

Report to:	COUNCIL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Report of:	HEAD OF ELECTORAL SERVICES
Date of Meeting:	21 OCTOBER 2019
Subject:	REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND PLACES
Wards affected:	ALL

1.	Purpose of report:
1.1	To approve the Polling Districts and the designated Polling Places as set out in Appendix 1 in accordance with the requirements of Section 18 and Section 31 of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

2.	Decision(s) recommended:
2.1	<p>There are no recommended changes to the current Polling Districts boundaries or the designated Polling Places on this occasion, as they were last comprehensively reviewed following the citywide ward boundary changes which were approved by this Committee in October 2017.</p> <p>There are, however, some suggested polling station venue changes arising as a result of the consultation for which this Committee is not required to agree, but merely note as part of the statutory review of Polling Districts and Places.</p>

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List of Appendices to this Report:	
1.	Original Acting Returning Officer proposals
2.	Revised Acting Returning Officer proposals where changes have been suggested.

3. Relevant background/chronology of key events.	
3.1	Section 18 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 places a duty on the Council to keep the Parliamentary Polling Districts under review with a view to giving all electors reasonable facilities for voting. Section 31 of the Act deals similarly with Polling Districts at Local Government elections. The Council's powers and duties in this respect are delegated to this Committee.
3.2	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 now be started and completed between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020 (inclusive).
3.3	A citywide review of all polling districts and places took place in 2017/2018 in order to implement the ward boundary changes which took effect from 4 th May 2018. Nevertheless, under the legislation we are required to do a further citywide review.
3.4	<p>For the majority of polling districts there are no changes from the decisions made at the last review- any changes being in response to feedback following the May 2018 poll. However, work has been undertaken to identify an alternative polling station venue for use at Parliamentary General elections. This is because, when the local boundary review was carried out by the Local Boundary Commission, our wards are no longer coterminous with the Parliamentary boundaries. This means that some wards cross two, and in one case, three Parliamentary constituencies.</p> <p>When undertaking the citywide polling district review in 2017/2018 we identified these streets and created unique polling districts so that we could identify them in Parliamentary elections. Where the number of electors is sufficient to merit a polling station the electors will see no difference. However, there are some very small polling districts, so the electors will in the event of a Parliamentary election or Parliamentary by election cast their vote at a different polling station than if they were voting at a local ward election.</p>
3.5	Legislation is underway to revise the Parliamentary boundaries, however, this legislation has not yet been enacted. Once it is in place, the polling districts and places will be reviewed again as the proposed changes will create more of these anomalies rather than create coterminous ward and parliamentary boundaries.

3.6 The timetable for this review -

Notice of start of review	6 August 2019
Publication of the Acting Returning Officer's representations	6 August 2019
Deadline for comments	6 September 2019
Final comments on ARO's revised representations following feedback	30 September 2019
Report to Council Business Management Committee, to approve and adopt the revised scheme	21 October 2019
Arrangements come into force when the revised Register is published	1 December 2019

3.7 During the review process the following guidelines were used:

- The current electorates of each polling district to be used
- A policy of "minimal disruption" has been followed
- All electors should be given reasonable facilities for voting.
- Replacements for temporary porta cabins should be found if possible
- Ideally, the polling station should be within its own Polling District, unless there is no reasonable alternative available
- Up to 2,000 electors may be allocated to one polling station (if the premises are suitable two polling stations - up to 4,000 electors – may be provided, etc.) based on Electoral Commission guidance
- No polling district to have less than 1000 electors – unless a natural boundary makes this a necessity, or the polling district must be kept separate in order to identify the streets contained as being part of a different constituency from the rest of the ward
- No polling station should be shared by more than one ward – unless no other suitable polling venue is available
- Any new premise/polling stations identified should have good access for people with disabilities
- Where possible, natural boundaries are to be used e.g. railways, major roads, waterways etc.
- The Acting Returning Officer has a preference to use, wherever possible, any room in a school maintained or assisted by a local education authority, or a school in respect of which grants are made out of monies provided by Parliament to the person or body responsible for the management of the school (this includes Academies). This use of schools guarantees that rooms are available each year, even at short notice, and are free of charge, though extra charges for heating, lighting and caretakers etc. are met by the Acting Returning Officer. Schools have good access and are usually in a prominent position within the polling district and are well known landmark buildings.

3.8 The Council published the Acting Returning Officer's proposals on the web site inviting comments from members of the public, and emails were sent to all elected Members, MPs, MEPs, PCC and WMCA Mayor, main party agents / organisers inviting comments. Twitter and Facebook updates signposting citizens to the website were posted to raise public awareness during the consultation period.

- 3.9 Comments were received in respect of 12 wards making suggestions regarding the proposed polling station locations where the original ARO scheme had set out options.
- 3.10 There were no suggestions submitted which changed the polling district boundaries or the designated polling place.
- 3.11 Council Business Management Committee needs to agree the proposals as set out in the Acting Returning Officer's report on the unchanged final polling district boundaries.
- 3.12 When agreed the proposals will come into effect from 1st December 2019 when the new annual register of electors is published.

Signature:

Chief Officer:.....

ROBERT CONNELLY, ACTING RETURNING OFFICER