

# LONDON BOROUGH OF NEWHAM

## Decision of Chief Executive

### Determination of Polling Districts in Newham

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Determination of Polling District Boundaries and Polling Places</b>	
<b>Date of Decision</b>	<b>21 October 2021</b>	
<b>Authority to take decision</b>	Part 3.1.1.4 of the Council's Constitution delegates the power to agree the polling districts in the borough under s.18 of the Representation of the People Act 1983	
<b>Decision Maker &amp; Position</b>	<b>Chief Executive</b>	
<b>Exempt information &amp; Grounds</b>	Yes/ No	Not Applicable
<b>Wards Affected</b>	All	
<b>Appendices (if any)</b>	1. Feedback from consultation 2. Proposed polling stations 2022 3. Polling District proposals 4. Timetable for implementation	

#### **1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report reports the outcome of the Polling District Review and seeks approval from the Chief Executive on the proposed polling district and polling stations in Newham. The recommendations are to be implemented for the 5 May 2022 elections. This will enable the Council to meet the statutory requirement to deliver its functions relating to elections.

#### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 For the reasons set out in the report and its appendices, the Chief Executive is recommended:
- 2.1.1 To consider and take into account the outcome of public consultation and the resulting changes set out in this report, Appendix 1 and then.

- 2.1.2 To agree the recommended scheme of polling districts and polling places in the London Borough of Newham, as set out in Appendix 2 and 3.
- 2.1.3 To delegate authority to the Director of Legal & Governance (or his nominees) to implement the decision at 2.1.2.

### **3 Background**

- 3.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE)<sup>1</sup> reviewed the London Borough of Newham council size and ward patterns in 2018 to 2020. The proposed increase in the number of wards, from 20 to 24, results in changes to current ward boundaries and therefore required a review of polling districts, in accordance with the requirements of section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983. The Polling District Review needs to be agreed and implemented in time for the Local Elections to be held on Thursday 5 May 2022, reflecting the changes to the ward boundaries.
- 3.2 An interim review of all polling stations was undertaken in January-March 2021, to reflect the impact of the pandemic on the safety of the borough's polling stations. These arrangements were implemented for the GLA election in May 2021 and resulted in a significant reduction in the number of schools being used as polling stations. A full assessment of all polling places and stations based on risk assessments, suitability, ownership and availability was undertaken Borough wide as part of this process.
- 3.3 The criteria for polling district and polling stations are as follows (noting this is guidance rather than a set of rules):
  - 3.3.1 There should be no more than 2500 electors (excluding absent voters) allocated to a particular polling station as per the LGBCE guidance. In some areas, geographical boundaries mean that it is sensible to have polling districts which may be smaller in clearly defined areas.
  - 3.3.2 Consideration is given to projected elector ratios that were used as part of the ward boundary review in relation to the size of venues.
  - 3.3.3 To ensure all electors have reasonable facilities for voting and all premises are accessible or capable of being made accessible to voters with disabilities.
  - 3.3.4 Where current polling districts can continue as the major part of the new districts and there are sensible reasons for continuing with existing arrangements, then this principle has been followed.
  - 3.3.5 Suitable existing polling stations should be used where possible.

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<sup>1</sup> LGBCE final recommendations for Newham can be found at their website: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/greater-london/greater-london/newham>.

- 3.3.6 To consider geographical factors, including natural boundaries, such as railway lines, major roads and rivers, and demographic factors, such as population densities, housing developments etc.
  - 3.3.7 Polling places fall within the polling district wherever possible, and electors should where possible not have to travel past another polling station to get to their own station.
  - 3.3.8 Stations should be centrally located within the Polling District where possible.
  - 3.3.9 The use of schools be avoided where suitable alternative premises are available.
  - 3.3.10 Convenient transport links within the polling district.
- 3.4 The LGBCE recommendations resulted in the following changes to ward boundaries:
- 3.4.1 Increase in the number of councillors from 60 to 66.
  - 3.4.2 Increase in the number of wards from 20 to 24, with 18 three member wards and 6 two member wards.
  - 3.4.3 The boundaries of all wards except West Ham ward will change but to differing degrees.
  - 3.4.4 New wards are; Stratford Olympic Park, Maryland, Plaistow West & Canning Town East, Plashet, Royal Albert, and Royal Victoria.
- 3.5 Finally, after the LGBCE review took place, a proposed parliamentary boundary review was published and unfortunately is based on the pre-existing Newham wards (i.e. prior to the LGBCE review). This has resulted in 3 small, geographical areas where the proposed constituency boundaries do not follow the new ward boundaries. This will therefore create areas within each of these wards, where a small number of electors could be voting in a different parliamentary constituency to the majority of the ward. As a result, the Council has submitted the following recommendation to the Boundary Commission:
- 3.5.1 *“We consider it desirable that whole wards are represented by the same Member of Parliament. The numbers of electors involved in redrawing these boundaries would not materially affect the balance of the overall numbers of voters in the parliamentary constituencies.”*
- 3.6 The final decision is for the parliamentary Boundary Commission and they may not agree the submission. The attached proposals for Newham’s Polling Districts reflects this risk, as set out below.

## 4 Proposals

4.1 The initial Polling District Review proposals were put out to consultation in the period from 19 July 2021 to 30 September 2021. The proposals were advertised via the Newham Council website, at all libraries, and direct communication with existing polling stations, interested parties, community groups, and all schools in the Borough. Groups representing disabled voters or disabled persons were specifically contacted, as required. Comments were invited on the proposals, including seeking alternative suggestions for consideration where the proposal is not supported.

4.2 A total of 9 responses were received during the consultation, set out below with the management responses:

Ward	Polling District / Station	Consultation Response	Management Response	Accepted / not accepted
Forest Gate North	St. James C of E Junior School	Request not to use school as a station.	School premises not being used as polling station.	Not accepted
Beckton	Kingsford Community School	Request not to use school as a station.	School premises not being used as polling station.	Not accepted
Boleyn	St Edwards Catholic Primary School	Request not to use school as a station.	Our Lady of Compassion Church is being proposed as the polling station.	Not accepted
Beckton	Beckton Community Centre (polling district 3)	Request for additional polling station as travel to Beckton Community Centre involves crossing major roundabout near Gallions Reach.	Hamme Apartments have been identified as a polling station for polling district 5, which does not require residents to cross the roundabout.	Not accepted
East Ham South	All	Electors in the East of the ward have further to walk to their stations than in the west of the ward.	There are two polling stations proposed in east side of the ward, High Street Methodist church and the Well Community Centre. Only practical alternative to Methodist Church would be	Not accepted

			Brampton Manor School (Secondary), which would create significant disruption.	
Royal Victoria	Boundary between polling districts 2 and 3	Request for boundary to be moved to ensure all neighbouring homes near West Silvertown DLR station are within the same polling district.	Properties moved from the south of North Woolwich Road into polling district, ensuring the boundary aligns with the neighbourhood.	Accepted
Royal Albert	Polling district 3	Request to keep polling station at The Asta Centre, as voters have a longer walking distance to North Woolwich Learning Zone polling station.	Polling district split into two smaller polling districts, with both The Asta Centre and North Woolwich Learning Zone polling station being used as a polling station.	Accepted
Custom House	Boundary between polling districts 1 & 2, and 2 & 3.	Request to better align boundary with Custom House regeneration programme, as demolition sites obstruct voters direct route to the polling station.	Boundary between two polling districts moved to go down the middle of Butchers Road, to better align with regeneration.	Accepted
Plashet Ward	Trinity Centre	Request to move polling station as the premise is occupied by Labour Party office.	Plashet Secondary School is being proposed as the alternative polling place. The school premise has been consulted.	Accepted

4.3 Further details of the accepted consultation responses and resulting changes made can be found in Appendix 1. The three changes to polling district boundaries, as outlined in 4.2., were made to ensure polling districts align

with geographical factors, including development and regeneration projects, as referred to in 3.6.6.

- 4.4 The final proposals are set out in Appendix 2. The key polling station and polling district proposals resulting from 4.1 are:
- 4.4.1 A total of 89 polling places proposed, where 11 are a new polling station recommendation.
  - 4.4.2 34 proposed polling places are to be used as double polling stations.
  - 4.4.3 41 of the proposed polling stations are on school premises, 1 of which is Plashet Secondary School.
  - 4.4.4 A new polling station Manor Park Community and Neighbourhood Centre to replace Portakabin at Mornington Care Home.
  - 4.4.5 Carpenters and Docklands polling district has been split to reduce the pressure from voter numbers.
- 4.5 All proposed polling stations have been used at previous elections, with the exception of the 11 following new venues:

Trinity Centre, Canning Town South.	Brampton Primary School, East Ham South.	Odessa Infant School, Forest Gate North.
Plashet Secondary School, Plashet.	Kaizen Primary School, Plaistow South.	Manor Park Community and Neighbourhood Centre, Manor Park.
Royal Wharf Primary School, Royal Victoria.	Pavilion, Thames Barriers Park, Royal Victoria.	Carpenters Primary School, Stratford.
Timber Lodge, Stratford Olympic Park.	Elmhurst Primary School, Green Street West.	

- 4.6 A significant number of schools have been identified as polling stations. This is largely due to the absence of suitable alternatives in the polling districts and borough generally. Where possible, we will work with schools to see if it is possible to keep the school open, or a part of it, on polling day.
- 4.7 The proposals have been amended to seek to mitigate the current proposals in the Parliamentary Boundary Review, as identified above. It is proposed that 3 smaller polling districts in Green Street West, Forest Gate South, and Plaistow North to align the proposed parliamentary boundaries with the local ward boundaries. If the Council's consultation response is accepted and the Parliamentary boundaries are amended to reflect the Council's new ward boundaries, these changes can be reversed in a polling district review focussed on these districts only.
- 4.8 Details of the timetable leading to the publication of the electoral register can be found in Appendix 4.
- 4.9 **Summary**

- 4.10 The Chief Executive is recommended to consider the outcome of the consultation set out in this report and agree the final proposals for the Polling Districts set out at Appendix 3.

## **5 Delivering Council Policy and Priorities**

- 5.1 The Polling District Review is a statutory requirement and independent from the Council's political decision making.

## **6 Alternative options considered and rejected**

- 6.1 The Polling District Review is a mandatory requirement. Part 4 set out the alternative proposals arising from the consultation process and the Council's response.

## **7 Consultation**

- 7.1 See the outcome of public consultation in Part 4. This is a statutory report and there is no consultation with members or the Executive.

## **8 Implications**

### **8.1 Financial Implications**

- 8.1.1 Any increase in the amount of polling stations would incur additional costs in terms of building hire, equipment and polling station staff. The cost incurred from using Council maintained buildings is limited to covering heating, lighting and cleaning costs. These costs are met by the Council only when used for Council elections or by- elections. Otherwise the cost of elections are met by central or regional government.

### **8.2 Legal Implications**

- 8.2.1 The Representation of the People Act 1983 section 18D requires that local authorities designate the polling places within the Parliamentary Constituencies. Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, Returning Officers have the right to use certain public buildings (including schools that receive public funds) for use as polling stations at elections. The report identifies that full Council has delegated the power to designate polling districts and places to the Chief Executive.

### **8.3 Equalities Implications**

- 8.3.1 The Council will have 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, when exercising its functions. The accessibility of stations to all users, included disabled users is a key criterion in their selection. Where possible, polling stations have been located so as to minimise walking distances for voters and those with mobility issues.
- 8.3.2 All existing Polling Stations had an accessibility checklist and risk assessment, completed in the preparation for the Greater London

Authority elections held in May 2021. Any new or proposed polling station will undergo a new accessibility checklist and risk assessment to ensure they are accessible for all residents.

## **9 Background Information used in the preparation of this report**

- 9.1 Full details of the proposed polling stations and polling districts with the new ward arrangements in the following:  
<https://www.newham.gov.uk/council/review-polling-districts-polling-places-new-ward-arrangements/2>
- 9.2 LGBCE final recommendations: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/greater-london/greater-london/newham>.



**CONSULTATION SHEET – COMPLETE WHERE REQUIRED OR PUT N/A**

IN CONSULTATION WITH (Refer to delegation for other specific consultees)

Please check the following


- Does the decision require the agreement of or consultation of another Director, especially Finance and Legal?
- Does the decision require consultation with one or more Lead Members?

Add additional directors / members to this form as are necessary.

Only sign the report when you have received the outcome of the consultation and taken into account any comments in your decision.

Electronic signatures of any kind are accepted.

Lead Member [insert title] Comment  NOT APPLICABLE TO ELECTORAL DECISIONS	Signed:  Print  Date:
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SIGNATURE Officer with Delegated Powers: [CHIEF EXECUTIVE   AGREED/NOT AGREED:	Signed:   Print ALTHEA LODERICK  Date: 27 October 2021
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**NB Key decisions made by officers cannot be implemented until the 6<sup>th</sup> working day following the date of publication of the decision to allow members to consider whether or not to call in the decision.**