

## POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACE REVIEW

<b>Head of Service:</b>	Piero Ionta, Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer
<b>Report Author</b>	Tim Richardson
<b>Wards affected:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>Urgent Decision?(yes/no)</b>	No
<b>If yes, reason urgent decision required:</b>	
<b>Appendices (attached):</b>	Appendix 1 – Polling District and Polling Place Review consultation document

### Summary

This report presents a proposal to undertake a Polling District and Polling Place Review for Epsom and Ewell in order to facilitate anticipated changes from the Electoral Review of Surrey County Council by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

### Recommendation (s)

#### The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Approve a Polling District and Polling Place Review and public consultation as set out in this report.**

### 1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 An Electoral Review of Surrey County Council was undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in 2023 and the resulting [Surrey \(Electoral Changes\) Order 2024](#) has yet to come into force and is anticipated to be passed by parliament without objection in due course. Once passed, the Order will make changes to County Council electoral division boundaries within Epsom and Ewell. These changes will be in effect for the County Council Elections held on 1 May 2025.
- 1.2 To facilitate the changes introduced by the Order and enable polling arrangements to be successfully delivered, it is recommended that the Council undertakes a review of polling districts and polling places within the Borough in advance of the County Council Elections.

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### 2 Background

- 2.1 The Representation of the People Act 1983 (the Act) was amended by the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (Section 16) and later by the Electoral Registration Act 2013 (Section 17) to detail the current process regarding the way reviews of polling districts and polling places must be undertaken.
- 2.2 The Council last undertook polling district and polling place reviews in October 2022 and October 2023 in response to Electoral Reviews for Epsom and Ewell Borough Council and Epsom and Ewell Parliamentary Constituency respectively.
- 2.3 The Council is responsible for undertaking each review to provide a sufficient number of polling districts and polling places for elections.
- 2.4 The Council's Chief Executive, as Returning Officer for Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, is responsible for deciding how many polling stations are required for each polling place and for allocating electors to those polling stations as they consider appropriate.
- 2.5 At least one polling place must be identified for each polling district. Polling places have polling stations located within them; so, for example, a church building may be a polling place, with the room or hall where voting takes place comprising the actual polling station.
- 2.6 There are a number of factors that need to be considered when reviewing existing polling places or when assessing new polling places. In practice, the designation of polling places is very much dependent on the availability of suitable premises that can be used as polling places.
- 2.7 The review of polling districts and polling places cannot propose changes to Ward, Borough or Constituency boundaries, which are the responsibility of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) or Boundary Commission for England (BCE).

### 3 Review timescale

- 3.1 The following timescale is proposed for this polling district and polling place review:
  - Public consultation period 21 November 2024 - 2 January 2025
  - Report to Strategy & Resources Committee, 28 January 2025. To consider recommendations from the review.
  - **Report to Full Council, 10 February 2025** – to consider and approve the recommendations of Strategy & Resources Committee.
  - Amended polling arrangements in place for 1 May 2025 elections

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### 4 Public Consultation

- 4.1 It is proposed to undertake a six week public consultation from 21 November 2024 to 2 January 2025.
- 4.2 The consultation will propose changes to meet the requirements of the [The Surrey \(Electoral Changes\) Order 2024](#) and resolve outstanding issues identified in earlier reviews. A copy of the consultation document is attached at **Appendix 1** and a summary of the proposals is detailed in paragraph 5.1 below.
- 4.3 To promote engagement with the consultation, it will be made available on the Council's website, communicated via social media and a number of consultees will be directly informed as detailed on page 5 of Appendix 1. All venues including the affected schools (i.e. those allocated as Polling Places) will be contacted directly to advise of the review and to enable them to comment on the proposals.

### 5 Consultation Proposals

- 5.1 The proposals contained within the consultation document are as follows:

<b>Electoral Area</b>	<b>Changes proposed by consultation document</b>
Cuddington Ward	No changes to polling district or polling place are proposed.
Auriol Ward	No changes to polling district or polling place are proposed.
Ewell Court Ward	No changes to polling district or polling place are proposed.
Ruxley Ward	<p>No changes to polling district or polling place are proposed.</p> <p>The consultation document proposes that the polling place is retained at Epsom and Ewell High School (with the 6th Form IT Suite remaining as the location of the polling station) due to the lack of suitable alternative locations.</p> <p>At the request of Epsom and Ewell High School, a trial of the use of the school sports pavilion as a polling station was held for the Police &amp; Crime Commissioner election in May 2024.</p> <p>The trial was not successful, with a number of complaints being received from voters regarding access difficulties and antisocial behaviour in the neighbouring footpath.</p> <p>As a result, the polling station was reverted to its previous location in the school's 6th Form IT Suite for the</p>

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	Parliamentary election held in July 2024. No complaints were received from voters following this move back to the 6th Form IT Suite and there was not a repeat of the issues experienced in May.
West Ewell Ward	No changes to polling district or polling place are proposed.
Court Ward	<p>The County Council Division boundaries in this area of the Borough are not coterminous with Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Ward boundaries. As a result, voters from two different County Council Divisions currently vote in the same polling place (Community &amp; Wellbeing Centre, Sefton Road) and there is a risk of ballot box contamination by ballot papers from the two different electoral divisions.</p> <p>It is proposed that Polling District FB(2) be merged with Polling District FA as voters in both areas are within Epsom West County Council division. The polling station for these voters will be the Pavilion, Court Recreation Ground.</p> <p>This will remove the risk of ballot box contamination at the Community and Wellbeing Centre Polling Station which will only be used by voters in the West Ewell County electoral division.</p> <p>There will be no change to the County District or Borough Ward of any voter as a result of this merge, just the polling station they vote in.</p>
Stamford Ward	No changes to polling district or polling place are proposed.
Stoneleigh Ward	No changes to polling district or polling place are proposed.
Nonsuch Ward	No changes to polling district or polling place are proposed.
Ewell Village Ward	No changes to polling district or polling place are proposed.
Town Ward	No changes to polling district or polling place are proposed.
College Ward	No changes to polling district or polling place are proposed.
Woodcote and Langley Vale Ward	<p>No changes to polling district or polling place are proposed.</p> <p>At the request of St Martins C of E Junior School, a trial of the use of the School's Children Centre as a Polling station was held for the elections in May and July 2024.</p>

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	The trial was successful, with no adverse comments received from voters and it is proposed to continue with its use in the future.
Horton Ward	<p>An outcome of the Surrey County Council Electoral Boundary Review is that the whole of Horton Ward is now in the same County Division (Epsom West). This was not previously the case, and the Ward was split into two polling districts (N(1) and N(2)).</p> <p>It is proposed that polling district N(1) be merged with polling district N(2) as a separation is no longer required. The polling place for all of these voters will remain as Horton Chapel Arts Centre and the administrative arrangements for that polling place will be significantly simplified.</p>

## 6 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

### 6.1 Equality Impact Assessment

6.1.1 The Council has due regard to its equality duties under Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010. In addition, it is a legal requirement of the Returning Officer that, in so far as is reasonable and practical, every polling place is accessible to electors with disabilities. This has been taken fully into account during this review process.

6.1.2 Appropriate equipment (such as ramps, visual enhancement aids etc.) will continue to be provided at all polling stations, and all polling staff will continue to be fully trained to provide support and facilities for voters with disabilities.

### 6.2 Crime & Disorder

6.2.1 None.

### 6.3 Safeguarding

6.3.1 Safeguarding issues are considered for all potential polling places prior to their recommendation to the Council, and prior to every election. Any issues identified are appropriately managed in accordance with Council policies and in agreement with the management of the premises.

### 6.4 Dependencies

6.4.1 None.

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6.5 Other

6.5.1 None.

### 7 Financial Implications

7.1 The cost of venue hire for national elections and referenda is met by central Government. Costs for local elections are covered by the County Council for County Council elections and the council's own allocated budgets for Borough Council elections.

7.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** None arising from the contents of this report.

### 8 Legal Implications

8.1 This review will be undertaken in accordance with Section 18 of Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended by Section 17 of the Electoral Registration Act 2013). A review requires all of the steps set out in Schedule A1 of Representation of the People Act 1983 to be met, as demonstrated by this report and its appendices.

8.2 The regulations that govern the use of schools falls under rule 22, Schedule 1 of the Representation of the People Act 1983. There is a duty imposed on schools who are either maintained or assisted in any way by money provided by Parliament, to be used free of charge (with the exception of certain expenses) as polling places.

8.3 **Legal Officer's comments:** None arising from the contents of this report.

### 9 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

9.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:

- Effective Council.

9.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is not included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

9.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** The accessibility of polling places by foot, bicycle and public transport has been considered in the process of their recommendation in the consultation document.

9.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None.

9.5 **Partnerships:** None.

### 10 Background papers

10.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

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### **Previous reports:**

- [Report to Council 23 July 2019, Notices of Motions, Polling Stations](#)
- [Report to Council 18 December 2019, Polling Stations Review 2019](#)
- [Report to Council 4 December 2022, Polling District and Places Review 2022](#)

### **Other papers:**

- Electoral Commission: Reviews of Polling Districts, Polling Places And Polling Stations:  
<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/reviews-polling-districts-polling-places-and-polling-stations>
- [Local Government Boundary Commission Electoral Review of Surrey County Council](#)
- [Surrey \(Electoral Changes\) Order 2024](#)
- Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended)