

POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW

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Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1: Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places & Polling Stations: Consultation – November 2024

Summary

This report sets out recommendations for proposed changes to Polling Districts.

Recommendation (s)

The Council is asked to:

- (1) Agree the location of the polling places and districts as set out in Appendix A within Appendix 1.

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 This report presents a recommendation from the Strategy and Resources Committee for amendments to polling districts.

2 Recommendation from Strategy & Resources Committee

- 2.1 At its meeting of 12 November 2024 the Strategy & Resources Committee approved a Polling District and Polling Place Review to be opened for public consultation between 21 November 2024 and 02 January 2025. The purpose of this review was to facilitate the adoption of changes required as a result of an [electoral review of Surrey County Council by the Local Government Boundary Commission \(LGBCE\)](#).
- 2.2 The Committee considered the responses to the consultation at its meeting of 28 January 2025 and unanimously recommended the proposals put forward by the review to Full Council for adoption.

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- 2.3 Subsequent to the committee's consideration of the proposals, officers were notified that due to the announcement of Local Government Reorganisation, any Surrey County Council by-elections held before 30 September 2026 would use the existing (old) County Council division boundaries. This was then confirmed within Schedule 1 of the Surrey (Structural Changes) Order 2026. These factors meant that the Register of Electors for the Borough could not be updated to include the changes to polling districts recommended by the Strategy and Resources in advance of 30 September 2026, but that they would still be required after that date.
- 2.4 Accordingly, the recommendations of Strategy and Resources Committee were not proposed to Full Council in February 2025 and the Chair of the committee recommended to the Council that this item be considered at an appropriate time in the future.
- 2.5 As the deadline of 30 September 2026 has now passed, the proposed changes can be incorporated into the Register of Electors if approved by Full Council.
- 2.6 If approved, the recommended changes will be implemented from the next publication of the Register of Electors for the Borough, on 1 December 2026.

3 Background – Polling district and polling place reviews

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 The Council is responsible for undertaking each review to provide a sufficient number of polling districts and polling places for elections.
- 3.3 The Council's Chief Executive, as Returning Officer for Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, is and remains responsible for undertaking the review prior to 1 April 2027. The Returning Officer is also 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.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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.

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- 3.6 The Council 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).
- 3.7 If the recommendations of the Strategy and Resources Committee are agreed, the polling districts and polling places proposed will be confirmed with effect from the next publication of the Register of Electors on 1 December 2026, and will be used for any election called subsequent to 1 December 2026.

4 Background - Council Motion on use of Schools as Polling Places

- 4.1 At its meeting on 23 July 2019, Council passed the following Motion:
 - 4.1.1 “This Council agrees that it will no longer use any schools that, in order to act as a polling station, would have to close for the day. It will provide polling districts which it has been accustomed to using such schools with alternative polling stations as near as possible to that polling district”.
- 4.2 It is important to note that the legislation (Representation of the People Act 1983, Schedule A1) sets out the requirements for polling place reviews. This requires Local Authorities to comply with the access requirements. As part of the review, they must:
 - 4.2.1 Seek to ensure that all electors in a constituency in the local authority area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
 - 4.2.2 Seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practical every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to electors who are disabled.
- 4.3 In the event these tests are not met, an elector has a right of representation (i.e. appeal). The two appeal grounds are:
 - 4.3.1 The local authority has failed to meet the reasonable requirements of the electors in the constituency
 - 4.3.2 The local authority has failed to take sufficient account of accessibility to disabled persons of the polling station/ polling stations within a polling place.
- 4.4 It is therefore clear, that a polling place is determined with the elector as the primary interest, no other considerations form part of the legislative requirements.

5 Consultation Exercise

- 5.1 The consultation in respect of the [Polling Districts and Places Review](#) was carried out for five weeks between 21 November 2024 and 2 January 2025, a copy of the consultation document is attached at Appendix 1. The review was conducted in accordance with the Electoral Commission's guidance on conducting such reviews.
- 5.2 To ensure a wide circulation of the consultation, it was made available on the Council's website, communicated via social media and a number of consultees were directly informed as detailed on page 5 of Appendix 1. All venues including the affected schools (i.e. those allocated as Polling Places) were contacted directly to advise of the review and to enable them to comment on the proposals.
- 5.3 During the consultation period, a number of representations were received. In essence, the representations were made up as follows:

Ward	Total Number Received
College	1
Not Ward Specific	4

- 5.4 Following consideration of all the representations by officers, a set of proposals were presented to the Strategy & Resources Committee on the 28 January 2025. The Strategy and Resources Committee unanimously agreed to recommend the proposals to Council for approval.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 The changes to polling districts recommended by Strategy and Resources Committee are as follows:

EEBC Ward:	Recommendation for change to polling district:
Court Ward	That polling district FB(2) is merged with polling district FA which is in the same East Surrey Council electoral ward as proposed by the review documentation. That polling district FB(1) is renamed FB as proposed by the review documentation.
Horton Ward	That the polling districts N(1) and N(2) be merged and known as N, as proposed by the review documentation.

- 6.2 There are no further changes to polling districts proposed by the review.

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- 6.3 There are no changes to polling places proposed. However, voters in the current polling district FB (2) (which will be merged into polling district FA) will vote at the Bowling Pavilion, Court Recreation Ground, Pound Lane, Epsom KT19 8SB. This is the same polling place which is used by all voters in polling district FA, and was successfully used during the May 2026 elections.

7 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

7.1 Equality Impact Assessment

7.1.1 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.

7.1.2 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.

7.2 Crime & Disorder

7.2.1 None.

7.3 Safeguarding

7.3.1 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.

7.4 Dependencies

7.4.1 None.

7.5 Other

7.5.1 None.

8 Financial Implications

- 8.1 The cost of venue hire for national elections and referenda is met by central Government. Costs for local elections are covered by the relevant council's own allocated budgets.

- 8.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** The financial implications are included in this report.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 The review of polling districts and polling places was undertaken in accordance with Section 18 of Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended by Section 17 of the Electoral Registration Act 2013), which requires such a review to be undertaken every five years. 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.
- 9.2 In addition, due consideration has been given to the requirements of the Electoral and Registration Act 2013 in relation to the timing of the review.
- 9.3 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.
- 9.4 Section 83 (3) of the Local Government Act 1972 sets out that if a casual vacancy occurs in the six months before the date on which a councillor would have ordinarily retired, an election is not to be held, unless more than one third of the authority's seats are vacant.
- 9.5 **Legal Officer's comments:** None arising further to the content of this report.

10 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 10.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:
- Effective Council
- 10.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is not included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 10.3 **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 to the Council.
- 10.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None.
- 10.5 **Partnerships:** None.
- 10.6 **Local Government Reorganisation Implications:** The proposals put forward by this report aim to enable the successful delivery of future elections held in the Borough. From 1 April 2026, all elections held in the Borough these will be delivered by East Surrey Council.

- 10.7 These proposals enable the polling districts for Epsom and Ewell to be updated to meet the warding arrangements of East Surrey Council and will remain in place until a further review of polling districts and polling places is undertaken by East Surrey Council.

11 Background papers

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

Previous reports:

- [Minutes of Full Council, 11 February 2025](#)
- [Report to Strategy and Resources Committee, 28 January 2025, Polling District and Places Review](#)
- [Report to Council 23 July 2019, Notices of Motions, Polling Stations](#)

Other papers:

- [Public Consultation - Polling District and Polling Places Review, November 2024](#)
- 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](#)