

Appendix 1 - Returning Officer Recommendations

Aveley & Uplands

Existing Arrangements						
Polling District	Electors 2023	Electors 2019	Properties 2023	Properties 2019	Polling Place	Summary of Comments Received
A	1826 Increase since 2019 -13 electors (1813)		1035	1035	Park Tavern, Romford Road	One
B	2510 Increase since 2019 - 66 electors (2444)		1297	1269	Aveley Community Hub, High Street	One
C	2563 Increase since 2019 - 94 electors (2469)		1509	1494	The Sycamores, Dacre Avenue	Two
D	685 Decrease since 2019- 9 electors (694)		463	463	Hugh Delargy Hall, Wood Avenue	None

Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals

Polling District A

Park Tavern was first used at polls in May 2023 due to Aveley Methodist Church Hall being deemed unsafe by the Church. One online response to the consultation confirmed it was adequate and ok. Following feedback from May 2023 polls, election staff will provide further screening or barriers onsite to more clearly define the polling station within the Tavern. considered The Impulse Leisure Belhus site was considered initially, but this was not taken further or consulted on due to the location and accessibility within the polling district.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District B

One response received to the consultation stated this was a suitable location with adequate facilities. The comment was "It's in the middle of the all the estates that make up the old village area of the town of Aveley. It also has brilliant disabled access and facilities including a changing places style disabled toilet something even the newer council offices do not have."

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District C

Two online responses were received stating that (1) parking can be difficult and (2) it was a good location. The Electoral Commission recommend that no more than 2250 electors (excluding postal voters) are allocated to a polling station. The polling place is large enough to accommodate this number of electors and two polling stations will accommodate the elector numbers if required.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District D

This is polling place accommodates a small electorate and it provides suitable and adequate facilities.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Financial Impact	
None	

Belhus Ward

Existing Arrangements						
Polling District	Electors 2023	Electors 2019	Properties 2023	Properties 2019	Polling Place	Summary of Comments Received
E1	660 Increase since 2019 - 2 electors (658)		334	333	All Saints Church Hall, Foyle Drive <i>Proposal – merge polling district with E2</i>	None
E2	1409 Decrease since 2019 - 88 electors (1497)		872	874	Royal British Legion Hall, Faymore Gardens (station 1) <i>Proposal – merge polling district with E1</i>	Two Comments on proposal – two
F	2919 Increase since 2019 – 51 electors (2868)		1764	1764	Royal British Legion Hall, Faymore Gardens (stations 2 & 3)	None

G	2302 Increase since 2019 – 34 electors (2268)	1111	1098	Temporary Structure- South Parade <i>*Proposal move to 1st Ockendon Scout Hall</i>	None
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Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals

Polling District E1 & E2

The Consultation sought comments on a proposal to merge polling district E1 and E2 with voting to take place at All Saints Church Hall for electors. This would create one new Polling District – Polling District E.

Two comments were received about the proposed move from the Royal British Legion stating it would (1) have a negative impact and (2) the British Legion was handy to get to. Both responses said the Royal British Legion Hall was accessible. Whilst the consultation was underway the LGBCE* informed the Council that they will commence a separate boundary review. The consultation did not provide evidence of a need to amend this polling district, at this time. The LGBCE will consult separately on their draft proposals for implementation at the May 2025 polls.

The Returning Officer therefore recommends no change to the current polling district boundaries or polling places

- Polling District – E1 All Saints Church Hall
- Polling District – E2 Royal British Legion Hall, Faymore Gardens (station 1)

Polling District F

The Royal British Legion Hall is used for polling for electors from Polling District E2 plus Polling District F. It is accessible. The hall can accommodate this number of electors with several stations set up inside. In May 2023 polling staff highlighted the need for further signposting within the hall. Electors did not raise any issues. The signs and staffing will be reviewed for the May 2024 election. The Electoral Commission recommend that no more than 2250 electors (excluding postal voters) are allocated to a polling station. The polling place is large enough to accommodate this number of electors and the RO will

- provide two polling stations in this polling place, for Polling District F, to accommodate the elector numbers if required and
- provide one polling station for Polling District E2 (as referred to above)

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District G

The use of a temporary polling station on South Road was agreed in 2013. Previously, the Ockendon Scout and Guide Hall was used, followed by Thurrock Garden Centre.

The use of temporary polling stations have been reviewed as part of this statutory review. The Elections Act 2022 required the Returning Officer to ensure that polling places and stations are accessible to all electors. Temporary polling stations are not ideal but have been adequate in the past. They provide limited facilities and accessibility for electors. The space within a temporary station is limited and there is not room to provide a private space to check Voter ID if required. At an election with a higher turnout, the station will not be suitable considering the additional requirements introduced by the Elections Act. The cost of temporary cabins and the risk when booking and placing on site is proportionally high. Additional resources are required to site the cabin, from Environmental Services. At this particular location there are incidences of fuel being taken from the generator even though it is not delivered until early morning to mitigate such risk. This leaves the site at risk with no fuel, lighting or electricity. The electorate allocated to this polling place is above the limit recommended by the Electoral Commission although within the limit when taking into account the number of postal voters. The electorate size does contribute to the risk as this is a large electorate in the smallest and least accessible polling places.

An alternative suitable location is available. The Ockendon Scout and Guide Hall has been reviewed and is available. The hall is 65ft x 35ft and could accommodate two polling stations if required. The hall has disabled access with a ramp and facilities plus good public transport links with a car park directly outside. There is space to provide a private area for viewing Voter ID. Facilities are available for polling staff.

The Returning Officer recommends that the Ockendon Scout and Guide Hall is designated as the polling place for Polling District G.

***Local Government Boundary Commission for England**

Financial Impact

Polling District E1 & E2 – no financial impact
 Polling District F – no financial impact
 Polling District G –
 Ockendon Scout Hall - awaiting final cost – expect circa £350-£500
 Proposed financial impact – Estimated Saving £3000

Temporary polling station costs, as of 2023 - £3854*

*This includes generator hire, fuel, transport, toilet hire, cabin, ramps and furniture

Chadwell St Mary

Existing Arrangements						
Polling District	Electors 2023	Electors 2019	Properties 2023	Properties 2019	Polling Place	Summary of Comments received
H	673 Decrease since 2019 – 6 electors (679)		393	382	Alf Lowne OAP Complex, Loewen Road <i>Proposed change to polling district boundary</i>	None
I	2672 Increase since 2019 – 83 electors (2589)		1634	1572	Delargy Close OAP Complex, Delargy Close <i>Proposed change to polling district boundary</i>	One including one comment on the proposal
J	1772 Increase since 2019 – 41 electors (1731)		930	932	Chadwell Library, Brentwood Road <i>Proposed change to Marisco Hall</i>	None
K	2255 Increase since 2019 – 1 elector (2254)		1239	1245	Chadwell Village Hall, Waterson Road	None

Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals

Polling District H

No responses were received to the online consultation. A change was proposed to Polling District I which if implemented would have had an impact on this Polling District and Polling Place. This is covered below. The polling place is acceptable and accessible, with adequate facilities for the electorate size.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling district and polling place arrangements.

Polling District I

The electorate allocated to this polling place is above the range recommended by the Electoral Commission even when the number of postal voters are removed. The polling place can accommodate two polling stations and the hall is accessible with appropriate facilities. Due to the large electorate, the Consultation asked for comments on a proposal to change the polling district boundary between Polling District H and I. This proposed that some electors from Polling District I, would vote at Alf Lowne Complex which has a far smaller electorate. Whilst the consultation was underway the LGBCE* informed the Council that

they will commence a boundary review. The LGBCE will consult separately on their proposals for implementation at the May 2025 polls. The Polling District and Place consultation did not provide evidence of a need to amend this polling district, at this time. One response indicated the proposal would have a negative impact on the elector with further to travel.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling district and polling place arrangements.

Polling District J

In 2021 the polling place was moved to Chadwell Library on Brentwood Road as the Working Mens Club would no longer hire to the Returning Officer for the purpose of an election. Chadwell Library is fairly central within the main residential area, on a main road and a bus route and parking is available. There have been no negative comments regarding the use of Chadwell Library however the review highlighted that the flow of electors and route into the area used as a polling station is not ideal. Looking ahead to an election with a higher turnout this may be an issue, but the Polling Place is otherwise suitable. No comments were received in relation to the proposed change of polling place.

Marisco Hall is situated next to the library. It is in the same location and has access to the same parking area and public transport. The hall has disabled facilities and facilities for staff and a suitable area to use for polling. The hall is available for scheduled elections but booking may be difficult for an unscheduled Parliamentary Election.

The Returning Officer recommends that

- a) Marisco Hall is designated as the Polling Place for Polling District J and
- b) In the event that Marisco Hall is not available, Chadwell Library is designated as the Polling Place for Polling District J.

Polling District K

No comments have been received about the current polling arrangements. The polling station is on a road that runs through the residential area and has transport links and parking facilities. A large hall can accommodate more than one polling station if the elector numbers increase. The electorate allocated to this polling place is on the upper limit of the range recommended by the Electoral Commission however this figure includes electors with a postal vote. A proposal has been made by the Conservative Group requesting that some electors from East Tilbury (Polling District T) vote at this polling place. This is covered under East Tilbury below. The hall is accessible with a ramp and facilities.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Financial Impact

Polling District J
 Chadwell Library – £336*
 Marisco Hall – no charge – agreed with Neil Woodbridge
 Saving/increase - negligible

*subject to internal fees and charges increase

Chafford and North Stifford

Existing Arrangements						
Polling District	Electors 2023	Electors 2019	Properties 2023	Properties 2019	Polling Place	Summary of Comments Received
L	558 Increase since 2019 – 23 electors (535)		266	265	The Pavilion, North Stifford Rec. Ground	None
M	3103 Increase since 2019 – 32 electors (3071)		1640	1639	Beacon Centre, All Saints Church, Drake Road	One
N	1966 Decrease since 2019 – 39 electors (2005)		1027	1026	Drake Community Centre, Drake Road	None

Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals

Polling District L

The Pavilion is a central and suitable location within the residential area. There is parking onsite, including disabled parking and facilities. A larger hall is available in the village but a change was not considered due to the small electorate size and no negative feedback on the current location.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District M

All Saints Church at The Beacon Centre was used as a polling place in May 2023. This was due to the unavailability of the Chafford Gorge Visitor Centre. The Visitor Centre had not been an ideal venue due to size and outside lighting. Staff provided positive feedback about the use of The Beacon Centre. One online response to the consultation highlighted dissatisfaction due to being nearer to the Polling Place for Polling District N. Polling districts M and N are built up areas with few buildings to use as polling places. The venue is well known in the area with parking directly outside, additional parking outside the shopping parade and on good public transport links. The location near the shops may help to encourage turnout. The building is accessible and has facilities for staff and the electorate. The electorate allocated to this polling place is above the recommended amount by the Electoral Commission however the Returning Officer operates two polling stations within the polling place to accommodate this. The area available for polling is able to accommodate separate polling stations.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District N

Drake Community Centre was designated the polling place for polling district N in 2011 after concerns continued to be raised about the use of Tudor Court Primary School. Drake Community Centre is not within the polling district, but it is within the ward boundary and its use is permitted. Polling districts M and N are built up areas with few buildings to use as polling stations. The current polling place appears to suit the electorate whilst working with the facilities available in the area. No responses were received to the consultation about this location however a comment was made from an elector in Polling District M, who stated this was a nearer location and they would prefer Drake Community Centre as opposed to travelling to The Beacon Centre. Parking is available to the side and rear of the centre and the building has two halls available.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Financial Impact

None

Corringham & Fobbing Ward

Existing Arrangements						
Polling District	Electors 2023	Electors 2019	Properties 2023	Properties 2019	Polling Place	Summary of Comments Received
O	1553 Decrease since 2019 – 23 electors (1576)		828	810	Thurrock Christian Fellowship, 2-4 Chase Road	Two
P	2271 Decrease since 2019 – 37 electors (2308)		1235	1235	Corringham Community Church, Fobbing Road	One
Q	598 Increase since 2019 – 22 electors (576)		489	305	Gardner Hall, High Road	One
Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals						
Polling District O						

The Christian Fellowship Centre in Chase Road has been used as a polling place since 2011. Staff of the Returning Officer have not been able to find alternative venues within the polling district and highlight that no complaints have been received regarding the use of the Christian Fellowship Centre. The Christian Fellowship Centre is just outside the polling district and the ward but on the boundary line. Two comments were received to the online consultation confirming it was a suitable location.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District P

Corringham Community Church is centrally located in the main residential area and is fully accessible. A small number of parking spaces are available off-road, however there is parking on Fobbing Road and in a nearby side road (Recreation Ave). Public transport links are available. The church is now established as the Polling Place. One comment was received to the online consultation which confirmed it was accessible. This Polling District has the largest electorate in the ward and the hall is available with a dividing wall and suitable to accommodate two polling places if required for a larger electorate or turnout.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District Q

One comment was received to the online consultation confirming it was “a perfect location and easy to access.” The hall could accommodate more than one polling station if required. It has parking onsite and disabled access and facilities.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Financial Impact

None

East Tilbury Ward

Existing Arrangements						
Polling District	Electors 2023	Electors 2019	Properties 2023	Properties 2019	Polling Place	Summary of Comments Received
R	3535 Increase since 2019 – 117 electors (3418)		2013	1993	East Tilbury Village Hall, Princess Margaret Road	Three
S	1319 Decrease since 2019 - 45 electors (1364)		670	668	Linford Village Hall, Lower Crescent	None
T	418 Increase since 2019 – 23 electors (395)		235	235	West Tilbury Village Hall, Rectory Road	None Conservative Group – joint response

Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals

Polling District R

There has been an increase in electors in Polling District R since 2019. The Electoral Commission recommendation is that no more than 2250 electors are allocated to one polling station. The elector level is above this (3535) but the figure will be lower when taking into account the number of electors who choose to vote by post. The electorate numbers require two polling stations at this polling place. The hall is large and able to meet this requirement.

Three responses were received to the online consultation. To summarise, the hall is accessible, spacious, in a good location and parking is available.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District S

No responses were received to the online consultation. The review confirmed it was a large accessible hall with parking, ramps and accessible facilities.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District T

No responses were received to the online the consultation.

The Conservative Group responded with a request to consult further on a proposal for voters to the west of Turnpike Lane voting at Chadwell Village Hall. Electoral services have identified that this refers to part of Linford Road, Biggin Lane and Sandy Lane.

The Returning Officer has considered this request and highlights the following in response

- a) The proposal would mean that East Tilbury electors would cast their vote for an East Tilbury member outside of the ward, (in Chadwell). This could cause confusion if East Tilbury ward ballot papers are mixed with Chadwell ballot papers.
- b) It would require additional staffing and the setup of an additional separate polling station in Chadwell Village Hall for East Tilbury
- c) A reduced electorate of circa 300, including postal voters, at West Tilbury Village Hall
- d) Chadwell Village Hall has a large electorate and can accommodate two polling stations if required for the Chadwell electorate. The number allocated is currently just below this requirement. A defined separate area and station would be required for a section of the East Tilbury electorate. This would impact the voters at Chadwell Village Hall.
- e) A potential change to a polling district and a ward boundary may be required. Ward boundaries are not part of the Polling District review.
- f) Polling places should only be designated outside of the ward or polling district if there are no suitable places within the district. This is not the case with this proposal.
- g) No complaints have been received about the polling arrangements from electors. Absent Voting arrangements are available if required.
- h) Electoral staff have consulted with the LLPG custodian who advises that the area to the west of Turnpike Lane is considered part of Chadwell St Mary. The Returning Officer recommends that interested parties could consider raising this in response to LGBCE proposals when warding arrangements are consulted on.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Financial Impact	
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None	
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Grays Riverside Ward

Existing Arrangements						
Polling District	Electors 2023	Electors 2019	Properties 2023	Properties 2019	Polling Place	Summary of Comments Received
U	3472 Increase since 2019 – 9 electors (3463)		2177	2175	Belmont Village Hall, Parker Road (Station 1 & 2) <i>Proposal – change polling district boundary</i>	None Conservative Group – joint response
V	1316 Decrease since 2019 – 8 electors (1324)		893	864	Inspire Youth Hub, Orsett Road	None
W	3459 Increase since 2019 – 35 electors (3424)		2589	2504	Civic Offices, New Road <i>Proposal – change polling district boundary and polling place to Seabrooke Rise</i>	One Conservative Group – joint response
Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals						

Polling District U

This is a polling place with a large electorate. Belmont Village Hall is large and two polling stations are set up to meet the needs of the electorate. Parking is available for polling staff and a designated disabled parking space. On street parking is available. Disabled facilities are available inside the hall.

The consultation asked for consideration to be given to change the polling district boundary and move some properties south of the railway line to Polling District W. No responses were received online. The Conservative Group responded stating that *“they do not believe that moving Belmont Village Hall polling station (U) to Seabrook Rise is correct. However, the Town Hall is ideally located to enable maximum voter participation. The station should, therefore, move to the Town Hall – but not be located in the middle of the Seabrook Rise housing development; as transport links by comparison to the Town Hall are sub-optimal.”*

The Returning Officer notes the response by the Conservative Group and highlights that this was not a consultation to move all the electorate of polling district U to Seabrooke Rise Community Hall. Taking into account the response and the commencement of the LGBCE* separate boundary review, the Returning Officer does not consider a need to change the current polling arrangements for Polling District U at this time. The LGBCE will consult separately on their draft proposals for implementation at the May 2025 polls.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District V

No responses were received to the online consultation.

Electoral Services considered the option to propose of this Polling Place which included a move and combined polling at Seabrooke Rise Community Hall. However, upon examining maps it was considered that electors within the residential area to the north of this polling district would be inconvenienced and potentially disenfranchised. No adverse comments had been received from electors in respect of the use of Inspire Youth Hub. This initial option was not considered viable and was not consulted upon.

Inspire Youth Hub is located on the edge of Grays town centre along the main Orsett Road. As a council owned building, access at the time of an unscheduled election is available. Parking facilities are available for staff with equipment and disabled parking is available to the side of the building. A ramp is available. The space available is not large and it would not accommodate a larger electorate but there is sufficient space for the flow of electors, polling and privacy screens.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

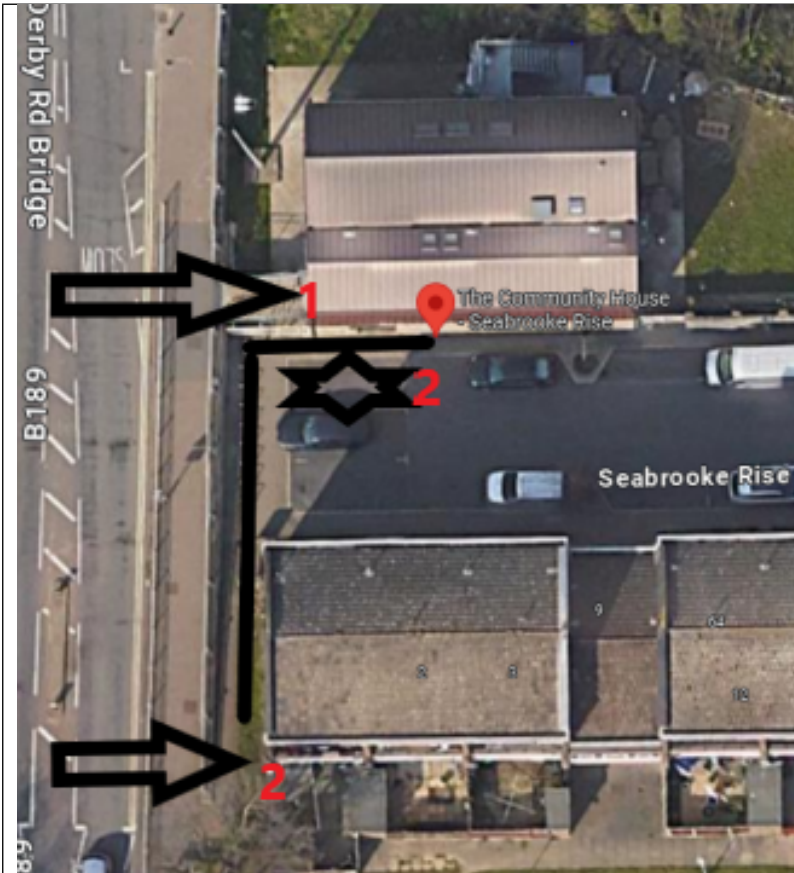
Polling District W

There has been a slight increase in electors in Polling District W since 2019. The Electoral Commission recommendation is that no more than 2250 electors are allocated to one polling station. The elector level is above this (3459) but the figure will be lower when taking into account the number of electors who choose to vote by post. The Returning Officer operates two polling stations within the polling place to accommodate the number of electors.

The Civic Offices are currently designated as the polling place for Polling District W. This can be confusing with electors unsure of where the exact station(s) will be located each year and how to enter. The main entrance for the public throughout the year is via the new Town Hall building whilst on polling day, a separate access is requested and required via the closed, old reception doors. The old reception area has been used recently which means that staff using the Civic Offices cannot access the building or security team on the ground floor area. The committee rooms in CO1 used to be the polling stations but these are no longer accessible. With an increase in staff numbers returning to work in the building, the area used in May 2023 will no longer be available. The old reception area is also being considered for other uses. The Town Hall ground floor reception does not provide a suitable location. The area used for polling needs to be a separate area, cordoned off and not accessible to people who are not using it to vote.

Seabrooke Rise Community Hall is located on Derby Road Bridge/Sherfield Road, on the corner to the Civic Offices, just along from New Road. It would provide an accessible, permanent location for a polling place. There is parking on the bridge and around Seabrooke Rise if required. This is not available on New Road for the current polling place. The Returning Officer notes the Conservative Group response to a proposed change to Polling District U, whereby they stated that *transport links to Seabrooke Rise were sub-optimal in comparison to the Town Hall (Civic Offices) and that the location is in the middle of Seabrooke Rise*. The Returning Officer believes this is not a consideration in this instance. The proposal would create a polling place on the edge of the residential area and may encourage a higher rate of voter participation amongst the residents of Seabrooke Rise.

One comment was received from the online consultation which stated that the proposed move to Seabrooke Rise would have a negative impact as the Community Hall did not have step free access.



Elections staff checked access during the review. If accessing from Derby Road Bridge there are two pedestrian access routes to the hall. There are steps with a handrail to the main entrance from Derby Road Bridge (Route 1 on the map). Route 2 is more accessible for those with a disability or the need to access with a pushchair, with access via a lift (route 2 on the map). Entrance can be gained to the access lift via Seabrook Rise and a disabled parking bay is available (marked by a star on the map). Additional signage will be supplied to highlight route 2. Communications could also be added to poll cards.

The Returning Officer recommends that

- a) Seabrooke Rise community hall is agreed as the polling place for W and
- b) In the event that Seabrooke Rise is not available or suitable, polling will revert back to a location, to be determined by the Returning Officer, within the Civic Offices or Town Hall.

Financial Impact

Proposed change to Seabrooke Rise - cost increase £400
 Civic Offices – no charge

Grays Thurrock Ward

Existing Arrangements						
Polling District	Electors 2023	Electors 2019	Properties 2023	Properties 2019	Polling Place	Summary of Comments Received
X	2342 Decrease since 2019 – 22 electors (2364)		1277	1268	Attlee Court OAP Complex, Lucas Road	One
Y	1625 Increase since 2019 – 14 electors (1611)		899	885	United Reform Church, Bradleigh Avenue <i>Proposal – alternative location Stanley Lazell Hall</i>	One - Labour Ward Member
Z	2705 Decrease since 2019 – 22 electors (2727)		1618	1605	St Thomas Parish Room, John Street	Seven
Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals						
<p>Polling District X</p> <p>There has been a small decrease in electors since 2019. The number of electors for this polling place is slightly above the level recommended by the Electoral Commission. The polling place is large enough to accommodate two polling stations if required but the electorate will be lower when taking into account the number of postal voters. Signage has been previously mentioned by members at this polling place and this was reviewed in 2023.</p> <p>One comment was received to the online consultation which stated that “access via wheelchair is impossible and the elector uses a postal vote for all the family.” This was not found to be the case in the review of the sheltered housing hall. The hall has disabled parking facilities with level access and a ramp from the car park area. The doors are wide enough to provide good access for all users. The location is a sheltered housing complex and no issues have been raised previously by electors or members. The same elector responded to a later question in the consultation stating that the complex was accessible.</p> <p>The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.</p> <p>Polling District Y</p> <p>The current polling place is United Reform Church on Bradleigh Avenue. This is on the far east boundary of the polling district and not within the main residential area.</p>						

A Labour Group Ward member requested that consultation and consideration be given to move polling back to Stanley Lazell Hall. Stanley Lazell Hall on Dell Road was reviewed and included in the online consultation. The Hall is now divided into two smaller rooms which are used as a class room and a sensory room. The hirers would be willing to accommodate polling for a scheduled election, with notice given, although space is smaller than when the venue was previously used and it would impact students. There was no access to the onsite parking and parking outside is limited with mostly permit parking between 9am and 6pm. The building was reviewed at lunchtime and no nearby parking was available. Congestion is likely to increase at peak school hours due to the location next to Quarry Hill Academy and the narrow road.

The United Reform Church offers a large accessible venue with a car park outside. The staff were pleased with the venue and the polling place is large and accommodates the size of the electorate. No comments were received to the online consultation or directly from electors regarding the change of location at previous polls. Due to the parking limitations at Stanley Lazell Hall, the upcoming Parliamentary Election with a likely increased turnout plus availability at short notice, the United Reform Church on Bradleigh Avenue is considered the better polling place. Members have previously preferred not to locate polling places in schools or venues that would disrupt schooling if this could be avoided.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District Z

There has been a small decrease in electors since 2019. The polling place has its own car park. The number of electors is above the number recommended by the Electoral Commission but the large hall accommodates two polling stations. Seven comments were received to the online consultation. Four comments stated that this location was too far for them either because they no longer drove or there was a polling place nearer to their property that they wished to attend. One comment said there was no parking. The review of this polling place confirmed that the car park still exists with level access and disabled parking. Three positive responses stated the location was convenient, accessible, parking was available, with good access for wheelchairs and was a well-known location.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Financial Impact

Change to Stanley Lazell - £309 – potential saving £241	
Remain at United Reform Church - £550 – no impact, current cost	

Little Thurrock Blackshots Ward

Existing Arrangements						
Polling District	Electors 2023	Electors 2019	Properties 2023	Properties 2019	Polling Place	Summary of Comments Received
AA	3251 Decrease since 2019 - 77 electors (3328)		1770	1768	Civic Hall, Blackshots Lane	None
AB	1859 Decrease since 2019 - 6 electors (1865)		971	970	Woodside Academy, Grangewood Avenue	None
Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals						
<p>Polling District AA</p> <p>The Electoral Commission recommendation is that no more than 2250 electors are allocated to one polling station. The electorate for polling district AA is above this. The Civic Hall is the current polling place and the Returning Officer will provide two polling stations within this place to accommodate this elector number. The Civic Hall is a well-known location within Little Thurrock Blackshots area. It has ample parking outside with designated disabled parking, disabled ramp access and provides accessible facilities within the hall.</p> <p>No comments were received to the consultation.</p> <p>The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.</p> <p>Polling District AB</p> <p>The electorate in this polling district is within the limit recommended by the Electoral Commission for one polling station. The Returning Officer notes that Woodside Academy remains open on polling day and the Academy is given advance notice of scheduled elections. Whilst members have previously indicated that they would prefer schools not to be used for polling, the options for polling places within this ward and polling district are limited. Election staff work with the Academy to maintain good relations and follow their requests for signage to enable polling to take place and the school to remain open.</p> <p>There is a small step into the area used as a polling station and a ramp is supplied by Electoral Services. The entrance doors are wide to enable access for all.</p>						

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Financial Impact

None

Little Thurrock Rectory Ward

Existing Arrangements						
Polling District	Electors 2023	Electors 2019	Properties 2023	Properties 2019	Polling Place	Summary of Comments Received
AC	1821 Decrease since 2019 – 23 electors (1844)		958	955	Grays Spiritualist Church, 168 Rectory Road	One
AD	2734 Decrease since 2019 – 65 electors (2799)		1623	1624	Tyrells Hall, 67 Dock Road <i>Proposal – alternative location – St Mary’s Church</i>	One Conservative Group – joint response

Returning Officer’s Comments and Proposals

Polling district AC

One comment was received to the online consultation stating that the location is suitable however the parking is insufficient, with limited parking and the road is very congested. There is a small car park with parking for staff and disabled parking. The Church is located within a residential area and whilst parking is always a consideration there is no requirement for parking to be provided. Parking is available in the surrounding residential roads and they are not restricted by yellow lines or permit parking. The hall has level access, double doors and is accessible.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling district AD

The electorate for this polling district has decreased slightly since 2019 but is above the recommended limit of voters set by the Electoral Commission. The Returning Officer provides two polling stations within the place.

Election staff reviewed the use of Tyrells Hall. Access to the hall is via a corridor. It is not directly into the polling station. Parking can also be an issue although there is a car park. However we do not have sole access to the venue and parking can be

problematic if there is a larger event in the other hall. Lighting has also been raised previously as an issue. More recently, booking and securing the venue has become problematic and there has been an increase in the rate of hire.

Staff have considered other options within this consultation and review. St Mary’s Church is directly opposite Tyrells Hall and provides a well-lit polling place with direct access from the car park. There is also a cost saving vs Tyrells hall. The consultation asked respondents to consider the impact of moving polling to St Mary’s Church. One response from a Member was received indicating polling should remain at Tyrells Hall and that a move to St Mary’s Church would have a negative impact due to it being difficult to access and park at the church. There was a further joint response from Basildon & Thurrock Conservatives who did not believe there was a sufficient case to move the polling station currently located at Tyrells Hall (AD). The response was as follows *“The polling station serves its purpose effectively and is located in the best place for highest voter turnout/engagement. The Tyrell’s Hall site has more suited vehicle, access parking, disabled access and toilet facilities. The polling station was originally moved from the Church Hall to Tyrell’s Hall because the car parking was insufficient as it is difficult to navigate into and out of in a vehicle, the facilities inside for staff were not sufficient, the small carpark and single point of access for both cars and residents made it more difficult for those with mobility issues to access the Church Hall at the same time. These issues remain at the Church Hall site. The Church Hall should not be considered at all.”*

Election staff are not aware of polling previously taking place at the Church Hall. Tyrells Hall has been the polling place from 2009. A review of the Church (not the Hall) indicated that it would be acceptable for polling and provide facilities for staff. A large area is available within the Church and capable of housing two polling stations for the electorate size. There is a slight step into the Church porch and again into Church, no more than 1.5 inch high. There is parking for polling staff but no disabled parking. There are facilities for staff onsite and disabled toilets within the church. Note, the Church Hall is not available, this is used for a nursery. The Church is available and used as a foodbank and place of worship.

The Returning Officer has considered the responses provided to the consultation, the review undertaken by staff and the LGBCE review taking place. The Returning Officer does not consider there is an immediate requirement to change the polling place for this district. However, in the event that Tyrells Hall is not available it would be prudent to designate St Mary’s Church as an alternative polling place.

The Returning Officer recommends

- a) no change to the current polling place – Tyrells Hall and
- b) St Mary’s Church Hall be designated as a polling place if Tyrells Hall is not available.

Financial Impact

Tyrells Hall - £1200 – current venue – no impact
 St Marys Church £400
 Potential saving - £800

Ockendon Ward

Existing Arrangements						
Polling District	Electors 2023	Electors 2019	Properties 2023	Properties 2019	Polling Place	Summary of Comments Received
AE	1943 Decrease since 2019 – 16 electors (1959)		1091	1091	Belhus Village Hall, Daiglen Drive – STATION 1	None
AF	2738 Increase since 2019 – 566 electors (2172)		1751	1687	Belhus Village Hall, Daiglen Drive – STATION 2	One
AG1	2061 Increase since 2019 – 53 electors (2008)		1317	1303	Benyon Court OAP Complex, Peartree Close	None
AG2	1656 Decrease since 2019 – 17 electors (1673)		859	856	Brandon Groves Community Hall, Brandon Groves	Two
Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals						
<p>Polling District AE and AF</p> <p>Belhus Village Hall is located in the main residential area of the polling district in the shopping parade. It is accessible and a car park is available for the hall and the nearby shopping precinct. Belhus Village Hall is able to cope with the current number of electors and no issues were raised. Whilst the Returning Officer is able to use a room in a school for polling, the use of schools as polling stations has declined in recent years in Thurrock unless there is absolutely no alternative location.</p> <p>Two polling districts vote at Belhus Village Hall. They are clearly signposted and the stations are set up in different rooms within the Polling Place/Hall.</p> <p>Polling District AE is located in the smaller hall.</p> <p>Polling District AF - The electorate number has increased in recent years and the electorate within this polling district is above the number recommended by the Electoral Commission for one polling station. The Returning Officer uses the bigger hall within Belhus Village Hall to provide two polling stations for this polling district (AF).</p>						

There is no suitable alternative location within the polling district apart from Bonnygate School. Bonnygate School has previously shut on polling day despite advance notice being provided. There is also confusion about entry to the school from different gates when polling takes place.

One comment was received to the consultation confirming that *“the hall was accessible with a ramp to enter the polling station. It was very well-lit and spacious, although not busy. Good availability of parking nearby and easy to get to on foot.”*

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements for Polling Districts AE and AF

Polling District AG1

Benyon Court OAP complex is fairly central to the residential part of the polling district from east to west. Other polling stations have been used in the past including South Ockendon Methodist Church which became unavailable a few years ago. The complex is a council owned property which assists Electoral Services to book the facility and ensures it is available at election time.

The electorate has decreased slightly since 2019 and is below the level recommended by Electoral Commission. When the complex was first used, signage was an issue as the complex is accessed and located away from the main roads. Signage is provided from West Road to indicate the entrance to Peartree Close. The complex has level access and parking is available with entrance via double doors and disabled facilities provided.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District AG2

Brandon Groves Community Hall is located centrally in the residential part of the polling district. The elector numbers have decreased slightly since 2019. The Hall is large and accessible with facilities available for staff. Two entrances are available, one with steps and one with a purpose built ramp, hand rail and double doors. Two comments were received to the consultation saying it was a suitable and accessible location with parking but within walking distance of everyone in Brandon Groves and nearby roads.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Financial Impact

None

Orsett Ward

Existing Arrangements						
Polling District	Electors 2023	Electors 2019	Properties 2023	Properties 2019	Polling Place	Summary of Comments Received
AH	843 Increase since 2019 – 28 electors (815)		446	414	Bulphan Village Hall, Church Road	One – community forum
AI	1718 Increase since 2019 – 110 electors (1608)		902	893	Horndon Village Hall, Mill Lane	None
AJ	1482 Decrease since 2019 – 64 electors (1546)		827	827	Orsett Village Hall, High Road	Three
AK	1009 Decrease since 2019 - 11 electors (1020)		521	514	Whitmore Hall, Bristowe Drive	None
Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals						
<p>Polling District AH Bulphan Village Hall is centrally located within the polling district. The hall is large and easily accommodates the small electorate size. Car parking is available and the hall has a purpose built ramp and handrail.</p> <p>One response was received to the consultation from the community forum confirming the hall had good parking, good disabled access, perfect location, plenty of space, good lighting and secure (including CCTV).</p> <p>The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.</p> <p>Polling District AI Horndon Village Hall is located within the main residential area of the polling district. The elector numbers have increased since 2019 but there is a large hall which is adequate for this electorate size or two polling stations if required in the future. Parking is available, level access and a purpose built ramp with handrail.</p> <p>No comments were received about this polling place.</p>						

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling station and location.

Polling District AJ

Orsett Village Hall is located within the village. Three comments were received from the public consultation confirming it was in a suitable location, easy to walk to and a central location. It was accessible for a wheelchair user and the car park was used when required. The hall is large, with a large car park and could accommodate a bigger electorate if required. A ramp is provided. There are facilities for staff and voters.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling district AK

Whitmore Hall is located within the residential area of the polling district and elector numbers are within the limits recommended by the Electoral Commission. There is a large hall which could accommodate a larger electorate and car parking. Facilities are available for staff and voters.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Financial Impact	
None	

South Chafford Ward

Existing Arrangements						
Polling District	Electors 2023	Electors 2019	Properties 2023	Properties 2019	Polling Place	Summary of Comments Received
AL	1778 Increase since 2019 – 17 electors (1761)		917*	1057	Bannatyne Health Club <i>Change required</i> <i>Option 1</i> – portacabin at Bannatyne Health Club <i>Option 2</i> – portacabin at Sainsbury supermarket <i>Option 3</i> – combine polling at Harris Academy	None Conservative Group response
AM	3397 Increase since 2019 – 109 electors (3288)		1823	1823	Harris Academy, Mayflower Road	Two Conservative Group response
Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals						
<p>*reduction in properties due to deletion of flats that will not be built.</p> <p>Polling District AL This district is highly residential and the lack of places for a polling place has been an issue for several years. Portacabins have been used previously along with Brewers Fayre public house and Bannatyne Health Club (Tennis Court).</p> <p>Bannatyne Health Club was the last approved polling place. Since the last election in this ward, external access to the Tennis Court is no longer available. Electors would need to sign in and access the Tennis Court via the Health Club. This is not acceptable. An alternative polling solution is required.</p> <p>Three options were put forward for consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 1 - Portacabin on land at Bannatyne Health Club (permission agreed) • Option 2 - Portacabin on land at Sainsbury Supermarket (permission agreed) • Option 3 - Combine Polling at Harris Academy <p>The Elections Act 2022 required the Returning Officer to provide polling stations that were more accessible. The size of the electorate plus additional space required for privacy for Voter ID means that portacabins do not best meet this criteria. The</p>						

Returning Officer does not consider a temporary polling place should be the first option if other locations are available. For this reason, the Returning Officer recommends that polling should be combined at Harris Academy where the location is suitable and will accommodate this electorate with a number of polling stations.

The Conservative Group provided the following response to the consultation. *“Moving the two polling districts of AL and AM together is not supported – Harris School is already very busy, evidenced by queues in 2010, 2015 and 2019 general elections. We acknowledge there have been some issues regarding using the internal facilities at Bannatyne Health Club and Spa (AL), however, this remains the right location for voting activity. We therefore submit that a temporary structure should be arranged/used at the Bannatyne Health Club and Spa in the exterior car park.”*

The Returning Officer considered the response provided and responds that measures will be put in place at the next election to improve the voter journey at the polling station through the use of Modern Polling. This solution allows each elector to be processed more efficiently and quickly. Queues are possible and likely at Parliamentary Elections due to the higher turnout. It is important to consider how a queue is managed and if electors are disenfranchised and do not vote due to the queue. The risk and issues with temporary buildings remain high and there is no suitable permanent building within the polling district. A portacabin would not be the better option at a Parliamentary Election with a high turnout as there is no space to wait inside. There are cost implications for temporary buildings and they are subject to availability, especially with the possible increase use in schools since Autumn 2023.

The Returning Officer recommends that the polling place for this polling district is Harris Academy, within Polling District AK.

Polling District AK

The electorate allocated to this polling place is above the recommended number suggested by the Electoral Commission. The Returning Officer provides two polling stations in this polling place for electors of polling district AK. The review by officers confirmed that the hall was large and could accommodate an additional polling station if the Returning Officer recommendation for Polling District AL is approved. There is a limited parking for polling staff but no additional parking. It is desirable to provide parking however it is not possible in this instance. Comments about accessibility did mention parking.

The comments from the Conservative Group for Polling District AL are noted and addressed above. There will be an impact with additional voters from Polling District AL if approved. Two comments were received to the online consultation. One response said this was a suitable location and responded to the proposed combined polling, stating there was plenty of room. One negative response said *“There is nowhere to park whilst visiting the polling station at Harris Academy. Although I can see the school from my house, it is a long walk, and a round trip takes 25 minutes, which discourages me from voting, especially on a busy working day or when the weather is inclement. It is not on my regular routes to or from anywhere, so it means making a special journey to vote. A better location would be at Bannatynes, Sainsbury's or Chafford Hundred railway station.”* The Returning Officer notes

the comment however the ward is very residential with a lack of suitable public or private buildings for hire. This location provides a permanent building for polling with adequate facilities.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the polling place for Polling District AK.

Financial Impact

Polling District AL

Bannatyne Health Club (not available) – cost £400

Option 1 and 2 - Portacabin at Bannatyne or Sainsbury £4000

Increase of £3600

Option 3 – Harris Academy £0

Saving £400

Polling District AK

Harris Academy – hire cost £50 – this is the cost to hire the hall and is not affected by the number of polling stations set up.

Stanford East & Corringham Town

Existing Arrangements						Summary of Comments Received
Polling District	Electors 2023	Electors 2019	Properties 2023	Properties 2019	Polling Place	
AN	2954 Decrease since 2019 – 144 electors (3098)		1702	1699	O'Donaghue House, Thors Oak	Two
AO	1758 Decrease since 2019 – 54 electors (1812)		1019	1017	Tom Wood Hall, Bellmaine Avenue	None
AP	1607 Decrease since 2019 – 27 electors (1634)		960	956	The Springhouse Club, Springhouse Road	None

Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals

Polling District AN

The number of electors at this polling place is above the number recommended by the Electoral Commission. The Returning Officer operates two polling stations at this polling place to accommodate the size of the electorate. Two comments were received during the public consultation. One comment stated that it was a suitable and accessible location. One further response commented that *“it was a long and arduous trek and they rely on being taken by car. Access to the polling station building is*

difficult with parking outside a problem.” This resident stated that the building was accessible, but it could be improved. They did not provide a suggestion for improvement.

O’Donaghue House is not centrally located within the polling district but it is a suitable location and as a council owned building there is flexibility to book the polling place when required. There is parking for staff and disabled electors, level access to the building and facilities for staff and disabled electors inside. The doors are wide with automatic opening. As a sheltered housing complex the building is accessible and has appropriate facilities.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District AO

The number of electors at this polling station has decreased slightly since 2019. Although the polling place is on the edge of the polling district boundary the station is fairly centrally located. Schools are available within the polling district but members have previously preferred not to use a school when there is an alternative building. The hall is large with parking for staff and disabled electors. There is a purpose built slope and wide entrance doors to the building.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District AP

Springhouse Club was approved as the polling place for this district due to the unavailability of Corringham Hall. Corringham Hall have confirmed they will not permit the Returning Officer to hire the venue.

The Springhouse Club has been used for two elections and the polling station is accessible via a ramp into the main club entrance and then into the hall or alternatively directly into the hall via a step. Whilst it is not ideal to have a separate accessible entrance via a different route, there is no other suitable location in the polling district. Clear signage is provided and there have been no reported issues. There is adequate parking onsite and the accessible entrance has a ramp with handrail. There are no kitchen facilities for staff on polling day but equipment is provided to staff in advance.

Election staff are aware of planning permission for Springhouse Club with a new building planned and the existing building to be demolished. Talks have taken place and assurance received that we can continue to hire the building whilst the new club is being built and then use the new build.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Financial Impact

None

Stanford-le-Hope West Ward

Existing Arrangements						
Polling District	Electors 2023	Electors 2019	Properties 2023	Properties 2019	Polling Place	Summary of Comments Received
AQ	2258 Increase since 2019 – 124 electors (2134)		1374	1365	Allott Hall, Park Road	None
AR	2083 Increase since 2019 – 61 electors (2022)		1412	1236	St Margaret's Church, The Green	Two
AS	1243 Decrease since 2019 – 93 electors (1327)		687	686	Kynoch Court, Billet Lane	None

Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals

Polling District AQ

There has been an increase in electors in this polling district since 2019 but the elector number is within the limit recommended by the Electoral Commission when excluding postal voters. The hall is large and could accommodate two polling stations if required. Allott Hall is quite central within the polling district and has an onsite car park with a bus stop nearby. There are stairs to both entrances but the venue provides a purpose built ramp and handrail on polling day. No comments have been received about accessibility. No comments were received during the public consultation.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District AR

St Margaret's Church on The Green is located quite centrally within the polling district, a visible location and has parking to the rear of the church. The allocation of electors is within the limit recommended by the Electoral Commission. One comment was received during the recent election as an elector did not wish to cast their vote within a church and the church hall had been used previously. Two comments were received to the consultation stating it was a suitable location; very close, a large public building with friendly staff and easy to access.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District AS

Kynoch Court is within the residential area of the polling district and run by Thurrock Council which assists with booking arrangements in the event of an unscheduled election. No comments were received during the consultation period. The allocation of electors is within the limit recommended by the Electoral Commission. There is parking for polling staff on the street and disabled parking. Facilities for staff and disabled electors are available and there is ramp access with a handrail to the building. There is a slight lip at the entrance door which is marked by hazard tape.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Financial Impact

None

Stifford Clays Ward

Existing Arrangements						
Polling District	Electors 2023	Electors 2019	Properties 2023	Properties 2019	Polling Place	Summary of Comments Received
AT	2626 Decrease since 2019 – 66 electors (2692)		1408	1406	Headon Community Hall, Crawford Avenue	One
AU	2428 Decrease since 2019 – 16 electors (2444)		1258	1255	Stifford Clays Social Club, Crammavill Street	One
Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals						
<p>Polling District AT</p> <p>The Electoral Commission recommendation is that no more than 2250 electors are allocated to a polling station. The elector number is slightly above this but will be less when the number of absent voters are taken into account. The Returning Officer operates two stations in this polling place. One comment was received during the consultation confirming it was a suitable polling station. Polling staff can park outside on hard standing but there is no disabled parking. Public transport is available outside. There is level access to the hall and facilities inside for staff and disabled voters.</p> <p>The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.</p> <p>Polling district AU</p>						

The Electoral Commission recommendation is that no more than 2250 electors are allocated to a polling station. The elector number is slightly above this but will be less when the number of absent voters are taken into account. A larger hall is available within the venue if required. One comment was received during the consultation confirming it was an excellent polling station with car parking, easy access, and secure. There is level access in the car park with a slight slope and handrail into the building. The entrance doors are double doors and disabled facilities accessible within the venue.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Financial Impact	
None	

The Homesteads Ward

Existing Arrangements						
Polling District	Electors 2023	Electors 2019	Properties 2023	Properties 2019	Polling Place	Summary of Comments Received
AV	1919 Decrease since 2019 – 36 electors (1955)		1020	1019	Homesteads Village Hall, Dunstable Road <i>Proposed change</i>	Three One - Independent ward member Conservative Group
AW (1) & AW (2)	2420 Increase since 2019 – 63 electors (2483)		1221	1219	2 x Temporary Structure(s), Balstonia Rec Ground <i>Proposed change</i>	Eight One - Independent ward member Conservative Group
AX	1234 Decrease since 2019 – 49 electors (1283)		610	604	Gable Hall School, Southend Road <i>Proposed change</i>	Two
AY	837 Decrease since 2019 – 50 electors (887)		447	447	Temporary Structure, Gardner Avenue <i>Proposed change</i>	Two
Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals						
Options considered in the consultation:– Option 1 - Merge Polling Districts AV and AW – electors vote at Homesteads Village Hall or Option 2 - Retain separate Polling Districts, AV and AW – electors from AV and AW both vote at Homesteads Village Hall or Option 3 – no change to polling for Polling Districts AV and AW						

AND

Option 4 - Merge Polling Districts AX and AY – electors vote at Gable Hall School or

Option 5 - Retain separate Polling Districts, AX and AY – electors from AX and AY vote at Gable Hall School or

Option 6 – no change to polling for Polling Districts AX and AY

Polling District AV & AW

Homesteads Village Hall provides a large polling place with an electorate below the number recommended by the Electoral Commission. There are additional buildings to the rear of the hall. In contrast Polling District AW has a larger electorate and currently requires the provision of two temporary polling stations at Balstonia Recreation Ground (Park).

3 electors responded to the consultation for AV (Homesteads Village Hall).

- Very convenient, well laid out and well run hall. Plenty of parking, lights and security.
- Absolutely ideal for the purpose and in a large catchment area
- Good location and facilities, plenty of space and parking

All respondents said it was accessible and the proposals would have neutral or no impact as they already vote at Homesteads Village Hall.

AW - 8 electors responded to the consultation and proposal. They confirmed that the polling place for AW (Balstonia Park) was in a suitable location.

- *Located very centrally. Adequate lighting & parking available if needed.*
- *Fit for purpose and disabled access considered.*
- *Always been good enough for voting.*
- *Local not far to get to and has parking*
- *The use of Balstonia Park is a great idea for the temporary site of the polling station. The park is ideally situated for locals with 3 entrances to it plus parking on the gravel area. The park is not inconvenienced in any way, the ground is flat and ideal for wheelchair access as long as a ramp is in place for the demountables, lighting can be easily rigged up and there were plenty of staff to help and provide security.*
- *It is very convenient and easy to walk to.*
- *There were no issues from my perspective as a voter within the Borough and as a presiding officer at the temporary polling station too.*

All respondents replied that (Balstonia Park) was accessible.

6 responses said a change from polling at Balstonia Park would have a negative impact and in summary said it was further for them to travel and they would not be able to walk to the polling station. One response said the proposed change would be neutral/no impact and Homesteads Village Hall would be more accessible for through traffic.

The Conservative Group response to Polling District AV and AW is outlined and summarised as follows. *“The proposal would double the electorate at Homesteads Village Hall. Homesteads Village Hall is located on the corners of Southend Road (no parking), Dunstable (almost no parking), and Colman (a very tight cul-de-sac with almost no parking). The car park is very limited. The hall is on the far west of the ward, meaning the current AW voters have quite an extra trip with poor access. This was compared with the current polling arrangements in Balstonia Park highlighting the location is almost in the centre of the ward with access via three entrances on Rosevalley, Graham and Rodings Avenue. This means the park and polling station is highly accessible on foot from a myriad of roads in the ward. The roads also have limited to no parking restrictions. Therefore [they] suggest the council still consolidate these 2 districts but do so at the central and accessible AW, Balstonia Park location, and not at the cramped and further out AV, Village Hall location. If this cannot be the case, then retaining both is the only way to prevent a real accessibility issue for many people currently living in AW.”*

An Independent Ward member responded to the proposals for the Homesteads Ward as follows. *“Already had many messages from residents, the turnout is low anyway, cutting out residents access to that side of Southend road will only lower the numbers who go out and vote, especially for the less abled. 100% in support of residents, Not in favour of the change or keep as is until the all outs in 2025 then you have 4 years is decide.”* It is not clear if this response is in relation to the proposed move away from Balstonia Park and combined polling at Homesteads Village Hall or all the proposals for The Homesteads Ward.

The Returning Officer notes the joint response from the Conservative Group plus the response from a ward member and has considered the need for accessible polling places which cater for the whole electorate in the ward. Whilst the consultation was underway the LGBCE* informed the Council that they will commence a separate boundary review. The council consultation did not provide evidence of a need to amend polling districts AV and AW, at this time. The LGBCE will consult separately on their draft proposals for implementation at the May 2025 polls. The designation of polling places and the use of temporary structures post implementation of the Elections Act is still a matter for consideration in this review. The risk and issues with temporary buildings remain high and there are no suitable permanent buildings within polling district AW. A portacabin is not considered suitable to provide space to view Voter ID in private unless there is no alternative. At a Parliamentary Election with a high turnout there is no space to wait inside and for transparency there is no space for observers within the polling place. There are cost implications for temporary buildings and they are subject to availability, especially with the potential increased use in schools since Autumn 2023.

Polling District AV has an electorate within the range recommended by the Electoral Commission. The total size is 1919 and this is smaller when the number of postal voters is removed from this range. The RO will provide one polling station in Homesteads Village Hall for a polling district of this size.

Polling District AW has an electorate of 2420 which is slightly above the range recommended by the Electoral Commission. The electorate size will reduce when the number of postal voters is removed.

Homesteads Village Hall could comfortably operate 2 or 3 polling stations within the hall to accommodate Polling Districts AV and AW. By contrast 2 temporary structures are required for this number of electors if polling remains at Balstonia Park.

Taking into account the LGBCE review and the requirements of the Elections Act for accessibility, Voter ID and privacy, the Returning Officer recommends Option 2

- Retain separate Polling Districts, AV and AW – electors from polling districts AV and AW both vote at Homesteads Village Hall. The Returning officer will confirm the number of polling stations to be provided for AV and AW depending on the electorate at the time of polling.

Polling District AX

The polling place at Gable Hall School, Southend Road was introduced to reduce costs and minimise complaints from residents. The previous location was a portacabin on land at Kenneth Gardens, Southend Road. The School does not shut on polling day.

2 responses were received to the consultation with one commenting it was 'great continue to make it available'. Both responses said the polling place was accessible and the proposal for AY would not affect them.

The Returning Officer is aware of feedback from the 2022 polls regarding accessibility and the election team continue to work with the School and colleagues from Education to ensure that the location provided by the school for polling is the most accessible. No accessibility issues were raised at the polls in 2023.

The Returning Officer recommends no change for the polling place for polling district AX.

Polling District AY

The temporary structure at Gardner Avenue is located in a layby outside of a parade of shops. In previous years members have requested combined polling at Gable Hall School.

2 electors responded to the online consultation about the current provision

- Easy to get to and access. Parking is free, ramps provided for disabled users, easy to find location. Lighting easy on the eyes. Enough space to do what was required.
- This polling station is within easy walking distance of my house but if I drove, there is adequate parking. Both responses said the provision was accessible

In response to the proposal to move polling to Gable Hall School the responses said this would have a negative impact and provided the following

- More people would drive. Depending on which part of Gable Hall is used, there would be noise nuisance with car doors slamming, people hooting, car alarms going off, unsupervised children running around the grounds.

- Going by the above map, my polling station is labelled as AY. If my station was to close, it hasn't been allocated a place that it'll merge with.

The Conservative Group and a ward member responded to the consultation stating *“Firstly, the new Gable Hall district makes much sense. Both AX and AY are very small and it is hard to justify a split. The Gable Hall site is very large with plenty of onsite parking, and there are many safe walking routes. The Gardiner site, however, is a demountable at the shops, which frequently causes much congestion given it takes up parking spaces and it is also a main cut through to the school. Much of the current AY population is closer to Gable Hall than the current AY station they have. I support councils proposal”*.

The Returning Officer has outlined risks and issues associated with temporary structures earlier in this summary of The Homesteads Ward. The issues apply equally to this Polling District. The recommendation below takes account of the LGBCE review which is currently taking place and the requirement to provide polling places which are accessible and take account of the provisions contained within the Election Act.

The Returning Officer recommends Option 5

- a) Polling district boundaries to remain unchanged and
- b) Gable Hall School be confirmed as the polling place for polling district AY, due to the lack of suitable buildings within the polling district.

Financial Impact

Homesteads Village Hall – no financial impact

Options 1 & 2 – saving £7,708 – Balstonia Park

Option 3 – no financial impact or saving

Options 4 & 5 - saving £3,854 – Gardener Avenue

Option 6 – no financial impact or saving

1 x Temporary polling station - cost as of 2023 - £3854*

*This includes generator hire, fuel, transport, toilet hire, cabin, ramps and furniture

Tilbury Riverside & Thurrock Park

Existing Arrangements						
Polling District	Electors 2023	Electors 2019	Properties 2023	Properties 2019	Polling Place	Summary of Comments Received
AZ	464 Decrease since 2019 – 19 electors (483)		242	241	Temporary Structure, Churchill Road	None
BA	2542 Increase since 2019 – 206 electors (2336)		1776	1718	Beaconsfield Place, Calcutta Road	None
BB	1898 Increase since 2019 – 23 electors (1875)		1119	1112	The Sunshine Centre, Civic Square	None

Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals

Polling District AZ

The temporary structure is located in a non-residential part of the Thurrock Park estate. It serves a small electorate and no comments or issues were raised during the consultation or at previous elections in respect of accessibility. The Returning Officer has outlined in other Ward arrangements that the use of temporary polling stations are not ideal and have inherent risks. However, this polling district is clearly defined and separate from the rest of Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park. Removing this temporary location and combining it with other polling districts in the ward would require the residents to make a journey to central Tilbury (Tilbury Town) and potentially discourage participation in the democratic process.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District BA

Beaconsfield Place was a new polling place location in May 2023. No responses were received to the consultation. Electors commented on polling day that they did not know the location of this polling place. Further communication will be undertaken with electors in this polling district. The electorate is slightly above the range recommended by the Electoral Commission but it will be within the accepted range when electors who vote by post are removed. The hall is not overly large but it accommodates one polling station set up. The polling place is on a main road through Tilbury and has a bus stop outside. As a council run hall it is available in the event of unscheduled elections. Parking bays are available on the road and staff parking is permitted within the development. Access to the polling station is directly from the pavement in Calcutta Road and the polling place is accessible and has appropriate facilities.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District BB

No responses were received to the consultation. The electorate allocated to this polling place is within the range recommended by the Electoral Commission. The space provided can accommodate one polling station and this is a suitable arrangement for the electorate size. As a council run building it is available in the event of unscheduled elections. Public transport is available with a bus stop opposite the building if required. Disabled parking and parking for staff is available. There is level access with a slight ramp to the door, with a handrail. Other appropriate facilities are available inside for staff and electors.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Financial Impact

None

Tilbury St Chads Ward

Existing Arrangements						
Polling District	Electors 2023	Electors 2019	Properties 2023	Properties 2019	Polling Place	Summary of Comments Received
BC	2607 Increase since 2019 – 34 electors (2573)		1421	1419	The Hall, Lansbury Gardens OAP Complex	None
BD	1806 Decrease since 2019 – 70 electors (1876)		1076	1075	Fruitful Land Church, The Anchor, Civic Square	One
Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals						

Polling District BC

No comments were received during the consultation, The Hall is a Sheltered Housing complex and as the venue is a council run property it ensures that a polling location is available when required at a minimum cost. The electorate allocated to this polling district is slightly above the range recommended by the electoral commission even with the number of electors who vote by post removed. The Returning Officer currently runs two polling stations in this polling place. There is a bus stop nearby, parking for disabled voters and parking for staff. Access to the building is via a ramp with handrail and disabled facilities are available inside the building.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District BD

The Fruitful Land Church (The Anchor Pub) was designated as the polling place at the last statutory review. One response was received to the consultation which confirmed it was suitable and accessible. The response also said 'Only place really in the eastern area of Tilbury. However, it is next to the other polling station for riverside at the civic centre. Parking is tough as you have to park around the back of Civic Square and play 'chicken' running across the road.'

There is a large accessible space for voting which could accommodate an additional polling place. The electorate size does not require this. Public transport links are available with parking to the rear of the building, with CCTV and outdoor lighting. Level access is available from the main street through double doors. Access from the car park requires a ramp which is supplied by electoral services. There are facilities available within the building for staff and electors.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Financial Impact

None

West Thurrock & South Stifford

Existing Arrangements						
Polling District	Electors 2023	Electors 2019	Properties 2023	Properties 2019	Polling Place	Summary of Comments Received
BE	2368 Increase since 2019 – 66 electors (2302)		1503	1456	Mulberry Drive OAP Complex, Mulberry Drive	Two
BF	1608 Increase since 2019 – 42 electors (1566)		1161	1161	The Fleet Public House, London Road	None
BG	2267 Increase since 2019 – 618 electors (1649)		1457	1196	Cowdray Hall, London Road	Four Conservative Group
BH	2789 Increase since 2019 – 204 electors (2585)		1685	1670	St Clements Health & Community Centre, London Road	None

Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals

Polling District BE

Two responses were received to the online consultation, which confirmed it was in a suitable location with one commenting it was very accessible and the other commenting it was accessible but could be improved (limited parking). St Stephens Church Purfleet-on-Thames was suggested as an alternative location.

No issues have been raised about the suitability of Mulberry Drive Complex as the polling place. The complex is a suitable location and provides an adequate size room for polling. The electorate size is within the range recommended by the Electoral Commission when the number of electors who vote by post are removed from the total. There are parking facilities for the electorate, disabled parking and staff parking. The entrance has stairs with a handrail plus a ramp to the main door. Facilities for the disabled are available within the polling place. As a council building the cost is minimal and the building is available for elections when required.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District BF

No responses were received to the consultation regarding this polling place. The Fleet is an established polling place located along the main London Road, Purfleet. The place provided for polling is large and could accommodate an additional polling station if required. The manager is accommodating and provides access at short notice to book the area within the building for polling. Parking is available on site and the links to public transport are good. Access to the building is down a slight slope with entrance via a raised decking area with ramp access and a hand rail. No issues have been raised about accessibility. Facilities are available inside for both staff and the electorate.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Polling District BG

Three responses were received to the online consultation, which confirmed this polling place was in a suitable location and accessible. The comments are listed below

- "Large car park; disabled access; lighting and security good inside and outside; plenty space for individuals; toilets and kitchen for water available.
- Everything at this Polling Station is perfect - car parking, disabled access, location, space, lighting and security - all brilliant.
- Parking on site, close to my home. Large enough to have a busy voting station. Not sure if there would be anywhere better for residents in the vicinity"

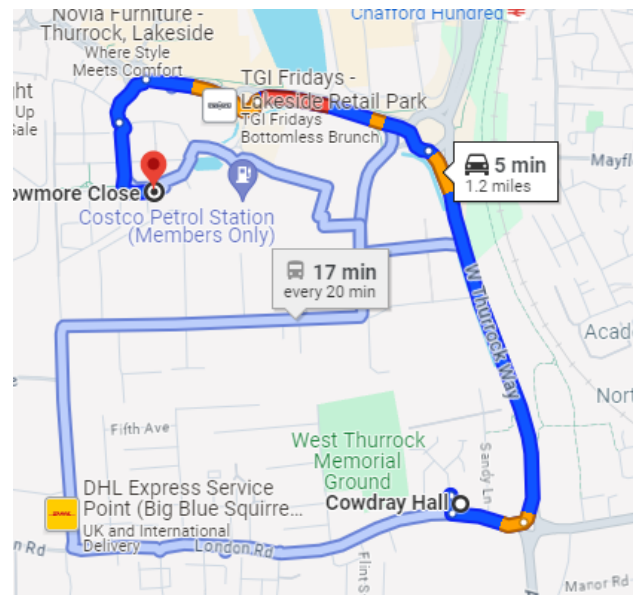
One comment was received from a resident in Killarney Crescent stating

- The nearest polling station (Cowdray Way and St Clements) are too far. The distance is about 1.5 miles each way, this is too long for me to walk after a long day at work.

There has been an increase of over 600 electors in this polling district and allocated to this polling place. It is still within the limit recommended by the Electoral Commission especially when the electors who vote by post are removed from that total. Parking is available to the rear of the hall.

The Conservative Group responded to the consultation and provided the following comment which relates to this ward and polling district “the new housing development in the Lakeside Basin suffers the risk of being disenfranchised because of no polling station in near commutable distance. We therefore submit that a temporary structure should be arranged/used at a suitable location on the new development to ensure maximum voter participation.” A labour ward member has previously raised the issue of access to a polling station for the electorate housed in the Renovo estate and queried if the allocated polling station could accommodate the size of the potential electorate in this estate.

The Returning Officer has noted the comments received and the additional comment raised by one of the electors living in the housing development comprising of Abberton Way, Buttermere Way, Carrowmore Close, Colliford Road, Dovestone Close, Draycote Road, Killarney Crescent and Loweswater Way in regard to their voting arrangements and polling at Cowdray Hall, London Road. The map below outlines the distance from the development to the polling place.



The Returning Officer does not consider that introducing a temporary polling station, with limited accessibility for 321 properties is appropriate when there is a suitable permanent building within the existing polling district.

The location and siting of a temporary building in this area and the impact that the placement of a temporary building for 3-4 days would be problematic.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements for BG at Cowdray Hall.

Polling District BH

There has been an increase in electors in this polling district since 2019 and it is just slightly over the range recommended by the Electoral Commission. The hall is large enough to accommodate the size of the electorate and currently two polling stations are provided within the hall. Parking is available off road with a bus stop nearby. Access to the building is via a slight slope with hand rails. Adequate facilities are available within the hall.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

Financial Impact

None

Proposal for additional polling place in Polling District BG – increase of £3854

1 x Temporary polling station - cost as of 2023 - £3854*

*This includes generator hire, fuel, transport, toilet hire, cabin, ramps and furniture

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