, SE5 9QY (VED)

- 2.18 The polling place moved to this venue from Minet Library when the library was unavailable due to building works. Longfield Hall is not an accessible building and it is recommended that the polling station be relocated to Minet Library building using both the lending library and local studies/archive library, which will close for the day. Minet Library is fully accessible.
- 2.19 Recommendation: That Longfield Hall, 50 Knatchbull Road, SE5 9QY (VED) be relocated to Minet Library, 52 Knatchbull Road, SE5 9QY

Thornton Ward

Henry Cavendish Primary School (Balham), Hydethorpe Road, London, SW12 0JA (SSE)

- 2.20 Representations have been made by a parent and a councillor about the use of this school. The only alternative location in the polling district is Telferscot School which would also have to close for the day of any election. Henry Cavendish School is a double polling station and the current arrangements work well. This will be reviewed again following the LGBCE ward boundary review. We are therefore not recommending any change to the use of Henry Cavendish School (Balham).
- 2.21 No changes are recommended in Thornton Ward.

Streatham Hill Ward

St Margaret's Church Hall, Cricklade Avenue, Streatham Hill, London, SW2 3BH (STD)

- 2.22 The Church Hall was originally used as the polling station but was then moved to the main auditorium of the church when the hall become unavailable. Following a number of concerns about using the main auditorium of the church, and now that the hall is available again, we recommend relocating to the Church Hall. It should also be noted that the church hall is scheduled to be re-provisioned so the polling station will be kept under review.
- 2.23 Recommendation: That St Margaret the Queen Church (STD) be relocated to the Church Hall on the same site.

St Leonard's Ward

St Leonard's Church Hall, 8 Tooting Bec Gardens, SW16 1RB (SVB)

- 2.24 The number of voters at this station has increased to from 2290 to 2827. The threshold for designating a double station is 2,500 therefore St Leonards Church should be designated as a double polling station.
- 2.25 Recommendation: That St Leonard's Church Hall, 8 Tooting Bec Gardens, SW16 1RB (SVB) to be designated as a double polling station.

Coldharbour Ward

- 2.26 Councillor Tiedemann asked for an assessment of the use of schools of schools in this ward.
- 2.27 St John's Angell Town (NJA) remains open as it is able to segregate voters from pupils and teachers.
- 2.28 Loughborough Primary School (NJB) the proposed alternative, Loughborough Estate Community Office, does not meet all of the necessary criteria in terms of accessibility and location and is therefore is not recommended.
- 2.29 Hill Mead Primary School, Moorland Rd, Brixton, London SW9 8UE (NJD) – it is proposed to move the polling place to the Key Stage 1 building which is self-contained. This would enable the Key Stage 2 building (Years 3-6) to remain open. It is possible that Key Stage 1 children can be accommodated in the other building on polling day.
- 2.30 Recommendation: That Hill Mead Primary School, Moorland Rd, Brixton, London SW9 8UE (NJD) be relocated to the Key Stage 1 building from Key Stage 2 building.

Gipsy Hill Ward

The Park Campus, Gipsy Road, SE27 9NP (NNC)

- 2.31 At the suggestion of the Head of the Park Campus it is proposed that the polling station move to the Kingswood Lower Site, 55 Gipsy Road, which is next door to Park Campus and also part of the Gipsy Hill Federation. This is to avoid closing the Park Campus.
- 2.32 The consultation incorrectly stated that the polling place for NND was Berridge Road Community Church Hall, 2 Berridge Road, West Norwood, London, SE19 1EF. The polling place is Berridge Road Community Resources Centre, 13-17 Bridgetown Close, SE19 1JZ

Recommendations

- 2.33 That Park Campus Academy, Gipsy Rd, London, SE27 9NP (NNC) be relocated to Kingswood Lower Site, 55 Gipsy Road, SE27 9NP
- 2.34 To note that the polling station for NND is Berridge Road Community Resources Centre, 13-17 Bridgetown Close, SE19 1JZ

Clapham Town Ward

Macaulay CE Primary School, Victoria Rise, SW4 0NU (VHC)

- 2.35 A stakeholder raised the childcare issue arising from the school being closed and the alternatives suggested were reviewed with the following outcomes:

- Clapham Baptist Church - the Church could not guarantee availability – the Council's booking would be cancelled if someone wanted to use the premises for a funeral.
- Omnibus Theatre – the organisation would not be able to guarantee availability.
- Holy Trinity Church Hall – the hall is due to be refurbished in the next two years and therefore will be kept under review for possible use once the work is complete.
- Royal British Legion – was not interested in hosting a polling station.
- Royal Trinity Hospice – does not have a suitable room and felt that use as polling station is incompatible with hospice.

2.36 No changes are being recommended to Clapham Town Ward.

Herne Hill Ward

Jessop Primary School, Lowden Road, SE24 0BJ (NKC)

2.37 The head teacher and three parents at the school raised concerns about the school being used due to disruption to education and the cost to parents of childcare. It has been agreed with the school that the polling station is moved to the Children's Centre which is on the same site but can be segregated from the rest of the school allowing it to remain open.

2.38 Recommendation: That the polling place at Jessop Primary School (NKC) is moved to the Children's Centre on the same site.

Bishop's Ward

Johanna Primary School, Lower Marsh, SE1 7RH (VAB)

2.38 A resident of Wellington Mills asked that the polling place for the estate be moved Johanna Primary School to Oasis Hub Kennington Road, SEW1 7RH (VAC) which is closer to the estate in order as the majority of residents are elderly and would have a shorter walk to Oasis.

2.39 Due to the forthcoming LGBCE review no changes are recommended but the arrangements for Wellington Mills will be reviewed once the review is complete.

2.40 No changes are recommended to Bishop's Ward.

3. FINANCE

3.1 There will be a cost of creating two additional polling stations as six additional polling station staff will be required. The total cost of the six additional staff is £1,814 which will be funded from existing budgets. A hire fee is paid for all polling stations. This will not increase as existing polling stations will be used. All elections, apart from the Borough Council election, are funded externally.

4. LEGAL AND DEMOCRACY

4.1 The Representation of the People Act 1983 section 18D requires that local authorities designate the polling places within their Parliamentary constituencies. Under Representation of the People Act 1983, Returning Officers have the right to use certain public buildings (including schools that receive public funds) for use as polling stations at elections.

4.2. Section 18B (4) of the RPA 1983 states that in conducting a review of polling places the authority must:

- seek to ensure that all the electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;

- 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. Page 3 of 3; and,
- must be within the area of the district unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area either wholly or partly outside of the polling district.

4.3 There were no further comments from Democratic Services.

5. CONSULTATION AND CO-PRODUCTION

5.1 In August 2019 a letter was sent to all councillors, election agents and political parties, the contact for polling places and anyone who had given feedback over the past five years to ask for their views and alternative suggestions. Following the informal consultation a formal consultation was published on 16 September with a closing date of 13 October 2019. A link to the consultation report and the formal notice was also sent to all of the previous consultees and anyone who had contacted us during the informal consultation. The responses to the formal consultation are set out in Appendix B and the responses to the consultation are detailed in paragraph 2.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 No potential risks have been identified.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 An equalities impact assessment is not required. The review has ensured that any new polling station are accessible.

8. COMMUNITY SAFETY

8.1 There are no implications.

9. ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Not applicable.

10. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

10.1 The new scheme is due to be adopted on 1 December 2019 when the revised register is published.

AUDIT TRAIL

Consultation

Name/Position	Lambeth directorate / department or partner	Date Sent	Date Received	Comments in paragraph:
Councillor Jim Dickson	Cabinet Member for Voluntary Sector and Partnerships	05.11.19	06.11.19	
Andrew Travers, Chief Executive and Returning Officer	Chief Executive's Department	08.09.19	09.09.19	
Christina Thompson, Director	Finance and Investment	05.11.19	06.11.19	
Wayne Chandai, Head of the Chief Executive's Office and Democratic Services Manager	Legal and Governance	17.10.19	18.10.19	
Nisar Visram Assistant Director	Finance and Investment	05.11.19	05.11.19	
Alison McKane, Director	Legal and Governance	30.10.19	05.11.19	
David Rose, Democratic Services	Legal and Governance	05.11.19	05.11.19	

REPORT HISTORY

Original discussion with Cabinet Member	N/A
Report deadline	01.11.19
Date final report sent	06.11.19
Part II Exempt from Disclosure/confidential accompanying report?	No
Key decision report	No
Date first appeared on forward plan	N/A
Key decision reasons	N/A
Background information	Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013
Appendices	Appendix A – Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2019 and Maps Appendix B – Representations Received Appendix C - Response from the Acting Returning Officer