

## **COUNCIL – 15TH JANUARY 2023**

### **Report of the Chief Executive**

#### REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS – OUTCOME

##### Purpose of Report

To present the outcomes of the review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations within the Borough.

##### Recommendations

1. That the proposals of the Chief Executive as set out in the Annex to this report, which are put forward in his capacity as the (Acting) Returning Officer for elections, for future arrangements for polling districts, polling places and polling stations be approved.
2. That authority to re-designate polling places be delegated to the Chief Executive in accordance with Section 18 and 18B of the Representation of the People Act 1983. Such authority should be exercised only where a decision is required at short notice, and it is not possible to await a decision of Council.

##### Reasons

1. To comply with requirements of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, and to ensure that any amended arrangements for polling districts, polling places and polling stations are in place in time for the UK Parliamentary General Election following the review undertaken by the Boundary Commission for England.
2. The designation of polling districts and places is a function of the Council, whereas decisions about polling stations are for the Returning Officer. In certain situations, it might not be practicable to await formal Council approval to designate a polling place – for example, where a building becomes unavailable at short notice due to unforeseen circumstances. Due to the potential need to identify alternative locations as polling stations as a matter of urgency, it is prudent to update the Scheme of Delegation to Officers.

##### Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced changes to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places. Reviews are required to be held within the period of 16 months that starts on 1<sup>st</sup> October every 5<sup>th</sup> year after 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013. Therefore, the next compulsory review must be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025.

The last compulsory review was undertaken in 2017, and the recommendations were agreed by Council at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019 (minute reference 62.4).

The last interim review was undertaken in 2022, and the recommendations were agreed by Council at its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022 (minute reference 68).

At the meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023, Council approved proposals to undertake a review, and this report presents the outcomes of that review for approval.

### Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny

If approved, the arrangements set out in this report will come into effect for the Police and Crime Commissioner elections on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024 and any subsequent elections.

The proposals relating to the change to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers will come into effect with immediate effect.

### Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

#### *Financial Implications*

The population of the Borough, and consequently the number of electors, is increasing as new residential developments proceed, and this is reflected within the proposals to create a number of new polling stations, which will have ongoing cost implications.

The anticipated costs of the 2027 Borough elections, taking account of the proposals within this report, will be included within the 2027/28 budget which will come to Council for approval in due course.

The costs of other elections (eg. Parish and Town Councils, County Council, Parliamentary, and Police & Crime Commissioner elections) are met by the relevant external organisations.

#### *Risk Management*

There are no specific risks associated with this decision.

Background Papers:                      Electoral Commission guidance on reviews of polling districts, polling areas and polling stations:  
<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator/polling-place-reviews>

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## **Annex**

(Acting) Returning Officer's Final Proposals