

General Purposes Committee Meeting		Agenda Item: 5
Meeting Date	3 February 2014	
Report Title	Polling District and Place Review	
Portfolio Holder	Leader	
SMT Lead	Abdool Kara	
Head of Service	Mark Radford	
Lead Officer	Katherine Bescoby	
Key Decision	No	
Classification	Open	
Forward Plan	N/A	
Recommendations	1. The General Purposes Committee is asked to agree the polling districts and places set out in Appendix I for the purposes of the consultation.	

1. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council is required to undertake a review of all polling districts and places within 16 months from 1 October 2013. At its meeting on 22 January 2014, the Council considered the timetable for this review, and agreed to give delegated authority to the General Purposes Committee to agree the polling districts and places for the purposes of consultation.
- 1.2 Appendix I sets out a proposed scheme, based on the new Borough ward boundaries that will take effect in May 2015. Maps have also been drawn and are on display in the Members' Room. Copies will also be given to Members of the General Purposes Committee and Group Leaders. Copies will also be available electronically as part of the consultation.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council is responsible for setting the polling district (a geographical area of a ward) and polling places (a geographical area within a polling district that the polling station must be located within). The Returning Officer is then responsible for locating the polling station, which must be within the designated polling place.
- 2.2 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a requirement for Councils to undertake a review of polling districts and places in 2007 and every four years thereafter. In practice, however, we do monitor this more regularly and have, when necessary, made arrangements for alternative polling places/stations with the agreement of the Council/(Acting) Returning Officer.
- 2.3 Given that new Borough ward boundaries will take effect in May 2015, and other workload within the Elections Team planned for 2014 (European Parliamentary elections and the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration), it is proposed to start the review in February 2013, and to give a

delegation to the General Purposes Committee to agree a draft scheme for consultation purposes. This was agreed by the Council on 22 January 2014.

- 2.4 After the General Purposes Committee has agreed the scheme, a Notice will be published to launch the review, and a webpage set up inviting people to make comments on the proposals. This will take place in February and there will be a 12 week consultation period.
- 2.5 The General Purposes Committee will then meet in June/July with a view to making recommendations to Council in June/July regarding polling districts and places that will take effect for the new ward boundaries.

3 Proposal

- 3.1 The General Purposes Committee is asked to agree the proposed polling districts and places set out in Appendix I for the purposes of consultation.
- 3.2 Following the consultation, the General Purposes Committee will be asked to consider this further, and to make recommendations to full Council in June/July regarding the polling districts and places for the 2015 elections.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Committee is encouraged to agree a scheme for consultation purposes. Given other workload for the Elections Team, any delay in the review is not recommended.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 All Ward Members, County Members, MPs and party contacts will be encouraged to respond to the 12 week consultation.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Localism
Financial, Resource and Property	We are looking to retain a similar number of polling stations (which must be located within the polling place); however, there may be some variations due to the new ward boundaries. Hire charges do vary but we are aiming to keep within existing budgets.
Legal and Statutory	The Council is required to undertake such a review within the 16 months from 1 October 2013.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this time.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The purpose of the review is to ensure that all voters have reasonable facilities for voting. It is important that venues meet health and safety requirements so as not to put voters at risk. Presiding Officers are encouraged to give feedback on venues, and each station is visited by a Polling Station Inspector on election

	day.
Equality and Diversity	The purpose of the review is to ensure that all electors in the Borough have reasonable facilities for voting, and that as far as is reasonable and practicable; facilities for voting are accessible for disabled people.
Sustainability	None identified at this stage

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Polling Places

8 Background Papers

8.1 None.