



Public Document Pack
**ELECTORAL REVIEW SUB COMMITTEE
AGENDA**

**WEDNESDAY 9 JANUARY 2019 AT 7.30 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 2 - THE FORUM**

The Councillors listed below are requested to attend the above meeting, on the day and at the time and place stated, to consider the business set out in this agenda.

Membership

Councillor Williams (Leader)
Councillor Anderson
Councillor Douris
Councillor Marshall

Councillor Hicks
Councillor England
Councillor Fisher

For further information, please contact Corporate and Democratic Support

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

There are no minutes to sign.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

An opportunity for members of the public to make statements and ask questions in accordance with the rules as to Public Participation.

5. POLLING PLACES REVIEW (Pages 2 - 7)

6. PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY CHANGES (Pages 8 - 10)

Agenda Item 5



Report for:	Electoral Review Committee
Date of meeting:	9 January 2019
Part:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	POLLING PLACES AMENDMENTS
Contact:	Cllr Williams: Leader of the Council Responsible Officer: Sally Marshall, Chief Executive in the role of Returning Officer. Mark Brookes – Solicitor to the Council Author: J Doyle: Elections Team Leader
Purpose of report:	To consider the various options for the arrangement and re-designation of Polling Stations and to consider the results of the consultation on these issues with the various stakeholders
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That arrangements be finalised with Camelot Rugby Club for its use as the polling station for Boxmoor Ward, polling district AGB. 2. That the future of the polling station for the Tring East Ward, polling district DAA be agreed. 3. That the transfer of the polling station for Nash Mills Ward, (polling districts BA, BAA, and BAB), from Nash Mills Primary school to Nash Mills Parish, Village hall be agreed. 4. That the temporary relocation of Polling District AC from Communal Hall, Old House Road, to the Community Centre Queens Square, Adeyfield, be noted.
Corporate objectives:	<p>The holding of elections contributes to the Council's community leadership role and fosters public engagement in the democratic process.</p> <p>The responsibility for the good conduct of elections falls on the Electoral Registration Officer, who for all Local Government</p>

	Election matters is the Chief Executive
Implications:	<u>Financial</u> The allocation of some polling stations could result in extra costs in the event of a by-election.
'Value for money' implications	<u>Value for money</u> The provision of Polling Stations for elections is reviewed on a regular basis and the funding is overseen by the Electoral Commission and the Elections Claims Unit.
Risk implications	Electoral matters require continual review to ensure that the democratic process operates effectively. A failure to provide polling places would result in huge reputational damage.
Consultees:	The Returning Officer; Election Agents, Parish Councils, Ward councillors.
Background papers:	Tring Town council Response Nash Mills School submission
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	PH - Portfolio Holder EC – Electoral Commission. ECU – Elections Claims Unit

BACKGROUND

1. In preparation for any elections required in 2019 the availability and suitability of the various polling stations to be used were confirmed and reviewed. As a result of this review Polling Stations in the following locations were identified as no longer suitable or a more suitable option considered.

1.1. **Boxmoor Ward Camelot Rugby Club**

The polling station for the AGB polling district (electorate 2210) was the Social Centre for the Blind, Alston Road, Boxmoor. This building has been sold and boarded up. With the future use of the site uncertain, it can no longer be used for election purposes.

The suggested alternative is at Camelot Rugby Club, Chaulden Lane, Hemel Hempstead. Although on the edge of the ward, the proposed site has a substantial amount of parking spaces and as a purpose built sports club has access suitable for all.

1.2. **Tring East Ward – Polling District DAA**

At the moment Polling District DAA including (Tring Parish Dunsley Ward) is served by the Grove Road Primary School as a polling station. The current electorate is 2340. The actual Polling Station is in a hall in the main building and accessed from a separate entrance to the side of the building.

The school's representatives have expressed serious reservations about the use of the site as a Polling Station, mainly on safeguarding grounds, though there are also recorded incidents of teaching staff being abused by visitors to the polling station. Historically this venue has experienced difficulties surrounding disabled access, as the school gates have been kept closed to prevent vehicular (and pedestrian) access in an effort to maintain security and ensure the safety of children crossing the road that runs through the grounds. The head is amenable to partially opening the gates to allow pedestrian access and to make arrangements to allow access for the disabled in cars (contact phone number, signs, bollards and a turning circle).

The hall to be used is accessed by a well-lit path, around the side and to the rear of the building and adjacent to the Playing Fields (which will not be used on that day) leading to fire doors at the rear of the building.

Use of this venue requires some arrangement being made to provide screens for the Political Party Tellers to sit inside the station in the event of inclement weather, as there is no cover for them outside.

As an alternative the school and some parents have suggested the 'scout hut' 200 metres down Grove Road. Officers have visited the building and the facilities are adequate for use as a Polling Station.

The site has some off-road parking provision though it is situated close to a junction and on a well-used road.

Tring town Council have been consulted on this issue and dealt with it at their meeting on 26 November 2018. Their conclusions are attached in the accompanying letter at annex A.

1.3. Nash Mills School

At the moment Polling Districts BA, BAA, and BAB are served by Nash Mills Primary School, Belswains Lane, Hemel Hempstead. The current electorate is 2760.

Once again, the school's representatives have expressed reservations about the use of the site as a Polling Station, mainly regarding the disruption of the pupils' education and on safeguarding grounds. These have been summarised by the Head Teacher at annex B. Prior to, and after, every recent election the Head Teacher reiterates these concerns, supported by letters from a few parents. The matter is also usually the subject of an MP enquiry/response.

For recent elections we have tried to alleviate some of the disruption by installing a temporary polling station in the staff car park (portakabin) though this is time consuming, not without its own logistical challenges, and incurs additional expense on the part of the Borough Council. Due to the size of the electorate being served at this station, this option is not suitable for 'national' events, such as parliamentary elections or referenda, where a large turnout is expected.

The alternative being suggested in this case is to move the polling station to Nash Mills Parish, Village Hall, Lower Road, Nash Mills. The hall has adequate facilities for its use as a polling station and the benefit of a substantial amount of adjacent car parking. Recent housing developments in the area have increased the amount of electors in the area immediately surrounding the proposed polling station. However, electors from the Bennetts End side of the polling district would have an appreciable increase

in the distance they have to travel and be required to by-pass the current polling station on the way to the new site.

1.4 Communal Hall, Adeyfield – Polling District AC

Members should be aware that due to renovation work scheduled for the coming summer months there is the likelihood that the current polling station at Communal Hall, Old House Road, Adeyfield will not be available for election purposes in May 2019. As a temporary measure the electorate for this polling district (AC) will be redirected the short distance to Adeyfield Community Centre in Queens Square. This alternative has been used in the past when the Communal Hall has not been available and the Community Centre has adequate facilities to allow for a separate station to be included, in a separate room if desired, without causing confusion to the electorate. This temporary arrangement will be made clear and explicit in all the election materials (e.g. Poll Cards) sent to the electorate.

2. While this committee has the authority and power to make the changes/decisions suggested in this report they will also be reported to a future council meeting as part of a Polling District Order.

Response from Tring Town Council Meeting held in November 2018 regarding the use as a polling station of Grove Road School, Tring.

See accompanying .pdf.

The Head Teacher at Nash Mills Primary School has provided the following as a summary of their concerns regarding the continued use of the school as a polling station.

The reasons for wanting our school to stop being used as a polling station are as follow:

1. We tried to remain open once before but found members of the public wandering in our playground, in corridors as they searched for a toilet and two entered our Foundation Stage building. This breaches safeguarding procedures and so, reluctantly, the school has been closed to the children on general election dates and staff have used the day for training on-site. However, we would never choose to have a training date in the middle of a week, especially so close to the start of the summer term, due to the disruption for parents and carers.
2. Impact on children's learning. Elections usually take place the week of the first Bank holiday in May, which is often just a few weeks after our return from the Easter holiday. Year 6 take their SATs in the middle of May, which is usually the first full week after the Bank holiday. Although the children will have been revising, a day off at this vital period is far from ideal.
3. Whenever we have an INSET Day, we tag it onto a holiday as this causes the least problems for parents and carers, most of whom work. Having one on a Thursday means learning lacks continuity.
4. We have been very grateful for the times when DBC has been able to provide a Portakabin; although this means that the children's play area is restricted, as staff park on the playground, it has enabled their learning to continue with no disturbance. However, some of the public were found inside as the election officers needed the gates onto the playground open for access - again, this is a serious safeguarding issue.
5. The village hall is only 0.4 miles away with plenty of parking readily available and, with the increased housing at that end of the village, it would be the most sensible site for a polling station as none of the issues raised above would be applicable.
6. An increasing number of people are submitting postal votes - to have to close a school for a smaller number of adults to vote, affecting the education of 240 children and causing child-minding issues for their families, seems disproportionate.

I hope that the Electoral Review Committee will bear these points in mind and thank those serving on the Committee for their consideration. I strongly believe that everyone should be made to vote, notwithstanding exceptional circumstances; however, with the increased pressures on working families and schools, I also believe that the time is ripe for a change in using school buildings for these purposes.

Kind regards

Rosie Washford Mower
Headteacher
Nash Mills C of E Primary School



TRING TOWN COUNCIL

COUNCIL CHAMBER
THE MARKET HOUSE
61 HIGH STREET
TRING HERTS
HP23 4AB

Miss S. Sanderson
Headteacher
Grove Road Primary School
Tring,
Hertfordshire
HP23 5PD

Telephone: 01442 823347
Email: admin@tring.gov.uk

Mr Michael Cuny
Clerk of the Council
Email: clerk@tring.gov.uk

22nd November 2018

Dear Miss Sanderson,

Re: Polling Station

Following discussions with Jim Doyle at Dacorum Borough Council about the possibility of moving the polling facility at Grove Road Primary School, you contacted Cllr Mrs Hearn. As a consequence I arranged for the matter to be discussed at the Town Council meeting held on Monday 19th November 2018.

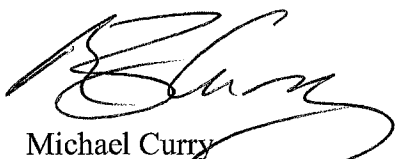
Your case for making the request was made available to the Councillors before considering the item. During the debate, Members recognised your concerns and were very disappointed to hear that you, your staff and volunteers had suffered abuse.

However, on balance the Council decided not to support your request to move the polling station. They felt that to do so would reduce accessibility with a negative impact on electoral turn-out:

- The school was the best location in the ward in terms of location, accessibility and the convenience for parents of pupils attending the school
- Having the polling station at the school
 - promoted awareness of local democracy amongst the children
 - was not a frequent occurrence
- Relocating the polling station away from the school would set a precedent for other schools in the town

Whilst the decision will be disappointing for you, I hope you can appreciate the Council's position.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Curry
Clerk to the Council

Agenda Item 6



Report for:	Electoral Review Committee
Date of meeting:	9 January 2019
Part:	1 (For Information)
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW 2018
Contact:	<p>Cllr Williams: Leader of the Council</p> <p>Responsible Officer: Sally Marshall, Chief Executive in the role of Acting Returning Officer. Mark Brookes – Solicitor to the Council</p> <p>Author: J Doyle: Elections Team Leader</p>
Purpose of report:	To note the Boundary Commission proposals for the Hemel Hempstead constituency.
Recommendation	That the Boundary Commission proposals for the Hemel Hempstead constituency be noted.
Corporate objectives:	<p>The holding of elections contributes to the Council's community leadership role and fosters public engagement in the democratic process.</p> <p>The responsibility for the good conduct of elections lays with the Electoral Registration Officer, who as Acting Returning Officer for Parliamentary Election matters, is the Chief Executive.</p>
Implications:	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>There is likely to be a significant increase in the volume of printing and consequent postage costs which are reimbursed by the Home Office, Election Claims Unit.</p>
'Value for money' implications	<p><u>Value for money</u></p> <p>The provision of election costs for elections is reviewed on a regular basis and the funding is overseen by the Electoral</p>

	Commission and the Elections Claims Unit.
Risk implications	Electoral matters require continual review to ensure that the democratic process operates effectively. The boundary review has attempted to address the issue of equality of representation by alteration to the MP/elector ratio. Failure to complete this process would result in unequal representation and result in a decrease in the value and effectiveness of the democratic process.
Consultees:	The (Acting) Returning Officer; Election Agents, Political Parties, Boundary Commission and Electoral Commission.
Background papers:	Details of the proposals can be found on the following website: https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/2018-review/
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	EC – Electoral Commission. ECU – Elections Claims Unit SI – Statutory Instrument

BACKGROUND

1. 2018 Parliamentary Boundary Review

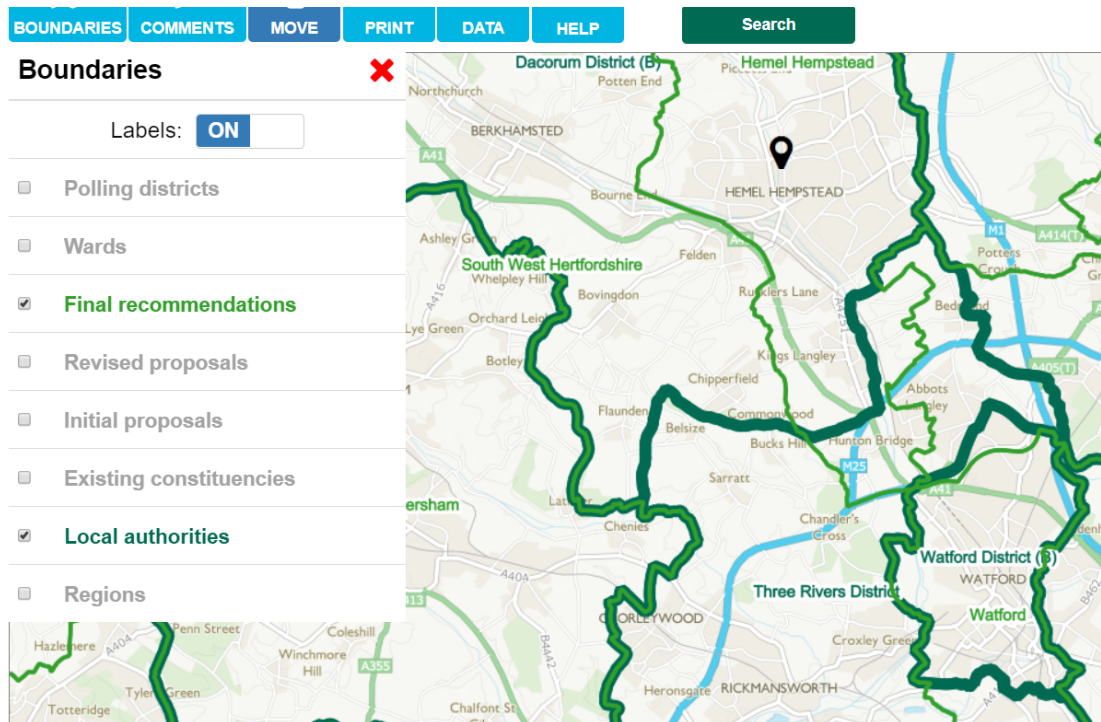
The 2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies began in 2016, and the final recommendations were reported to Government in September 2018. The Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended) ('the Act') sets out certain requirements on the Boundary Commission in relation to the submission of their final report, and on the Government in relation to Parliament's consideration of the report and the laying of the draft Statutory Instrument (SI) that would implement the Commission's recommendations.

As the report has now been before parliament it can be viewed on the Boundary commission's website: <https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/2018-review/>

The Commission will not be distributing hard copies of the report and maps but they are available to download, and the recommended boundaries have been overlaid on the interactive map on the website.

The Government must now prepare the SI that would implement the recommendations. Both Houses of Parliament must vote on these SIs before they become law. If both houses approve the SI, the new boundaries would come into force at the next general election after that vote, this is assumed to be the next scheduled parliamentary elections in 2022. If they are not voted through by both houses, the existing boundaries will continue to apply for future general elections.

Details of the proposals can be found on the above website. The boundaries relevant to the Hemel Hempstead Parliamentary Constituency can be viewed by 'checking' the 'Local Authorities' box on the following page: <https://www.bce2018.org.uk/node/6484?postcode=HP11DN>.



As far as the organisation of elections is concerned the main issue will be the smooth transfer of elector details between Three Rivers DC and Dacorum Borough Council. Electoral Register details will be required for the production of election materials (Notices, poll cards, postal vote packs and return envelopes, etc.) and accurate elector numbers will be necessary for the conduct of the election count. Officers of both Councils are in regular contact through the regional election administrators meetings and have already discussed the practicalities of implementing the recommendations. As it happens, at current General Elections, DBC already provide 3 Rivers with Electoral Register data for the SW Herts Constituency element of Dacorum Borough. Should the new boundaries be agreed, 3 Rivers will now be providing to us electoral register data for the Hunton Bridge / west Abbots Langley areas. This transfer of data has been made easier by the fact that both authorities now use the same Elections Management Software.