

Review of polling districts and places 2019

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REPORT TO: FULL COUNCIL

DATE: 31 OCTOBER 2019

TITLE: REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND PLACES 2019

LEAD OFFICER: BRIAN KEANE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE/ACTING RETURNING OFFICER (01279) 446000

CONTRIBUTING OFFICER: SIMON HILL, HEAD OF GOVERNANCE (01279) 446099

RECOMMENDED that:

- A** The proposals for the Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations in Harlow, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved with the changes as follows:
- i) St Stephen's Church is being designated as the polling place for Bush Fair West, replacing William Martin School.
 - ii) Church Langley Community Centre being designated as the polling place for Church Langley East, except for Parliamentary Elections and referenda where Henry Moore Primary School will continue to be used.
 - iii) The creation of a new polling district for Newhall (designated HC) Old Harlow South, using Newhall Primary Academy as the polling place.
- B** The Electoral Registration Officer reflect alterations required as a result of the review in the revised Electoral Register, to be published in accordance with the statutory timetable.
- C** The Acting Returning Officer be authorised to identify and designate alternative polling places should a requirement arise of necessity prior to the next scheduled review.

BACKGROUND

1. Under the Electoral Administration Act 2006 there is a statutory requirement for the Council to review its polling places every four years. To comply with this, the Council must finalise its review by 1 December 2019.
2. The Council began a review on 1 July 2019 which was split into two stages. The first stage gave the public the opportunity to make initial representations until 31 July 2019. Following consideration of these representations the (Acting) Returning Officer published their proposed changes on 22 August 2019. The

public were invited to make representations on these proposals by 20 September 2019.

3. A notice of the review was published on the Council's website. Copies were also sent to all local Councillors, County Councillors, the local MP, all current polling places, social media and local notice boards. The responses are attached as Appendix B to the report, but are also summarised below:
 - a) Bush Fair West – William Martin School
 - i) Closing school causes unnecessary disruption and is difficult to justify given the low turnout at recent elections;
 - ii) Imminent loss of car parking opposite school; and
 - iii) Other suitable venues within area.
 - b) Church Langley East – Henry Moore Primary School
 - i) Unnecessary to close school due to disruptive impact on education and costs to families given low turnout; and
 - ii) Church Langley Community Centre is a much bigger venue and is more suitable with better parking.
 - c) Great Parndon East – Jerounds Primary School
 - i) Unnecessary to close school due to disruptive impact on education and costs to families given low turnout.
4. The Council is required by law to divide its area into polling districts for the purpose of Parliamentary Elections and to designate polling places for those districts. The current list of polling districts and places is attached as Appendix C to the report
5. Consideration must be given to the law and the Electoral Commission's Guidance. This means that the Council must:
 - a) Seek to ensure that all electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as practicable in the circumstances;
 - b) Seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places they are responsible for are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled, and when considering the designation of a polling place, must have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons;
 - c) The polling place must be within the polling district (and therefore ward) unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area

wholly or partly outside the district (for example, if no accessible parking can be identified in the district).

6. The law makes provision for the (Acting) Returning Officer to use school premises for the purpose of taking a poll free of charge. In addition to this, schools are often used because they are centrally located, well known venues, with good disabled access and parking.

ISSUES/PROPOSALS

7. The (Acting) Returning Officer considered the following factors, in addition to those set out in paragraph 5 of this report:
 - a) Central or convenient location for the maximum number of electors in the ward;
 - b) Physical accessibility, especially for those with mobility difficulties;
 - c) Guaranteed availability;
 - d) Consistent availability;
 - e) Venue is well known to electors;
 - f) Cost;
 - g) Condition of building and facilities; and
 - h) Impartial and ethical use of the building/location.
8. The (Acting) Returning Officer's comments on representations received and any subsequent recommendations are below.
 - a) Bush Fair West – William Martin School
 - i) It is noted that the current polling place is unsuitable given the high level of Special Educational and Disability (SEND) children that attend.
 - ii) The loss of nearby parking also will make the current polling place less suitable.
 - iii) St Stephen's Church is more accessible to voters, with better access and facilities. It is therefore proposed that the polling place is changed to St Stephen's Church.

b) Church Langley East – Henry Moore Primary School

- i) Representations about the suitability of Henry Moore Primary School have been made during previous reviews and it was noted that use of Henry Moore Primary School had declined since its use as polling place began in 2008. The turnout during the 2019 Local Elections (excluding postal votes) was 18.5 per cent.
- ii) The school is unable to open up its staff car park until after 6pm as it is required for staff. The school playground cannot be used due to Police concerns about behaviour when it was previously used.
- iii) Church Langley Community Centre is in a good location within the Ward, with good parking, and is big enough for the whole Ward for lower turnout elections.
- iv) However for higher turnout polls, such as Parliamentary Elections, there are concerns about queuing at the Church Langley Community Centre. It is therefore proposed that Church Langley Community Centre is the new polling place for Church Langley East, except for Parliamentary Elections/referenda where Henry Moore Primary School be used. When the school is used, the Council will designate a disabled parking area outside of the School's gates and will suspend parking restrictions next to the School.

c) Great Parndon East – Jerounds Primary School

- i) The current polling place is centrally located and easily accessible. Alternatives are not centrally located, so although it is noted that there is disruption to students, it is not proposed to make any changes.

9. The (Acting) Returning Officer has also made the following representation not arising from comments received during the consultation. The representations are attached as Appendix D to the report.

a) Old Harlow South

- i) To reflect the increasing size of Old Harlow West due to the Newhall development, it is necessary to create a new polling district. It is proposed that the new district will be called Old Harlow South and will comprise the Newhall development. The Newhall Primary Academy would be used as the polling place, subject to the agreement of the academy trust.

10. All other polling districts and places received no representations in respect of them and are considered appropriate.

11. Consultation on the (Acting) Returning Officer's Representation began on 22 August 2019 and ended on 20 September 2019. The responses are attached as Appendix D to the report and are summarised below:

a) Bush Fair West

- i) The nursery at William Martin School can be isolated from the rest of the school, or the school can earmark an INSET day.
- ii) Parking will not be lost due to Bushey Croft development.

b) Church Langley West

- i) Supportive of change, but unclear why Henry Moore Primary School will be used for Parliamentary Elections/referenda.
- ii) Disagree with proposed changes. There have been no changes since the previous review. The school can use INSET days and the school is centrally located within the polling district. Parking issues are only anecdotal and it would be more difficult, and discriminatory, for the majority of the electorate to travel to Church Langley Community Centre. It will be confusing to have different arrangements for different elections.

c) Old Harlow South

- i) Unnecessary and inappropriate to use Newhall Primary Academy as it creates disruption to parents and can pose a safeguarding risk.
- ii) There are other locations nearby to the school which should be considered.
- iii) There is a need to create a new polling district.
- iv) Support the use of the school as a polling place.

12. The (Acting) Returning Officer has considered the issues raised as part of the second phase of consultation and considers that the proposed changes set out in Appendix A to the report remain appropriate.

13. The changes to the Electoral Register will take effect from 1 December 2019 unless a Parliamentary General Election is called. The Electoral Registration Officer will make the changes accordingly.

Changes to a Polling Place Before the Next Statutory Review

14. If a polling station becomes unavailable the (Acting) Returning Officer will first consider whether it is feasible to use a different room or area within a designated polling place.

15. If a polling place is or will become unavailable and sufficient time permits, a review will take place and a decision on a replacement polling place will be made by Full Council.
16. However, in an urgent situation where it is not feasible to make alternative arrangements within a designated polling place, such as the building was destroyed by fire or unsafe, the Council's Scheme of Delegation to Officers would apply whereby the Chief Executive, or another designated Officer in their absence, would identify and designate an alternative polling place taking into account paragraphs 5 and 7 above.

IMPLICATIONS

Environment and Planning (Includes Sustainability)

None specific.

Author: Andrew Bramidge, Head of Environment and Planning

Finance (Includes ICT, and Property and Facilities)

There may be some additional costs incurred where buildings other than schools are used. These costs can be met from within existing budgets.

Author: Simon Freeman, Head of Finance and Deputy to the Chief Executive

Housing

None specific.

Author: Andrew Murray, Head of Housing

Community Wellbeing (Includes Equalities and Social Inclusion)

Appropriate bodies have been consulted over access needs.

Author: Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing

Governance (Includes HR)

As contained within the report.

Author: Simon Hill, Head of Governance

Appendices

Appendix A – (Acting) Returning Officer's Representation

Appendix B – Responses Received from Stage 1 Consultation

Appendix C – Current List of Polling Districts

Appendix D – Responses Received from Stage 2 Consultation

Background Papers

None.

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used

INSET – In-service Training Day

SEND – Special Educational and Disability

(Acting) Returning Officer's Representation

Current Polling District	Current Polling Place used	(Acting) Returning Officer's Proposed Polling Place	Reasons for change
AB – Bush Fair West	William Martin School	St Stephens Church	Current polling station is unsuitable due to the school having a high level of SEND children which causes disruption to their routines. Additionally the car park will be lost due to houses being built opposite the school. St Stephen's Church is more accessible to voters with a bigger room and better facilities.
BA - Church Langley East	Henry Moore Primary School	Church Langley Community Centre, except for UK Parliamentary Elections/Referendums where it will be Henry Moore Primary School	Current polling station is unsuitable, primarily because there is no parking and most people go to the polling station in their car, either going to or coming from work. It also causes disruption to the school. Church Langley Community Centre is in a good location within the Ward, is big enough and has plenty of parking available.
HB – Old Harlow West	The ABC Centre	A new polling district will be created comprising of Newhall – HC Old Harlow South and we plan to use Newhall Primary Academy as a polling station, subject to agreement with the Academy trust. The ABC Centre will continue to be used for HB polling district.	Current arrangements are unsuitable due to the ever increasing size of the polling district and the distance for voters to travel from Newhall in order to get to the polling station. Therefore there is a need for a separate polling district for Newhall.

Brian Keane
(Acting) Returning Officer

Dated: August 2019

Brian Keane,

22/8/19.

RECEIVED

- 9 JUL 2019

ELECTORAL SERVICES REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2019
Submission Form

Full Name	[REDACTED]
Organisation (if applicable)	WILLIAM MARTIN SCHOOLS
Residential / postal address	[REDACTED]

Your submission

Which ward does your submission relate to?	BUSH FAIR WEST
Which polling station does your submission relate to?	WILLIAM MARTIN SCHOOL
What is your submission? (use an additional page if necessary)	
SEE OVER	

Signature:	[REDACTED]
Date:	7/7/2019

Please be aware that this submission and any other correspondence will be published on our website within 30 days of receipt.

Send to: Electoral Services, Harlow District Council, Latton Bush Centre, Southern Way, Harlow CM18 7BL or via email: registration@harlow.gov.uk

Stage one deadline = 31 July 2019. Stage two deadline = 20 September 2019.

Since 2016 the Governors at William Martin Schools have been raising the issue of using the School as a Polling Station. At William Martin we have a high level of SEND, ADHD and disadvantaged children, who do not handle any disruption or change to their routines, and thus become unsettled when it does happen, which will normally result in a non compliant day. Unfortunately we cannot always work inset days to coincide with Polling days.

On the last voting day we did try using the nursery and keeping the rest of the school opened, especially as our year 6 children were working hard towards their sat exams, to shut the school again would have been very unjust for them. We also have Parents/Carers who every polling day do raise their objections too as the majority of them are working Parents, which then leads to childcare issues.

There are so many other venues that I am sure could be used instead: St. Stephens Hall, Tye Green Community Hall, Tye Green Library, Harlow Study Centre to name but a few. Also bear in mind that this year house building is set to commence opposite the School which will result in the loss of the car park.

Myself and the other Governors are also concerned that all of the disruption to the School, Parents and Children for a turnout of just 17% seems very unfair. We would appreciate if you would consider an alternative venue if possible.

RECEIVED

- 9 JUL 2019

ELECTORAL SVCS

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2019
Submission Form

Full Name	[REDACTED]
Organisation (if applicable)	[REDACTED]
Residential / postal address	[REDACTED]

Your submission

Which ward does your submission relate to?	Bush fair west
Which polling station does your submission relate to?	William Martin
What is your submission? (use an additional page if necessary)	
Please see attached.	

Signature:	[REDACTED]
Date:	5-7-19

Please be aware that this submission and any other correspondence will be published on our website within 30 days of receipt.

Send to: Electoral Services, Harlow District Council, Latton Bush Centre, Southern Way, Harlow CM18 7BL or via email: registration@harlow.gov.uk

Stage one deadline = 31 July 2019. Stage two deadline = 20 September 2019.

William Martin is a school for approx. 350 children. Historically the whole school has been closed so a polling station can be held in the junior hall.

In recent months the council have agreed to move the polling station to the nursery school, a small classroom with a few children's toilets and kitchenette. There are car park facilities on the opposite side of the road accessed via a zebra crossing.

Suggestions have previously been made for the polling station to be held in St Stephens Church part of Bushfair West ward. The church has a large hall, adult public toilets, a kitchen and parking on site. There is also a ramp available for any less abled people.

According to your published figures only 17% of voters turned out to use the polling station, can the council really justify closing any part of the school for this amount of people?

It would be great if the council could recognise the negative effects closing the school has on the children, parents (working or otherwise) & teachers. It has been documented in the schools Ofsted report that the school has a high % of SEN children, to close the nursery for one day will affect many children with autism, additional needs or just in need of a constant weekly routine. Not to mention the fact parents aren't allowed to take their children out of school for a day trip or family event without being penalised does seem a little hypocritical.

I look forward to hearing about your proposed changes soon.



RECEIVED
31 JUL 2019
ELECTORAL SVCS

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2019
Submission Form

Full Name	[REDACTED]
Organisation (if applicable)	
Residential / postal address	[REDACTED]

Your submission

Which ward does your submission relate to?	CHURCH LANGLEY
Which polling station does your submission relate to?	HENRY MOORE PRIMARY SCHOOL
What is your submission? (use an additional page if necessary)	
To close the polling station at Henry Moore school and use the one at the Church Langley Community centre. It is not good for parking - especially for disabled people, The school should not be closed which causes financial costs to parents and children miss a days education and it's hardly used!	

Signature:	[REDACTED]
Date:	20.7.19

Please be aware that this submission and any other correspondence will be published on our website within 30 days of receipt.

Send to: Electoral Services, Harlow District Council, Latton Bush Centre, Southern Way, Harlow CM18 7BL or via email: registration@harlow.gov.uk

Stage one deadline = 31 July 2019. Stage two deadline = 20 September 2019.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 04 July 2019 22:42
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2019

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to put my views forward regarding the use of Henry Moore Primary School as a polling station.

Firstly and most importantly the disruption this causes to the education of the pupils at the school (my Daughter included) is completely unnecessary.

Secondly, the impact this has on working families. Having to arrange childcare, often at additional cost, or having to take time off work has significant financial implications to families.

I understand from looking at the figures that the turn out of voters in this area was very low and do not feel that it requires two separate polling stations in Church Langley. The Community Centre is sufficient for those who want to vote.

The Community centre is larger than the hall at Henry Moore. It is within walking distance of all homes within Church Langley. For anyone less able to walk it also has the convenience of parking facilities and disabled bays directly outside.

I sincerely hope that common sense will prevail and the educational needs of the children and financial impact to families, will be put before a small number voters, who could easily use the nearby Community Center at no inconvenience.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

RECEIVED
- 5 JUL 2019
ELECTORAL SVCS

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2019
Submission Form

Full Name	[REDACTED]
Organisation (if applicable)	NDA
Residential / postal address	[REDACTED]

Your submission

Which ward does your submission relate to?	Church Langley East
Which polling station does your submission relate to?	Henry Moore Primary School (BA).
What is your submission? (use an additional page if necessary) - Request serious consideration is given to ceasing use of the school as a polling station. The community centre is sufficiently sized & could be sufficiently resourced to handle a feet-on-ground average turnout of 10% across both polling stations. It is ridiculous to keep doing this - and other school for this purpose when other stations are under-utilised.	

Signature:	[REDACTED]
Date:	24 July 2019

Please be aware that this submission and any other correspondence will be published on our website within 30 days of receipt.

Send to: Electoral Services, Harlow District Council, Latton Bush Centre, Southern Way, Harlow CM18 7BL or via email: registration@harlow.gov.uk

Stage one deadline = 31 July 2019. Stage two deadline = 20 September 2019.

RECEIVED

24 JUL 2019

**ELECTORAL REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2019
Submission Form**

Full Name	[REDACTED]
Organisation (if applicable)	
Residential / postal address	[REDACTED]

Your submission

Which ward does your submission relate to?	Church Langley
Which polling station does your submission relate to?	Henry Moore School.

What is your submission? (use an additional page if necessary)

There is no need to close the School and turn it into a polling station, causing disruption to pupils e parents.

It is nonsensical that the local authority prosecute parents if they disrupt a child's schooling by absencing them during term time but it apparently is fine to disrupt over 500 pupils education to use the School for elections.

Most people vote by post now anyway and there is an alternative at church Langley Community Centre 10 minutes walk away.

The current provision needs revising.

Signature:	[REDACTED]
Date:	23/07/19.

Please be aware that this submission and any other correspondence will be published on our website within 30 days of receipt.

Send to: Electoral Services, Harlow District Council, Latton Bush Centre, Southern Way, Harlow CM18 7BL or via email: registration@harlow.gov.uk

Stage one deadline = 31 July 2019. Stage two deadline = 20 September 2019.

RECEIVED
31 JUL 2019
ELECTORAL SVCS

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2019
Submission Form

Full Name	[REDACTED]
Organisation (if applicable)	—
Residential / postal address	[REDACTED]

Your submission

Which ward does your submission relate to?	CHURCH LANGLEY
Which polling station does your submission relate to?	HENRY MOORE PRIMARY SCHOOL
What is your submission? (use an additional page if necessary)	
<p>We do not require a polling station at Henry Moore School, when there is an adequately sized one at Church Langley Community Centre. Voter turnout is historically low, and we do not need it in such close proximity. The cons outweigh the pros, with children missing out on learning, and parents paying the cost for child care.</p>	

Signature:	[REDACTED]
Date:	31-07-19

Please be aware that this submission and any other correspondence will be published on our website within 30 days of receipt.

Send to: Electoral Services, Harlow District Council, Latton Bush Centre, Southern Way, Harlow CM18 7BL or via email: registration@harlow.gov.uk

Stage one deadline = 31 July 2019. Stage two deadline = 20 September 2019.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 18 July 2019 10:16
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Polling stations in Church Langley

I struggle to understand the reasoning for closing a school to complete polling when there is a community hall on church Langley.

Every closure disrupts the education of 570 pupils-including the week before SATs each year - It is an unnecessary use of school. The Community Centre has plenty of capacity-it is currently very underused on polling day - Community Centre has better parking - Community Centre has good/much better Blue Badge parking - Every Church Langley resident passes the Community Centre going to and from their home-it is far more convenient to everybody than Henry Moore School

[REDACTED]

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2019
Submission Form

Full Name	[REDACTED]
Organisation (if applicable)	N/A
Residential / postal address	[REDACTED]

Your submission

Which ward does your submission relate to?	Great Parndon.
Which polling station does your submission relate to?	Jerounds School.

What is your submission? (use an additional page if necessary)

Please STOP using schools as polling stations.
How can you justify closing a school of 400 children for a 22% turnout on 2nd May '19 elections?
Working parents have to pay for child care or take a days holiday.
please STOP using schools as polling stations

Signature:	[REDACTED]
Date:	8th July 2019

Please be aware that this submission and any other correspondence will be published on our website within 30 days of receipt.

Send to: Electoral Services, Harlow District Council, Latton Bush Centre, Southern Way, Harlow CM18 7BL or via email: registration@harlow.gov.uk

Stage one deadline = 31 July 2019. Stage two deadline = 20 September 2019.

Harlow Council Polling Stations							
Ward	Polling District	Register	Polling Station	Address	Address 1	Postcode	Total Electorate
Bush Fair	Bush Fair East	AA	New Life Christian Fellowship	Purford Green		CM18 6HP	3,044
	Bush Fair West	AB	William Martin Junior School	Tawneys Road		CM18 6PW	2,592
Church Langley	Church Langley East	BA	Henry Moore Primary School	Kiln Lane		CM17 9LW	3,737
	Church Langley West	BB	Church Langley Community Centre	Church Langley Way		CM17 9TG	2,664
Great Parndon	Great Parndon East	CA	Jerounds Primary School	Pyenest Road		CM19 4PH	2,831
	Great Parndon West	CB	Katherines Common Room	Katherines Hatch	Brookside	CM19 5NJ	2,159
Harlow Common	Harlow Common East	DA	Potter Street Baptist Church	Church Lane	Potter Street	CM17 9AW	2,857
	Harlow Common West	DB	Pear Tree Mead Primary Academy	Pear Tree Mead		CM18 7BY	2,694
Little Parndon & Hare Street	Little Parndon & Hare Street East	EA	Pemberley Academy	Hodings Road		CM20 1NW	2,281
	Little Parndon & Hare Street South	EB	Trinity U.R. Church	Hare Street		CM19 4AY	1,768
	Little Parndon & Hare Street West	EC	Little Parndon School	Park Mead		CM20 1PU	2,249
Mark Hall	Mark Hall North	FA	Harlow Museum	Muskham Road		CM20 2LF	1,926
	Mark Hall South	FB	Harefield Church	Burgoyne Hatch	Momples Road	CM20 3EH	3,358
Netteswell	Netteswell	GA	David Livingstone URC	Church Hall	Maddox Road	CM20 3RL	5,576
	Netteswell	GA	Freshwaters Primary Academy	Freshwaters	School Lane	CM20 3QA	Only used for Parliamentary Elections
Old Harlow	Old Harlow East	HA	St Mary's Church Centre	Churchgate Street		CM17 0JR	941
	Old Harlow West	HB	The ABC Centre	Garden Terrace Road		CM17 0AT	5,722
Staple Tye	Staple Tye East	JA	Griffin Suite	Latton Bush Centre	Southern Way	CM18 7BL	624
	Staple Tye West	JB	Longwood Primary Academy	Paringdon Road		CM18 7RQ	4,286
Sumners & Kingsmoor	Sumners & Kingsmoor East	KA	Kingsmoor Christian Centre	Parndon Wood Road		CM19 4SE	3,598
	Sumners & Kingsmoor West	KB	Xperience Centre	Broadley Road		CM19 5RD	1,686
Toddbrook	Toddbrook North	LA	Harlow Playhouse	Playhouse Square		CM20 1LS	1,349
	Toddbrook East	LB	St Mark's West Essex Catholic School	Tripton Road		CM18 6AA	836
	Toddbrook West	LC	Salvation Army Centre	Tendring Road		CM18 6RN	3,371

Alison Hodgson

Sent: 21 August 2019 18:01
Subject: RE: Polling station review - Recommendation

I am confused by the suggestion we move the Bush Fair Polling station from William Martin School to St Stephens. The school, together with the Council, made arrangements such that in the 2019 election only the nursery was used for polling- as the rest of the school could be isolated from that building the rest of the school would have remained open if the day had not already been earmarked as an INSET day. Also the parking opposite the school will not be lost due to the Bushey Croft Development. Plans show the provision will remain and be enhanced, it certainly has more parking than St Stephen's Church.

Thanks

From: Alison Hodgson <alison.rayman@harlow.gov.uk>
Date: 21 August 2019 at 15:39:41 BST
Subject: RE: Polling station review- Recommendation

Dear Councillor

I am emailing you as one of the ward councillors in Bush Fair, Church Langley and Old Harlow. Please find attached our recommendations for changes to the polling stations in your ward as part of the polling station review.

These will be published and open for Public comments until 20 September 2019.

Regards

Alison Hodgson
Electoral Services Assistant Manager (Part-Time)
Electoral Services
Latton Bush Centre
Southern Way
Harlow
CM18 7BL

Alison Hodgson

Sent: 02 September 2019 10:47
Subject: Use of Henry Moore Primary as a polling station
Categories: In Progress

Dear sir/madam,

I am supportive of the acting officer's proposal to stop the use of Henry Moore Primary School as a polling location for all but Parliamentary and Referendum votes.

As a trustee of the Harlow Inspirational Learning Trust, I am reassured that this proposal will provide much less disruption for the pupils within our Trust.

However, I would ask you to consider using Church Langley Community Centre as a polling station for Parliamentary and Referendum votes as well, or- if this is not possible - to please explain why Henry Moore is a more suitable polling station for this category of elections.

Yours faithfully,

Harlow Inspirational Learning Trust

Get Outlook for Android

Alison Hodgson

Sent: 20 September 2019 08:55
Subject: Review of Polling stations

Please find attached a response to the (Acting) Returning Officers recommendations following the responses to the review of polling stations in Harlow. It is sent on behalf of the three Church Langley ward councilors.

Reviews of polling districts, polling places and polling stations

(Acting) Returning Officer's Representation

Henry Moore Primary School

Current polling station is unsuitable, primarily because there is no parking and most people go to the polling station in their car, either going to or coming from work. It also causes disruption to the school.

Church Langley Community Centre is in a good location within the Ward, is big enough and has plenty of parking available.

Response

This representation fails on a number of important grounds:

- there have been no changes to the circumstances affecting the role of the polling station since the last review to warrant such a drastic upheaval as closure;
- insufficient weight is given to accessibility as required in sections 4.2 and 4.6 of the *Polling Station Review - Guidance* issued by the Electoral Commission;
- and the suggestion of having different polling stations for different elections is confusing. What arrangements do you have for referenda or the Police and Crime Commissioner elections?

Henry Moore school has been used a polling station ever since it opened nearly twenty years ago and is now recognised and accepted as such by the electorate. There have been no changes to the population size since the last review nor to the highways infrastructure making access more difficult. No evidence is provided to support such a recommendation now. Its location and normal ease of access it is appropriate for use as a polling station within the guidelines.

Some parents wonder why the school closes for an additional day when it can be allocated for training or similar purposes. Adequate notice is available for elections.

There is parking available if the school chose to make it so. Residents popping into to the school to vote will require only a short stay so there would be rapid turnover. The school is closed to pupils so there is no risk to children. Henry

Moore is unique in that other schools in Harlow used as polling stations keep their gates open and manage to provide parking without difficulty.

The use of schools as polling stations is covered in section 5.22 of the Guidance. Schools are public funded public buildings usually situated centrally within a community and its location generally known by that community. For this reason traditionally schools have been used not just in Harlow but across the country. Nearly half of the 23 polling stations in Harlow are in schools, so Henry Moore is far from unusual.

It can only be anecdotal to say that most people go to vote by car as no such study has ever been undertaken and there is no evidence of any great change in voter habits over the past twelve months. There are plenty of retired and non-employed residents who walk to the polling station during the day and evening.

In terms of access and equality it seems unfair to discriminate against the majority of voters by closing their polling station. The west polling district (Henry Moore) served 3,737 voters (May 2018), whereas the East (Community Centre) district served only 2,593 voters. Equity would suggest that the least number of voters should be inconvenienced by closing their polling station and using a more central and more convenient polling station in the middle of the ward.

It is likely more voters would drive to a remote polling station, located in a far corner of the ward, than walk to their local one – an unnecessarily environmentally unfriendly result. Something seemingly overlooked in this Representation is the existing congestion at the Church Langley School, adjacent to the Community Centre, at school starting and closing times. This is exacerbated by residents popping into the store for shopping on their way to work. The distance and congestion would deter many people from attending a single polling station stuck in an isolated part of the estate. Most voters in Church Langley (West) live within a quarter mile of Henry Moore School whereas it is over a mile to the community centre.

The current layout of the school as a polling station is in breach of the Equality Act 2010, including section 149 Public Sector Equality Duty, by discriminating against people with disabilities, a protected characteristic under Section 4 of the Act. Section 149 is breached by failing to eliminate discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity. There is a perfectly usable room for a polling station adjacent to the main entrance to the school, which is only yards from the main entrance. However, the layout provided forces voters to take a hundred yard walk to a second hall at the far end of the school building. It is therefore necessary for a member of the polling staff to wait at the locked

gates and telephone through for the presiding officer to walk to the gate with a voting paper in order for a disabled voter to exercise their democratic right.

Having two systems of voting for different elections will be confusing to voters, especially with annual local elections. It is inevitable that voters in a general election would make their way to the Community Centre, only to be told they have to go somewhere else. Most people will make the effort, but some will not, but voters from the west division will wonder at the sense of their local authority. There is no record of any other council operating a dual polling station voting arrangement.

Schools and parents have plenty of time to prepare for elections. They are always held the first Thursday in May, except for European Elections, now no longer an issue, and general elections every few years.

It is not much of an ask that citizens can exercise their democratic freedom and rights achieved at the sacrifice of millions in two world wars, and the campaign by Suffragettes to achieve female emancipation.

Nothing has changed since the last review to warrant the closure of the polling station, access issues are not properly reviewed and the suggestion of different polling stations for different elections is not practical.

Alison Hodgson

Sent: 07 September 2019 12:23
Subject: Polling Station query

Dear Harlow Council,

I write with reference to the proposed polling station site to be located at Newhall Primary School.

Although thankfully I do not have children in this school and it will not effect me personally I am opposed to it. Primarily because I have schooled my children at Henry Moore School and it has caused unnecessary disruption to the school, the children & parents so much so that the school is trying to cease their school being used as a polling station any longer.

However I am thankful that a new polling station site is being sought closer to where I live and preferably one that I can walk to.

Please may I ask why other locations other than schools aren't being researched?

For example we have New Ground Cafe practically next door to this school and it is a focal point of our community, could this not be considered an option?

Last year I witnessed a lovely atmosphere at The Queens Head Public House in Churchgate Street in Old Harlow. The polling station was inside the pub and people voted and stayed to have a drink resulting in great community spirit.

I have no links to the Cafe and am unsure even if they would be prepared/ permitted to have the polling station at the cafe due to extended opening hours, however I have *cc'd* them in incase this could be researched. Apologies for direct approach.

Please see below picture posted on Harlow Council's Facebook page of Polling Day in May this year at The Queens Head PH on Churchgate Street.

Kind Regards

Alison Hodgson

Sent: 07 September 2019 09:59
Subject: Proposed Polling Station @ Newhall Primary Acaedmy

Dear Planning Dept,

As a parent of a child who attends Newhall Primary Academy, I strongly oppose your proposal of opening a polling station at the school as this will ultimately be putting our children at risk, however minuscule the risk and despite any safeguarding measures you put in place it's still a risk non the less!

If the school stays open during polling days do you plan CRB check every person(s) entering the school?

alike many other parents I have spoken with i would not feel comfortable sending my child to school on this day!

If the school decides close on these days to you plan to reimburse us parents the cost of childcare for those days?

Surely there has be to a more suitable place within the Newhall area for a polling station ensuring we are protecting our child against even minimal risks.

I look forward to your response.

Regards

Sent from my iPhone

Alison Hodgson

Sent: 05 September 2019 22:51
To: Registration
Subject: Polling statiions

To whom it may concern,

I have just come across your Facebook post regarding the polling station review.

I have a child who has attended Henry Moore since year 2 and is now in year 4. The days of elections are a huge problem for us trying to find childcare..... especially as I work within a school that does not close for polling as they use a church hall instead.....

Therefore, seeing the reasons you wish to move Henry Moore polling station to Church Langley community centre is great.....you are correct in saying it causes a disruption to the school and all the school children who are legally obligated to attend..... therefore, moving it to church Langley community centre is great news.....

However, below this box I then see the plan is to create a Newhall polling station which fair enough there probably is a need.....however, the plan there is to close the Newhall school and disrupt that school instead..... (which my son attends by the way so the great news above just becomes really rubbish news as I'm yet again stuck with no childcare).

If one of the reasons is to not use Henry Moore due to the disruption of the school..... why is it then ok to disrupt another school instead?

There is absolutely no logic in that decision at all.

The polling days cause massive problems for childcare for any parent as the schools cannot even run an emergency childcare club to help those parents who cannot get time off as they cannot use the site.

Working in a school myself I don't get holiday entitlement..... But I will certainly not be flavour of the month if I keep having to tell my work that I have no-one to have my kids especially as the beings that run parliament seem to keep running polling days just for fun

If it was just one day a year..... that's bad enough but this year with the potential of another vote.....

That will be 3 school learning days missed in one year..... please can you explain how it is acceptable for children to loose those three days when other schools do not close and they get the extra 3 days of education they are entitled to?

Kind regards,

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

Alison Hodgson

Sent: 07 September 2019 08:32
To: Registration
Subject: Newhall polling district

Dear Sirs

As a Newhall resident, I fully support the proposal to create a district for the Newhall area and use of the local school as a polling station. The current station is too far away and results in people being unable to get there and vote.

Kind regards

Sent from my iPhone

Alison Hodgson

Sent: 07 September 2019 10:25
To: Registration
Subject: Newhall polling station

I just wanted to say I support using the Newhall school as a polling station, there is an active member of our new hall community who has told everyone this is the opposition email address so you will be receiving an unbalanced amount of negative feedback.

Alison Hodgson

Sent: 24 August 2019 15:35
To: Alison Hodgson
Subject: RE: Polling station review - Recommendation

That sounds very sensible. Is Churchgate Street still in the Church Hall.

Date: 21 August 2019 at 15:39:41 BST
Subject: RE: Polling station review- Recommendation

Dear Councillor

I am emailing you as one of the ward councillors in Bush Fair, Church Langley and Old Harlow. Please find attached our recommendations for changes to the polling stations in your ward as part of the polling station review.

These will be published and open for Public comments until 20 September 2019.

Regards

Alison Hodgson
Electoral Services Assistant Manager (Part-Time)
Electoral Services
Latton Bush Centre
Southern Way
Harlow
CM18 7BL

Proposed Amendment to Recommendation of the Review of Polling Districts and Places 2019

Proposed by Councillor Andrew Johnson (seconded by Councillor Simon Carter)

Recommendation A ii to read:

“Church Langley Community Centre being designated for one district election as the polling place for Church Langley East. If the turnout at that election is no less than the average of the previous three district elections and there are no adverse issues at the one polling station then this shall be made permanent, except for Parliamentary Elections and referenda where the first hall by the entrance to Henry Moore school shall be used.”

The email below was sent to the following as a BCC:

'harlowdeafsociety@gmail.com'; 'davidlivingstoneclub@hotmail.co.uk';
'harlowstrokegroup@hotmail.com'; 'heather.beach@affc.org.uk';
'info@support4sight.org.uk'; 'harlow@alzheimers.org.uk';
'supervisor@harlowcab.cabnet.org.uk'; 'Claire.challis@essexcares.org';
'info@packforautism.org.uk'; 'ehwe@mssociety.org.uk';
'comeconnectwithus@gmail.com'; 'info@ageukessex.org.uk';
'info@deafblind.org.uk'; Leah Manning <leah.manning@harlow.gov.uk>

From: Janet Jackson

Sent: 02 July 2019 12:28

To: Registration

Subject: Harlow District Council Review of Polling Places 2019

Dear all

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2019

In accordance with Section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended by Section 17 of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013) notice is given that Harlow District Council is to conduct a review of the polling districts and polling places.

Please see the attached Polling Station Review Notice 2019. The review will be conducted between 1 July and 20 September 2019 and will be in two parts as shown below.

Stage one - Current arrangements to be assessed and open for initial comments - 1 July to 31 July 2019

Stage two – (Acting) Returning Officer’s representation published and open for comments - 19 August to 20 September 2019

Please see the link to the Harlow Council website for further information. www.harlow.gov.uk/elections-polling and email the attached form if you have any comments to make to registration@harlow.gov.uk

Kind regards

Janet

Janet Jackson

Corporate and Democratic Service Manager

PA to Brian Keane Managing Director Tel: 01279 446004 Email: janet.jackson@harlow.gov.uk

Alt contact: Lisa Thornett - 01279 446185 lisa.thornett@harlow.gov.uk or Emma Crouch - 01279 446001 emma.crouch@harlow.gov.uk

Visit our website www.harlow.gov.uk

Follow us on twitter [@HarlowCouncil](https://twitter.com/HarlowCouncil)

Harlow Council, Civic Centre, The Water Gardens, Harlow, Essex, CM20 1WG

