

ASSEMBLY

26 January 2022

Title: Polling Districts and Polling Places Review 2022	
Report of the Strategic Director, Law & Governance	
Open Report	For Decision
Wards Affected: All	Key Decision: No
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Accountable Strategic Leadership Director: Fiona Taylor, Strategic Director, Law & Governance	
Summary: <p>The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) recently carried out an electoral review of Barking and Dagenham and published its final recommendations on 31 August 2021 – further details of the LGBCE review can be found at https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/greater-london/greater-london/barking-and-dagenham. The LGBCE recommendations were approved by Parliament via the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (Electoral Changes) Order 2021 on 13 December 2021.</p> <p>The LGBCE review has resulted in the number of wards in the Borough increasing from 17 to 19 and there have been boundary changes to all but one of the current wards. The number of councillors across the 19 wards will remain at 51, with 13 wards having three councillors and six having two councillors. The new ward arrangements will come into effect from the Local Council Elections on Thursday 5 May 2022.</p> <p>As a consequence of the review, the Council was required to carry out its own review of the polling districts within each ward and the location of polling places / stations to serve each polling district. That exercise was commenced following the publication of the LGBCE final recommendations and the proposals are presented in section 2 of this report. However, the proposals must be subject to a four-week consultation with relevant interested persons / organisations and the local community which commences on 20 January 2022.</p> <p>In the circumstances, the Assembly is asked to approve the proposals in principle and delegate authority to the Strategic Director, Law & Governance, in her dual capacities as Returning Officer (RO) and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO), to approve any amendments to the proposals that may be deemed appropriate following the public consultation. It is further proposed that the Strategic Director be authorised to make any other necessary changes in the lead-up to an election owing to, for example, the unavailability of venues.</p>	

Recommendation(s)

The Assembly is recommended to:

- (i) Approve, subject to (ii) below, the review of polling districts and associated polling places as detailed in Appendix A to the report; and
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director, Law & Governance in her capacity of RO and ERO, to approve any amendments to the polling districts and/or polling places that (a) may be deemed appropriate following the public consultation, and (b) are deemed necessary for the efficient delivery of an election.

Reason(s)

In order for the Council to meet its statutory responsibility to review polling districts and polling stations every five years.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham last underwent a comprehensive boundary review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) in the late 1990's.
- 1.2 The Council was notified in 2019 that the LGBCE would be conducting a new comprehensive review during 2020/21 and the Assembly received various presentations and reports on the review during that time, which culminated in the publication by the LGBCE of its final recommendations on 31 August 2021.
- 1.3 The LGBCE review has resulted in the number of wards in the Borough increasing from 17 to 19 and there have been boundary changes to all but one of the current wards. The number of councillors across the 19 wards remains at 51. The new ward arrangements will come into effect from the Local Council Elections on Thursday 5 May 2022.
- 1.4 Stemming from the LGBCE review, the Council must carry out a review of the polling districts within each ward and the location of polling places / stations to serve each polling district.
- 1.5 A polling district is a sub-division of a constituency or ward. A polling place is the location where electors for that district would vote in person. A polling station is within a polling place – there may be more than one station within a place, depending on the number of electors for the area. It is possible for a polling place to be outside of the polling district in certain circumstances, as the overriding principle is that a polling place should be convenient for the electors in that polling district.
- 1.6 Since the last comprehensive boundary review in the late 1990's, the Council has undertaken periodic polling district / places reviews in accordance with the requirements of section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended by section 17 of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013). The last formal review was carried out in 2019, although a further informal review was undertaken for the GLA elections in May 2021 due to the additional

considerations that needed to be given to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to ensure that voters and staff were able to attend polling places in a safe and compliant way.

2. Proposal and Issues

2.1 The following statutory and Electoral Commission guidelines have been taken into account as part of the Review:

- The Council must seek to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
- The Council must seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable, every polling place is accessible to electors who are disabled and, where they are not, reasonable adjustments must be made;
- There should be no more than 2,500 electors (excluding absent voters) allocated to a particular polling station.

2.2 In respect to accessibility, the Equalities and Human Rights Commission explain that the duty to make reasonable adjustments comprises three requirements. For service providers and those exercising public functions, these requirements are:

- Where a provision, criterion or practice puts disabled people at a substantial disadvantage compared with those who are not disabled, to take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage.
- Where a physical feature puts disabled people at a substantial disadvantage compared with people who are not disabled to avoid that disadvantage or adopt a reasonable alternative method of providing the service or exercising the function, and
- Where not providing an auxiliary aid¹ puts disabled people at a substantial disadvantage compared with people who are not disabled, to provide that auxiliary aid.

2.3 Other good practice taken into account where possible includes:

- a) The polling place should be in its own polling district;
- b) All polling places should relate to a single ward;
- c) Natural, well-defined boundaries are preferred;
- d) All properties in a minor road or estate should be in the same polling district (unless the ward or constituency boundary makes this impossible);
- e) There should be an even spread of polling places;
- f) The polling district should be the 'catchment area' for the polling place and no elector should have to pass another polling place to get to their own;
- g) The polling places that voters are familiar with should not be changed unless there is a strong need to do so.

2.4 With regard to the types of buildings used as polling places, every effort is made to find alternatives to schools to avoid any potential disruption to pupils, teachers and parents. However, as schools are generally at the heart of the community and are more likely to be Disability Discrimination Act compliant than private buildings, it has been necessary to retain a number of school premises as polling places, particularly

¹ In the context of a polling station, an auxiliary aid could, for example, be a ramp for wheelchair users.

in new development areas and those not currently well served by suitable alternative community facilities. Also, the Representation of the People Act 1983 gives the Returning Officer the right to use such school buildings free of charge, only reimbursing heating, lighting and cleaning costs, which reduces the burden on the public purse and is a particular consideration for Local Elections where the Council meets the full cost of the election. Where school premises are to be used, site visits have taken place and discussions held with school representatives to identify, wherever possible, locations within the school boundary that are separate from the main classroom areas to enable the school to remain open on election day and to minimise the cross-over between electors and school staff / pupils.

- 2.5 There are 70 proposed polling stations across a total of 60 different polling places. Of the 60 polling places, 55 have previously been used and 19 of the sites are schools or other educational establishments. All of the premises proposed within this review have been assessed as accessible. As both Council and non-Council premises are used as polling places it is not always possible to ensure full accessibility, such as provision for disabled car parking. Where permanent access ramps are not in place, temporary ramps are provided by Electoral Services for the day of an election and Presiding Officers, who are responsible for the smooth running of an election at polling stations, are trained on the practical steps that they should take to facilitate disabled voters. Access issues are also mitigated by the option that exists for all registered voters to apply for a proxy / postal vote, negating the need to vote in person.
- 2.6 Attached at **Appendix 1** is a list of the proposed polling districts and polling places for each of the 19 wards. The list also shows the number of eligible, in-station electors (ie. excluding registered postal voters) for each polling place as at 1 December 2021. In line with the EC guidance referred to in paragraph 2.1 above, those polling places with more than 2,500 eligible electors at the time of an election will be split between two polling stations (known as a 'double station').
- 2.7 Maps showing the area covered by each polling district and the respective location of polling places for each district are set out in **Appendix 2** (listed in the same order as below and in Appendix 1).
- 2.8 A summary of the proposals for each ward is set out below:

- i) **Northbury ward:** The new Northbury ward has been divided into polling districts NB1, NB2 and NB3.

The three new districts generally mirror the previous districts of AA, AB and AC (in former Abbey ward) respectively. The exceptions are:

- the Park Avenue / Faircross Avenue area previously in AB has been allocated to NB1, to enable those electors to vote at Eastbury Community School Primary in Wilmington Road (rather than the Barking Enterprise Centre), which is closer and more convenient for them. For information, the Eastbury Community School Primary site falls just outside the ward boundary;
- the Whiting Avenue / North Street area previously in AC district has been allocated to NB2, to enable those electors to vote at the Barking Enterprise Centre in Cambridge Road (rather than Abbey Community Centre), which is

considered more convenient for them and avoids having to cross the A124 Gudwara Way.

Subject to those variations, the remaining electorate in Northbury ward would continue to vote at the same polling stations as before; Eastbury Community School Primary (NB1), Barking Enterprise Centre (NB2) and Abbey Community Centre (NB3).

- ii) **Abbey ward:** The new Abbey ward has been divided into three districts: AB1, AB2, AB3.

AB1 covers the area north of Town Quay and west of Abbey Road, which was formerly part of Gascoigne ward. The electorate in this district is very small at the moment and it is proposed that they vote at the Town Hall, which is considered the most appropriate accessible location at present. It is anticipated that as part of the major regeneration of that immediate area, new community facilities will be constructed which would be suitable to use a polling station in the future.

AB2 covers the majority of the former AD (Abbey) district and it is proposed that the electorate continue to vote at the Town Hall which, along with the adjacent Barking Learning Centre, has been the long-standing venue for the former AD electorate.

AB3 covers the remaining area of the former AD district (Vicarage Field / Sunningdale Road) and the entire former DD district which was in Gascoigne ward. It is proposed that the electorate vote at the Ripple Centre, St Erkenwald Road, which has been the long-standing venue for the former DD electorate and is equally convenient for those transferring from the former AD district.

- iii) **Eastbury ward:** The new Eastbury ward has been divided into three districts: EY1, EY2, EY3.

EY1 covers the area east of Lodge Avenue which was previously the entire CB (Eastbury) district and the western most end of the EB (Goresbrook) district. It is proposed that the EY1 electorate vote at the St John the Divine Church, Goresbrook Road site, which has been the long-standing venue for the former CB electorate.

EY2 mirrors the former CC (Eastbury) district as well as taking in the Alfreds Way Industrial Estate area. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Eastbury Manor House, Eastbury Square, which has been the long-standing venue for the former CC electorate.

EY3 mirrors the former CA and CD (Eastbury) districts. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Eastbury Primary School, Dawson Avenue, which has been the long-standing venue for the former CA and CD electorates.

- iv) **Gascoigne ward:** The new Gascoigne ward has been divided into three districts: GC1, GC2, GC3.

GC1 mirrors the former DB and DC (Gascoigne) districts. It is proposed that the electorate vote at the Salvation Army Community Hall, Morley Road, which has been the long-standing venue for the former DB and DC electorates.

GC2 covers the vast majority of the former DA (Gascoigne) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at the Gascoigne Primary School site, Gascoigne Road, which is at a central location in the district. Gascoigne Primary School is a new polling station site, as the nearby Gascoigne Community Centre site used at previous elections has now been demolished.

GC3 covers the area to the west of Abbey Road, up to the ward boundary with Abbey ward. Similar to AB1 district, this area is undergoing significant development and, in time, it is hoped that a suitable, accessible building will become available within the boundaries of GC3 district. At the present time, it is proposed that the electorate vote at the Gascoigne Primary School site, Gascoigne Road in the GC2 district.

- v) **Goresbrook ward:** The new Goresbrook ward has been divided into four districts: GK1, GK2, GK3, GK4.

GK1 mirrors the former RD (River) district. It is proposed that the GK1 electorate vote at Thomas Arnold Primary School, Rowdowns Road, which has been the long-standing venue for the former RD electorate.

GK2 covers the former EC (Goresbrook) district and the area north of the A13 that was previously in JC (Thames) district. It is proposed that the GK2 electorate vote at St Peter's Catholic Parish Church, Goresbrook Road, which has been the long-standing venue for the former EC electorate.

GK3 mirrors the former EA (Goresbrook) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Hatfield Community Centre, Hatfield Road, which has been the long-standing venue for the former EA electorate.

GK4 covers the former EB and ED (Goresbrook) districts (except for the area west of Gale Street now in Eastbury ward) and a small area south of Becontree Station that was previously part of HB (Mayesbrook) district. It is proposed that the GK4 electorate vote at Becontree Church Centre, Hedgemans Road, which has been the long-standing venue for the former EB electorate. For information, the polling station for the former ED district was Harmony House, Baden Powell Close, which is no longer available for use as a polling station.

- vi) **Longbridge ward:** This is the only ward in the Borough unaffected by the LGBCE review. The ward has been divided into the four districts of LB1, LB2, LB3, LB4 which mirror the four previous Longbridge districts of FC, FB, FD, FA respectively. It is proposed to continue to use the polling stations at St Thomas More Catholic Church, Longbridge Road (LB1), Manor Junior School, Sandringham Road (LB2), Barking United Reformed Church, Upney Lane (LB3) and Eastbury Community Primary School, Wilmington Gardens (LB4) which have been the long-standing venues for the electorate.

- vii) **Mayesbrook ward:** The new Mayesbrook ward has been divided into four districts: MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4.

MA1 covers the entire former HB (Mayesbrook) district and part of the former HA (Mayesbrook) district. Previously, the HB electorate voted at the Sycamore Trust, Woodward Road site which was outside the ward boundary. It is proposed that the MA1 electorate vote at the Roding Primary School, Cannington Road site, which is a much more central location for the district. Roding Primary School, Cannington Road is a new polling station site.

MA2 mirrors the former VE (Becontree) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at St Thomas More Catholic Church, Longridge Road, which has been the long-standing venue for the former VE electorate.

MA3 largely mirrors the former VD (Becontree) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Mayesbrook Park School (Erkenwald campus), Marlborough Road Community Centre, Hatfield Road, which is in a central location in the district and has been the preferred venue for the former EA electorate.

MA4 covers parts of the former HA (Mayesbrook) district and the vast majority of the former HC (Mayesbrook) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Ted Ball Memorial Hall, Neasham Road, which is in a central location in the district and has been the long-standing venue for the former HC electorate.

- viii) **Thames View ward:** The new Thames View ward has been divided into three districts: TV1, TV2, TV3.

TV1 mirrors the former JF (Thames) district. Prior to 2018 the JF district electorate voted at the Thames View Community Centre, Bastable Avenue. For elections held during 2018 and 2019, a portacabin was used as a polling station and located in the immediate area of the district, to reduce the distance that voters had to travel. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions the Thames View Community Centre was again used in 2021 as portacabins were deemed unsuitable to meet social distancing requirements. In view of the likelihood of COVID-19 restrictions continuing to be in place and the significant extra costs associated with using portacabins (hire costs, generator costs and 24-hour security to protect the equipment), it is proposed that the electorate continue to vote at the Thames View Community Centre. For information, the turnout figures for the JF electorate for the elections held in 2018 and 2019 when the portacabin was used show no discernible difference from the turnout figures when the JF electorate have voted at Thames View Community Centre.

TV2 mirrors the area of the former JA (Thames) district that remains in the new Thames View ward. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Thames View Community Centre, Bastable Avenue, which has been the long-standing venue for the former JA electorate.

TV3 covers the area of the former JD (Thames) district that remains in the new Thames View ward. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Rivergate Church, Minter Road, which although now falling within new Barking Riverside ward, is

close to the residential properties in TV3 district and has been the long-standing venue for the former JD electorate.

- ix) **Barking Riverside:** The new Barking Riverside ward has been divided into four districts: BR1, BR2, BR3, BR4.

BR1 covers the entirety of the former JB (Thames) district, which stretches from the Scrattons Farm estate to the west and Chequers Lane to the east. At present, the only residential area in the district is the Scrattons Farm estate and it is proposed that the electorate vote at the Tenants and Residents Association building, Julia Gardens, which is the long-standing venue for the former JB electorate. Should other residential developments separate from the Scrattons Farm estate come to fruition in the next few years, the BR1 polling district will be revised and a suitable alternative polling station will be identified for those residents, due to the relatively remote location of Scrattons Farm.

BR2 covers the eastern end of the former JA (Thames) district and the former JE (Thames) district. For elections held during 2018 and 2019, a portacabin was used as a polling station and located at the eastern end of Bastable Avenue to serve the JE electorate, primarily to reduce the distance that voters living on the east side of Renwick Road had to travel. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions the Thames View Community Centre was again used in 2021 as portacabins were deemed unsuitable to meet social distancing requirements. In view of the likelihood of COVID-19 restrictions continuing to be in place and the significant extra costs associated with using portacabins (hire costs, generator costs and 24-hour security to protect the equipment), it is proposed that the electorate continue to vote at the Thames View Community Centre. For information, the turnout figures for the JE electorate for the elections held in 2018 and 2019 when the portacabin was used show no discernible difference from the turnout figures when the JE electorate have voted at Thames View Community Centre.

BR3 covers the area west of Renwick Road that was formerly in JD (Thames) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Rivergate Church, Minter Road, which has been the long-standing venue for the former JD electorate.

BR4 covers the area east of Renwick Road that was formerly in JD (Thames) district and the remaining part of the former JE (Thames) district that was previously undeveloped. This area has recently undergone significant development and electorate numbers are predicted to increase substantially in the years ahead. It is proposed that the BR4 electorate vote at Riverside Primary School which is accessible from Fielders Crescent, where the majority of new development has taken place. Riverside Primary School is a new polling station site.

- x) **Parsloes ward:** The new Parsloes ward has been divided into six districts: PA1, PA2, PA3, PA4, PA5, PA6.

PA1 mirrors the former HD (Mayesbrook) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Bowes Road, which has been the long-standing venue for the former HD electorate.

PA2 covers that part of the former PD (Heath) district that has moved into the new Parsloes ward. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Five Elms Primary School, Wood Lane, which has been the long-standing venue for the former PD electorate.

PA3 mirrors the former KC (Alibon) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Osborn Square Church, Osborne Square, which has been the long-standing venue for the former KC electorate.

PA4 covers the vast majority of the former NB (Parsloes) district and the area north of Parsloes Avenue formerly in KD (Alibon) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Fanshawe Community Centre, Barnmead Road, which has been the long-standing venue for the former NB electorate. The former KD electorate previously voted at Parsloes Primary School, Spurling Road, which is closer for those living in the south-easterly most part of PA4 compared to Fanshawe Community Centre (by up to approx. 200 metres). Despite the potential additional distance for some, the proposed boundary along the centre of Parsloes Avenue is more in line with the guidance referred to in paragraph 2.4 above in terms of there being a natural, well-defined boundary and properties in a minor road or estate being in the same polling district.

PA5 covers the area south-west of Parsloes Avenue previously in KD (Alibon) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Parsloes Primary School, Spurling Road, which has been the long-standing venue for the former KD electorate.

PA6 covers the former NA (Parsloes) district and has been extended to include the northern most area of the former NB (Parsloes) district. This means that PA6 now includes the whole of Maxey Road and Cornwallis Road, which were previously divided between the NA and NB districts, and the western side of Beverly Road from Wood Lane to its junction with Maxey Road. It is proposed that the PA6 electorate vote at Kingsley Hall, Parsloes Avenue, which has been the long-standing venue for the former NA electorate and will involve a shorter, more convenient journey for those residents living in the Maxey Road / Cornwallis Road / Beverley Road areas previously in NB district.

- xi) **Becontree ward:** The new Becontree ward has been divided into three districts: BE1, BE2, BE3 which mirror the three previous Becontree districts of VC, VA, VB respectively. It is proposed to continue to use the polling stations at St Thomas Church, Haydon Road (BE1), Bethel Christian Centre, Bennetts Castle Lane (BE2) and The Vibe, Becontree Avenue (BE3), which have been the long-standing venues for the electorate.
- xii) **Alibon ward:** The new Alibon ward has been divided into three districts: AL1, AL2, AL3 which mirror the three previous districts of KA (Alibon), MC (Eastbrook) and KB (Alibon) respectively. It is proposed to continue to use the polling stations at St George's Church, Rogers Road (AL1), Dagenham & Redbridge Football Club, Victoria Road (AL2) and Richard Alibon Primary School, Alibon Road (AL3), which have been the long-standing venues for the electorate.

- xiii) **Valence ward:** The new Valence ward has been divided into five districts: VA1, VA2, VA3, VA4, VA5.

VA1 covers the entire former TB (Valence) district and the area south of Green Lane that was previously in TC (Valence) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Henry Green Primary School, Chittys Lane, which has been the long-standing venue for the former TB and TC electorates.

VA2 covers the entire former TD (Valence) district and the Nicolas Road / Coote Road area previously in PD (Heath) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Grafton Primary School, Grafton Road, which has been the long-standing venue for the former TD electorate and is equally as accessible for the former PD electorate.

VA3 mirrors the former TA (Valence) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at the Valence House Visitor Centre, Margery Road, which has been the long-standing venue for the former TA electorate.

VA4 covers the vast majority of the former NC (Parsloes) district and the former ND (Parsloes) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at the Bethel Christian Centre, Bennetts Castle Lane. Although this site is slightly outside the ward boundary, it is considered the most accessible location for the majority of the electorate.

VA5 covers the eastern part of the former NC (Parsloes) district. Although only a small area, it is necessary to create this as a separate district due to potential cross-boundary issues between the current Parliamentary constituencies of Dagenham & Rainham and Barking. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Grafton Primary School, Grafton Road, as the former NC district polling station at St Mary's Church Hall, also in Grafton Road, cannot be used due to the cross-boundary issues.

- xiv) **Whalebone ward:** The new Whalebone ward has been divided into five districts: WH1, WH2, WH3, WH4, WH5.

WH1 covers the area south of Chadwell Heath High Road in the former LD (Whalebone) district and the eastern part of the former LB (Whalebone) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Shackleton Hall, Morden Road, which is a central location within WH1 district. Shackleton Hall is a new polling station.

WH2 covers the remaining area of the former LB (Whalebone) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Catterall Hall, Cecil Road, which has been the long-standing venue for the former LB electorate.

WH3 mirrors the former LA (Whalebone) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Hartley Brook Church, Rosslyn Road, which has been the long-standing venue for the former LA electorate.

WH4 covers the entire residential area of the former LC (Whalebone) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Green Lane Christian Fellowship Hall, Green Lane, which has been the long-standing venue for the former LC electorate.

WH5 covers the former TC (Valence) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Harmony Christian Centre, Kemp Road, which in a central, accessible location within WH5 district. Harmony Christian Centre is a new polling station.

- xv) **Chadwell Heath ward:** The new Chadwell Heath ward has been divided into five districts: CH1, CH2, CH3, CH4, CH5.

CH1 covers the area north of Chadwell Heath High Road in the former LD (Whalebone) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Chadwell Heath Community Centre, High Road, which has been the long-standing venue for the former LD electorate.

CH2, CH3, CH4 and CH5 mirror the four districts in the former Chadwell Heath ward of QC, QD, QB and QA respectively. It is proposed to continue to use the polling stations at United Reformed Church Hall (CH2), Eastern Avenue Baptist Church, East Road (CH3), Marks Gate Baptist Church Hall, Bardfield Avenue (CH4) and Marks Gate Community Centre, Rose Lane (CH5), which have been the long-standing venues for the electorate.

- xvi) **Eastbrook & Rush Green ward:** The new Eastbrook & Rush Green ward has been divided into two districts: ER1, ER2.

ER1 covers the entire former MA (Eastbrook) district and incorporates the small development at Alex Guy Gardens that transferred into the new ward under the LGBCE review. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Barking and Dagenham College, Dagenham Road, which has been the long-standing venue for the former MA electorate.

ER2 covers the entire area of the former MB (Eastbrook) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Eastbrook Primary School, Dagenham Road, which has been the long-standing venue for the former MB electorate.

- xvii) **Heath ward:** The new Heath ward has been divided into three districts: HE1, HE2, HE3.

HE1 covers that part of the former PB (Heath) district that includes the Stour Road / Althorne Way and Gosfield Road / Terling Road areas. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Becontree Heath Methodist Church, The Broadway, which has been the long-standing venue for the former PB electorate. For information, the Becontree Heath Methodist Church site is just outside the Heath ward boundary.

HE2 mirrors the former PA (Heath) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Eastbrook Community Centre, Rainham Road North, which has been the long-standing venue for the former PA electorate.

HE3 covers the entire former PC (Heath) district, the Trefgarne Road area in the former PB (Heath) district and the area east of the Heathway formerly in PD (Heath) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Heath Park Community Hall, Rusholme Avenue, which has been the long-standing venue for the former

PC electorate and is more accessible and convenient for the former PB and PD electorates within the new Heath ward.

- xviii) **Beam ward:** The new Beam ward has been divided into three districts: BM1, BM2, BM3.

BM1 covers the majority of the former RA (River) district and entire former RB (River) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Marsh Green Primary School, South Close, which has been the long-standing venue for the former RB electorate and is equally accessible for the electorate of the former RA district.

BM2 covers the area north of the A1306 New Road within the former RC (River) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Beam County Primary School, Oval Road North, which has been the long-standing venue for the former RC electorate.

BM3 covers the area south of the A1306 New Road within the former RC (River) district. The electorate in BM3 district is predicted to remain quite low for the immediate future and, for that reason, it is proposed that the electorate vote at Marsh Green Primary School, South Close, which is close to the current residential development areas in BM3 district (albeit on the opposite side of the A1306 New Road). As the BM3 district is expected to undergo significant redevelopment in the years ahead, the provision of an alternative polling station which is more convenient for the new electorate will be kept under review.

- xix) **Village ward:** The new Village ward has been divided into four districts: VE1, VE2, VE3, VE4.

VE1 covers the entire former UA (Village) district as well as a small area of the former RA (River) district. It is proposed that the electorate vote at Village Community Hall, Vicarage Road, which has been the long-standing venue for the former UA electorate and is equally accessible to those in the former RA district.

VE2, VE3 and VE4 mirror the three previous districts of UB, UD and UC respectively. It is proposed to continue to use the polling stations at Dagenham Parish Hall, Exeter Road (VE2), John Perry Primary School, Charles Road (VE3) and Teresa Greene Community Centre, Leys Avenue (VE4), which have been the long-standing venues for the electorate.

- 2.9 The proposals above represent the circumstances that exist at this point in time. As referred to in several places, the scale of new housing development in the Borough is likely to require a review of some polling districts / polling stations prior to the next formal review. It is also possible that other alternative, interim arrangements may need to be made in the lead-up to an election to take account of, for example, the unavailability of a polling station owing to refurbishment works or clashes with exam timetables at education premises. Any such changes do not require a formal review and it is proposed that the Strategic Director, Law and Governance, be authorised to make any necessary changes to polling station arrangements in the lead-up to an election due to, for example, the unavailability of venues.

3. Options Appraisal

- 3.1 A number of alternative sites for polling places were considered as part of the review. However, these alternative sites were discounted for various reasons, such as the Council being unable to secure a commitment for their use at election time, accessibility issues and social distancing issues associated with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 The Council is required to publish a notice and undertake a four-week public consultation, ensuring that all relevant groups and individuals are given the opportunity to comment on the proposals being put forward for polling places, particularly in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons with disabilities. Consultees will therefore include local councillors, MPs and other elected representatives, political parties, disability groups including DABD, Carers of Barking and Dagenham, Independent Living Association and The Sycamore Trust, local residents and other stakeholders. Consultees wishing to make representations should, if possible, give alternative places that may be used as polling places and the reason(s) for the alternative proposal.
- 4.2 The public consultation will commence on 20 January 2022. Once closed, any representations received will be considered and final arrangements agreed. Once the final arrangements are agreed, they will be published on the Council's website along with all relevant correspondence including any representations made.
- 4.3 Following the publication of the final arrangements the following are, by law, entitled to appeal direct to the Electoral Commission (EC) within a period of six weeks:
- Groups of no less than 30 electors in a constituency (who have not previously made representations).
 - An elector who made representations during the review.
 - A person who is not an elector in the area but who the EC decides has sufficient interest or expertise in the accessibility of disabled persons to polling places or facilities for disabled people.
- 4.4 All representations to the Electoral Commission must be in writing. Representations must be on the grounds that the review has not been conducted properly because it has either failed to meet the reasonable requirements of electors, and/or taken insufficient account of accessibility for disabled people to the polling places within a polling district.
- 4.5 The decision of the EC on any representations will be published on their website and local authorities are encouraged to do likewise for transparency and completeness. Where appropriate the EC will direct local authorities to consider alterations to polling places that they deem necessary under the review.

5. Financial Implications

Implications completed by: David Folorunso, Finance Business Partner

- 5.1 The cost of this review (including employee costs, general office expenses and the cost of consultation) will be met from within the existing Electoral Services budgets, with no additional funding required.
- 5.2 Costs incurred for Local Elections are met by the Council and a budget of £300,000 is set aside for these four-yearly elections. Costs incurred for other elections, such as Parliamentary and GLA/Mayoral elections, are reimbursed to the Council under the Cabinet Office the standard funding arrangements.

6. Legal Implications

Implications completed by: Dr. Paul Feild, Senior Governance Solicitor

- 6.1 Each constituency is divided into polling districts for the purposes of Parliamentary elections. The Electoral Administration Act 2006 provides that the Council must divide its areas into districts and keep the polling districts under review.
- 6.2 A polling district must have a designated polling place. Section 18C of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 places a duty on the Council to conduct regular reviews of polling districts and polling places. The Electoral Registration and Administrative Act 2013 details the timing of the compulsory reviews.

7. Other Implications

- 7.1 **Risk Management** - It is important to conclude and publish the Council's final arrangements for polling districts and places so as to properly plan for the Local Elections on 5 May 2022. Provisional bookings of venues seek to ensure that buildings will be available for the Election and any issues that may arise will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the recommendation in the report authorising the RO to agree any alternative polling station arrangements that may prove necessary.
- 7.2 **Corporate Policy and Equality Impact** - The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:
 - (i) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
 - (ii) The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex/gender, and sexual orientation) and those who do not; and
 - (iii) Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all

Barking and Dagenham residents in respect of socio-economic and health determinants.

The proposals in this report have been reviewed to ensure that all eligible electors can access a polling station. Also, staff receive equalities training as part of the mandatory Polling Staff training for each election. Existing polling stations had an accessibility checklist and risk assessment completed as part of the preparation for the Greater London Authority elections held in May 2021. An accessibility checklist and risk assessment is being completed for each new polling station referred to in the report.

Public Background Papers Used in the preparation of the Report: None

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 - Schedule of polling districts and places / stations

Appendix 2 – Ward Maps showing the polling stations within polling districts