

## DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

### ELECTORAL PROVISIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

**MINUTES** of the meeting of the Electoral Provisions Sub-Committee held on Wednesday 17 October 2018.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Chris Shippam (Chairman)  
Councillor Joshua Jones  
Councillor Keith M Kelly  
Councillor Jeremy A Kite MBE  
Councillor Denzil J Reynolds  
Councillor Richard J Wells

**COUNCIL OFFICERS** Graham Harris – Managing Director  
Sarah Martin – Strategic Director (External)  
Jeanette Peglar – Electoral Service Manager

#### **5. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hawkes, Read and Swinerd.

The sub Committee noted the appointment of Councillors Jones and Kite as substitutes for Councillors Hawkes and Swinerd respectively.

#### **6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Kite declared a personal interest in item 10 as he was a director of Dartford Football club and a governor of Leigh Academy Trust school both of which were being considered as venues for polling places.

#### **7. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Electoral Provisions Sub – Committee held on 27 June 2018 were confirmed as a correct record of that meeting.

#### **8. URGENT ITEMS**

The Chairman reported that there were no Urgent Items for the Board to consider.

#### **9. REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

It was noted that there were no references for the Sub - Committee to consider.

#### **10. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES**

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The Sub - Committee received a report on the proposed arrangements for a review of polling district and polling places for Dartford required under Section 189C (1) and (2) of the 1983 Representation of the People Act.

The Act requires that the Council divides the Borough into polling districts and designates a polling place for each district, and to keep these arrangements under review. It was also reported that this process must be started and completed between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020 respectively.

As a result of the recently undertaken Local Government Boundary Commission for England review of the local borough ward boundaries and the Community Governance Review of parish boundaries, it is necessary to undertake the review now and that it be completed in time for use at the local elections scheduled for May 2019, so that the arrangements for Local elections remain the same for parliamentary elections.

The Sub-committee supported the suggestion that when the final recommendations are taken to the General Assembly of Council, delegated approval be granted to the Managing Director 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.

The report identified initial proposals for polling districts and polling places, which were to be the subject of public consultation, and highlighted the following amendments to the details set out in the report which were necessary due to recent developments:

### **Bean & Village Park Ward.**

Village Park Polling District. Officers explained the difficulties of this mobile unit and that it may not be able to offer good polling arrangements in the future. Members raised no objection and agreed that the Arrow Riding School would offer a possible suitable alternative.

### **Brent Ward.**

Livingstone Polling District: Investigations have identified that other options in the district are not viable and that the Dartford Primary Academy remains the best venue for the polling place.

Grassbanks Polling District. The use of a building to be identified within the environs of the football ground seem suitable for this new polling district.

### **Bridge Ward.**

Marshes Polling District The issues with car parking was explained to Members and it was agreed that this still offered better polling arrangements.

**Burnham Ward.** The polling place for this ward is satisfactory but the size of the electorate may require that the register is split to obviate unnecessary queues.

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### **Ebbsfleet Ward.**

Cherry Orchard Polling District. The Acting Returning Officer may need to seek an alternative polling place if the existing venue is unable to cope with an ever expanding electorate. It is possible that the adjoining Community Centre may be suitable.

Black Eagle Polling District. A new polling place, possibly a mobile unit, will be necessary for this new District, but the Acting Returning Officer may need to seek an alternative polling place possibly outside the District.

### **Greenhithe Ward.**

Knockhall Polling District. Members agreed that the use of the Knockhall, Primary School would offer a more central arrangement for electors.

Everards Polling District. Concern was raised regarding this polling place due to the distance away from previous arrangements of a mobile unit at Eagles Road. Officers explained the history of the arrangements and how these had overcome and fewer complaints had been received. This polling district would now support a smaller electorate and electors from the Ingress development now had their own polling district. Member requested that additional signage may help to resolve these issues of people not being able to locate the polling station.

Abbey Polling District. It was originally proposed that the Community Centre at Ingress Park be used as a Polling place but doubt now exists regarding its availability, consequently the Acting Returning Officer may need to seek an alternative polling place for this district and the recommendation should be amended to reflect this.

### **Longfield, New Barn and Southfleet Ward**

Green Street Polling District. A suitable polling place has not as yet been identified for this new polling district, but investigations are on - going. Should no suitable venue be found during the review then the use of a mobile unit would be utilised

New Barn West Polling District. When a mobile unit is placed on Nuthatch it invariably draws complaints from neighbours, officers have been unable to identify an alternative location in this area.

Southfleet West Polling District. The placement of the mobile unit and use of a generator has caused complaints from noise from the adjoining property and also issues with the sightlines. Members acknowledged that the Acting Returning Officer may need to identify an alternative location for the polling station.

### **Newtown Ward**

St Albans Polling District. Members supported the use of the school as the polling place.

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Hesketh Polling District. If available, Members supported the use of the pavilion as the polling place.

### **Princes Ward**

Phoenix Polling District. Concern was expressed by Members that the proposed new polling district would not find favour with electors and that voter numbers would consequently fall and felt that the tree estate should retain its own polling place which was currently a mobile unit on the junction of Chestnut Road and Larch Road.

It was therefore agreed that an additional polling district would be created (Willow) similar to the arrangements for the current KD polling district for those electors

The polling district reference would be amended accordingly.

### **Stone Castle Ward**

Stone Village Polling District. – Members acknowledged that the previously polling place was no longer available and as no alternative could be identified a mobile unit would need to be used.

Castle Polling District. A more permanent location for a polling place was being sought to replace the mobile unit used at previous elections. It was suggested that a currently vacant retail unit at St Clements Way may be suitable and it was agreed that this would be investigated.

### **Stone House Ward**

St John's Polling District. Although the current polling place is perfectly adequate for one or even two possible polling stations, Members asked that further investigation of alternatives is undertaken as part of the review.

### **Temple Hill Ward**

St Edmunds Polling District. Members agreed that the use of Temple Hill School offered a sensible arrangement.

### **Town Ward**

Central Polling District. Members were advised that the review was looking at alternative locations for a polling place for this polling district. The use of the Meeting Place in the Orchard Shopping Centre was discussed and although some of the concerns could be overcome, it was felt that current arrangement using the Baptist Church on Highfield Road still offered the most convenient location if the Acting Returning Officer could not identify a suitable alternative.

Fairfield Polling District. Concern was raised if this would have an impact on car parking within the area. Officers advised that the running track car park could be utilised and that signage could be placed up on polling day advising of its availability.

### **West Hill Ward**

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Edward Polling District. Members supported the use of the school as the polling place.

Nelson Polling District. Members felt that use of the Grammar schools may offer a more suitable location for the Acting Returning Officer to consider.

### **Wilmington, Sutton at Hone and Hawley Ward**

Sutton-at-Hone District Polling District. It was noted that an alternative polling place had been sought and Members supported the suggestion of the Library on Main Road.

Having considered the report the Sub - Committee

RESOLVED

That

1. the proposed timetable for the review as set out in the report, together with any subsequent changes to be agreed in consultation with the Chairman of the Sub-committee and the Managing Director, be noted;
2. due to the boundary review carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE), it is noted that all of the polling districts in the Borough will need to be reviewed and amended where necessary;
3. initial proposals for polling districts and polling places set out in the Report be approved, as amended above, and together with the Acting Returning Officer's comments be submitted for public consultation;
4. the Electoral Services Manager identify organisations/persons for the purpose of consultation on the proposals; and,
5. the Sub-committee supports the proposal that the Managing Director be granted delegated 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 be noted.

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The meeting closed at 8.04 pm

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Councillor C Shippam  
CHAIRMAN