

Committee General Purposes Committee	Date 17th January 2012	Classification Unrestricted	Report No.
Report of: Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services) Originating Officer(s): Louise Stamp, Electoral Services Manager		Title: Polling District and Polling Place Review 2011 Ward(s) affected: All	

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the representations on the review of polling districts and polling places and the steps which must be taken to complete this process.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The Council is responsible for the conduct of a polling district and polling place review at least once every four years under the Electoral Administration Act 2006. Although the Council reviewed its polling places in 2009, there is now a requirement to conduct a review again to ensure compliance with the Act.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is proposed that polling districts remain unchanged due to an Electoral Review taking place in February 2012, conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission.
- 3.2 That the Committee consider the draft polling place changes and reasons for change set out in paragraph 6, Appendix A, for consultation with a view to implementation in time for the Greater London Authority elections to be held on 3 May 2012.
- 3.3 That a further report on the outcome of consultation be submitted to the next meeting of the GP committee.
- 3.4 That the Council continues to make every effort to find suitable alternative polling places for those polling places where there is uncertainty about their availability for future elections and enhance the convenience, suitability and practical electoral arrangements for electors.

4. Background Information

4.1 Over the past two years Electoral Services have conducted a number of reviews. In 2008, all the 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.

4.2 Section 16 of the EA Act 2006 introduced a number of changes in respect of the way in which the review of polling districts and polling places must be undertaken. Polling Districts and Polling Places are defined as follows:-

Polling District the area created by the division of a constituency, ward or division into smaller parts, within which a polling place can be determined which is convenient to electors.

Polling Place the building or area in which polling stations will be selected by the Returning Officer.

Polling Station the room or building chosen by the Returning Officer where the poll takes place for each election

4.3 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 places a responsibility on each local authority to carry out a review of polling districts and polling places within its area on a regular 4 yearly cycle, to ensure all electors have reasonable facilities for voting. The first such review was completed in 2007 with a supplementary review in 2009.

4.4 The Electoral Commission issued guidance on the practical procedures involved in conducting a review of polling districts and polling places. In addition there has been close compliance with DDA provisions whilst conducting the review.

4.5 A checklist was drawn up in accordance with Electoral Commission, SCOPE and DDA guidance, a copy is attached at Appendix B. Each new polling place will be visited to ensure compliance, which assesses suitability, safety and compliance.

5. Review of Polling Districts

5.1 It is recommended that all polling districts remain unchanged in light of the possibility of a full borough Electoral review taking place this year.

6. Review of Polling Places

6.1 A detailed breakdown of the polling places under review is shown below. All polling places were reviewed as part of this exercise. However, only those found at Appendix A were suitable for voting purposes.

6.2 Draft recommendations for change can be found at Appendix A. The full list of polling places and electorate figures can be found at Appendix C.

Polling District	Properties	Electors	Current Polling Place
BCT1	2,470	2,717	Blackwall Enterprise Centre
BE1	1,748	2,748	Francis Lee Community Centre
MGT3	2,673	2,817	Tower Hamlets Inclusion Support Centre

7. Comments of the Chief Financial Officer

7.1 The forthcoming scheduled elections are funded by the GLA and there are no immediate financial implications for the Council.

8. Legal implications from the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal)

8.1 Each polling district must have a sufficient and suitable designated polling place that provides '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.

9. Risk Management

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

10. Community Safety

10.1 All recommended polling places are checked for safety and disabled access.

11. Equal Opportunities

11.1 All recommended polling places are as far as practicable located centrally within the polling district and are accessible for people with disabilities.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2000 (SECTION 97)

LIST OF "BACKGROUND PAPERS" USED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Brief description of "background paper"

Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection

None

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