

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Council **DATE:** 22nd February 2018

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WARD(S): All

PART I **FOR DECISION/INFORMATION**

ELECTORAL MATTERS – POLLING DISTRICT HLA, DESIGNATION OF POLLING PLACES AND UPDATE ON ARRANGEMENTS FOR POSTAL VOTING PILOT

1 Purpose of Report

To advise the Council of:-

- An alteration to Polling District HLA;
- An alteration to four polling places for the local elections on 3rd May 2018;
- Arrangements for the Postal Vote Pilot being undertaken for the 3rd May 2018 elections.

2 Recommendation

The Council is requested to resolve:

- (a) That Priory Heights (76 flats), Buckingham Avenue, Slough, be moved from Polling District HLB to Polling District HLA.
- (b) That the following changes to polling places for the local elections on 3rd May 2018 be agreed:

Polling District	Designated Polling Place
Baylis and Stoke BSA	Manor Park Community Centre, Villiers Road, SL2 1NP
Elliman ELA	Portacabin on Lismore Park green space area (Shackleton road main entrance)
Farnham FAC	Methodist Church, Hampshire Avenue, Slough SL1 3AQ
Langley St Mary's LMC	Portacabin on green space area off the corner of Tamar Way.

- (c) That the arrangements for the Postal Pilot to be undertaken for the 3rd May 2018 election be noted.

3 Other Implications

(a) Financial

There are no financial or risk management implications as the report is administrative in nature.

(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act Implications associated with this report.

4 **Supporting Information**

Polling District HLB/HLA

- 4.1 Following a request from an elected member the polling district that the residential block of flats Priory Heights, Buckingham Avenue, is in has been reviewed. Ward members were consulted over the proposal to move the block of flats from polling district HLB to polling district HLA and no objections were raised. This alteration took effect from 2nd January 2018.
- 4.2 The registered electors at Priory heights will now vote at The Church of the Latter Day Saints, Leaholme Gardens, Slough rather than at the Portacabin on Whittaker Road.. The result of the alteration is a shorter walk for those residents to vote at The Church of the Latter Day Saints. The residential block joins the neighbouring Burnham Lane houses that were moved into HLA on the previous review. Residents have been advised of the location of their new polling place

POLLING PLACE REVIEW

- 4.3 Members were advised in July 2017 that that a review of polling places was being undertaken as a number of polling places currently used are unavailable for the May 2018 local elections. Feedback on currently used polling places was invited from election staff and elected Members.
- 4.4 The review took into account (for each polling place):
- Disabled access
 - Accessibility
 - Whether it was safe/clean
 - Space for a queue to form
 - Whether there were adequate Kitchen and toilet facilities
 - Key contacts
 - Whether it could accommodate a double station if necessary.
- 4.5 The Council has previously agreed the following principles for polling places/districts:
- An aim of 3 polling districts per ward unless exceptional reasons dictate departure [with a maximum of four]
 - An aim for approximately 2,000/2,200 voters per polling district wherever possible.
 - To seek to minimise use of school buildings for polling places wherever possible.

4.6 As a result of the Review I am proposing that all currently used polling places remain unchanged with the exception of the following four polling places:

Ward	Existing Polling Place (2017)	Recommended new Polling Place (2018)	Comments/reasoning
Baylis and Stoke BSA	Manor Park Hall, Villiers Road, SL2 1NP	Manor Park Community Centre, Villiers Road, SL2 1NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manor Park Hall is no longer a suitable venue to use as there are no toilet or kitchen facilities. The Community Centre has been inspected, is within the polling district and is suitable.
Elliman ELA	James Elliman School, Elliman Avenue SL2	Portacabin on Lismore Park green space area (Shackleton road main entrance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Head teacher of James Elliman no longer wishes the school to be used as a polling place. The Council has a policy of not using schools as polling places if at all possible. The area identified is suitable, is within the polling district and less than five minutes walk from existing polling place.
Farnham FAC	Portacabin in rear car park – The Centre Whitby Road SL1 3DR	Methodist Church, Hampshire Avenue, Slough SL1 3AQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Car park area is no longer available to use The Methodist Church has been inspected, is within the polling district and is suitable.
Langley St Mary's LMC	Portacabin, Langley Leisure Centre, Parlaunt Road SL3 8DB	Portacabin on green space area off the corner of Tamar Way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Leisure Centre site not available for May 2018 [note: The Leisure Centre will be accessible from June 2018] The area identified is suitable and less than five minutes walk from existing polling place.

4.7 All members have been advised of the proposed changes and no objections have been received. Given the need to secure premises for the forthcoming elections the bookings have been confirmed for the elections on 3rd May 2018.

4.8 There is a statutory requirement for a local authority to keep all polling arrangements under review and to establish a polling place within each polling district wherever possible. Arrangements must seek to ensure that all electors have reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable and that they are accessible to all electors, including any with disabilities. The Council will be required to undertake a statutory Polling District/Place Review in 2018 and the Council will be requested to agree the terms of reference and timetable for a Review later this year.

C Postal Vote Pilot – May 2018

- 4.9 At its meeting on 19th December 2017 the Council agreed that the Returning Officer be requested to liaise with the Cabinet Office to design a brief for a pilot scheme to be trialled at the 2018 local elections in Slough- with the pilot containing measures to strengthen the integrity of the postal vote system, help tackle fraud, and improve voter confidence.”
- 4.10 Work with the Cabinet Office is ongoing to agree the detailed scope of the Pilot. All members have been advised of the main elements of the Pilot which include:
1. A leaflet in each postal vote pack to inform electors about the secrecy of the vote and who to call if they suspect electoral fraud (RO, Police and Crime stoppers). The leaflet will be in English and signposting where to get assistance in other languages if required.
 2. Random sampling of postal voters in sampling wards in the period shortly after postal packs have been despatched and a follow up questionnaire after the election to seek views on voter experience with the information included in the postal packs and the door step.
 3. Delivery of Postal votes – consideration to be given to measures to address concerns that have been expressed over delivery particularly to communal areas of some residences.
- 4.11 The authority will be taking part in work with the Electoral Commission and Crimestoppers running a targeted digital awareness campaign to protect electoral integrity. The aims of the Campaign aims :
- To reduce electoral fraud and protect electoral integrity.
 - To promote the perception of a secure electoral process.
 - To highlight what constitutes electoral fraud offence and empower fraud victims to reject undue influence and report concerns to the CrimeStoppers helpline.
- 4.12 A detailed communications plan is currently being worked up to promote awareness of the Pilot and measures to strengthen the integrity of the postal vote system.
- 4.13 Group Leaders are, and will be, kept informed as arrangements for the Pilot are finalised.

5 **Background Papers**

None