

## For General Release

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Council Meeting Monday 29 January 2018</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Polling District and Polling Place Review</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Jo Negrini, Chief Executive and (Acting) Returning Officer</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>All wards</b>
<b>CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:</b> An effective polling district and polling place scheme supports the council priority to encourage strong and involved communities, by enabling the electorate to effectively engage in the democratic process.	
<b>FINANCIAL IMPACT</b> There are no financial implications arising from this report.	

### 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended:

- 1.1 To note that the London Borough of Croydon (Electoral Changes) Order 2017 to implement the recommendations made by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) for new ward boundaries within Croydon was made on 20 November 2017 and will be in effect from the local government elections on Thursday 3 May 2018.
- 1.2 To approve the revised schedule of polling districts set out in Appendix A.
- 1.3 To approve the revised schedule of polling places set out in Appendix A.
- 1.4 To delegate to the (Acting) Returning Officer authority to approve an alternative polling place in the event that any polling place becomes unavailable or found to be unsuitable in the run up to an election and to make this change on a permanent basis following the election.

### 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report sets out the proposed changes to the polling districts and polling places as required following the recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England for new and revised local government electoral arrangements for the Borough. The new arrangements are to come into force at the local government elections to be held on Thursday 3 May 2018.

- 2.2 The proposals are designed to try to ensure there is a balance of electorate within each polling district and that 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 the expected electorate figures arising from new build and developments where currently known.

### **3. THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON (ELECTORAL CHANGES) ORDER 2017**

- 3.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) undertook a review of the electoral wards of Croydon and made the following recommendations:
  - Croydon will be represented by 70 ward councillors, the same as now.
  - Croydon will have 28 wards, four more than now.
  - The new arrangements will come into force at the local government elections on Thursday 3 May 2018.
- 3.2 The London Borough of Croydon (Electoral Changes) Order 2017 (“the Order”), was made by Parliament on 23 November 2017 implementing the changes. The effect of the order was to abolish the existing electoral wards of the Borough (effective for the next ordinary elections in May 2018) and replace them with 28 new electoral wards.
- 3.3 As a result of the Order, the (Acting) Returning Officer was required to carry out a review of all the polling districts and polling places in the borough. The new wards have to be sub-divided into smaller geographical areas called polling districts. Each polling district has a polling place where the polling station for the district is located and where electors living in the district will vote. Given that there is an entirely new set of electoral wards and a completely revised polling district scheme there is no reference made to existing polling districts or polling places as these are not of relevance in relation to the revised scheme.
- 3.4 A physical survey of the borough was carried out using the new ward scheme. This helped determine where boundaries had changed. Electoral Services software was then used to generate maps and road data at polling district level.
- 3.5 The (Acting) Returning Officer published the proposals for new polling districts on Friday 8 December. A copy of the consultation documentation (excluding map) is attached at Appendix C The guiding principles in reviewing the polling districts were:
  - To seek to ensure that all electors in the borough have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
  - Where possible, no more than 2,500 electors should vote at any one polling station (not including postal voters; however, there can be more than one polling station in a polling place).
  - Proposed future developments that will increase the number of houses and the potential number of electors in a ward or polling district over the next four years.

- To ensure that, so far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places are accessible to those who are disabled.
- 3.6 In addition, where the new wards cross parliamentary constituency boundaries, the overlap is kept as a separate polling district so that, where possible, electors will cast their votes in the same place regardless of what type of election it is.
- 3.7 The scheme of proposed polling districts and polling place designations is attached as Appendix A

#### **4. CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

- 4.1 The (Acting) Returning Officer published the proposals on Friday 8 December 2017 seeking the views and comments of electors, interested parties and any persons with expertise in access to premises for persons with any type of disability.
- 4.2 The proposals were open to a consultation period which ran from Friday 8 December 2017 to Friday 29 December 2017.
- 4.3 The consultation document provided background and details of the review, including the proposed polling district and polling station scheme. During the consultation period the (Acting) Returning Officer's proposals were also published on the council's website.
- 4.4 In total 7 submissions were received during the consultation period, 1 supporting the proposals and the remaining 6 responses requesting changes to polling districts or polling places in a number of wards.
- 4.5 All submissions received were considered by the (Acting) Returning Officer. Meetings were held with both the majority and minority groups to discuss the consultation responses. The submissions were reviewed in the context of the principles of the review and how they best met the criteria.
- 4.6 A summary of the submissions received and the comments of the (Acting) Returning Officer can be found at Appendix B.

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

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report  
Approved by – Lisa Taylor Director of Finance, Investment and Risk

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

The Council Solicitor comments that:

- 6.1 Section 18C of the Representation of the People Act (RPA) 1983, as amended by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, requires the Council to carry out a review of polling districts and polling places in its area within the period of 16 months of 1 October 2013 and then within the period of 16 months

from the 1 October of every fifth year after that. The next compulsory review is required to be started and completed within the period 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020. The last compulsory review was carried out in 2015. The review undertaken as a consequence of the changes to ward boundaries to be introduced by London Borough of Croydon (Electoral Changes) Order 2017 is not a compulsory review. As set out in Appendix C, the review has been carried out in accordance with Schedule A1 of the RPA which requires the Council to publish its proposals and consult and seek representations from certain prescribed people. Electors may also make representations.

- 6.2 Once the review is completed the Council must publish its decision together with correspondence and representations made in relation to the review and other prescribed information. Representations received in relation to the review are set out at Appendix B.
- 6.3 The Electoral Commission has issued guidance on the review of Parliamentary Polling Districts Polling Places and Polling Stations.
- 6.4 The requirements of Section 18 RPA do not prevent a local authority from conducting a review at any time outside the compulsory review periods. It is sometimes necessary, as here, that interim reviews need to be conducted outside the compulsory period.
- 6.5 The local elections scheduled to be held on 3 May 2018 will be based on the 28 newly created electoral wards as set out in the London Borough of Croydon (Electoral Changes) Order 2017. As a result of the recommendations made by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) and set out in the 2017 Order made on 20 November 2017 a review of polling districts and polling places is required.
- 6.6 A Polling District is a geographical area created by the sub-division of an electoral area i.e. a UK Parliamentary constituency, a European Parliamentary electoral region, a Ward or an electoral division.
- 6.7 A Polling Place is a geographical area in which a polling station is located. There is no legal definition of what a Polling Place is; it could be defined as tightly as a particular building or as widely as the entire polling district.
- 6.8 A Polling Station is the actual area where the process of voting takes place and must be located within the Polling Place designated for the particular Polling District.
- 6.9 The Council's functions relating to a review of polling districts and places are designated by law as non-executive functions and so cannot be discharged by the Leader or Cabinet. Save where Council has delegated responsibility for approving changes to Polling Districts and Polling Places to a committee, sub-committee or an officer responsibility for approving such changes rests with full Council.

APPROVED BY: Sandra Herbert Head of Litigation and Corporate Law for and on behalf of Jacqueline Harris-Baker Director of Law and Monitoring Officer.

## **7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

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

## **8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.1 As far as is reasonable and practicable the polling places are accessible to the disabled. Where new polling places are being used, the accessibility has been assessed as being suitable by electoral officers.

8.2 In the run up to the May 2018 local elections polling stations will be kept under constant review and equity considerations will form part of the process.

8.3 In the run up to the May 2018 local elections the electoral services team will visit each designated polling place to carry out an equalities impact assessment survey.

8.4 For those less able to vote in person at a polling station the option of voting by post or proxy will be an option.

APPROVED BY: Simon Bashford, Community & Voluntary Sector

## **9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

9.1 None arising from this report.

## **10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

10.1 None arising from this report.

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### **CONTACT OFFICER:**

Lea Goddard, Head of Elections and Civic Services, Ext. 65730.

### **APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT**

#### **Appendix A.**

The scheme of proposed polling districts and polling place designations

#### **Appendix B.**

A summary of the submissions received and the comments of the (Acting) Returning Officer

#### **Appendix C.**

Copy of consultation documents (excluding map)

### **Background Documents**

A map of the new wards and proposed polling districts recommended in this report can be found at;

[www.croydon.gov.uk/polling-districts-places](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/polling-districts-places)

Hard copies of the new ward maps are available in the Members' area.

