

Committee: General Purposes Committee	Date: 16 December 2009	Classification: Unrestricted	Report No:	Agenda Item No:
Report of Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)		Title: Review of Polling District and Polling Places		
Originating Officer: Isabella Freeman Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)		Ward(s) Affected: Millwall, Bow East and Mile End East		

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the results of a polling district and polling place review and makes proposals for the use of two additional polling places and suggests that there be an amendment in respect of the extent of one polling districts.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee considers the recommendations set out in paragraph 5 below and recommend that they be adopted by the Council for implementation in time for the local government election in May 2010.

3. Background

- 3.1 Over the past two years Electoral Services have conducted a number of polling place reviews. In 2008, all premises used as polling stations were visited with a particular emphasis on access and the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended on 1st October 2004.
- 3.2 In the report to the previous meeting held on 22 October 2008, the Committee were advised that the Boundary Commission had identified its priorities for 2009-2011 and the council's situation did not fulfil the criteria for a ward boundary review prior to the next full review due to take place in 2011 under legislation section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006.
- 3.3 This report identifies the increase in electorate due to growth in the number of properties in the borough and proposes new polling districts and polling places as set out below.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 To ensure clarity in discussing issues arising from the review the following definitions are used:

polling district; a geographical sub-division of an electoral area ie a UK

parliamentary constituency, a European parliamentary electoral region, a ward or an electoral division.

polling place; a geographical area in which a polling station is located. however, as there is no legal definition of what a polling place is, the geographical area could be defined as tightly as a particular building or as widely as the entire polling district.

polling station; the actual area where the process of voting takes place, and must be located within the polling place designated for the particular polling district.

5. Process

5.1 Following publication of the revised Register of Electors 2010 and in preparation for the local election, Mayoral referendum and Parliamentary election in May 2010, the Electoral Services Manager and her deputy conducted a review of those wards where the electorate has risen significantly over the past year. A full breakdown of each ward by polling district, polling place and electorate is shown at Appendix A.

5.2 The proposals are as follows:

Bow East, BE2 – currently there are 2 polling stations at Eastside Youth Centre and due to the amount of electors attending the centre, we propose to create a new polling place, BE2A, at Wrights Community Centre, Wrights Road, E3 5LG to deal with the area south of Parnell Road and reduce 1 polling place at Eastside. See Appendix B.

Millwall; The current electorate for MI1 polling district is 5,702, which is too large for one polling place, with 3 polling stations at Seven Mills Primary School. We propose to create a new polling district MI4 with an additional polling place sited at River House Montessori School, 3 Millharbour, E14 9XP (former Council Housing Offices) to deal with the current and anticipated increase in the electorate. The electorate for MI1 would reduce to 3,357, with 2 polling stations at Seven Mills Primary School and the electorate for MI4 would equate to 2,345, with two polling stations at the new River House Montessori School. The revised polling district boundary and new polling place location is set out at Appendix C.

Mile End East; change Stebon Primary School to Burdett Neighbourhood Centre, off Woowood Street, Masjid Lane, E14 7BW (opposite school).

5.3 **Bow East**; BE1 - we were asked to look into the possibility of creating a new polling district in this area, to give an additional polling place for residents of Wick Lane, Cadogan Terrace, Whitepost Lane, Dace Road and part of Jodrell Road to ensure residents have a polling place within easy access to be able to cast their vote. As the total electorate affected is 348, at this time we cannot justify a new polling place under current regulations. However, as the electorate grows in this area, we will review the situation again.

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6. It was a legal requirement to carry out the review of polling places in 2007 and thereafter every four years in accordance with the requirements of the Electoral Administration Act 2006. Each polling district must have sufficient and suitable designated polling places that provide ‘such reasonable facilities for voting that are practicable in the circumstances’ including accessibility for electors with disabilities. The Council is under a duty to promote equality for those with a disability and the recommendations in this report are drafted with this duty in mind.

Comments of the Chief Financial Officer

7. This report describes a review of polling districts and polling places in Tower Hamlets and makes recommendations to create two additional polling places and amend one polling district due to increases in the electorate in recent years.

Any financial implications arising from these changes are expected to be fully contained within existing budgets.

One Tower Hamlets Considerations

8. It is essential that disabilities issues are taken into account particularly in relation to identifying new polling places.

Risk Management Implications

9. The entire polling place review exercise is concerned with managing risk at all premises used as polling places

**Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)
List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report**

<i>Brief description of “back ground papers”</i>	<i>Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection.</i>
<i>Further Electoral Review Report</i>	<i>Louise Stamp 020 7364 3139</i>