

<b>29 January 2020</b>		<b>ITEM: 13</b>
<b>Council</b>		
<b>Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations 2019/2020</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Key	
<b>Report of:</b> Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive and Returning Officer		
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Not applicable		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Sean Clark, Director of Finance and IT		
<b>This report is public</b>		

### **Executive Summary**

This report requests Council to consider and approve the recommendations of the Returning Officer and Chief Executive in relation to the statutory Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations

#### **1. Recommendation(s)**

- 1.1 That the existing arrangements for Aveley and Uplands be confirmed.**
- 1.2 That the existing arrangements for Belhus be confirmed.**
- 1.3 That the existing arrangements for Chadwell St Mary be confirmed.**
- 1.4 That the existing arrangements for Chafford and North Stifford be confirmed.**
- 1.5 That the existing arrangements for Corringham and Fobbing, polling districts O and Q, be confirmed**
- 1.6 That Corringham Evangelical Church, Fobbing Road be confirmed as the polling place for Corringham and Fobbing, polling district P.**
- 1.7 That the existing arrangements for East Tilbury be confirmed.**
- 1.8 That the existing arrangements for Grays Riverside be confirmed.**
- 1.9 That the existing arrangements for Grays Thurrock be confirmed.**

- 1.10 That Civic Hall, Blackshots Lane be confirmed as the polling place for Little Thurrock Blackshots, polling district AA.**
- 1.11 That the existing arrangements for Little Thurrock Blackshots, polling district AB, be confirmed.**
- 1.12 That the existing arrangements for Little Thurrock Rectory be confirmed.**
- 1.13 That the existing arrangements for Ockendon be confirmed.**
- 1.14 That the existing arrangements for Orsett be confirmed.**
- 1.15 That the existing arrangements for South Chafford be confirmed.**
- 1.16 That the existing arrangements for Stanford East and Corringham Town be confirmed.**
- 1.17 That the existing arrangements for Stanford-le-Hope West be confirmed.**
- 1.18 That the existing arrangements for Stifford Clays be confirmed.**
- 1.19 That the existing arrangements for The Homesteads be confirmed.**
- 1.20 That the existing arrangements for Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park be confirmed.**
- 1.21 That the existing arrangements for Tilbury St Chads, polling district BC, be confirmed**
- 1.22 That the Fruitful Land Church (The Anchor Pub), Tilbury be confirmed as the polling place for Tilbury St Chads, polling district BD, subject to monitoring feedback from electors and further review if required.**
- 1.23 That the existing arrangements for West Thurrock and South Stifford be confirmed.**

## **2. Introduction and Background**

- 2.1 The report sets out the legal requirements of the Review, the methodology used and the conclusions drawn, together with the proposed changes that have been recommended by the Returning Officer.**
- 2.2 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced the requirement for all Councils to undertake a full review of all polling districts and stations to improve accessibility. Additional Statutory Instruments were issued in late December 2006.**
- 2.3 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and**

polling places. The next compulsory review must be started and completed between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020 inclusive.

- 2.4 The statutory responsibility for reviewing UK Parliamentary polling districts and places rests with each relevant local authority in Great Britain for so much of any constituency as is situated in its area. A relevant local authority is, in England, the council of a district or London borough, in Scotland, a local authority, and, in Wales, the council of a county or county borough.
- 2.5 Depending on the structure of the local authority, it may not be the full council which makes the decisions on any changes to polling districts or polling places. Some local authorities may have delegated that function, in which case the decision on polling districts and polling places becomes the responsibility of a committee or sub-committee. This will be set out in the council's constitution.
- 2.6 The function has been delegated to General Services Committee and General Services are requested to approve the recommendations detailed in this report.
- 2.7 Local authorities must comply with the following legislative requirements regarding the designation of polling districts and polling places:
  - each parish in England and community in Wales is to be a separate polling district, unless special circumstances apply
  - in Scotland, each electoral ward must be divided into two or more separate polling districts, unless special circumstances apply
  - the council must designate a polling place for each polling district, unless the size or other circumstances of a polling district are such that the situation of the polling stations does not materially affect the convenience of the electors
  - the polling place must be an area in the district, unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the district (for example, if no accessible polling place can be identified in the district)
  - the polling place must be small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the district how they will be able to reach the polling station
- 2.8 Local authorities must also comply with the following access requirements. As part of the review, they must:
  - seek to ensure that all electors in a constituency in the local authority area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances
  - seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to electors who are disabled
- 2.9 The council must have regard to the accessibility to disabled persons of potential polling stations in any place which it is considering designating as a polling place or the designation of which as a polling place it is reviewing.

2.10 Consultation with the electorate and elected members was an integral part of the review process:-

- A communications plan was agreed.
- The formal commencement of the review requires the local authority to give notice of the holding of a review. The notice was published on the Council noticeboard and website.
- A press release was issued at the start to inform residents about the consultation, and another near the end to remind residents to take part.
- Regular promotion using the hashtag #Thurrockpollingreview across Thurrock Council's social media accounts sharing the online consultation link. There were opportunities for messages to be re-shared by other related social media channels.
- E-newsletters – one story was planned for inclusion in Thurrock News once in July and once in August
- Posters – these were distributed to libraries and hubs for display.
- Group Leaders and ward members were informed by email of the consultation and asked for their comments on the existing polling places and to provide suggestions for new polling places.
- The consultation was sent to the Member of Parliament for Thurrock and the Member of Parliament for South Basildon and East Thurrock.
- The consultation was available for completion via the consultation portal from 1 July to 18 August.
- Political Parties and ward members were asked to comment on the proposals in this report. The Acting Returning Officer for South Basildon and East Thurrock has also been consulted and responded.
- Feedback from elections held in 2019 were included. This includes comments from Inspectors and Presiding Officers.

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

3.1 The issues, options and analysis for each polling station and district is detailed in Appendix 1.

### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

4.1 The reasons for recommendations are informed by the consultation and the analysis in Appendix 1.

### **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

5.1 The consultation exercise was extensive to maximise inclusion and input into the review. The consultation arrangements were outlined in paragraph 3.0 and the political parties and MPs have been apprised of the Returning Officers recommendations.

### **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

6.1 The Council continually seeks to ensure services are accessible by all users and the review will help to ensure that those electors who wish to vote will not be put off by inaccessible polling stations. The proposed changes have been reviewed to actively encourage participation.

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Dammy Adewole**  
**Senior Management Accountant – Central Services**

All costs associated with the changes in polling places or polling stations are contained within the electoral services budget.

### **7.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**  
**Acting Head of Law, Assistant Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer**

The Electoral Administration Act 2006 (the 2006 Act) introduced the requirement for all Councils to undertake a periodic full review of all polling districts and stations throughout their area

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 (the 2013 Act) introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places. Both the 2006 Act and the 2013 Act amended the Representation of the People Act 1983.

The 2013 Act stated that the review must be started and completed in a 16 month period every five years after 1 October 2013. The current review period is between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020 inclusive.

### **7.3 Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Price**  
**Team Manager - Community Development and Equalities**

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on Local Authorities to promote equal opportunities. These considerations should sit alongside the statutory obligations set out in the Electoral Administration Act. The Electoral Administration Act (2006) and the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 seeks to improve the engagement in the electoral process, by ensuring that polling places are accessible to all. The proposed changes will

improve access to the electoral process, in line with the objective of the legislation.

The proposals contained in the report will aid community participation in elections, by bringing the polling stations nearer to the voters and ensuring adequate facilities are available. The consultation gave consideration to the use of religious buildings and access requirements

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children)

None

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- The Electoral Commission – Reviews of polling districts, polling places and polling stations

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – Returning Officer recommendations
- Appendices 2, 3, 4 – location maps

**Report Author:**

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