

# Croydon Council

For General Release

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>GENERAL PURPOSES &amp; AUDIT COMMITTEE</b> 28 January 2015
<b>AGENDA ITEM NO:</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Polling District Review 2014/15
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Nathan Elvery, Acting Returning Officer (ARO)
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Cllr Simon Hall, Cabinet Member for Finance and Treasury and Chairman of Electoral Working Party
<b>WARDS:</b>	All Wards
<b>CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:</b> The Council's policy is to encourage the active participation of all its citizens in the in the democratic process.	
<b>FINANCIAL IMPACT</b> None	
<b>FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.:</b> This is not a key decision.	

## 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the Committee agrees the changes to the Polling Districts and Polling Places as set out in the Report of the Acting Returning Officer (Appendix A)

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report sets out the proposed changes to a number of polling districts and polling places as part of a review carried out as required by the Review of Polling District and Polling Places Regulations (Parliamentary Regulations) 2006.
- 2.2 The proposals are designed to try and ensure there is a balance of electorate within each polling district and that the polling places are convenient and easily accessible for electors.
- 2.3 The proposals have taken into account the representations received during the consultation period.

- 2.4 The review took into account expected electorate figures arising from new build and developments.
- 2.5 These changes, if agreed, will take effect with the publication of the revised Register of Electors on 2 March 2015.
- 2.6 Moving forward the Boundary Commission is to be invited to Croydon to discuss the feasibility of conducting a full scale Electoral Review of the local authority. Such a review will look at the number of councilors, the names numbers and boundaries of the wards and the number of councilors to be elected to each.

### 3. **DETAIL OF YOUR REPORT**

- 3.1 The review was conducted according to the requirements of the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary elections) Regulations 2006 and the provisions of the Representation of People Act 1983, as amended. The Current review must be completed by 31 January 2015.
- 3.2 The Acting Returning Officer published the proposals for changes to polling districts on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014 and the consultation on the proposals ran from 31 October 2014 to 28 November 2014. The Council received one representation as a result of the consultation.
- 3.3 The consideration of the outcome of the consultation and representations received was incorporated within the terms of reference of the cross party Electoral Working Group. The Group considered the proposals by the Acting Returning Officer and the representations received and made recommendations to the ARO which have been incorporated within the Report of the ARO at Appendix A which is recommended for adoption by full Council.
- 3.4 The guiding principles followed in reviewing Croydon's polling districts were:
  - That the Acting Returning Officer's median figure for the initial review of 1,750 projected polling station voters per polling district formed the basis of the recommendations the report
  - That in line with Electoral Commission guidelines there will no more than 2,500 electors allocated to each polling station
  - That electors will be distributed equally amongst all polling districts in the Ward, where practicable
  - That accessibility requirements will be accounted for when allocating polling places
  - That local disability groups will be consulted as part of the review
- 3.5 Other considerations:
  - There are many new developments in the process of being built. Those completed and occupied prior to the May 2015 elections were taken into account as part of the review
  - New properties that have yet to be completed or occupied will not be considered until after the May 2016 elections where the Wards affected will be reviewed again

- The current electoral register is being used to provide statistics for the review
- The electorate figures will be refreshed during the 2014 annual canvass
- Polling district boundaries could be changed but not the Ward boundaries

3.5 The Acting Returning Officer's final report and recommendations can be found at Appendix A. The report details the changes to Croydon's polling districts as well as the Acting Returning Officer's proposed scheme of polling places for each Ward.

3.6 Once the proposals are agreed details of the new polling districts and polling places must be made available to the public.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

4.1 The Acting Returning Officer published the proposals for changes to polling districts on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014. The proposals were open to a consultation period which ran from 31 October 2014 to 28 November 2014.

4.2 Submissions were received and were considered by the Acting Returning Officer and the Electoral Working Group. Where possible the submissions were used to help improve the proposals. Appendix A makes clear those submissions which have been accepted and sets out reasons.

#### **5. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

#### **6. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER**

6.1 The review has been conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006. There is a statutory obligation on the Committee to agree the recommendations of the Acting Returning Officer by 31 January 2015.

6.2 Approved by: Julie Belvir , Council Solicitor & Director of Democratic and Legal Services.

#### **7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

7.1 There are no Human Resources implications arising out of this report.

#### **8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.1 There are only nominal changes proposed to the polling stations following the extensive revision of polling stations and polling districts which took place during the last review. In addition, there is a single change proposed to the polling districts following receipt of representations which will affect a small number of electors, 380, affected by change of the few streets from FA5 to FA6 and reduce the distance they need to travel to get to their local polling station thereby improving accessibility to get to their polling station. Where new polling

places are being used, the accessibility has been assessed as being suitable by Electoral Officers.

- 8.2 The poll cards to be issued for the May 2015 Parliamentary elections and any subsequent elections, will contain accessibility information and highlight where the polling place has changed.
- 8.3 In the run up to the May 2015 Parliamentary Election, polling stations will be kept under constant review and equality considerations will form part of that process.
- 8.4 Approved by: Sharon Goodman, Head of Communities.

## **9. ENVIRONMENTAL & CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

- 9.1 None arising from this report.
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### **CONTACT OFFICERS:**

Lea Goddard, Head of Elections Ext 65730  
Julie McGhee, Acting Electoral Services Manager.  
Ext: 61449

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

Report of the Acting Returning Officer (Appendix A)