



# GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

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## SUMMONS AND AGENDA

**Date: WEDNESDAY, 18 DECEMBER 2024 at 7.00 pm**

**Location: Civic Suite, Catford Road, London, SE6 4RU**

**Enquiries to: Head of Governance and Committee Services  
(emma.campbellsmith@lewisham.gov.uk)**

### **MEMBERS**

Councillor Jacq Paschoud (Chair)  
Councillor Susan Wise (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Aisha Malik-Smith  
Councillor Sakina Sheikh  
Councillor James-J Walsh  
Councillor Luke Warner

**Members are summoned to attend this meeting**

*Jeremy Chambers*

Monitoring Officer  
Laurence House  
Catford Road  
London SE6 4RU  
Date: 10 December 2024

## ORDER OF BUSINESS – PART 1 AGENDA

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The public are welcome to attend our committee meetings, however occasionally committees may have to consider some business in private.

## MINUTES OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 11 September 2024 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Jacq Paschoud (Chair), Susan Wise (Vice-Chair), James-J Walsh, Aisha Malik-Smith, Sakina Sheikh and Luke Warner

ALSO PRESENT: Emma Campbell Smith (Head of Governance and Committee Services), Councillor Amanda De Ryk and Councillor John Paschoud

IN ATTENDANCE VIRTUALLY: Jeremy Chambers (Director of Law and Corporate Governance), Jamie Baker (Head of Electoral Services)

### 1. Minutes

This being the first meeting of the Governance Committee since its constitution, the Head of Governance and Committee Services opened the meeting and invited nominations for Chair.

It was moved by Cllr Sheikh, seconded by Cllr Warner and RESOLVED to elect Cllr Jacq Paschoud to the Chair.

The Chair invited nominations for Vice Chair. It was moved by Cllr Aliya Sheikh, seconded by Cllr Warner and RESOLVED to elect Cllr Susan Wise as Vice Chair.

The Chair noted that Cllrs John Paschoud and Amanda De Ryk were also in attendance.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the final meeting of the Constitution Working Party (CWP) held on 14 March 2023 be confirmed and signed by the Governance Committee as the successor to the CWP.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

None.

### 3. Update from the Monitoring Officer

The Monitoring Officer (MO), who was in attendance virtually, gave a spoken update of planned work on the constitution as follows, most of which would come to the next meeting:

- Tidy up of the Scheme of Delegation to reflect the council structure following Lewisham Homes coming in house. Some of this work had been done but the fine details needed to be worked through;
- Include a senior officer structure chart;

- Work to make the constitution more user friendly. This would not involve changing the provisions, but making the document easier to navigate and use;
- Review the remaining Council, Executive and Committee procedure rules. Around a third of procedure rules had already been reviewed;
- Substitutions ;
- Deputations – there was currently a single reference to deputations in the constitution but with no details on what they are or how the council would handle them;
- Outside Bodies – ensuring this is up to date and fit for purpose
- Refining the referrals process; and
- Appending the scrutiny/Executive protocol and referencing it in the procedure rules.

The MO reassured the committee that the Task and Finish Group on Scrutiny would report to Mayor and Cabinet, who would respond in the usual way, however any resulting constitutional changes would have to come to the Governance Committee for agreement and recommendation to Council.

A discussion followed in which the following was noted:

- Some Members supported the introduction of substitutions, believing that they helped knowledge sharing as well as achieving quorum;
- A full written report would be available for the next meeting;
- One Member called for a review of whether council questions should be allowed during any pre-election publicity period, noting that some questioners had asked political questions to which the Cabinet Members could not give a political response.
- Many authorities have constitutional provisions that do not allow motions, public or member questions during pre-election periods.
- The MO agreed to review of the constitutional changes made in the previous phase.

#### **4. Elections update**

The Head of Electoral Services gave a brief overview of the 2024 elections as follows:

- The 20<sup>th</sup> annual Young Mayor election took place in February. The election delivery cost had been reduced by £10,000 over the last 3 years, by using pupils as polling staff and by promoting online engagement, including social media platforms such as Tiktok.
- Also in February was the Lee Green Neighbourhood Planning Referendum - a cross-borough election with Greenwich.
- 7 March Lewisham mayoral election
- 2 May GLA and Deptford by election. This was a constituency level count with Greenwich.

- 4 July parliamentary election and by election in Blackheath.

The Committee heard that:

- The new Returning Officer had brought a fresh perspective and had made changes to the count, resulting in a slightly longer count time but allowing greater confidence in the result.
- The delivery cost of elections was increasing due to rising cost of postage, printing, staffing, polling station venue hire. In some cases, venue hire charges had increased to 2 or 3 times the pre-pandemic cost.
- The team was currently working on a review of EU voters. Of the approximately 20,000 such voters in Lewisham, around 15,000 had automatic rights and the remainder needed to be reviewed.
- The annual canvas had started a fortnight prior to the meeting, beginning with online, and to be followed by door knocking in October. Around 40% of properties had already responded online by the time of the meeting.
- The review of polling districts was about to commence. This was a statutory process which involved looking at the polling stations in borough, consulting on them, reporting back to the Governance Committee for a recommendation to Council in January.

In response to questions from the Committee it was noted:

- Compared with 0.08% nationally of people who were turned away for not having ID, the figure in Lewisham was around 0.12%. Some London authorities were yet to publish their statistics so an accurate local comparison was not possible.
- Some authorities had problems collecting the data, and therefore the figures were not reliable. Lewisham had used the March election as a practice so had achieved a high level of compliance with polling stations completing the form accurately.
- The lowest turnout had been in Bellingham ward, which had been a trend for a number of elections. Turnout had also been comparatively low in Downham, Rushey Green, Evelyn, Deptford.
  - **ACTION:** Head of Electoral Services to look at turnout side by side with deletion and registration statistics to see whether there was a correlation between turnout and register mobility.
- Where voters had presented without ID, polling station staff encouraged them to return with ID. Return rates varied, likely due to the approach and manner of polling station staff.
- The online canvas saves 50p per return. The previous year's canvas had seen a record number of online returns – around half of the properties in the borough had replied online.
- Anecdotally it seemed to be older, poorer residents who did not present or return with voter ID. However, no data could be recorded about voters so this was merely an observation.
- Polling locations – there had been a low percentage change between elections where polling stations had changed location but it was difficult to accurately compare since the turnout differed greatly between, for example, a local by election compared to a parliamentary election.
- One Member suggested running the Young Mayor election entirely online to reduce costs further.

- Other cost saving steps that the service was taking included piggy backing on the council tax letter to avoid duplicate postage costs, better targeting of communications. Members suggested adding clauses into the leases of community assets granting the council the right to use the venue at no cost for elections.
- Members also asked that “I have voted” stickers be trialled as a way of encouraging voter turnout.
  - **ACTION:** Head of Electoral Services to consider stickers
- According to the Electoral Commission recorded statistics, around 4% of those who didn’t vote cited voter ID as the reason.
- While it may be possible to look at distance from polling station to see whether there was a correlation between distance from station and propensity to vote, the reality was that availability of suitable venues was a significant challenge
- Some Members felt that the Young Mayors election should resemble as closely as possible a normal election as an education tool in how to vote.
- More outreach with residents with disabilities was planned before the 2026 election, including a mock election with adults with disabilities
- Lewisham received 694 applications for Voter Acceptance Certificates (VAC) across the 3 elections, with 159 having been recorded as used in the parliamentary election. This discrepancy suggested that polling staff recording of VAC presentation needed improvement.

Members thanked the Head of Electoral Services for his hard work in successfully delivering the various elections this year.

The meeting ended at 20.23pm



## Governance Committee

### Declaration of Interests

**Class:** Part 1

**Contributors:** Head of Governance and Committee Services

### Outline and recommendations

Members are asked to consider declare any interest they have in any item on the agenda.

#### Declaration of interests

Members are asked to declare any personal interest they have in any item on the agenda.

#### 1 Personal interests

There are three types of personal interest referred to in the Council's Member Code of Conduct :-

- (1) Disclosable pecuniary interests
- (2) Other registerable interests
- (3) Non-registerable interests

#### 2 Disclosable pecuniary interests are defined by regulation as:-

- (a) Employment, trade, profession or vocation of a relevant person\* for profit or gain
- (b) Sponsorship –payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than by the Council) within the 12 months prior to giving notice for inclusion in the register in respect of expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member or towards your election expenses (including payment or financial benefit from a Trade Union).
- (c) Undischarged contracts between a relevant person\* (or a firm in which they are a partner or a body corporate in which they are a director, or in

the securities of which they have a beneficial interest) and the Council for goods, services or works.

- (d) Beneficial interests in land in the borough.
- (e) Licence to occupy land in the borough for one month or more.
- (f) Corporate tenancies – any tenancy, where to the member’s knowledge, the Council is landlord and the tenant is a firm in which the relevant person\* is a partner, a body corporate in which they are a director, or in the securities of which they have a beneficial interest.
- (g) Beneficial interest in securities of a body where:-
  - (a) that body to the member’s knowledge has a place of business or land in the borough; and
  - (b) either
    - (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or 1/100 of the total issued share capital of that body; or
    - (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person\* has a beneficial interest exceeds 1/100 of the total issued share capital of that class.

\*A relevant person is the member, their spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom they live as spouse or civil partner.

### **(3) Other registerable interests**

The Lewisham Member Code of Conduct requires members also to register the following interests:-

- (a) Membership or position of control or management in a body to which you were appointed or nominated by the Council
- (b) Any body exercising functions of a public nature or directed to charitable purposes, or whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy, including any political party
- (c) Any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25

### **(4) Non registerable interests**

Occasions may arise when a matter under consideration would or would be likely to affect the wellbeing of a member, their family, friend or close associate more than it would affect the wellbeing of those in the local area generally, but which is not required to be registered in the Register of Members’ Interests (for example a matter concerning the closure of a school at which a Member’s child attends).

### **(5) Declaration and Impact of interest on members’ participation**



- (a) Where a member has any registerable interest in a matter and they are present at a meeting at which that matter is to be discussed, they must declare the nature of the interest at the earliest opportunity and in any event before the matter is considered. The declaration will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. If the matter is a disclosable pecuniary interest the member must take no part in consideration of the matter and withdraw from the room before it is considered. They must not seek improperly to influence the decision in any way. **Failure to declare such an interest which has not already been entered in the Register of Members' Interests, or participation where such an interest exists, is liable to prosecution and on conviction carries a fine of up to £5000**
- (b) Where a member has a registerable interest which falls short of a disclosable pecuniary interest they must still declare the nature of the interest to the meeting at the earliest opportunity and in any event before the matter is considered, but they may stay in the room, participate in consideration of the matter and vote on it unless paragraph (c) below applies.
- (c) Where a member has a registerable interest which falls short of a disclosable pecuniary interest, the member must consider whether a reasonable member of the public in possession of the facts would think that their interest is so significant that it would be likely to impair the member's judgement of the public interest. If so, the member must withdraw and take no part in consideration of the matter nor seek to influence the outcome improperly.
- (d) If a non-registerable interest arises which affects the wellbeing of a member, their, family, friend or close associate more than it would affect those in the local area generally, then the provisions relating to the declarations of interest and withdrawal apply as if it were a registerable interest.
- (e) Decisions relating to declarations of interests are for the member's personal judgement, though in cases of doubt they may wish to seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer.

## **(6) Sensitive information**

There are special provisions relating to sensitive interests. These are interests the disclosure of which would be likely to expose the member to risk of violence or intimidation where the Monitoring Officer has agreed that such interest need not be registered. Members with such an interest are referred to the Code and advised to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer in advance.

## **(7) Exempt categories**

There are exemptions to these provisions allowing members to participate in decisions notwithstanding interests that would otherwise prevent them doing so. These include:-

- (a) Housing – holding a tenancy or lease with the Council unless the matter relates to your particular tenancy or lease; (subject to arrears exception)
- (b) School meals, school transport and travelling expenses; if you are a parent or guardian of a child in full time education, or a school governor unless the matter relates particularly to the school your child attends or of which you are a governor;
- (c) Statutory sick pay; if you are in receipt
- (d) Allowances, payment or indemnity for members
- (e) Ceremonial honours for members
- (f) Setting Council Tax or precept (subject to arrears exception)



## Governance Committee

### Constitutional Update

**Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** N/A

**Contributors:** Jeremy Chambers, Monitoring Officer

### Outline and recommendations

The Council's Monitoring Officer is required to keep the Constitution under periodic review. This report provides a general update, proposes some amendments to the Constitution and details future work to be undertaken.

#### Recommendations

The Governance Committee is asked to: -

1. note the contents of this report;
2. consider the contents of this report and to make any recommendations it sees fit for further consideration by a future meeting of the Council.

## 1. Executive Summary

1.1. The Constitution is the document that governs how the Council makes decisions, how scrutiny operates, how the public engages with the Council and how the Council operates. The Council is required to keep the Constitution under review and the Council's Monitoring Officer is the custodian of the Constitution.

## 2. Introduction

The Constitution aims to:-

- i) lead to effective and efficient Council decision making;
- ii) make it clear to local people who is making decisions on their behalf;
- iii) give Councillors and local people greater opportunity to engage directly;
- iv) set out clearly the arrangements for local political governance;
- v) separate decision making from scrutiny of those decisions to create greater accountability.

- 2.1. The Council's Monitoring Officer, is required to keep the Constitution under periodic review. This report provides a general update, proposes some amendments to the Constitution and details future work that will be undertaken.
- 2.2. The Governance Committee has, as part of its Terms of Reference, responsibility for making proposals to the Council for any changes to the Council's Constitution it considers necessary. With limited exceptions only a meeting of the Council can make amendments to the Constitution. The views and any recommendations of the Governance Committee will be included in the report taken to the Council.
- 2.3. The purpose of this report is to allow the Committee to consider the effectiveness of the current constitutional provisions listed above. The report will consider each provision in turn. At the Committee meeting when the report is considered, the Monitoring Officer will be in attendance to clarify legal requirements, where members do and do not have options and, if and when required, give a professional view on effectiveness of each provision in terms of good governance.

### **3. General Update**

- 3.1. This section of the report updates the Committee on the impact of the previously agreed amendments to the Constitution relating to questions at Council meetings, the ongoing work of the Overview & Scrutiny Task & Finish Group and amendments made by the Monitoring Officer to the Constitution.

#### **Previous amendments to the Council Procedure Rules relating to questions**

- 3.2. At its meeting of 23 October 2022, Council agreed several amendments to the Constitution. One of the resolutions was as follows: -
  - *Public and member questions remain in the Council Procedure Rules;*
  - *Public questions are limited to two questions per member of the public and each question limited to 100 words;*
  - *The time limit for public questions remains at 30 minutes;*
  - *Member questions are limited to two questions per member and each question limited to 100 words;*
  - *The time limit for member questions remains at 30 minutes;*
  - *The provisions relating to order of questions, notice of questions, scope of questions, disallowing questions, record of questions, supplementary questions and the absence of the questioner remain as currently provided.*
- 3.3. Officers have undertaken a review of the impact of these amendments and considered the following questions: -
  1. The number of questions asked by members of the public at each of the Council meetings for the 12 month period prior to 23 October 2022;
  2. The number of questions asked by members of the public at each of the Council meetings for the 12 month period since 23 October 2022;

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3. Since the Council meeting held on 23 October 2022, the number of questions that have been rejected as a result of exceeding the 100 words limit;
4. Details of any occasion since 23 October 2022 where the time limit for public questions has been insufficient to enable all questions and supplementary questions to be dealt with.

3.4. The review has considered the following: -

The number of questions asked by members of the public at each of the Council meetings for the 12-month period prior to 23 October 2022:

Nov 2021	Jan 2022	Mar 2022	May 2022 AGM	July 2022	Sept 2022
75	54	61	N/A	29	34

The number of questions asked by members of the public at each of the Council meetings for the 12-month period since 23 October 2022:

Nov 2022	Jan 2023	Mar 2023	Mar 2023 AGM	May 2023	July 2023	Sept 2023
122	58	101	N/A	54	33	59

Since the Council meeting held on 23 October 2022, the number of questions that have been rejected as a result of exceeding the 100 words limit:

Nov 2022	Jan 2023	Mar 2023	May 2023	July 2023	Sept 2023	Nov 2023	Jan 2024	Feb 2024	May 2024	July 2024	Oct 2024
0	0	0	3	2	4	2	2	1	2	0	0

Details of any occasion since 23 October 2022 where the time limit for public questions has been insufficient to enable all questions and supplementary questions to be dealt with.

Nov 2022	Jan 2023	Mar 2023	May 2023	July 2023	Sept 2023	Nov 2023	Jan 2024	Feb 2024	May 2024	July 2024	Oct 2024
0	0	0	0	0	0	0*	0	0	0	0	0

\* November 2023 – meeting suspended for 15 minutes.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the above evidence: -

1. There has been no reduction in the number of public questions asked at Council meetings as a result of the changes;
2. Only 16 (2.2% of those asked) questions have been rejected for exceeding the 100-word limit since the changes were brought in following the October 2022 Council meeting. To put this into perspective, a total of 723 public questions were submitted during this timeframe;
3. Since the changes have been introduced, there have been no occasions where those members of the public wishing to ask a supplementary related question (either in person or online) have been prevented from doing so due to the time limit being reached.

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Taking all of these observations into account, it can be concluded that the changes have made a positive impact overall.

#### **Update on the work of the Overview & Scrutiny Task & Finish Group**

- 3.5. The final report of the Improving Scrutiny Task and Finish Group was considered by Mayor and Cabinet on 18 September 2023. Mayor and Cabinet agreed that the response to the report recommendations should be provided directly to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.6. On 5th November 2024, the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee will be considering the recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group.
- 3.7. In summary, the Task and Finish Group recognises that there are areas of both good quality and poor practice in Lewisham and that engagement with Members, officers and stakeholders has indicated a dissatisfaction with some ways of working. The recommendations put forward by the Task and Finish Group are welcomed. Many are within Scrutiny's gift to implement, with some Select Committee Chairs and committees already putting them into practice. Achieving the comprehensive change in practice envisioned by the Task and Finish Group will require uptake of the recommendations across the board and it is hoped that scrutiny members, supported by officers, will take on this challenge.
- 3.8. Some of the recommendations require further discussion and decision by Members before they can be taken forward. Once a consensus has been achieved, if Members agree that they wish to change the number of select committees or task and finish groups, the number of formal meetings held, or the terms of reference of select committees, proposals can be presented to the Governance Committee for onward consideration by Council.
- 3.9. Any proposals put forward by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee that require constitutional change will, in accordance with constitutional requirements, be brought to a future meeting of the Governance Committee for consideration.

#### **Amendment to the Constitution made by the Monitoring Officer**

- 3.10. As the Committee is aware, there are three routes for the Constitution to be amended. Firstly, proposed amendments to the Constitution are required to be taken to the Council's Governance Committee for consideration with recommendations being agreed at a meeting of Council. For virtually all constitutional amendments this process is followed and can be evidenced through an analysis of the minutes of the Council meetings.
- 3.11. Secondly, the elected Mayor has authority pursuant to Part IV D(6) of the Constitution, which states the Mayor may amend the Mayoral Scheme of Delegations of Executive Functions throughout the year. Any amendments to the Mayoral Scheme of Delegations of Executive Functions must be notified to the Proper Officer and the Proper Officer is required to notify any such amendments to all councillors and take a report to an appropriate meeting of Council for noting.

- 3.12. Thirdly, and by exception, in circumstances where the Monitoring Officer

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considers it necessary for amendments to be made to the Constitution in order to give it legal effect and protect the Council, there is a well-established practice at Lewisham of amendments being made in advance in a timely manner and reported to the Governance Committee and approved at a meeting of Council. Previously, the Monitoring Officer has amended the Constitution to remove all references to the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panels Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, which if allowed to remain would have been contrary to legislation. Other examples include amending the provisions in the Constitution insofar as they relate to the thresholds contained within the Public Contract Regulations 2015. Without such amendments, the Council's constitutional provisions would be contrary to statute with the potential for any relevant procurement process to be challenged.

3.13. Following an external investigation into matters outside the Terms of Reference for the Governance Committee, on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024, I asked the Head of Governance and Committee Services to amend the following provisions in the Scheme of Delegation: -

*(1) The following have delegated authority to initiate, conduct and defend all legal proceedings, public inquiries and planning appeals brought by or against the Council in any Court, Tribunal or Arbitration and may make representations at any public inquiry held by or on behalf of any Minister or public body:*

*(a) the Director of Law;*

*(b) any individual holding the position of Principal Lawyer, Senior Lawyer or Lawyer within the Legal Services Department.*

Be amended as follows: -

*(1) The following have delegated authority to initiate, conduct and defend all legal proceedings, public inquiries and planning appeals brought by or against the Council in any Court, Tribunal or Arbitration and may make representations at any public inquiry held by or on behalf of any Minister or public body:*

*(a) the Director of Law & Corporate Governance;*

*(b) the Head of Legal Services;*

*(c) any individual holding the position of Principal Lawyer (provided they hold an appropriate practising certificate)*

3.14. Following the investigation, the Monitoring Officer instructed that this amendment be made to the Scheme of Delegation with immediate effect in order to protect the Council and prevent any future potentially unlawful acts by any of its officers. The step taken by the Monitoring Officer has been confirmed as appropriate by Counsel.

3.15. The Chief Executive received a request to consider changing this amendment back to how it was. This has been resisted given the explanation above and that amendments to the Constitution are predominantly matters for the Governance Committee to recommend to Council.

3.16. A proposed amendment is set out at paragraph 4.16 of this report, which seeks to clarify the process that will be followed by the Monitoring Officer on the rare

occasions where it is necessary for amendments to be made in this way. The holistic review mentioned later in this report will also include consideration of best practice in this area.

#### 4. Proposed Amendments to the Constitution

- 4.1. Set out below are proposed amendments to the Constitution. The Governance Committee is asked to consider these and agree the recommendations.

##### Senior Management Structure

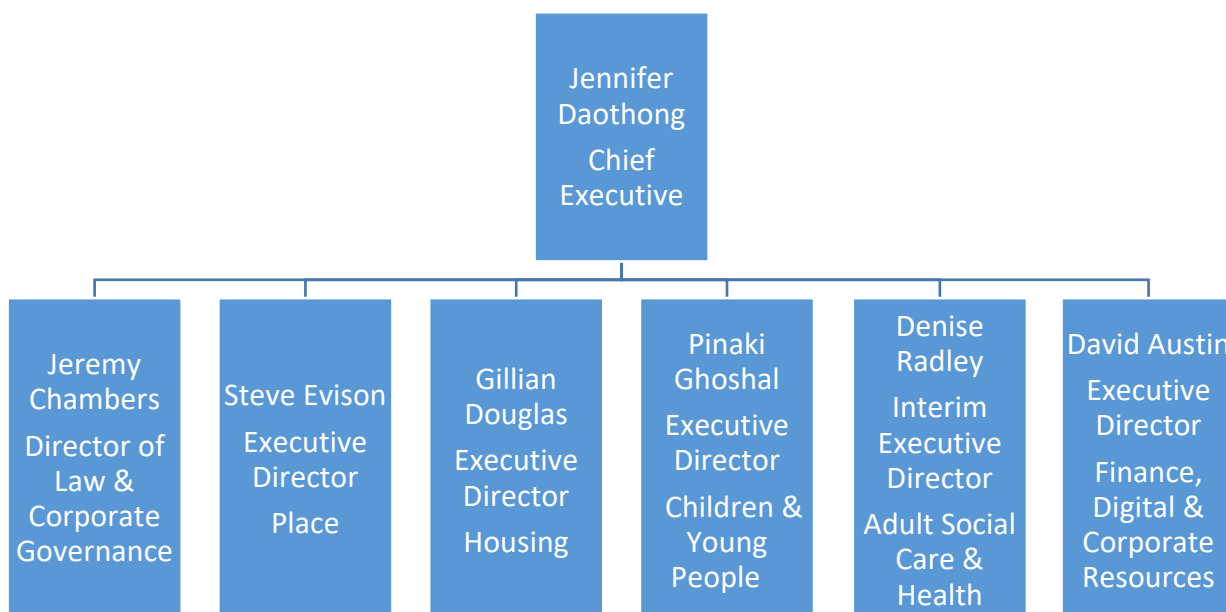
- 4.2. Under Part I - Summary of the Constitution, Section 15 currently states: -

*A brief outline of the Council's current organisational structure appears in the Constitution.*

It is proposed that this is amended to: -

*A copy of the Council's current organisational structure chart is included at Appendix 8.*

At Appendix 8 the following structure chart will be included: -



##### Scrutiny - Executive Protocol

- 4.3. At its meeting of 2nd March 2022, Council agreed to adopt a Scrutiny-Executive Protocol and that this be amended to the Constitution. It is proposed that the protocol is included as Appendix 9 to the Constitution and the following wording is included at Article 6 Overview And Scrutiny at the end of paragraph 6.2: -

*The Council has agreed a Scrutiny - Executive Protocol which is included at Appendix 9.*

##### Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules - Scrutiny of health matters

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- 4.4. This section needs to be updated to reflect the fact that referrals to the Secretary of State can no longer be made. The current wording is as follows: -

*NHS bodies must, subject to certain exceptions, consult the Healthier Communities Select Committee about any proposal for substantial variation in, or substantial development of, a service in the area, and where consulted the Select Committee is entitled to comments and in appropriate cases, the Select Committee may make referrals to the Secretary of State under the 2013 Regulations.*

The following amendment is proposed: -

*NHS bodies must, subject to certain exceptions, consult the Healthier Communities Select Committee about any proposal for substantial variation in, or substantial development of, a service in the area, and where consulted the Select Committee is entitled to comments and in appropriate cases, ~~the Select Committee may make referrals to the Secretary of State under the 2013 Regulations.~~ write to the Secretary of State, to request that they 'call-in' a reconfiguration proposal.*

- 4.5. Also, that the following addition be made to the Terms of Reference for the Healthier Communities Select Committee: -

*To comment on proposals for substantial developments or variation in health services in the local area and, if deemed necessary, write to request that the Secretary of State consider calling in a proposal.*

### **Scheme of Delegation**

- 4.6. The current Council Scheme of Delegation and Mayoral Scheme of Delegation do not reflect or align with the current Council management structure. For example, the schemes include authority given to the *Executive Director of Community Services*, a role that no longer exists.
- 4.7. Authority is sought to tidy up both Schemes of Delegation to reflect the current management structure of the Council.
- 4.8. Members should note that authority is not being sought to amend the levels or extent of any delegations at this time and that a detailed review of both schemes will be undertaken and reported back to a future meeting of the Governance Committee.

### **Deputations**

- 4.9. Currently the Constitution refers to deputations in the following sections: -

Under **Article 6 - Overview & Scrutiny Committee**, under *Community Representation* the following wording is included: -

*To receive petitions, **deputations** and representations from local people and other stakeholders about areas of concern within their overview and scrutiny remit and to refer them to the Executive, appropriate committee or officer for action, with a recommendation or report if the committee*

*considers that necessary.*

Under the **Council Procedure Rules** under *Business to be conducted at Ordinary Meetings* the following wording is included: -

*To receive deputations and petitions, if any*

- 4.10. The Constitution does not define what a deputation is or the process for dealing with them. No record of the use of deputations can be found in recent times. The proposal is to delete the word *deputation* from the Constitution.

### **Substitutes**

- 4.11. There are sporadic references to the use of substitutes in the current version of the Constitution. Set out below are some examples: -

#### Council Urgency Committee

The Council may also determine substitutes who may act in the absence of individual members of the Council Urgency Committee in their absence. Executive members may not be named as substitutes.

#### Licensing Committee

Every member of the main Licensing Committee acts as substitute for any member sitting on any Licensing Sub-Committee or Urgency Sub Committee.

#### Appointments Committee

In the event of any member informing the proper officer in writing that they are unable to attend a meeting of the Appointments Committee, then the Council appoints such person as the Leader of the relevant political group shall nominate as substitute in writing to the proper officer to be a member of the Appointments Committee for the purpose of that meeting only.

#### Cabinet

There may be no formal co-optees or substitutions to the Executive.

#### Works Council

The Council and the constituent trade unions shall both appoint substitute members of the Works Council, any one of whom shall act as a substitute for a full member of the appropriate side in the event of the latter being unable to attend a meeting. A substitute attending a meeting in place of a member shall have the same powers as the member.

If a member or a substitute member of the Works Council ceases to be a Member of the Council or an employee of the Council, that member shall cease to be a member of the Works Council. Any such vacancy arising shall be filled by the Employer's Side of the Union Side as appropriate.

#### Pension Board

Specifically prohibits substitutes.

#### Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

'Member' means a member of SACRE and includes a substitute or co-opted

member.

4.12. There have been several occasions in recent times where formal meetings of the authority have needed to be rescheduled or, on one occasion, cancelled on the night due to being inquorate. The current constitutional provisions don't allow sufficient flexibility and the following amendments are proposed: -

1. Substitutes be permitted at the following committees of the Council: -
  - a. All Planning Committees
  - b. All Licensing Sub-committees (as current)
  - c. Governance Committee
  - d. Standards Committee
  - e. Overview & Scrutiny Committee and all Select-Committees
  - f. Appointments Committee (as current)
  - g. Council Urgency Committee (as current)
  - h. Works Council (as current)
2. Substitutes not permitted at the following: -
  - a. Pensions Board
  - b. Cabinet
3. The following rules to be put in place regarding the use of substitutes: -
  - a. For each committee, 2 substitute members for each group to be appointed at the Annual General Meeting of the Council.
  - b. Substitute members to be permitted to take the place of an ordinary member from the respective political group on the Committee where that member will be absent for the whole of the meeting. Such an appointment would apply for the entire meeting, including where the meeting is reconvened after any adjournment.
  - c. The political group whose committee member wishes to appoint a substitute member must notify the Monitoring Officer in writing, prior to the beginning of the relevant committee meeting of the intended substitution. Once notification of a substitute member has been received the ordinary member of the committee will not (unless the notice of substitution is withdrawn by the political group prior to the start of the meeting) be entitled to attend the relevant meeting.
  - d. Any nominated substitute must have undertaken appropriate training relevant to the committee in question.

#### **Council meetings during any Pre-election Publicity Period**

4.13. The last 18 months have seen more elections than usual. As a starting point, wherever possible, all formal meetings of the authority that can be cancelled are cancelled during the period from publication of the Notice of Election until 10pm on the day of Poll. However, there are occasions where Council meetings are necessary during these periods.

4.14. As currently drafted, the Council Procedure Rules make no allowance for the difficulties that arise in holding a meeting of Council during a pre-election publicity period. Cabinet Members have understandably struggled to fully respond to questions or debate motions fully. This has led to frustration all round.

4.15. With this in mind, the following additional Council Procedure Rule is proposed, which seeks to balance the restrictions caused by any election and the need for business to be transacted: -

***Meetings of the Council during any Pre-election Publicity Period***

*Should, in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer, a meeting of the Council be required during any Pre-election Publicity Period, then the following provisions will apply: -*

- *The meeting will be summonsed in the normal way;*
- *The meeting will only consider reports relating to the decisions needed that necessitated the calling of the meeting;*
- *No other business will be considered;*
- *There will be no Announcements, Petitions, Public Questions, Member Questions or Motions on Notice;*
- *During any debate members will at all times be mindful of the restrictions placed on them and the Council by the Pre-election Publicity Rules.*

**Amendments to the Constitution**

4.16. As referenced in paragraph 3.15, above, there are, from time to time, exceptional circumstances where the Monitoring Officer is required to make immediate amendments to the Constitution in order to give it legal effect and protect the Council.

4.17. It is recommended that the following additional wording is added to Article 21.2 of the Constitution: -

*This provision shall not apply where in the professional opinion of the Monitoring Officer the Constitution requires amendment without delay. In these circumstances, the Monitoring Officer will notify the Chair of the Governance Committee and the Chief Executive of the amendment and the reasons for it within 24 hours.*

*The Monitoring Officer will also notify all members of the Council of the amendment and the reasons for it within five working days.*

*The Council's Website will be updated within five working days.*

*The amendment will be reported to a meeting of the Governance Committee as soon as reasonably practicable.*

## **5. Future Work Programme**

5.1. The current version of the Constitution has been reviewed in phases since early 2022. Whilst this approach has been useful in allowing some much-needed amendments to be considered and agreed by members, it is useful periodically for the whole Constitution to be subject to a review. The Constitution is a document that should be accessible and easy to use for Members, officers, stakeholders and the public. The current Constitution is sometimes difficult to

navigate, particularly the lack of a clear overall structure, contents (with hyperlinks) and index.

- 5.2. Following discussion between the Monitoring Officer and the Mayor, Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governance Committee, Cabinet Member with responsibility for governance and the Chief Executive, a holistic review of the Council's Constitution has been requested.
- 5.3. The Council has committed to undertake a review of industrial relations and it is likely that a number of recommendations relating to engagement mechanisms will be forthcoming. Those will be picked up and incorporated into the constitutional review.
- 5.4. Set out below is an indicative timeline for the holistic review: -

**18<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

Governance Committee considers this report.

**22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025**

Council considers any recommendations from the Governance Committee.

**December 2024 – February 2025**

Officers carry out a detailed analysis of other London council constitutions.

**March 2025 – April 2025**

Several workshops and Governance Committee meetings to consider potential revisions.

**7<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

Council AGM to consider and approve the revised Constitution.

## **6. Financial implications**

- 6.1. Not Applicable

## **7. Legal implications**

- 7.1. The report has been prepared by the Council's Monitoring Officer and all legal matters have been addressed in the body of the report.

## **8. Background papers**

- 8.1. A copy of the Council's constitution is available at the following link: -

[Lewisham Council - Our constitution](#)

## **9. Report author and contact**

Jeremy Chambers  
**Director of Law & Corporate Governance**  
**Monitoring Officer**

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## Governance Committee

### Review of Polling Districts and Places – Electoral Services

**Date:** 18 December 2024

**Key decision:** N/A

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** ALL WARDS

**Contributors:** Jamie Baker, Head of Electoral Services

### Outline and recommendations

Governance Committee is asked to: -

1. consider the Returning Officer's proposals for changes to Lewisham's polling scheme;
2. make recommendations for further changes and/or consultation with councillors;
3. recommend the revised polling scheme (with their proposed changes) for approval by Council in January.

### Timeline of engagement and decision-making

- 11 September – briefing provided to Governance Committee and discussion on general principles for the review
- 13 September – formal notice of review published. Start of formal consultation period (internal and external)
- 25 October – deadline for representations
- 18 December – report to Governance Committee for feedback and directions
- 10 January 2025 – Returning Officer to publish final proposals
- 22 January 2025 – Approval of final polling scheme at Full Council meeting

## 1. Summary

- 1.1. The council is required to undertake a statutory review of polling districts and

polling places every 5 years. The current review began on 13 September and must be completed by 31 January 2025. The Returning Officer has created draft proposals for all wards that have been shared with all councillors.

- 1.2. Officers have used feedback from previous elections since the last review in 2021, alongside representations received from residents and local parties. Where the proposals are recommending a change to polling district boundaries, or polling places, the relevant ward councillors have been contacted directly for feedback and approval.
- 1.3. The proposals are being shared with the Governance Committee for feedback and further direction before they are finalised. The proposals will then be revised to include all changes recommended by the Committee. Final proposals are due to go to Council for formal approval in January 2025.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. Governance Committee is asked to: -
  1. consider the Returning Officer's proposals for changes to Lewisham's polling scheme;
  2. make recommendations for further changes and/or consultation with councillors;
  3. recommend the revised polling scheme (with their proposed changes) for approval by Council in January.

## **3. Policy Context**

- 3.1. This report aligns with Lewisham's Corporate Priorities, as set out in the Council's [Corporate Strategy \(2022-2026\)](#): -
  - Cleaner and Greener
  - A Strong Local Economy
  - Quality Housing
  - Children and Young People
  - Safer Communities
  - Open Lewisham
  - Health and Wellbeing
- 3.2. In particular, this report is closely aligned to priority "Open Lewisham" because our polling scheme is designed to enable all residents to participate in elections, removing barriers for those with protected characteristics, and promoting equality.

## **4. Background**

- 4.1. Lewisham's last polling district review took place in 2021, in advance of the changes to ward boundaries which came into effect in May 2022. The boundaries for our wards and parliamentary constituencies are not in scope for this review – only the polling districts and polling places.
- 4.2. Lewisham has 19 wards and 3 Parliamentary constituencies. Lewisham's current polling scheme has 98 polling districts, 96 polling places and 120 polling stations.

The draft proposals would create a polling scheme with 89 polling districts, 88 polling places, and 116 polling places.

- 4.3. The small reduction in polling districts and polling places is bought about through the use of some new and better venues, moving district boundaries to better distribute voters, and maximising the use of our best venues.
- 4.4. The full suite of draft proposals for the polling scheme, along with an equalities impact assessment, can be found in a separate report, provided as an appendix.

## 5. Financial implications

- 5.1. A small number of polling place changes have been proposed to reduce the cost. However, the cost of a polling place is not the primary concern, of more importance is the accessibility of voting for our residents.
- 5.2. Overall, the proposed changes to our polling scheme will not have any significant financial impact.

## 6. Legal implications

- 6.1. By order of section 18c of the Representation of the People Act, the Returning Officer for Lewisham Council is required to undertake a review of all polling districts and places every 5 years. The current review period ends on 31 January 2025.
- 6.2. The legislative provisions are supported by further guidance published by the Electoral Commission. The Returning Officer has applied all guidance and legislative requirements in publishing the notice of review, the consultation period, receipt of representations, and decision making process.
- 6.3. Lewisham’s constitution has no delegation of the decision for approving the polling scheme, and therefore the decision must be made by Full Council at a formal meeting.

## 7. Risk Implications

Risk	Mitigation
Failure to complete statutory review by the deadline.	Early publication of notice. Confirmed item on agenda for January Full Council meeting.
Councillors are not able to approve Returning Officer’s proposals.	Direct engagement with ward councillors with proposals for their ward. RO to make all changes recommended by councillors, and where that is not possible, to reach understanding and agreement on the reasons and the best possible scheme. Make no change if no agreement can be made.
New polling scheme not communicated to voters.	Comms and engagement officers to help publish the review and consultation



	documents. Once final scheme is approved, electoral services to write to all voters several times in advance of 2026 elections (and any unscheduled polls). Reminders sent before every poll.
New scheme not fit for purpose	Rigorous consultation from councillors and interested residents. Engagement from facilities, highways and other relevant council teams. Application of electoral commission guidance and performance standards.

## 8. Equalities implications

- 8.1. The Committee is directed to the separate Equalities Impact Assessment which is appended to the formal Polling District Review proposals documents (Appendix A). In summary, all changes have been considered in line with equality legislation. In particular, we have considered the impact on residents with protected characteristics.
- 8.2. All polling places are subject to a site assessment where electoral officers visit the premises and conduct a thorough assessment of the facilities, access and location. Note that no polling place will be recommended that doesn't pass the site assessment. The assessment includes access, size of venue, width of entrance and internal doors, space for tellers, lighting, ventilation, kitchen and restroom facilities, etc. In particular, the officer must conduct checks for the accessibility of the site in order to determine suitability as a polling place with regards to people with a disability. This includes: -
- Access for the mobility disabled, e.g. wheelchair users, mobility scooters, etc;
  - Transport – bus stops, parking (regular and disabled);
  - Light;
  - Access for visually impaired.

## 9. Climate change and environmental implications

- 9.1. Local polling places allow voters to walk or cycle to their polling place. This reduces the requirement for voters to use a car. Where possible, polling places are situated close to public transport stops and hubs, again enabling residents to avoid using a car.
- 9.2. Postal voting is available for all voters, and targeted communications encourage people to consider postal voting if they would otherwise find it difficult to attend a polling station for any reason.

## 10. Crime and disorder implications

- 10.1. There are no crime and disorder implications.

## 11. Health and wellbeing implications

- 11.1. The accessibility of polling places, and ability to vote, are important. Participation

in the democratic process can benefit mental health and wellbeing. Residents need to feel like their opinion matters.

## 12. Background papers

- 12.1. Appendix A – PD Review 24-25. RO Proposals. Initial. V1. (Word document includes maps, additional maps supplied separately for ease of access)

## 13. Glossary

- 13.1. [Link to Oxford English Dictionary here.](#)

Term	Definition
Polling District	An area of residential properties containing electors who are allocated to a polling place
Polling Place	The building or area where polling stations are situated
Polling Station	A room or building which is used for the issuing of ballot papers to voters

## 14. Report author(s) and contact

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- 14.2. Report sponsor: Jeremy Chambers, Director of Law & Corporate Governance.  
[Jeremy.chambers@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:Jeremy.chambers@lewisham.gov.uk)

## 15. Appendices

- 15.1. Please attach appendices as separate documents and list them below.
- Appendix A – PD Review 24-25. RO Proposals. Initial. V1

# Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations

London Borough of Lewisham

September 2024 to January 2025

Jamie Baker, Head of Electoral Services

Laurence House, Catford, SE6 4RU – 02083146907 – Jamie.baker@lewisham.gov.uk

## 1 Introduction and purpose of the report

- 1.1. By order of section 18c of the Representation of the People Act, the Returning Officer for Lewisham Council is required to undertake a review of all polling districts and places every 5 years.
- 1.2. The last scheduled Review took place between August and December 2021. This current review must be completed by 31 January 2025.
- 1.3. This report provides the initial recommendations of the Returning Officer for councillors to consider. They draw on feedback from residents as well as the views of the election team.
- 1.4. Definition of terms:
  - Polling Station: A room or building which is used for the issuing of ballot papers to voters
  - Polling Place: The building or area where polling stations are situated
  - Polling District: An area of residential properties containing electors who are allocated to a polling place

For example, the polling district will be a large area comprising a series of roads and estates, the polling place is a local school, and the polling station is the main hall within the school.

## 2 Scope and Objectives of the Review

- 2.1. The Review will examine all Polling Districts and Polling Places but ward boundaries cannot be altered as part of this Review.
- 2.2. Polling Places will be selected according to the following criteria:
  - Compliance with Electoral Commission guidance
  - Accessibility will be a central consideration
  - Availability and cost – we require Polling Places that can be used for every election at a cost that is reasonable to the taxpayer

- No more than 2,250 electors to be allocated to each Polling Station, noting that a Polling Place can accommodate multiple Polling Stations
- 2.3. By way of context, it is noteworthy that some Polling Places that would normally be used are no longer of suitable quality, and in some Polling Districts the Polling Places are no longer available.
- 2.4. Information will be provided for each ward detailing any issues requiring solutions and the proposed new polling arrangements.

### 3 The Timetable

13 September 2024	Publish Notice of holding a review and start of consultation period
14 October 2024	Start of ward consultation meetings
25 October 2024	Deadline for representations
14 November 2024	Publish ARO's revised proposals, applying representations and feedback
22 January 2025	Formal meeting of the council to approve the new proposals
31 January 2025	Publish the electoral register using new polling districts

### 4 Key Issues for the Proposals

- 4.1. According to Electoral Commission guidance, no polling station should have more than 2,500 electors allocated to it. This excludes postal voters and those not eligible to vote. Where a polling district has more than 2,500 electors allocated to it the electorate is split between 2 polling stations in the same venue. In Lewisham we believe the figure of 2,500 is slightly too high, and set a figure of 2,250 for the maximum number of electors allocated to a single polling station. Should the electorate be higher, we allocate a second polling station in the polling place. This is known as a double polling station.
- 4.2. Polling stations should be local to the voters. Where possible, voters should be no more than 15 minutes walk from their polling station.
- 4.3. Continuity of the polling scheme is important. Many residents will become familiar with the location of their polling station and any change could lead to a decline in turnout. However, it is still possible to change the location – ensuring that the new location is suitable and sufficient notice has been given by more than one communication channel, including direct contact.
- 4.4. No polling station should have fewer than 1,300 electors allocated to it – this will ensure value for money in terms of costs per voter. This minimum number of voters will only apply where it is practical. If the walk would be too great a distance then a local venue for an isolated group of voters can be preferable.
- 4.5. All new polling places must be assessed for accessibility, proximity to voters in that polling district and facilities for staff such as toilets, kitchen and parking.

- 4.6. Physical barriers such as railway lines, parks, and main roads can prevent an easy division of electors to polling districts. The proposals must take these into account and regard the safety of electors travelling to and from their polling place.
- 4.7. Transport links in polling districts should be considered – they can improve accessibility for electors. Where changes are required the Review will note the provision of bus stops and parking spaces.
- 4.8. When allocating electors to polling places and stations the review will account for previous electoral turnout, reviews undertaken and lessons learnt after each election and the capacity of polling staff to deal with high turnouts.
- 4.9. The management of polling stations and staff for elections demands a lot of resource and risk. Sometimes a double polling station, serving a large number of electors, allows us to reduce cost and focus our staff and equipment on a single venue. That gives us extra resilience and opportunities to maximise the use of our best staff and resources. Where there are 2 polling venues in close proximity, we should consider combining the district and using a single venue, to realise these benefits.
- 4.10. The Returning Officer notes that the use of schools as polling places can cause significant disruption to pupils, teachers and parents. With plenty of notice schools can often use the occasion as a training day, and give parents/carers more than enough time to make alternative arrangements. Communication between schools and electoral staff gives schools the time to do this. However, we will continue to be proactive in identifying alternative venues to schools wherever possible but cannot rule out using them.

## **5 The Decision Making Process**

- 5.1. The notice of review was published on Friday 13 September. Residents and interested parties have been invited to submit representations.
- 5.2. The Returning Officer's proposals have been subject to an internal decision making process involving lead officers for electoral services, facilities and the health and safety team. They are now presented to all Councillors who will give expert feedback using their excellent local knowledge.
- 5.3. Ward meetings will be held with councillors to review these proposals alongside all submissions received from residents, and any other information. These meetings will be used to revise the proposals and come to agreements for each ward on a draft final scheme.
- 5.4. The Returning Officer will publish a report listing their final proposals. As part of the report, all representations will be published with the Returning Officer's response. This will be presented to the Governance Committee to consider and approve before being submitted to Full Council in January 2025.

## 6. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.1. Appendix A provides an equalities impact assessment (EIA).
- 6.2. The EIA examines the electoral process and provides information and actions for how we can make voting in polling places accessible for all residents who are eligible to vote.
- 6.3. The recommendations made in the EIA are reflected in the Returning Officer's proposals.

## 7. Polling District References

- 7.1. Polling districts must give reference to both the ward and the parliamentary constituency.
- 7.2. Lewisham polling districts are formatted in the following way:

First letter references the Parliamentary constituency  
Second 2 letters references the Ward  
Followed by a number  
Special districts have a letter A at the end

- 7.3. As our Parliamentary constituencies have changed, the polling district references must change too. Our revised polling districts will now appear as:

WARD	CONSTITUENCY	PD REFERENCE
Bellingham	Lewisham East	EBE
Catford South	Lewisham East	ECA
Downham	Lewisham East	EDO
Grove Park	Lewisham East	EGR
Hither Green	Lewisham East	EHG
Lee Green	Lewisham East	ELG
Rushey Green	Lewisham East	ERU
Blackheath	Lewisham North	EBL
Brockley	Lewisham North	NBR
Deptford	Lewisham North	NDE
Evelyn	Lewisham North	NEV
Ladywell	Lewisham North	NLA
Lewisham Central	Lewisham North	NLC
New Cross Gate	Lewisham North	NNG
Telegraph Hill	Lewisham North	NTE
Crofton Park	Lewisham West & East Dulwich	WCR
Forest Hill	Lewisham West & East Dulwich	WFO
Perry Vale	Lewisham West & East Dulwich	WPE
Sydenham	Lewisham West & East Dulwich	WSY

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# LEWISHAM EAST CONSTITUENCY

## BELLINGHAM WARD

<b>Bellingham Electorate Stats</b>	<b>Polling Station Voters</b>	<b>Postal Voters</b>	<b>Total Electorate</b>
Parliamentary Elections	6,194	768	6,962
Local Elections	6,715	834	7,549

### Summary

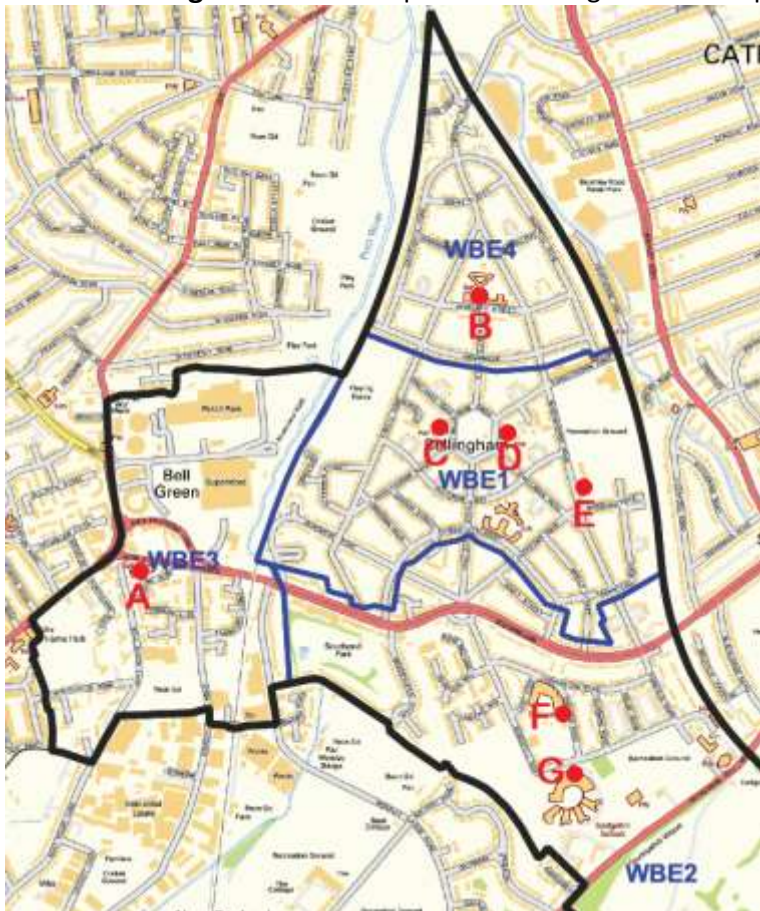
- The current polling scheme has 4 polling districts, with polling places towards the centre in each district. This is close to the ideal situation but turnout in this ward is the lowest in the borough
- It is believed the low turnout is not due to the polling places – their location or facilities – but related to other factors that are outside the scope of this review
- The only issue in this ward is the polling station for WBE2. Previously we used the Sedgehill Community Centre, but that has been knocked down. Then we used the Dumps Playground, but that is being closed and not due to reopen until Spring 2026
- Note the next scheduled elections are in May 2026, so the Dumps Playground should be available. This means we can retain that polling place but ensure we have a temporary solution for any unscheduled polls that could take place before May 2026

### The ARO's proposal

- Retain the current polling districts and places
- For WBE2, retain the Dumps Playground, and use one of 2 options:
  - A portacabin outside the same site
  - Sedgehill Academy has a large foyer area. This would be a good space for a polling place and could be used without significant disruption to the school



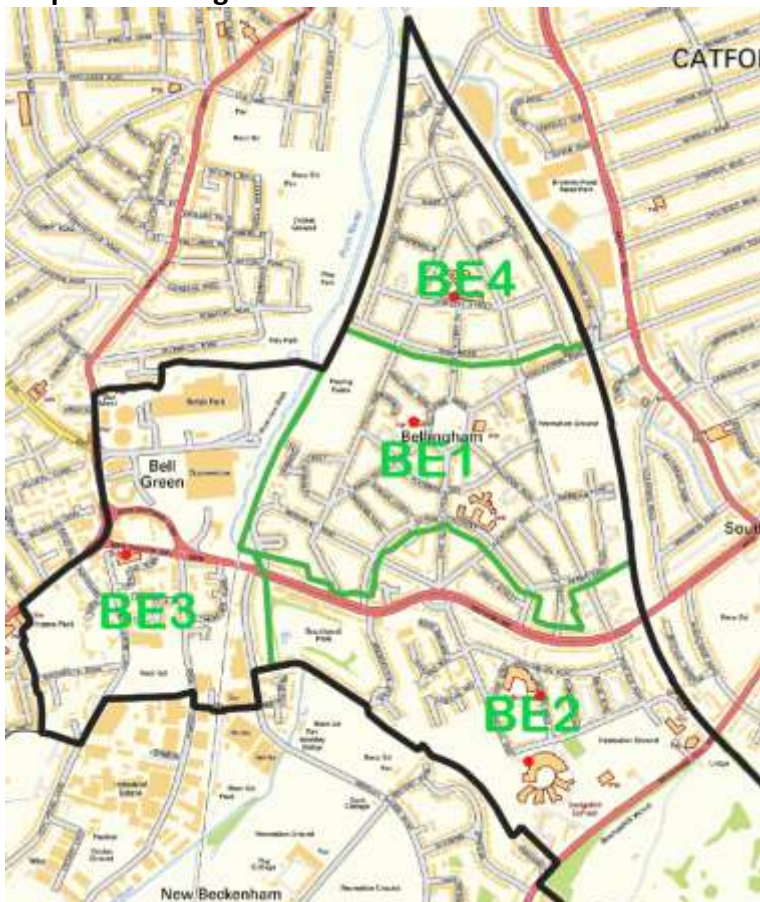
**Current Polling Scheme – with points indicating current and potential polling places**



**Potential Polling Places**

A	Haseltine Primary School
B	Athelney Primary School
C	Christ Church United Reformed Church
D	St. Dunstan's Church
E	Bellingham Gateway Youth and Community Centre
F	Dumps Adventure Playground
G	Sedgehill Academy, Foyer area

**Proposed Polling Scheme**



**Polling Districts and Polling Places**

EBE1	Christ Church United Reformed Church The Dumps
EBE2	(Sedgehill School for polls before May 26)
EBE3	Haseltine Primary School
EBE4	Athelney Primary School

## LEWISHAM EAST CONSTITUENCY

# CATFORD SOUTH WARD

<b>Catford South Electorate Stats</b>	<b>Polling Station Voters</b>	<b>Postal Voters</b>	<b>Total Electorate</b>
Parliamentary Elections	9,556	1,760	11,316
Local Elections	10,319	1,878	12,197

### Summary

This ward is average size and has benefited from a turnout that matches the borough wide average. In the past few years we've had problems with the polling place for ECA4, and in 2024 had to settle with sending all voters to the polling place of the neighbouring district ECA5 at St. John's Church. This arrangement actually worked very well, and there has been no problems reported by voters. Elsewhere in the ward we have found the electorate in ECA1 is slightly too large, with the polling station not quite big enough to manage a large double station. We've also experienced issues with the polling place in ECA3, the Synagogue. This venue is expensive, and there are restrictions on the refreshments the staff are able to bring.

### The ARO's proposal

- Formalise the arrangement of the double station at St. John's Church, merging those 2 districts
- Move the boundary for ECA2, bringing in some voters from the old ECA3
- Create a new polling place for ECA3 in the very good venue at the Bellingham Bowling Club
- Move the boundary between ECA3 and ECA1, reducing ECA1 to a more manageable size

**Current Polling Scheme – with points indicating polling places**

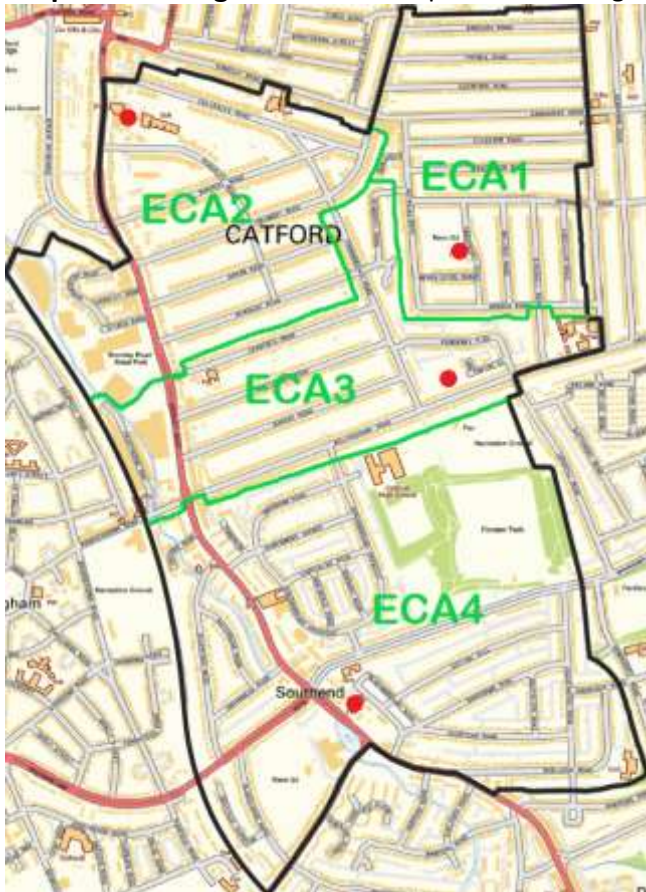


**Potential Polling Places**

A	Laurence Centre
B	Holy Cross Church Hall
C	Corbett Community Library
D	St. Andrew's Church Hall
E	Abbotshall Healthy Lifestyle Centre
F	Torridon Primary School
G	Bellingham Bowling Club
H	Catford and Bromley Synagogue
I	Haskins Community Room
J	St. John's Church
K	Green Man - Phoenix Community Housing

District	Voters	Polling Place
ECA1	3478	Abbotshall Healthy Lifestyle Centre
ECA2	1775	Laurence Centre
ECA3	1301	Catford and Bromley Synagogue
ECA4	1787	St. John's Church
ECA5	1978	St. John's Church

**Proposed Polling Scheme – with points indicating the polling place**



District	Voters	Polling Place
ECA1	2720	Abbotshall Healthy Lifestyle Centre
ECA2	1986	Laurence Centre
ECA3	1834	Bellingham Bowling Club
ECA4	3755	St. John's Church

# LEWISHAM EAST CONSTITUENCY

## DOWNHAM WARD

<b>Downham Electorate Stats</b>	Polling Station Voters	Postal Voters	Total Electorate
Parliamentary Elections	9,636	1,660	11,296
Local Elections	10,573	1,820	12,393

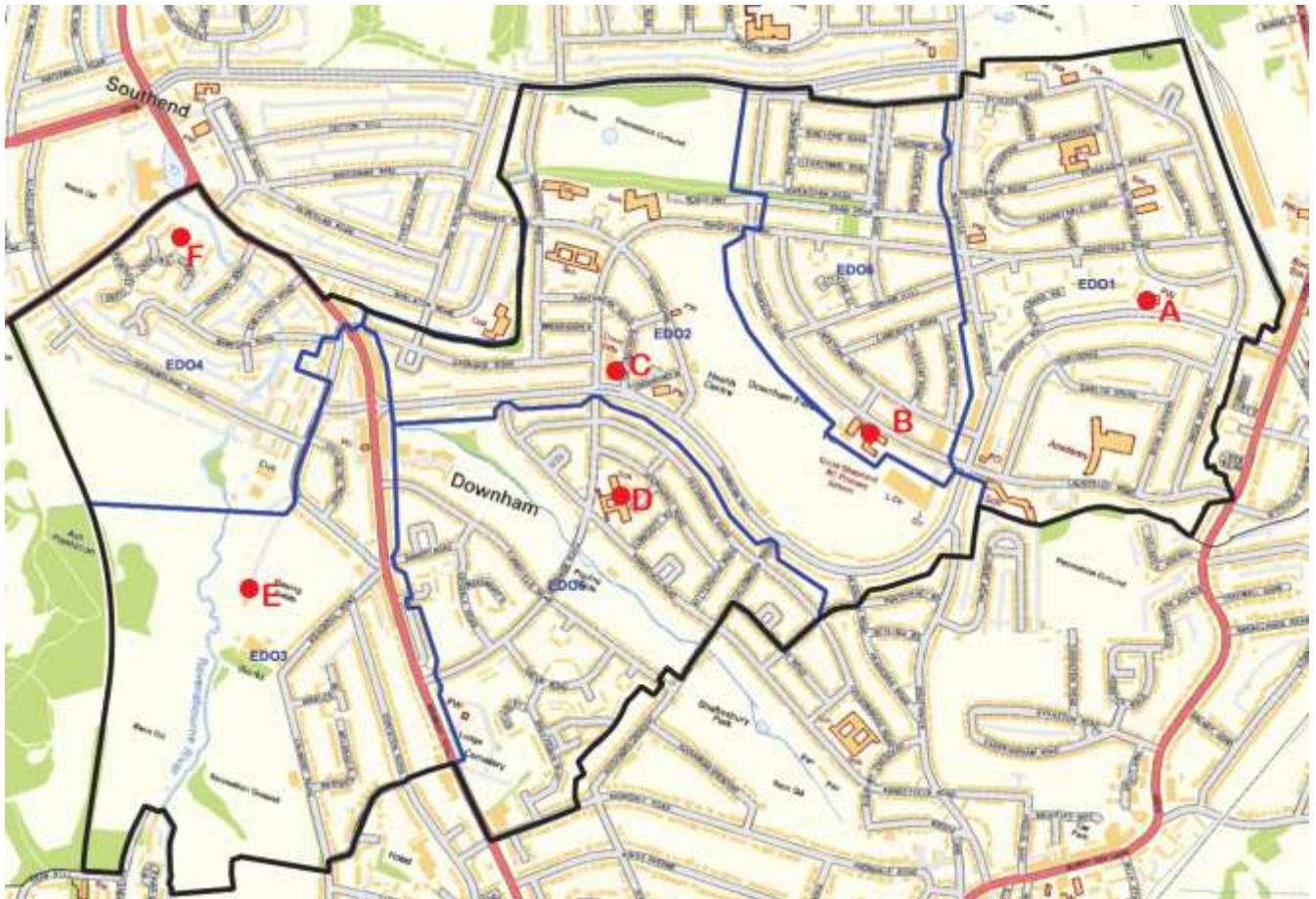
### Summary

- Downham ward has had a low turnout at elections for many years
- There are fewer voters allocated per polling station than the average for Lewisham
- 2 districts in this ward have low electorates of around 1,000 voters
- Normally we would seek to reduce the number of districts and push up the ratio of voters to stations, but given the low turnout, we feel that would be counter-productive
- There is also a lack of alternative venues, especially in the very south of the ward
- The geography, road layout and density of housing do not allow for a reduction in the number of districts without causing many voters having a walking distance to their station of over 15 minutes

### The ARO's proposal

We propose to keep the polling scheme in this ward unchanged. However, we would appreciate any comments or suggestions on the existing polling scheme, and any potential alternative polling places.

**Current and Proposed Polling Scheme – with points indicating polling places**



**Polling Districts and Polling Places**

EDO1	A	King's Church, (Main Hall), The Green, BR1 5LS
EDO2	C	Downham Community Centre, (Large Hall), Wesley Halls, BR1 5PE
EDO3	E	Ten Em Bee Sports Development Centre, BR1 4JY
EDO4	F	Catford Wanderers Sports Club, SE6 2NU
EDO5	D	Rangefield Primary School, Rockets Building, BR1 4RP
EDO6	B	Good Shepherd Primary School, Moorside Road, BR1 5EP

# LEWISHAM EAST CONSTITUENCY

## GROVE PARK WARD

Grove Park Electorate Stats	Polling Station Voters	Postal Voters	Total Electorate
Parliamentary Elections	8,414	1,558	9,972
Local Elections	9,246	1,673	10,919

### Summary

- This is another ward where the current polling scheme has been working well
- But we have had feedback from residents and teachers regarding the use of Baring Primary School
- The school has to close for polling day and there is no way of placing the polling station in a separate area in the school
- There are 2 churches in close proximity, both of which would be very good alternatives
- Elsewhere in the ward there is a youth centre and library that are not currently used. However, their location is not as good as the current polling places and so we are not recommending a switch in those districts

### The ARO's proposal

We propose to keep the polling districts in this ward unchanged, and retain all polling places except for EGR3. In this district we will change the polling place to one of the neighbouring churches. The final decision will be made after a site visit and assessment of each venue.

**Current and Proposed Polling Scheme – with points indicating current and potential polling places**



**Potential Polling Places**

A	St Mildred's Church
B	Baring Primary School
C	Trinity Presbyterian Church
D	Burnt Ash Methodist Church Hall
E	Ringway Centre
F	Grove Park Library
G	St. Augustine's Church Hall
H	Grove Park Youth Club
I	W.G.Grace Community Centre

**Polling Districts and Polling Places**

EGR1	W.G.Grace Community Centre
EGR2	St. Augustine's Church Hall
EGR3	Trinity Presbyterian Church, or St. Mildred's Church
EGR4	Ringway Centre
EGR5	Burnt Ash Methodist Church Hall

# LEWISHAM EAST CONSTITUENCY

## HITHER GREEN WARD

Hither Green Electorate Stats	Polling Station Voters	Postal Voters	Total Electorate
Parliamentary Elections	10,262	1,966	12,228
Local Elections	11,253	2,088	13,341

### Summary

Hither Green has the highest number of local government electors in the whole of Lewisham. The polling station turnout is around 55% for Parliamentary elections and 30% for local elections, which aligns with the borough average.

Brindishe Green Primary School has asked to be relieved of polling duties, and we have had a few complaints from residents in the past to that effect too (parents of pupils at the school). St. Swithun's Church would be a good replacement.

If we move HG1 to St. Swithun's Church, there are a large number of voters towards the bottom of HG1 who would now be much closer to St. Christopher's, which is the polling place for HG2.

Brownhill Road Baptist Church has been used as a polling place in the past, but it is on the main road and there is no disabled parking, or staff parking, on that side of the road.

In the south of the ward, in HG5, the turnout is the lowest in this ward. Many of the voters in that district actually live closer to Goldsmiths, the polling place for HG4. Therefore, merging those districts is a good option.

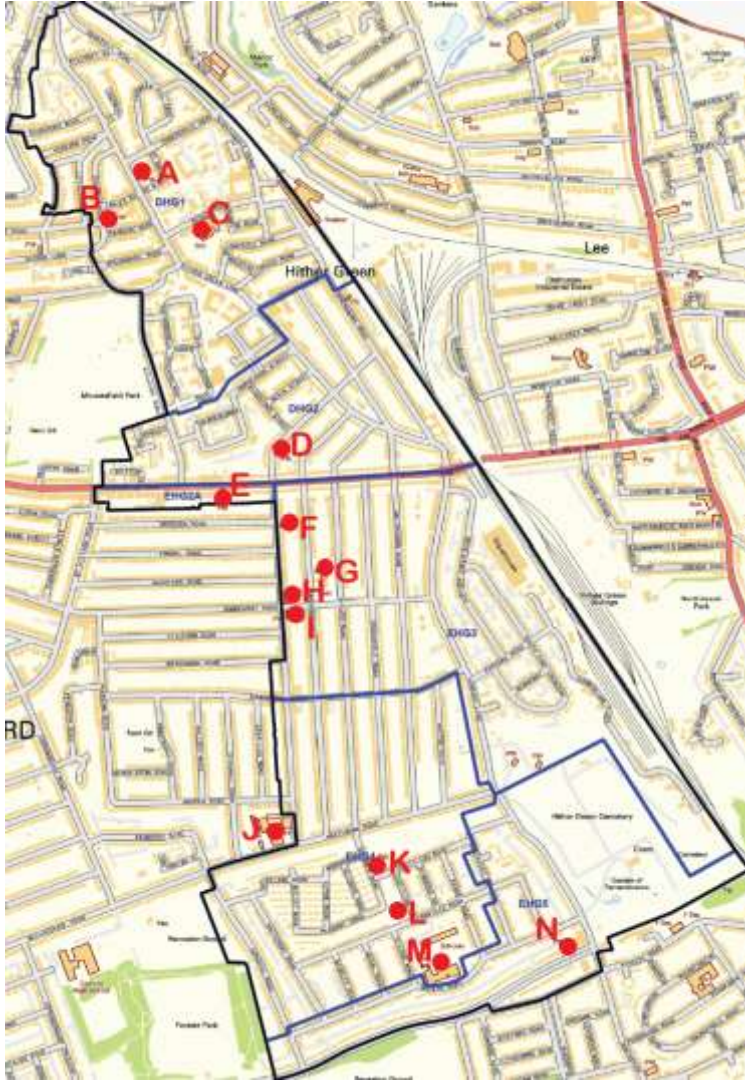
In HG4, the roads above Hazelbank Road are closer to St. Andrew's Church, so the boundary could be moved downwards and give those voters less distance to walk.

### The ARO's proposal

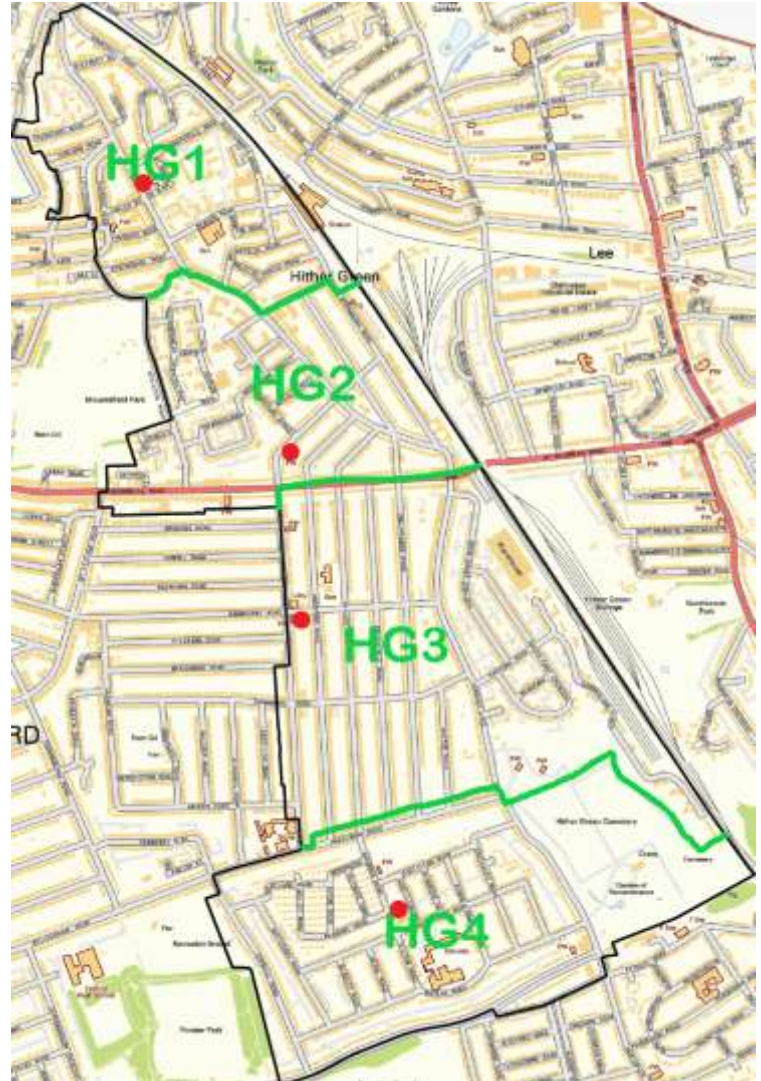
- Move the polling place for HG1 to St. Swithun's Church, relieving Brindishe School
- Move the boundary in HG2 to include the voters to the west of Hither Green Lane in the estate around the old hospital site
- Merge HG4 and HG5, sending all voters to Goldsmiths Community Centre
- Move the boundary for HG4 down to Hazelbank Road
- This creates 4 districts, each with a double station, with the large hall at St. Andrew's with a large double station. This would allow for a good use of our staff resources and optimise our use of the best venues



### Current Polling Scheme



### Proposed Polling Scheme



### Potential Polling Places

A	St. Swithun's Church Hall
B	Hither Green Baptist Church
C	Brindishe Green Primary School
D	St. Christopher's Christian Fellowship
E	Brownhill Road Baptist Church
F	Hither Green Methodist Church
G	Sandhurst Primary School
H	Corbett Community Library
I	St. Andrew's Church Hall
J	Torridon Primary School
K	St. Mark's Church
L	Goldsmiths Community Centre
M	Greenvale School
N	Hope Church Downham

### Polling Scheme

#### Current Scheme

District	Voters	Polling Place
DHG1	2974	Brindishe Green Primary School
DHG2	1314	St. Christopher's Christian Fellowship
EHG3	1975	St. Andrew's Church Hall
EHG4	1780	Goldsmiths Community Centre
EHG5	763	Hope Church Downham

#### Proposed Scheme

District	Voters	Polling Place
HG1	3164	St. Swithun's Church Hall
HG2	2939	St. Christopher's Christian Fellowship
HG3	4053	St. Andrew's Church Hall
HG4	3142	Goldsmiths Community Centre

## LEWISHAM EAST CONSTITUENCY

# LEE GREEN WARD

<b>Lee Green Electorate Stats</b>	<b>Polling Station Voters</b>	<b>Postal Voters</b>	<b>Total Electorate</b>
Parliamentary Elections	8,194	1,483	9,677
Local Elections	8,906	1,551	10,457

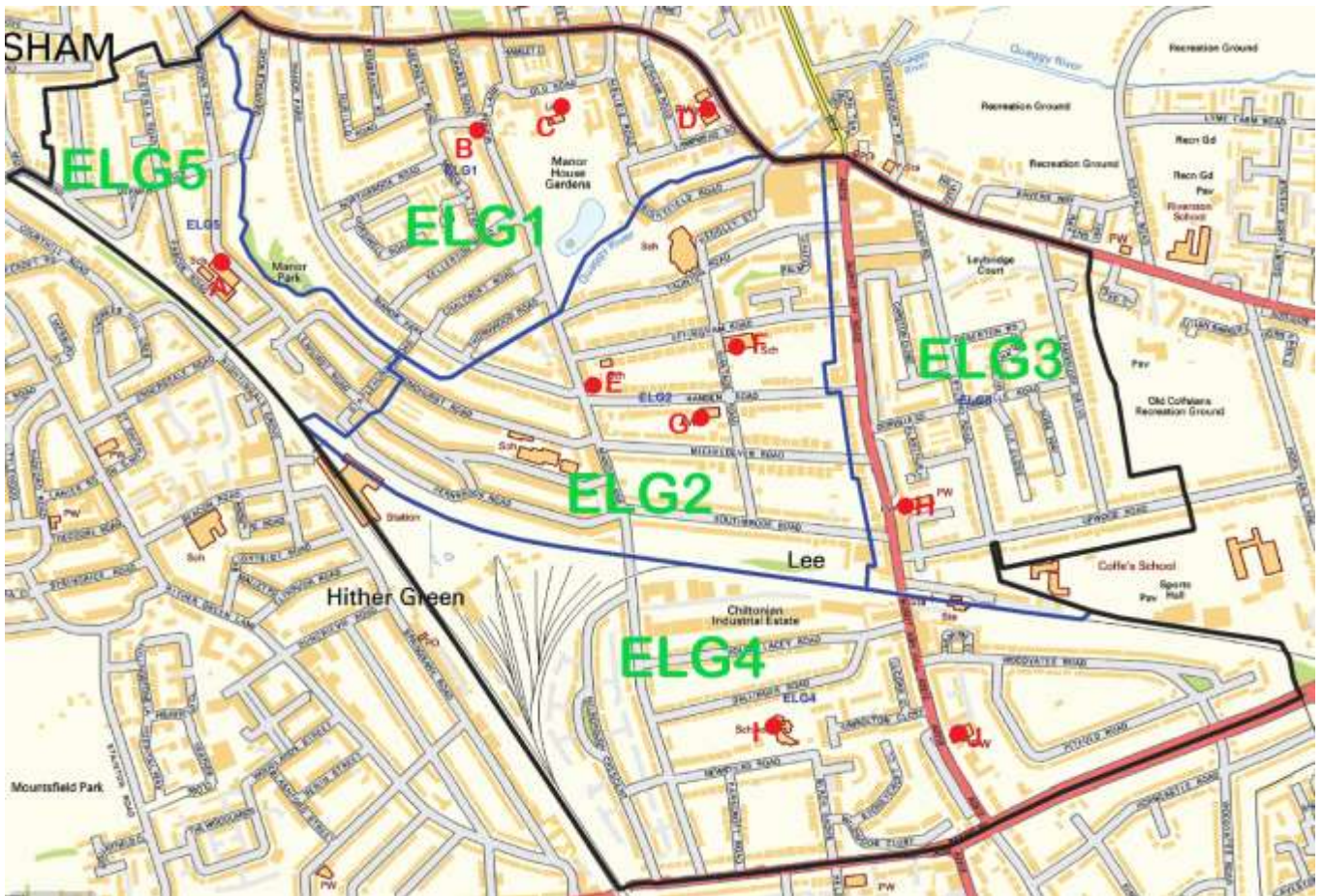
### Summary

- The main issue in this ward is the polling district ELG5
- The layout of roads, paths and properties isolates this area, which is unfortunate because there are no alternative venues other than Trinity Primary School
- The good news is that the school has a very accessible reception area which works well as a polling place and can be used whilst allowing the school to remain open
- Elsewhere in the ward there are 2 polling places quite close together for ELG3 and ELG4
- There could be an option to amend the districts of ELG2, ELG3 and ELG4 and create just 2 districts

### The ARO's proposal

We propose to keep the polling scheme in this ward unchanged. However, we would appreciate any comments or suggestions on removing the district of ELG3, and redistributing those voters to ELG2 and ELG5.

**Current and Proposed Polling Scheme – with points indicating current and potential polling places**



**Potential Polling Places**

A	Trinity Primary School
B	Lochaber Hall
C	Manor House Library
D	Emmanuel Gateway Church New Testament Church of God
E	Little Elms Nursery
F	Brindishe Lee Primary School
G	The Church of the Good Shepherd Lee
H	Lee Green United Reformed Church
I	St. Winifred's Primary School
J	Our Lady of Lourdes Church

**Polling Districts and Polling Places**

ELG1	Lochaber Hall
ELG2	The Church of the Good Shepherd Lee
ELG3	Lee Green United Reformed Church
ELG4	Our Lady of Lourdes Church
ELG5	Trinity Primary School

# LEWISHAM EAST CONSTITUENCY

## RUSHEY GREEN WARD

Rushey Green Electorate Stats	Polling Station Voters	Postal Voters	Total Electorate
Parliamentary Elections	9,281	1,690	10,971
Local Elections	10,381	1,846	12,227

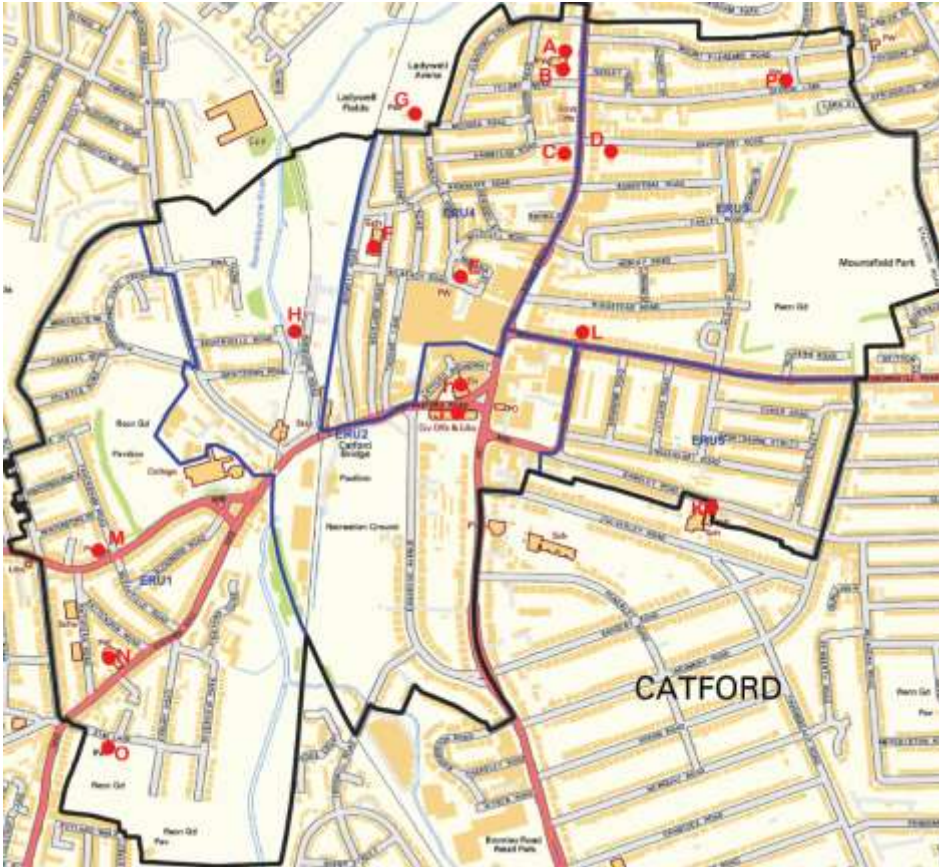
### Summary

There are a lot of potential polling places in this ward, but there are some streets and blocks of houses that are over 12 minutes walk from the closest possible venue. The roads of Rushey Green, Lewisham High Street and Brownhill Road are difficult for pedestrians to cross, and we are forced to use those roads as polling district boundaries. This makes any revision to the polling scheme in this ward quite difficult.

### The ARO's proposal

Holbeach Primary School is a good venue but they have to close on polling day, which has a significant impact on the local residents with pupils attending the school. The school itself is only 7 minutes walk from Laurence House, so our proposal is to move the boundary for ERU2 right up to the school and across to Rushey Green road. Then the rest of ERU4 will go to a new polling place at the Lewisham Youth Theatre. This venue was used in a previous polling scheme under its previous name of the Saville Centre. We don't propose any other changes in this ward but would be interested in any feedback on sending the ERU5 voters to Laurence House, instead of Holy Cross Church.

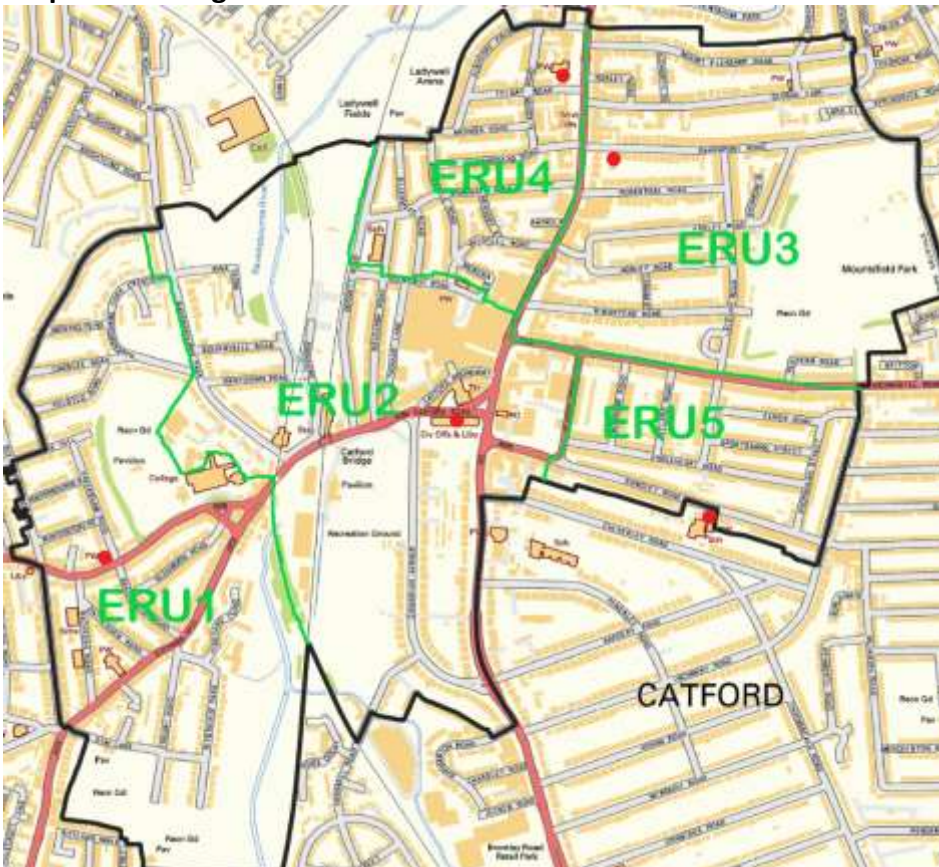
**Current Polling Scheme – with points indicating polling places**



**Potential Polling Places**

A	Lewisham 7th Day Adventist Church
B	Lewisham Youth Theatre
C	Kaleidoscope Centre
D	Lewisham Irish Centre
E	Holbeach Baptist Church
F	Holbeach Primary School
G	Ladywell Arena
H	Ladywell Bowling Club
I	Lewisham Civic Suite
J	Laurence House
K	Holy Cross Church Hartley Hall
L	Salvation Army
M	Trinity Church
N	King's Church
O	Elm Lane Pavilion
P	Holy Trinity Church

**Proposed Polling Scheme**



**Polling Districts and Polling Places**

ERU1	Trinity United Reform Church
ERU2	Laurence House
ERU3	Lewisham Irish Centre
ERU4	Lewisham Youth Theatre
ERU5	Holy Cross RC Church Hall

# LEWISHAM NORTH CONSTITUENCY

## BLACKHEATH WARD

<b>Blackheath Electorate Stats</b>	Polling Station Voters	Postal Voters	Total Electorate
Parliamentary Elections	8,685	1,968	10,653
Local Elections	9,588	2,069	11,657

### Summary

- A lot of work was done in the last review of polling districts and places to improve the polling scheme in this ward
- Since that review in 2019, the scheme has performed very well, with turnouts consistently above the borough average
- There are some alternative venues that have been investigated and ruled out for reasons including cost, location, and disabled access
- The polling places at Brandram Community Centre and St. Margaret’s Church are very close together. However, both districts have a large electorate and both polling places have double polling stations. Neither venue has the capacity for 4 polling stations, which is why it is not possible or practical to combine these districts

### The ARO’s proposal

We propose to make no changes to the polling districts and places in this ward. We welcome the views of elected members, political parties and local residents.

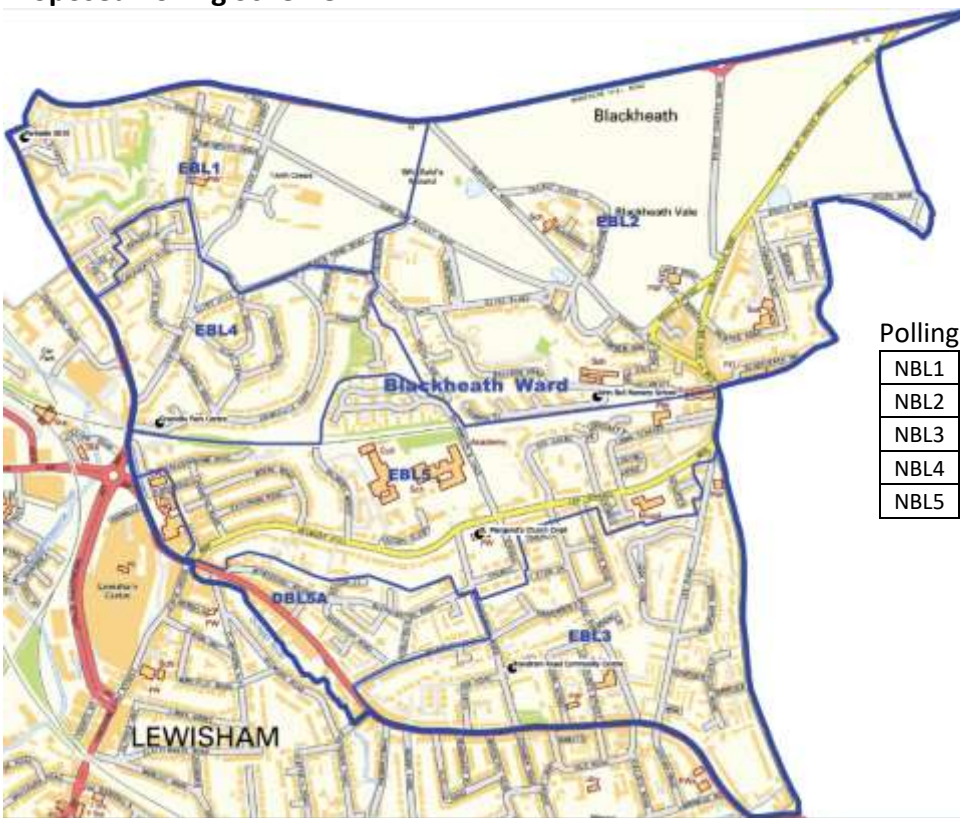
**Current Polling Scheme – with points indicating current and potential polling places**



**Potential Polling Places**

A	Parkside SE10
B	Church of Ascension
C	Orchard Gardens Community Centre
D	Granville Park Centre
E	St. Stephen and St. Mark Church Hall
F	St. Margaret's Church
G	Brandram Road Community Centre
H	St. Margaret's Lee School
I	The Church of Jesus Christ the Latter
J	Quaker Meeting House
K	John Ball Nursery School
L	Heath House Prep School

**Proposed Polling Scheme**



**Polling Districts and Polling Places**

NBL1	Parkside SE10
NBL2	John Ball Nursery School
NBL3	Brandram Road Community Centre
NBL4	Granville Park Centre
NBL5	St. Margaret's Church

# LEWISHAM NORTH CONSTITUENCY

## BROCKLEY WARD

<b>Brockley Electorate Stats</b>	<b>Polling Station Voters</b>	<b>Postal Voters</b>	<b>Total Electorate</b>
Parliamentary Elections	9,915	1,586	11,501
Local Elections	10,814	1,698	12,512

### Summary

- This is one of our largest wards and there are 3 districts with double polling stations
- The steep hill from Lewisham Way down Friendly Street, and the railway line, dictate the shape of DBR3. This was a new district introduced in 2019 with the new venue of St. Stephen's Primary School, and it has worked very well
- Lewisham Arthouse was another new venue from the last review and it has also been well received
- The DBR1 district has some properties that are quite isolated from the rest of the ward, and the polling place there is quite small. But we still feel this has worked well

### The ARO's proposal

We propose to make no changes to the polling districts and places in this ward. We welcome the views of elected members, political parties and local residents.



## Current Polling Scheme – and Proposed Scheme



### Proposed Polling Scheme

NBR1	St. James Family Learning Centre
NBR2	Lewisham Arthouse
NBR3	St. Stephen's C of E Primary School
NBR4	St. John with Holy Trinity Church
NBR5	St. Peter's Church

# LEWISHAM NORTH CONSTITUENCY

## DEPTFORD WARD

Deptford Electorate Stats	Polling Station Voters	Postal Voters	Total Electorate
Parliamentary Elections	8,958	1,273	10,231
Local Elections	10,111	1,428	11,539

### Summary

- Deptford has experienced 2 by-elections alongside the various borough-wide polls over the last 12 months, so there has been a lot of opportunity to test the polling scheme
- This ward benefits from having a lot of potential polling venues, but after careful consideration now and in previous reviews, we believe the current venues are the best choice
- The layout of the roads and venues has dictated the shape of each district, with most voters enjoying a very short walk to their polling place
- DDE2 has a low electorate of around 1100 voters, which is amongst the smallest in the borough. Because of this, it could be useful to redistribute those voters to a neighbouring district
- Another idea is to merge the districts of DDE4, DDE5 and DDE6 into just 2 districts

### The ARO's proposal

- Merge DDE2 and DDE1, to create a larger district, with all voters going to the Woodpecker Community Centre
- This is a large venue that could easily act as a double station
- The maximum walking distance is 11 minutes, which is well within our target
- It would mean releasing Childeric Primary School from polling duties

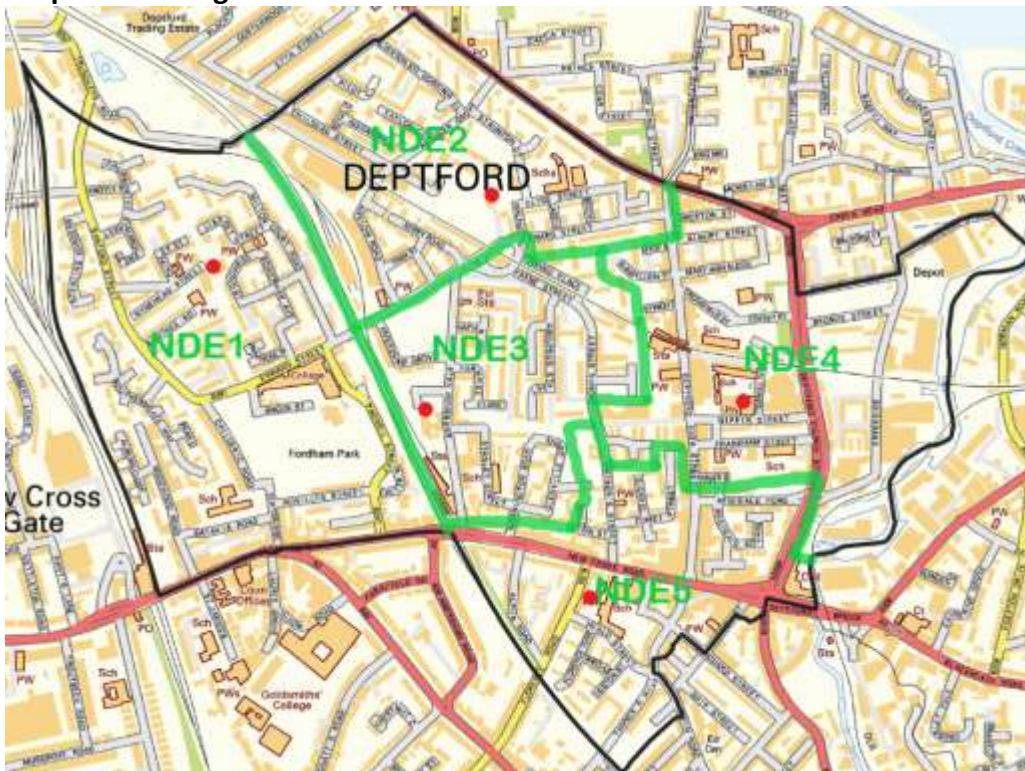
### Current Polling Scheme



### Potential Polling Places

A	St. Paul's Church
B	St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School
C	Our Lady of the Assumption Church
D	The Library at Deptford Lounge
E	The Shaftesbury Christian Centre
F	New Cross Road Baptist Church Hall
G	Mulberry Centre
H	Olivet Baptist Church
I	Celestial Church of Christ
J	Grinling Gibbons Primary School
K	Deptford Town Hall
L	Childeric Primary School
M	New Testament Church of God
N	Woodpecker Youth Club
O	Woodpecker Community Centre
P	St. Michael's United Church and Community Centre
Q	Living Flames Baptist Church
R	Evelyn Community Centre

### Proposed Polling Scheme



NDE1	Woodpecker Community Centre
NDE2	Evelyn Community Centre
NDE3	Mulberry Centre
NDE4	The Library at Deptford Lounge
NDE5	New Cross Road Baptist Church Hall

# LEWISHAM NORTH CONSTITUENCY

## EVELYN WARD

<b>Evelyn Electorate Stats</b>	<b>Polling Station Voters</b>	<b>Postal Voters</b>	<b>Total Electorate</b>
Parliamentary Elections	7,111	1,335	8,446
Local Elections	8,373	1,559	9,932

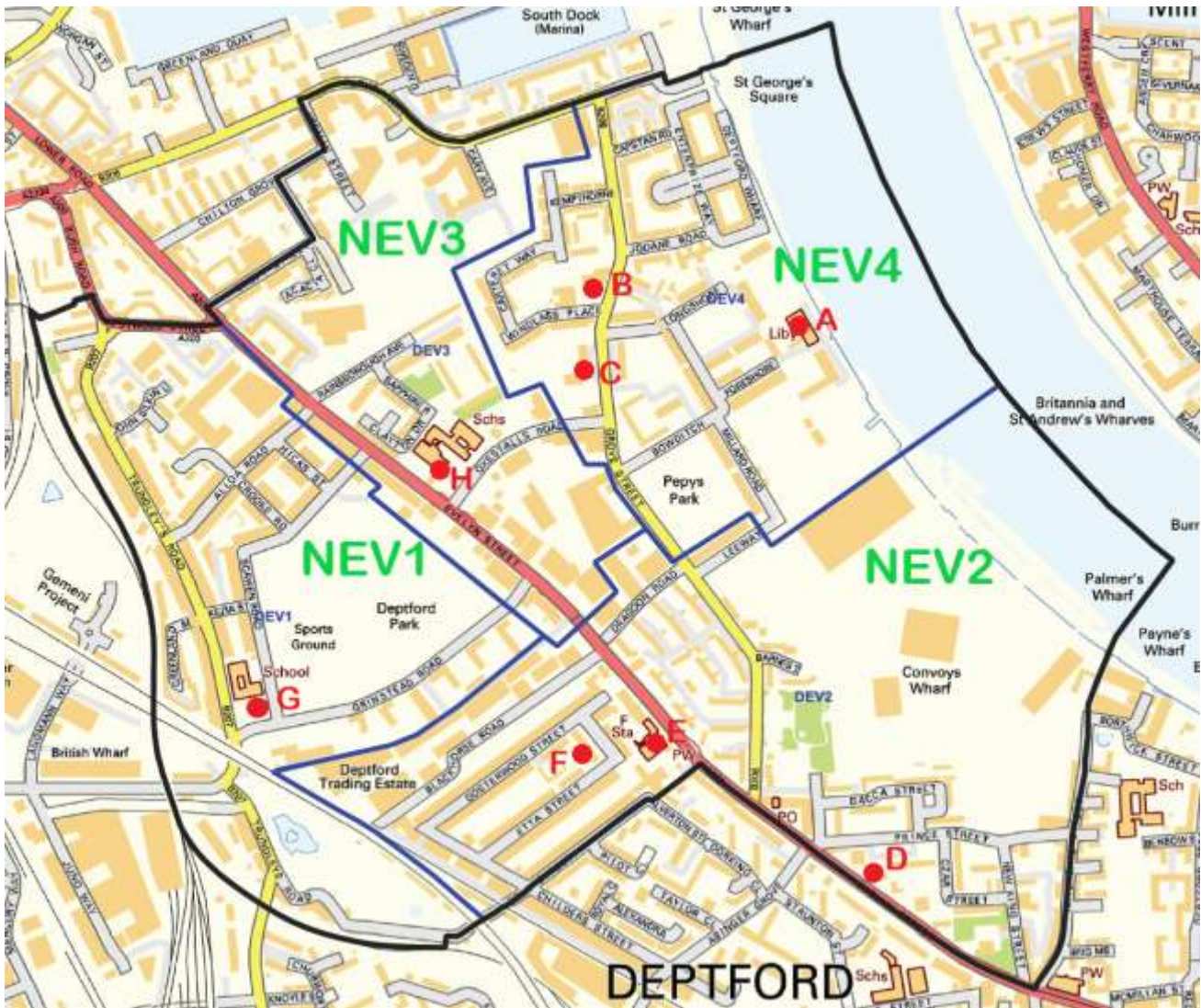
### Summary

- Evelyn has the lowest electorate for a 3 member ward in the borough, but that may be down to a low registration rate and high mobility
- There are large areas with few residential properties, with some large blocks of houses and estates, and the current polling places are located close to where the majority of residents are living
- Of the potential polling places, St. Luke's Church would be a great replacement for the Clyde Early Childhood Centre. However, the site is currently being renovated and is not yet ready
- In NEV2 there is also the option of the Refugee and Migrant Network building. But the location is not as good as the Childhood Centre, being further down and across the busy main road
- In NEV4 there are a couple of alternatives to the Evelyn Children's Centre (being renamed as the Family Hub). The Riverside Youth Club has been used in the past and was a good venue, but is also being refurbished. The Pepys Community Library is a potential alternative but the location is not as accessible

### The ARO's proposal

We propose to make no changes to the polling districts and places in this ward. We welcome the views of elected members, political parties and local residents.

**Current Polling Scheme** – with points indicating current and potential polling places



**Potential Polling Places**

A	Pepys Community Library
B	Evelyn Childrens Centre
C	Riverside Youth Club
D	Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network
E	St. Luke's Church, Deptford
F	Clyde Early Childhood Centre
G	Twin Oaks Primary School
H	Deptford Park Primary School

**Polling Districts and Polling Places**

NEV1	Twin Oaks Primary School
NEV2	Clyde Early Childhood Centre
NEV3	Deptford Park Primary School
NEV4	Evelyn Childrens Centre

# LEWISHAM NORTH CONSTITUENCY

## LADYWELL WARD

Ladywell Electorate Stats	Polling Station Voters	Postal Voters	Total Electorate
Parliamentary Elections	8,524	1,689	10,213
Local Elections	9,153	1,803	10,956

### Summary

For a 3 member ward, Ladywell has a low number of voters. But Ladywell has 7 polling districts in the current polling scheme, which is the highest number along with Perry Vale, Sydenham and Forest Hill. The main reason for that is the geography of the ward, with several large open spaces, and the main roads.

The current scheme has 4 polling districts that are well below our ideal number of voters, and 2 of those have under 1000 voters. Small polling districts are an inefficient use of resources, and should be avoided unless necessary due to geography or special circumstances.

The objective to prevent any voter from having to walk more than 15 minutes can still be met if we reduced the number of polling districts in this ward, but there is a challenge with determining where the new polling district boundaries should lie, and which venues should be used.

There are 2 schools used in this ward, both of which have to close when used for polling. In both cases, the number of allocated voters is low. Perhaps these are the venues to remove from the scheme, due to the impact on the parents, pupils and staff for when the schools have to close, and the relatively small number of voters who will have a slightly longer distance to travel to their polling place.

### The ARO's proposal

Due to the geography (road layout and open spaces) in this ward, there are many options for where to place the new district boundaries, and pros and cons to every option. It is not possible to maintain or improve the current distance to the polling station for every voter, but it is possible to maintain a similar level of service.

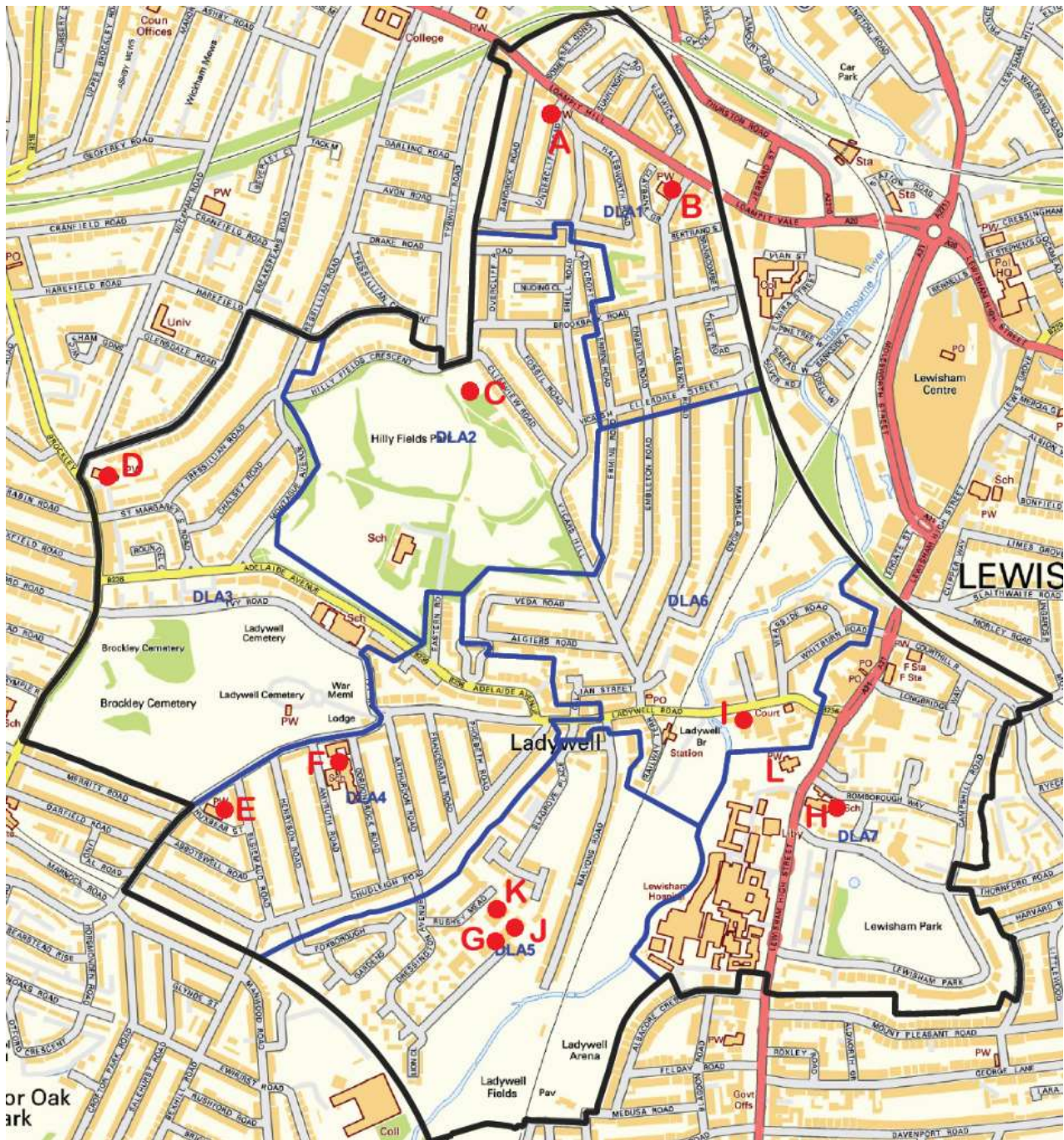
We have made 2 proposals for consideration.

The first scheme removes both schools and creates 4 districts, 2 of which would have a double polling station (2 polling stations within the same room).

The second scheme shows another way of moving the district boundaries, but retains St. Mary's School.

We expect the final scheme will be a mix of these 2 proposals, and would welcome feedback.

**Current Polling Scheme – with points indicating polling places**

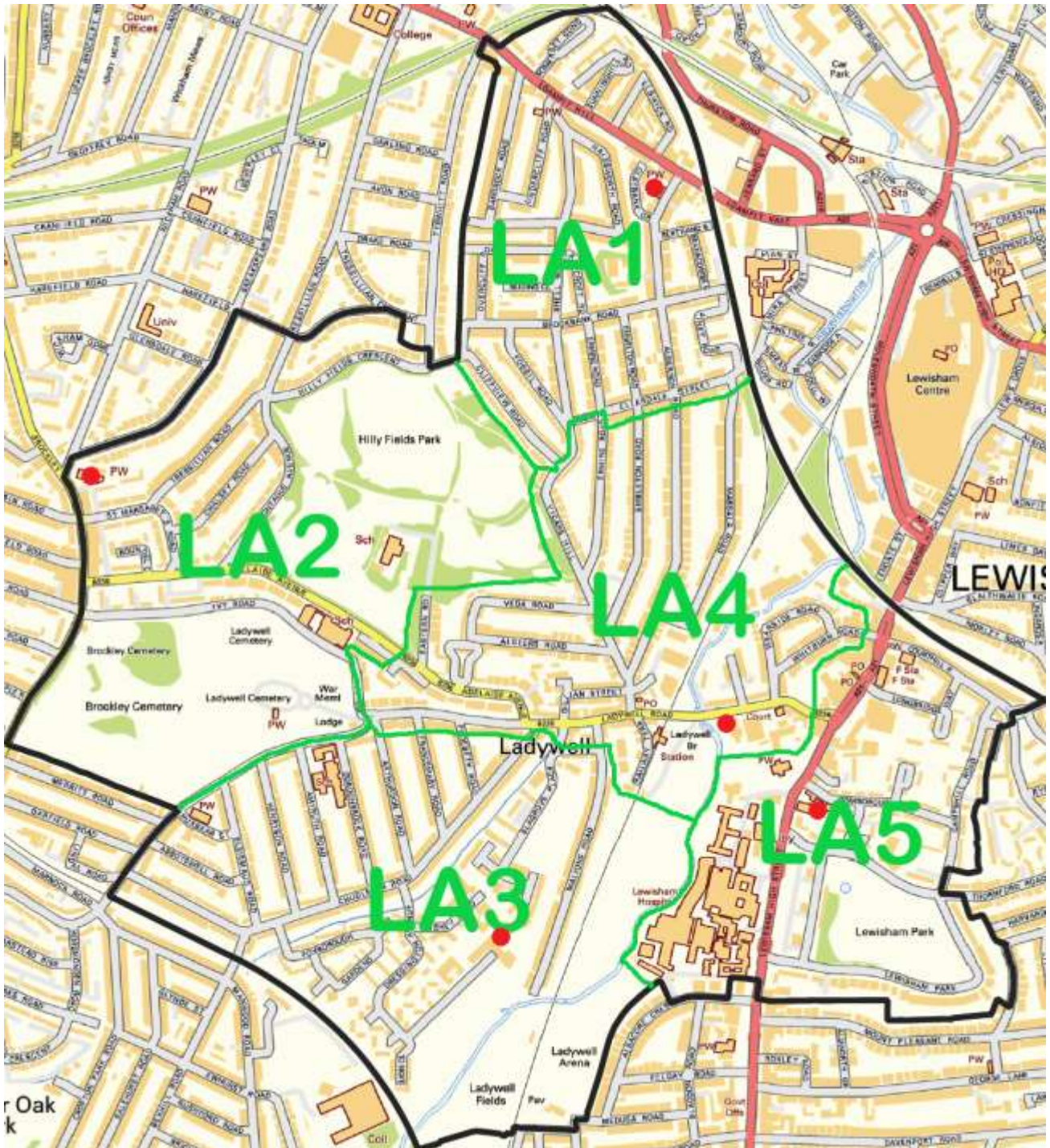


**Potential Polling Places**

A	Loampit Gospel Hall
B	Winners Chapel
C	Francis Drake Bowling Club
D	St. Andrew's United Reform Church
E	Crofton Park Baptist Church
F	Gordonbrock Primary School
G	John Evelyn Campus (Abbey Manor College)
H	St. Mary's CoE Primary School
I	St. Mary's Centre
J	The Ladywell Centre
K	Ladywell Family Hub
L	Church of St. Mary the Virgin

District	Voters	Polling Place
DLA1	1831	Winners Chapel
DLA2	778	Francis Drake Bowling Club
DLA3	1115	St. Andrew's United Reform Church
DLA4	1603	Crofton Park Baptist Church
DLA5	984	John Evelyn Campus
DLA6	1721	St. Mary's Centre
DLA7	1121	St. Mary's CoE Primary School

## Proposed Polling Scheme



District	Voters	Polling Place
LA1	2402	Winners Chapel
LA2	1227	St. Andrew's United Reform Church
LA3	2157	John Evelyn Campus (Abbey Manor College) or Ladywell Family Hub
LA4	2214	St. Mary's Centre
LA5	1114	St. Mary's CoE Primary School



## LEWISHAM NORTH CONSTITUENCY

# LEWISHAM CENTRAL WARD

<b>Lewisham Central Electorate Stats</b>	Polling Station Voters	Postal Voters	Total Electorate
Parliamentary Elections	3,790	705	4,495
Local Elections	4,636	814	5,450

### Summary

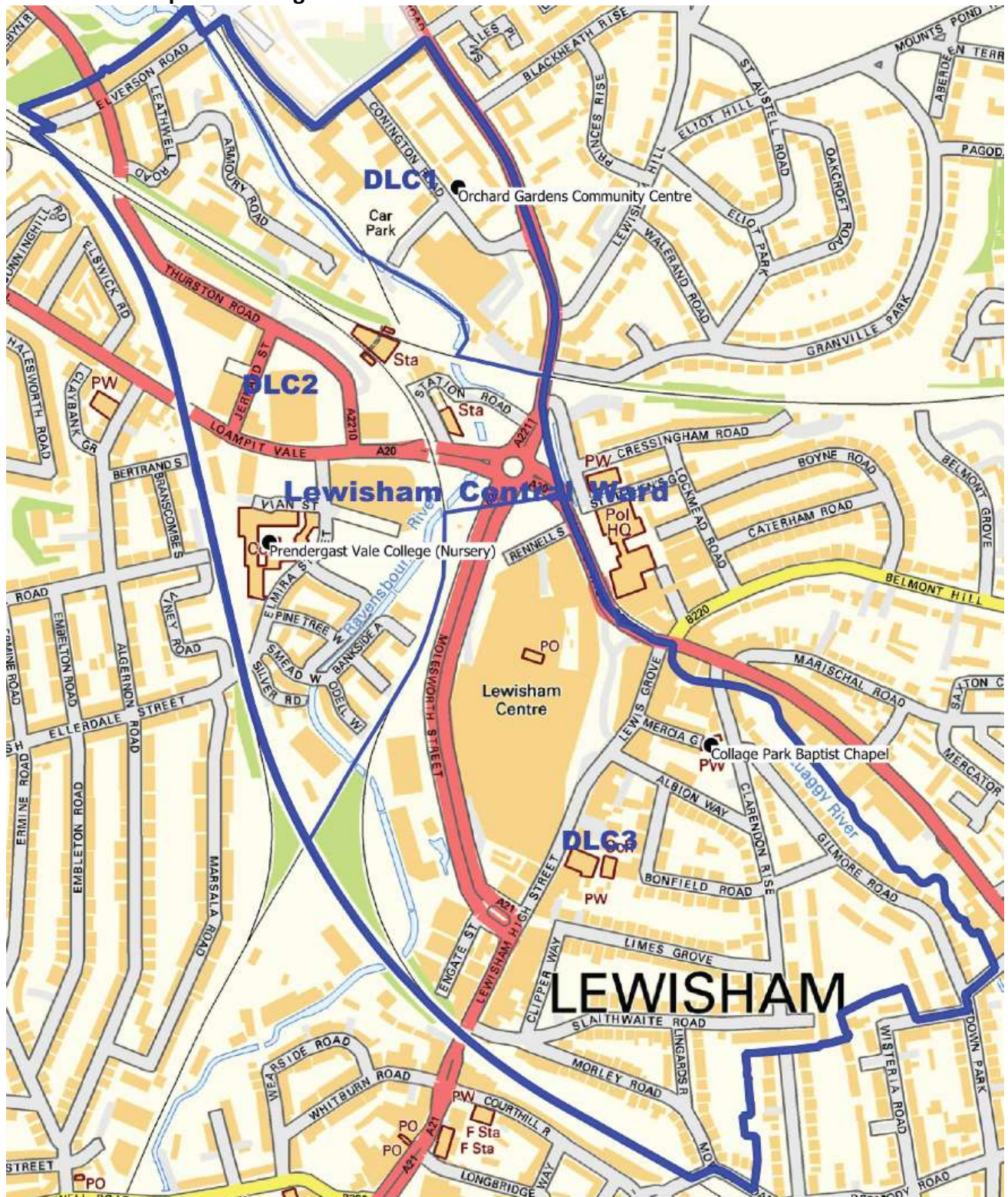
This is the smallest ward in terms of geography and the number of voters. The turnout is around the borough average. There is one extremely small polling district in the top of the ward. This is a small estate, isolated from the rest of the ward. The community centre makes a good venue. We've considered merging this district with the neighbouring one, but it would create a much longer journey for these voters and would reduce the accessibility of voting for the elderly and mobility impaired.

DLC2 in the centre of the ward serves a lot of voters. We use a double station in this venue which has worked really well. We wanted to find another venue towards the north of this district but have not found any that would be suitable.

### The ARO's proposal

We propose to make no changes to the polling districts and places in this ward. We welcome the views of elected members, political parties and local residents.

## Current and Proposed Polling Scheme



District	Voters	Polling Place
DLC1	750	Orchard Gardens Community Centre
DLC2	2,448	Prendergast Vale College (Nursery)
DLC3	1,438	Collage Park Baptist Church

## LEWISHAM NORTH CONSTITUENCY

# NEW CROSS GATE WARD

<b>New Cross Gate Electorate Stats</b>	Polling Station Voters	Postal Voters	Total Electorate
Parliamentary Elections	5,054	889	5,943
Local Elections	5,775	992	6,767

### Summary

- This is a small ward and is divided into 3 separate and distinct areas
- The divisions create natural polling districts – a small one at the top, a medium sized district in the middle, and a much larger district at the south of the ward, with a lot of electors in a relatively small area
- The scheme has worked well, although the engagement in this area has been low for a number of years
- We need to do work on engagement to improve registration and participation, but we are confident the polling scheme is not a factor in preventing people from voting. The polling places are accessible venues, in good locations, and no voter has to walk very far

### The ARO's proposal

We propose to make no changes to the polling districts and places in this ward. We welcome the views of elected members, political parties and local residents.

**Current Polling Scheme – and Proposed Scheme**



**Potential Polling Places**

A	St. Katharine with St. Bartholomew Church
B	Lewington Centre
C	Scotney Hall
D	Haberdasher's Hatcham Primary
E	All Saints Community Centre
F	The Old Library (now a bar)

**Polling Scheme**

NG1	Lewington Centre
NG2	Scotney Hall
NG3	All Saints Community Centre

# LEWISHAM NORTH CONSTITUENCY

## TELEGRAPH HILL WARD

Telegraph Hill Electorate Stats	Polling Station Voters	Postal Voters	Total Electorate
Parliamentary Elections	9,594	1,552	11,146
Local Elections	10,312	1,650	11,962

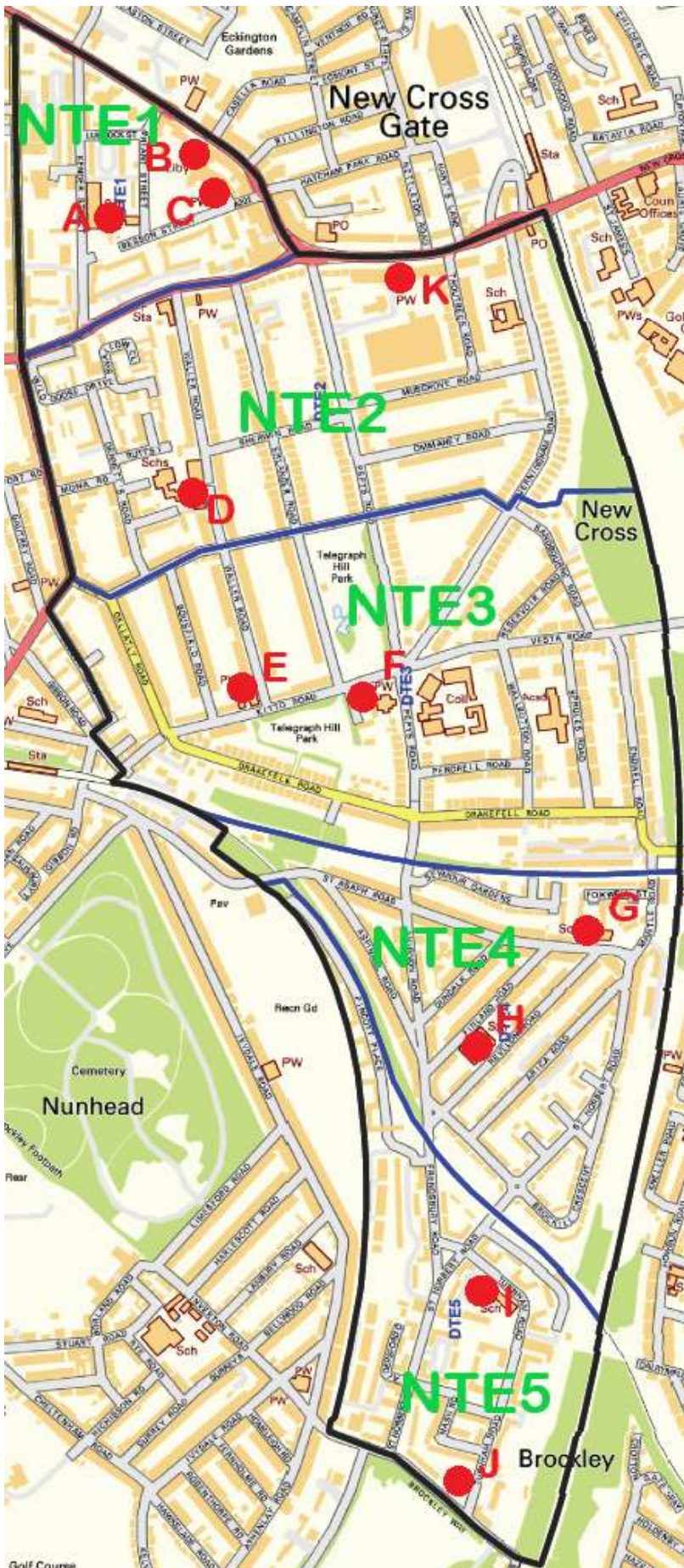
### Summary

The main issue in this ward is the use of 4 primary schools as the polling places, and the potential impact this could have on those schools. However, only one of the schools has to close on polling day, with the other 3 able to remain open for all pupils (excluding a small nursery in one school). John Stainer Primary School is the one school that has to close. This is because there is no way of separating the polling place from the rest of the school, which is a requirement for safeguarding. Unfortunately, this district, NTE4, has no suitable alternative venue. Drumbeat School has been considered, but this is a school for pupils with special needs and disabilities, and it would need to close if used as a polling place. The council have determined that closing a special school causes a much greater impact on those pupils and parents/carers and therefore that venue has been ruled out. John Stainer Primary School have confirmed that when closing the school they use the opportunity to take one of their statutory inset days, so there is no loss of learning for the pupils.

### The ARO's proposal

The only change we are proposing in this ward is to move the polling station for NTE5 to the Honor Oak Community Centre and Youth Club. This is a great community resource and will be an excellent polling place. It is just down the road from the previous polling place, Turnham Primary School, and will not impact voters.

**Current Polling Scheme – with points indicating current and potential polling places**



**Potential Polling Places**

A	Kender Primary School
B	The old library (currently a pub)
C	Christ Faith Tabernacle Church
D	Edmund Waller Primary School
E	Church of Prophecy New Cross
F	Telegraph Hill Community Centre
G	John Stainer Primary School
H	Drumbeat School
I	Turnham Primary School
J	Honor Oak Community Centre and Youth Club
K	New Cross Christian Centre

**Polling Districts and Polling Places**

NTE1	Kender Primary School
NTE2	Edmund Waller Primary School
NTE3	Telegraph Hill Community Centre
NTE4	John Stainer Primary School
NTE5	Honor Oak Community Centre and Youth Club

# LEWISHAM WEST & EAST DULWICH CONSTITUENCY

## CROFTON PARK WARD

<b>Crofton Park Electorate Stats</b>	<b>Polling Station Voters</b>	<b>Postal Voters</b>	<b>Total Electorate</b>
Parliamentary Elections	8,923	1,577	10,500
Local Elections	9,464	1,619	11,083

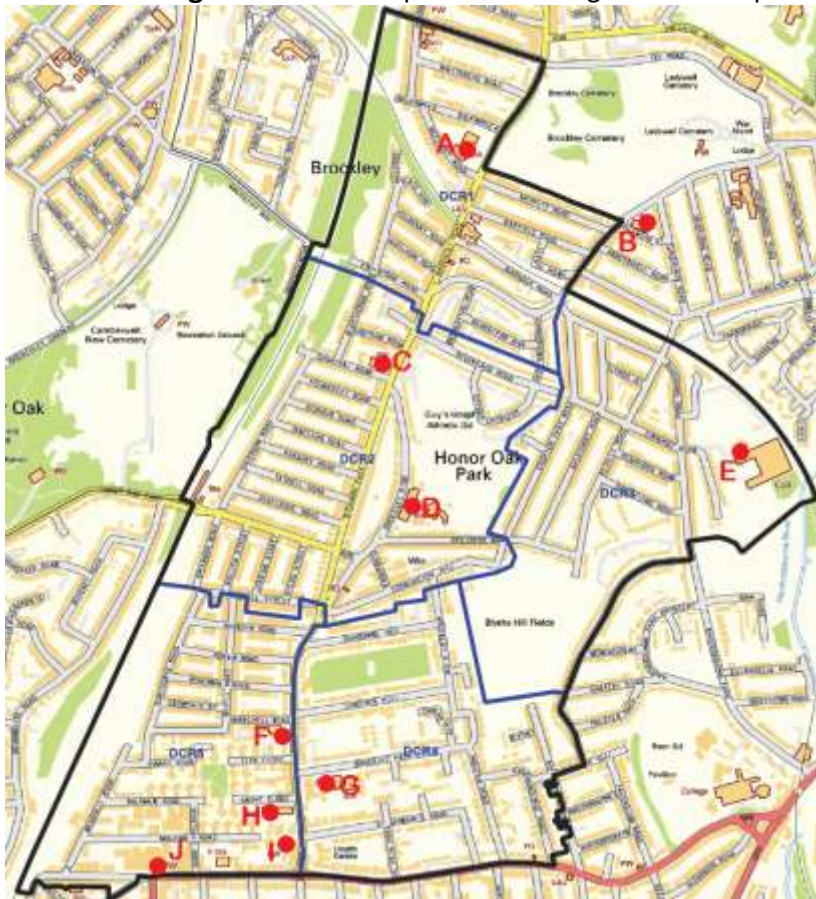
### Summary

- The current polling scheme works well, with a central polling place for the majority of districts
- But the districts of DCR4 and DCR5 have polling places that are extremely close together
- There are some alternative venues but these are on the very edge of the ward and would not be an improvement

### The ARO's proposal

- Our proposal is to combine the 2 districts of DCR4 and DCR5, and utilise the larger and more accessible of the 2 available venues at St. Saviour's Church Hall, with a double polling station

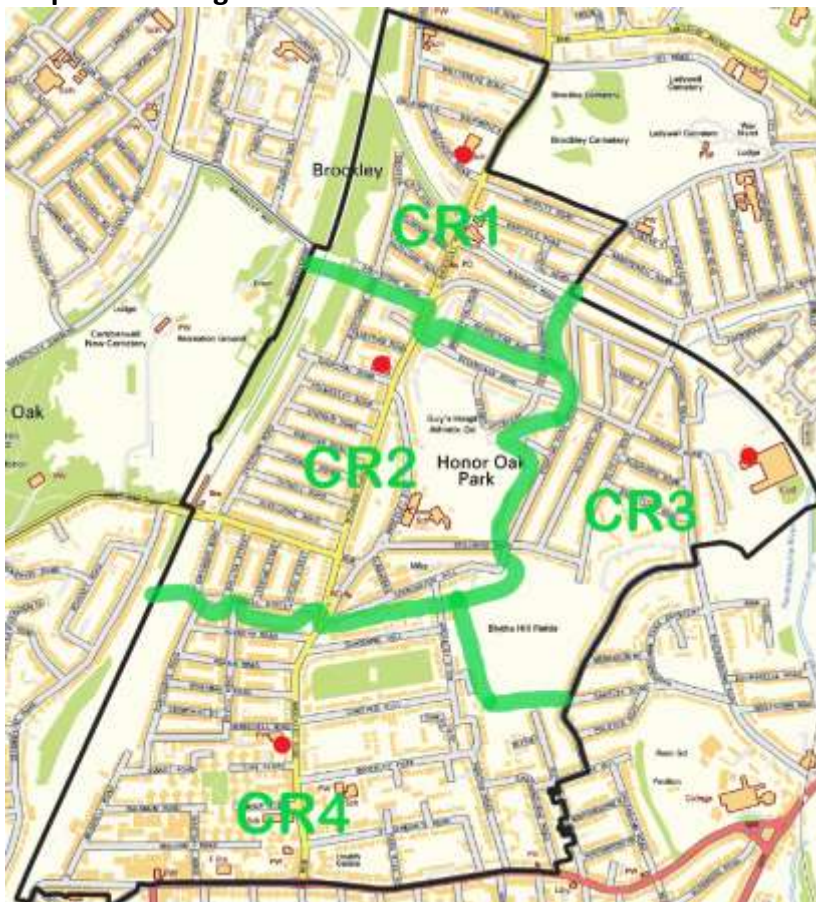
**Current Polling Scheme – with points indicating current and potential polling places**



**Potential Polling Places**

A	Beecroft Garden Primary School
B	Crofton Park Baptist Church
C	The Undercroft, St. Hilda's Church
D	Stillness Primary School
E	Prendergast Ladywell Fields College
F	St. Saviours Church Hall
G	Adult Learning Lewisham
H	Dalmain Primary School
I	Hope Church
J	CAC Bal of Gilead (Church)

**Proposed Polling Scheme**



**Polling Districts and Polling Places**

WCR1	Beecroft Garden Primary School
WCR2	The Undercroft, St. Hilda's Church
WCR3	Prendergast Ladywell Fields College
WCR4	St. Saviours Church Hall



# LEWISHAM WEST & EAST DULWICH CONSTITUENCY

## FOREST HILL WARD

Forest Hill Electorate Stats	Polling Station Voters	Postal Voters	Total Electorate
Parliamentary Elections	8,694	1,762	10,456
Local Elections	9,325	1,835	11,160

### Summary

- As the names suggests, this ward sits on a massive hill. This means we need to consider the impact of the slope on the walk that voters must take to reach their polling place
- The polling station at Eliot Bank Primary School has the smallest electorate of any polling place in the borough – only 717 for local elections. It also has the second lowest turnout for stations in the ward, despite being incredibly local for most of those voters
- Many of these voters would be able to walk down the hill to the library, or down towards Kelvin Grove Primary. There’s also the option of sending some of these voters across the South Circular to Horniman Primary School
- One option we’ve considered is using a space in the Horniman’s Museum. However, the location does not lend itself well to the polling scheme

### The ARO’s proposal

- Having a very small polling district is not an efficient use of resources, so we’d like to reallocate the voters of WFO6 to the neighbouring districts
- The South Circular road does have decent crossing points, but it does get extremely busy so we’d rather send the voters to the other neighbouring districts
- The increased walk time is still within our target, with the maximum walk at 13 minutes up the hill (quicker on the way down of course)

**Current Polling Scheme – with points indicating current and potential polling places**



**Potential Polling Places**

A	Kelvin Grove Primary School	E	Horniman Museum
B	Eliot Bank Primary School	F	Horniman Primary School
C	Forest Hill Library	G	Christian Fellowship Centre
D	The Church (Worldwide)		

**Proposed Polling Scheme**



**Polling Districts and Polling Places**

WFO1	Kelvin Grove Primary School	WFO4	Horniman Primary School
WFO2	Forest Hill Library	WFO5	Christian Fellowship Centre
WFO3	The Church (Worldwide)		

# LEWISHAM WEST & EAST DULWICH CONSTITUENCY

## PERRY VALE WARD

Perry Vale Electorate Stats	Polling Station Voters	Postal Voters	Total Electorate
Parliamentary Elections	10,581	1,737	12,318
Local Elections	11,274	1,819	13,093

### Summary

- The main issue in this ward is the polling place for WPE1
- This used to be Perrymount Primary school up until 2021 and we've struggled to find a suitable alternative
- In 2024 we put the polling place in Perry Rise Baptist Church, alongside the polling station for WPE4. But this is not a great walk for residents in WPE1 due to the steep hill
- One alternative is a polling place in the Forest Hill Methodist Church, which has meetings rooms in the building behind the school. However, they can only offer an upstairs room, which would not be accessible to voters with mobility issues
- There are several other options just outside the polling district, which we could utilise with a small change to the boundaries for WPE1 and WPE2
- If one of the new venues on South Road was large enough, it could be possible to use a single venue for both these districts, with a double polling station

### The ARO's proposal

- Combine the districts of WPE1 and WPE2 to create a single large district
- Use Hamilton Hall or Christ Church, or both, to host 2 polling stations for this district
- Keep the other districts and polling places the same
- Although, it could be possible to merge the districts of WPE5 and WPE6 and place a double polling station in St. George's Church. The church is 7 minutes walk from the school, and 12 minutes from the property that is furthest away

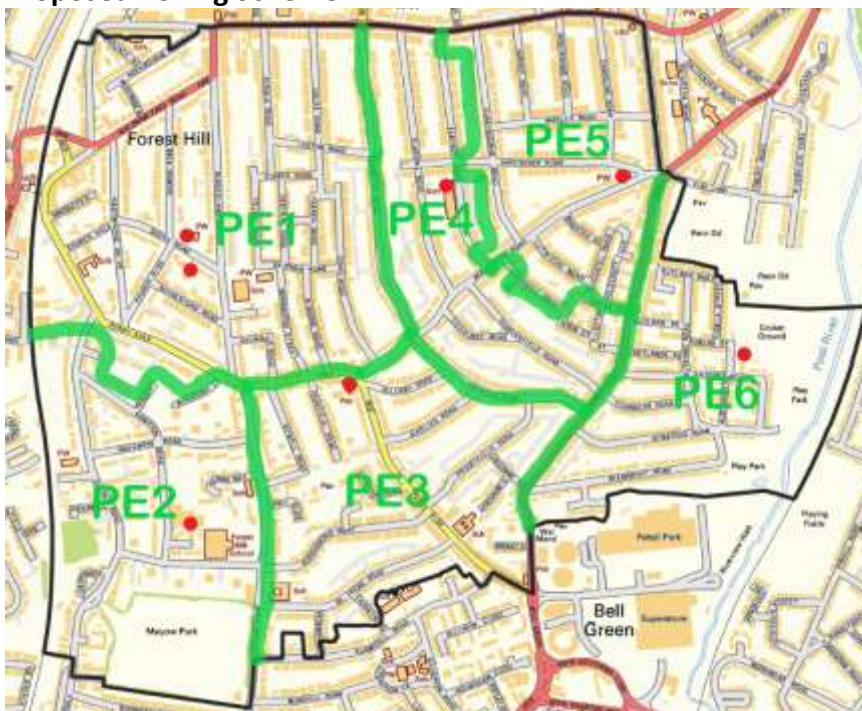
**Current Polling Scheme – with points indicating current and potential polling places**



**Potential Polling Places**

A	Rockbourne Youth Club	G	Forest Hill Methodist Church
B	Forest Hill Friends Meeting House	H	The Fusion Centre at Forest Hill School
C	St. George's C of E Primary School	I	Perry Rise Baptist Church
D	Hamilton Hall (Forest Hill Christadelphians)	J	Kilmore Primary School, Early Years Care Room
E	Christ Church	K	St. George's Church
F	Perrymount Primary School	L	Blackheath Hockey & Catford Cyphers Cricket Club

**Proposed Polling Scheme**



**Polling Districts and Polling Places**

WPE1	Hamilton Hall (Forest Hill Christadelphians)	WPE4	Kilmore Primary School, Early Years Care Room
WPE2	The Fusion Centre at Forest Hill School	WPE5	St. George's Church
WPE3	Perry Rise Baptist Church	WPE6	Blackheath Hockey & Catford Cyphers Cricket Club

# LEWISHAM WEST & EAST DULWICH CONSTITUENCY

## SYDENHAM WARD

Sydenham Electorate Stats	Polling Station Voters	Postal Voters	Total Electorate
Parliamentary Elections	9,775	1,863	11,638
Local Elections	10,509	1,945	12,454

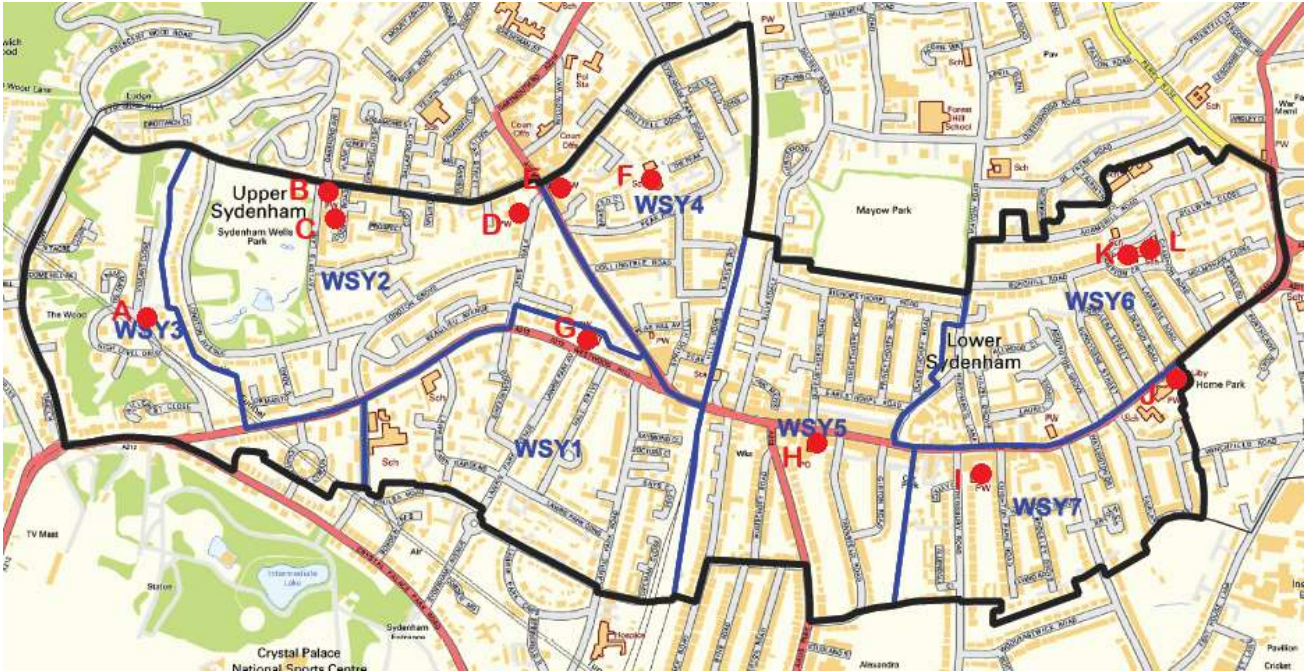
### Summary

- The current polling scheme in Sydenham has 7 polling districts and polling places. This is the joint highest for all wards in Lewisham.
- Sydenham has the lowest average number of voters allocated to polling places in the borough.
- The portacabin on High Level drive is a priority for replacement, because:
  - Cost – it is the most expensive polling place in the borough
  - Risk – there are many risks for a temporary building, including vandalism, delivery, access, facilities for staff, fire, etc
  - Pollution from the generator – both noise and air pollution
  - Disruption to the shop owner (where it sits in front of) and residents because it takes up 3 parking spaces
  - Poor facilities for polling staff – there is no toilet, no running water, it's very small
  - Despite the proximity to the voters, the turnout in this station is well below average
- St. Bartholomew's CoE School in WSY4 is another priority to change. This is because we have received a large number of complaints over the last few years, due to the school having to close on polling day. We've also received a large number of representations from local residents asking to use another venue such as the Grove Centre, which is under 10 minutes walk away

### The ARO's proposal

- Remove both the portacabin and St. Bartholomew's School
- Use the TNG Youth Centre on Wells Park Road, which is a good venue and a maximum of 12 minutes walk for voters in High Level Drive (less if they go through the park)
- Move the polling district boundaries to maximise the use of the Grove Centre, TNG Youth Centre and St. Bartholomew's Church
- Approach St. Michael's Church which is opposite St. Michael's CoE School, and use that venue instead, if possible
- This proposal changes Sydenham to 6 polling districts, which is more in line with the rest of the borough. The distance for voters to travel will also remain within the borough average

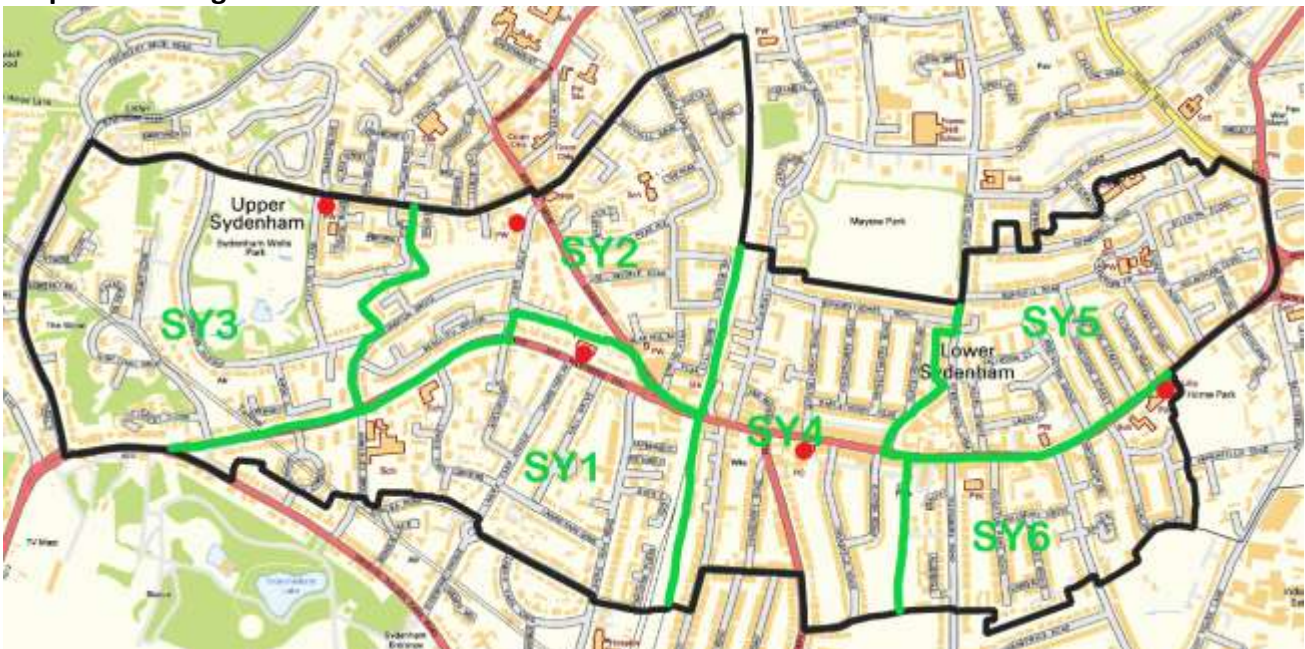
**Current Polling Scheme – with points indicating current and potential polling places**



**Potential Polling Places**

A	Portacabin on High Level Drive	G	St. Bartholomew's Church
B	TNG Youth Centre	H	The Sydenham Centre
C	St. Philip the Apostle Church	I	Church of St. Michael and All Angels
D	The Grove Centre	J	Sydenham Library
E	Church of the Resurrection of Our Lord	K	St. Michael's Church
F	St. Bartholomew's CoE School	L	St. Michael's CoE School

**Proposed Polling Scheme**



**Polling Districts and Polling Places**

WSY1	St. Bartholomew's Church	WSY4	The Sydenham Centre
WSY2	The Grove Centre	WSY5	St. Michael's CoE School
WSY3	TNG Youth Centre	WSY6	Sydenham Library

## Appendix A

### Equalities Impact Assessment – Polling District and Places Review 24/25

#### A. Background

The Equality Act 2010 includes a general duty which requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

In order to comply with the general duty local authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community. Authorities which fail to carry out equality impact assessments risk making poor and unfair decisions which may discriminate against particular groups and worsen inequality.

#### B. Summary

This equality impact assessment will review the practise of voting at polling stations and assess the impact on residents, and specifically those with protected characteristics. The report will identify each protected characteristic and list the issues that can impact that group, along with recommendations and mitigations we can take in order to meet the requirements in section A.

All polling places are subject to a site assessment where electoral officers visit the premises and conduct a thorough assessment of the facilities, access and location. Note that no polling place will be recommended that doesn't pass the site assessment. The assessment includes access, size of venue, width of entrance and internal doors, space for tellers, lighting, ventilation, kitchen and restroom facilities, etc. In particular, the officer must conduct checks for the accessibility of the site in order to determine suitability as a polling place with regards to people with a disability. This includes:

- Access for the mobility disabled – e.g. wheelchair users, mobility scooters, etc
- Transport – bus stops, parking (regular and disabled)
- Light
- Access for visually impaired

#### C. Protected Characteristic – Race and Ethnicity

This group includes all residents/voters of a non-white race or a non-British ethnicity, including Gypsies, Travellers, migrant workers and asylum seekers.

#### Negative Impacts

- This group will contain people with English as a second language. This can lead to several negative impacts including; difficulty in identifying the polling station venue address, difficulty in speaking with polling staff, polling staff not understanding the voter, and accessibility of signs and notices

- Impact of systemic racism. Some people in this group may have experienced systemic racism and have a feeling or belief that their participation in elections is not welcome

### **Recommendations and Mitigations**

- Maps on poll cards as well as written addresses
- Translated information in polling places
- Pictorial notices to identify polling stations, in addition to the large polling station signs
- Employment practises that promote equality and inclusion, so that the polling staff are representative of the communities we serve
- Large scale voters survey after each election, asking questions about our service and accessibility, with anonymous equalities information that enable Lewisham to analyse the accessibility of our service for residents with protected characteristics
- Commitment within Lewisham to take action to promote equality where information or feedback identifies specific or general issues
- Equalities training for polling staff

### **D. Protected Characteristic – Disability**

As defined by the Equality Act 2010, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

This is a large group which includes:

- Mobility impaired
- Visually impaired
- Hearing impaired
- People with learning disabilities including reading and writing
- People with mental health conditions

### **Negative Impacts**

- Where possible the polling place should be situated in a convenient location for most residents in the polling district to be able to walk to in around 10 minutes
- Ability to access polling venues due to lack of wheelchair/mobility entrance, parking, light and space
- Insufficient light inside polling venue
- Signage and official notices – at wrong height or too small
- Inability to hear instructions of polling staff
- Difficulty in understanding the polling process
- Inability to read ballot papers or make a mark on ballot papers
- Some people may require more time and the ability to sit down for a rest before or after voting
- The route to the station could be long, or involve a steep hill

### **Recommendations and Mitigations**

- All polling venues assessed for accessibility
- All polling places to be DDA compliant
- Seating available for voters who need a rest before or after voting
- Temporary ramps and lighting installed in polling venues where necessary
- Site visits prior to elections outside of summer to assess potential risks or issues due to weather or lack of daylight
- Hearing loops enabled where available



- Audio ballot of the ballot paper – playable on a phone (with polling staff able to play the audio on their phone if the voter does not have one)
- Extra training on assisting voters with a disability and statistics recorded by presiding officers
- Polling staff to follow standard procedures for handling of voters in polling places. Procedure to account for various disabilities – eg. Use of plain English, speaking clearly, listening carefully, being approachable, providing materials such as tactile voting device for the visually impaired, or the pictorial voting guide for learning disabled
- Additional training for presiding officers on the official procedures and forms required for them to assist voters with disabilities or for companions to assist voters with disabilities
- Employment practises that promote equality and inclusion, so that the polling staff are representative of the communities we serve
- Large scale voters survey after each election, asking questions about our service and accessibility, with anonymous equalities information that enable Lewisham to analyse the accessibility of our service for residents with protected characteristics
- Commitment within Lewisham to take action to promote equality where information or feedback identifies specific or general issues
- Equalities training for polling staff

## **E. Protected Characteristic – Sex / Gender**

Men or women may face discrimination because of their gender.

### **Negative Impacts**

- No specific negative impacts identified

### **Recommendations and Mitigations**

- Employment practises that promote equality and inclusion, so that the polling staff are representative of the communities we serve
- Large scale voters survey after each election, asking questions about our service and accessibility, with anonymous equalities information that enable Lewisham to analyse the accessibility of our service for residents with protected characteristics
- Commitment within Lewisham to take action to promote equality where information or feedback identifies specific or general issues
- Equalities training for polling staff

## **F. Protected Characteristic – Gender reassignment**

This group may experience discrimination and be anxious about how they are treated by officials.

### **Negative Impacts**

- Being mis-gendered by the polling staff – e.g. referred to by the wrong gender
- Experiencing transphobia or other discrimination by polling staff – and the fear of that happening

### **Recommendations and Mitigations**

- Procedure notes and training for polling staff is gender neutral
- Employment practises that promote equality and inclusion, so that the polling staff are representative of the communities we serve

- Large scale voters survey after each election, asking questions about our service and accessibility, with anonymous equalities information that enable Lewisham to analyse the accessibility of our service for residents with protected characteristics
- Commitment within Lewisham to take action to promote equality where information or feedback identifies specific or general issues
- Equalities training for polling staff

## **G. Protected Characteristic – Religion and belief**

This includes people of every faith and can overlap with ethnicity in terms of cultural clothing and behaviours.

### **Negative Impacts**

- Some people may not wish to enter a church, mosque or synagogue in order to vote
- Potential for some religious groups to experience discrimination, or the fear of discrimination, from polling staff

### **Recommendations and Mitigations**

- When using a religious building, cover any overt iconography and where possible use a space in the building that is not usually used for worship. For example, at the Catford Synagogue, we use the youth group room
- Cultural awareness of polling staff and general polite behaviour towards residents
- Employment practises that promote equality and inclusion, so that the polling staff are representative of the communities we serve
- Large scale voters survey after each election, asking questions about our service and accessibility, with anonymous equalities information that enable Lewisham to analyse the accessibility of our service for residents with protected characteristics
- Commitment within Lewisham to take action to promote equality where information or feedback identifies specific or general issues
- Equalities training for polling staff

## **H. Protected Characteristic – Sexual orientation**

This includes all people within the LGBTQ+ category.

### **Negative Impacts**

- Discrimination or the fear of discrimination by polling staff or other voters

### **Recommendations and Mitigations**

- Employment practises that promote equality and inclusion, so that the polling staff are representative of the communities we serve
- Large scale voters survey after each election, asking questions about our service and accessibility, with anonymous equalities information that enable Lewisham to analyse the accessibility of our service for residents with protected characteristics
- Commitment within Lewisham to take action to promote equality where information or feedback identifies specific or general issues
- Equalities training for polling staff

## **I. Protected Characteristic – Age**

People in the older age group may be more likely to have mobility issues or indeed various disabilities. Young people may be voting for the first time and be nervous.

### **Negative Impacts**

- See D, disability
- Younger people may be nervous about voting for the first time and not be aware of what to do
- Older people may require more time and the ability to sit down for a rest
- The route to the station could be long, or involve a steep hill

### **Recommendations and Mitigations**

- Where possible the polling place should be situated in a convenient location for most residents in the polling district to be able to walk to in around 10 minutes
- Items and signage to be clearly displayed, especially the guidance to voters, so that all voters are aware of what they need to do
- Calm and welcoming atmosphere created by the polling staff so that new voters are confident and able to ask questions, with additional information leaflets or guidance on display
- A chair available for voters who need a rest before or after voting
- Employment practices that promote equality and inclusion, so that the polling staff are representative of the communities we serve
- Large scale voters survey after each election, asking questions about our service and accessibility, with anonymous equalities information that enable Lewisham to analyse the accessibility of our service for residents with protected characteristics
- Commitment within Lewisham to take action to promote equality where information or feedback identifies specific or general issues
- Equalities training for polling staff

## **J. Promotion of Participation and Absent Voting**

The Returning Officer has a legal duty to promote participation in elections and referendums. Electoral Services have an engagement plan which sets out how we will promote participation amongst all residents, including the groups identified above.

An important part of improving accessibility of voting is our promotion of postal and proxy voting. All electors are able to apply to vote by either of these methods. Where voting in a polling station presents a challenge or difficulty for an individual, the service will assist them in making an application for postal or proxy voting. This is in addition to the mitigation measures above, and not a replacement. In all cases, for all residents, we shall seek to provide a polling place that enables everyone easy access to vote.

## **K. The Requirement to show photographic ID in polling stations**

The Elections Act 2022 introduced the requirement for voters to show ID in polling stations. The scale of that change is too significant to be included in this impact assessment. Lewisham has completed a separate Equalities Analysis Assessment regarding that policy. Note that this policy has now been in place for 2 years and there is data and reports that will inform our procedures around voter ID.