

# Public Consultation Document Polling District and Polling Places Review for the Borough of Surrey Heath

September 2024

Nick Steevens Chief Executive Surrey Heath Borough Council Surrey Heath House Knoll Road Camberley Surrey GU15 3HD

# Contents

Conta	act information	2
1.	Background to this review	3
2.	The Review Process	3
3.	Making representations	3
4.	Completion of the review	4
5.	The timetable for this review	5
6.	Challenging the Outcome of the Review	5
7.	Who may make a representation to the Electoral Commission?	6
8.	Review by the Electoral Commission	6
detail	ndix A: Current Schedule of Polling Districts & Polling Places (this appendix s any proposed changes to polling districts and polling places) ndix B	
Appe	ndix C	21

# **Contact information**

Information on who can make representations and where to address representations is given on page 5. Should you wish to speak to someone about this review or want further information please contact

Rachel Whillis Democratic Services Manager Surrey Heath Borough Council Surrey Heath House Knoll Road Camberley Surrey GU15 3HD

Telephone: 01276 707165 Email: vote@surreyheath.gov.uk

# 1. Background to this review

The Electoral Registration Act 2013 introduced a formal process for the timings of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places. A full review of the whole borough must be undertaken at intervals of not less than five years. The next compulsory review must be completed by no later than January 2025.

This review also incorporates proposed changes to Surrey County Council divisions that was submitted to Parliament on 25 July 2024. Any material changes required arising from the Order's progression through Parliament will be subject to a further consultation.

# 2. The Review Process

The main issues considered in the development of the proposals were:

- To seek to ensure that all electors in the district have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
- Where possible, no more than 2,250 electors should vote at any one polling station (not including postal voters); however, there can be more than one polling station in a polling place.
- Proposed future developments that will increase the number of dwellings and the potential number of electors in a ward or polling district over the next four years.
- To ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places are accessible to those who are disabled.
- Where possible to reduce the number of schools used as polling places.

This review document will be sent to all stakeholders, including the Returning Officer, local members of parliament, Councillors and local political parties. It will also be sent to persons who have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability.

The consultation period for this review will last until 2 October 2024. The timescale will allow for formal ratification of the final scheme of polling districts and polling places to be agreed at the Council meeting of Wednesday 11 December 2024.

A list of the proposed polling districts and polling places is attached as an Appendix B to this document. It is proposed that Surrey Heath will have 26 polling districts.

Information about the review can be found on the <u>open and upcoming consultations</u> <u>page on the Council's website</u>.

Maps of the proposed polling districts can be requested by contacting the Democratic Services team via the contact details in Section 3.

# 3. Making representations

Any registered elector in Surrey Heath may make representations to the Council.

Representations will also be considered from persons who have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability.

We would encourage anyone making representations to suggest alternative polling districts/places where appropriate and to give reasons for the alternative. Any representations must be received by **Wednesday**, **2 October 2024**.

All representations should be addressed to:

Polling Review Democratic Services Surrey Heath Borough Council Surrey Heath House Knoll Road Camberley Surrey GU15 3HD

If you prefer you can email your representations to vote@surreyheath.gov.uk

Responses can also be submitted via the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places online form

# 4. Completion of the review

The Council will publish:

- all correspondence received in connection with the review.
- all representations made by any person in connection with the review.
- details of the actual designations of polling districts and polling places agreed as a result of the review; and
- details of where the results of the review have been published.

A report on the final proposed scheme of polling districts and polling places will be presented for formal ratification at the Council meeting of 11 December 2024

# 5. The timetable for this review

Review Stage	Timescale	Comments
Preliminary stage giving notice of the review	Monday, 2 September 2024	Notice of the review published on the Council's website and in the Council Offices.
Consultation Stage	Monday, 2 September to Wednesday, 2 October 2024	<ul> <li>Sent to:</li> <li>Borough Councillors</li> <li>County Councillors</li> <li>Parish Councils</li> <li>Acting Returning Officer</li> <li>Political parties active within Surrey Heath</li> <li>MP</li> <li>Disability involvement groups</li> <li>Posted on Council website</li> <li>Links posted on social media channels</li> </ul>
Consideration of all representations	Thursday, 3 October 2024 – Friday, 29 November 2024	N/A
Publication of recommendations in the Council agenda	Tuesday, 3 December 2024	N/A
Formal ratification of new polling districts and polling places	Wednesday, 11 December 2024	Full Council meeting
Notice of Publication of Register of Electors	Monday, 3 February 2025	Notice published in at least one local paper plus website and office
New polling districts and polling places designated	Monday, 3 February 2025	Publication of the revised Register of Electors

# 6. Challenging the Outcome of the Review

Although the Electoral Commission has no initial role in the review process itself, it does have an important role in respect of considering representations and observations made that a Council has not conducted a review so as to:

- meet the reasonable requirements of the electors in the constituency, or a body of them (i.e. the reasonable requirements of a particular area of the authority have not been satisfactorily met); or
- take sufficient account of the accessibility to disabled persons of polling stations within a designated polling place.

# 7. Who may make a representation to the Electoral Commission?

The following may make representations to the Electoral Commission:

- not less than 30 registered electors within the constituency
- any person who made representations to the Council when the review was being undertaken (except the Returning Officer)
- any person who is not an elector within the constituency who the Electoral Commission feels has sufficient interest in the accessibility of disabled persons.

The Returning Officer may also make observations on any representations made to the Commission.

# 8. Review by the Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commission is required to consider any such representations and observations and, after doing so, may direct the relevant Council to make any alterations it sees necessary to the polling places designated by the review.

Should a Council fail to make the alterations within two months of the direction being given, the Commission may make the alterations itself.

# Appendix A: Current Schedule of Polling Districts & Polling Places Details of Polling District streets per polling district are available from Democratic Services

Ward	Polling District	Existing Polling Place	Proposed Changes
St Michaels	AA – St Michaels (West)	Bethel Prayer House Queen Mary Avenue, Camberley GU15 3BH	None
St Michaels	AB – St Michaels (East)	Adult Education Centre France Hill Drive Camberley GU15 3QE	Consideration of alternative polling place, as set out in Appendix B
Town	BA – Town	Camberley Theatre Knoll Road Camberley GU15 3SY	It is proposed to create a single polling district in Town ward and rename the polling district B - Town
Town	BB – The Terrace	Bethel Prayer House Queen Mary Avenue, Camberley GU15 3BH	It is proposed to create a single polling district in Town ward and rename the polling district B - Town
Old Dean	C – Old Dean	Surrey Heath Young People and Family Centre Kingston Road Camberley GU15 4AE	None
Watchetts	DA – Watchetts (West)	Camberley Guide Headquarters Crabtree Road	None

Ward	Polling District	Existing Polling Place	Proposed Changes
Watchetts	DB – Watchets' (East)	St Mary's Church Centre, Park Road Camberley GU15 2SR	polling district to incorporate the electors currently within the DC polling district.
Watchetts	DC – Watchetts (Outer)	St Mary's Church Centre, Park Road Camberley GU15 2SR	It is proposed to abolish this polling district and move the electors therein to DB – Watchetts (East)
St Pauls	EA – St Pauls (West)	St Paul`s Church Hall, Church Hill Camberley GU15 2AD	It is proposed to create a single polling district in St Pauls ward and rename the polling district E – St Pauls
St Pauls	EB – St Pauls (East)	St Paul`s Church Hall, Church Hill Camberley GU15 2AD	It is proposed to create a single polling district in St Pauls ward and rename the polling district E – St Pauls
Frimley	F – Frimley	St Peter's Church Hall Parsonage Way Frimley Green Road Frimley Camberley GU16 5HZ	It is proposed to divide the ward into two polling districts to reflect the county division boundaries and name the FA – Frimley (West) FB – Frimley (East)
Parkside	G – Parkside *	St Francis' Church Hall Upper Chobham Road Frimley Camberley GU15 1EE	None

Ward	Polling District	Existing Polling Place	Proposed Changes
Heatherside	H - Heatherside	Heatherside Community Centre Martindale Avenue, Camberley GU15 1AX	None
Frimley Green	IA – Frimley Green (North)	Frimley Community Centre Balmoral Drive Frimley Camberley GU16 9AR	None
Frimley Green	IB – Frimley Green (South)	Frimley Green Youth Centre Wharfenden Way Frimley Green Camberley GU16 6PJ	It is proposed to designate Frimley Green Club, Sturt Road, Frimley Green, GU16 6HX
Frimley Green	IC – Frimley Green (Parsonage Way)	St Peter's Church Hall Parsonage Way Frimley Green Road Frimley Camberley GU16 5HZ	It is proposed to retain this polling district, subject to consultation on whether to merge it with IA – Frimley Green (North)
Mytchett & Deepcut	JA – Mytchett	The Mytchett Centre 140 Mytchett Road, Mytchett Camberley GU16 3AA	None
Mytchett & Deepcut	JB –Deepcut	Deepcut Village Centre Swordsman Road Deepcut Camberley GU16 6SR	None

Ward	Polling District	Existing Polling Place	Proposed Changes
Bagshot	KA – Bagshot (North)	Windle Valley Centre Park Street	None
		Bagshot	
		GU19 5AQ	
Bagshot	KB – Bagshot (South)	Connaught Pavilion	None
0	<b>0</b> ( )	Whitmoor Road,	
		Bagshot	
		GU19 5QE	
Bagshot	KC – Windlesham North	Windlesham Club & Theatre	None
-		Kennel Lane	
		Windlesham	
		GU20 6AA	
Lightwater	LA – Lightwater (East)	All Saints Church Hall	None
		Broadway Road	
		Lightwater	
		GU18 5SJ	
Lightwater	LB – Lightwater (West)	The Briars Centre	None
		Briars Avenue,	
		Lightwater	
		GU18 5YY	
Bisley & West End	MA – Bisley	Bisley Village Hall	None
		School Close	
		Bisley	
		GU24 9DE	
Bisley & West End	MB – West End	Tringham Hall	None
		Benner Lane	
		West End	
		GU24 9JP	

Ward	Polling District	Existing Polling Place	Proposed Changes
Windlesham & Chobham	NA – Windlesham South	Windlesham Club & Theatre	None
		Kennel Lane	
		Windlesham	
		GU20 6AA	
Windlesham & Chobham	NB – Chobham	Chobham Village Hall	None
		Station Road	
		Chobham	
		GU24 8AQ	
Windlesham & Chobham	NC – Valley End	Valley End Institute	None
		Highams Lane	
		Valley End	
		Chobham	
		GU24 8TD	

# Appendix B Existing polling districts, polling places and Acting Returning Officer's proposed representations

# St Michaels Ward

Number of Polling Districts:	Two
Number of Polling Places:	Two
Electorate:	4,509
Proposed changes:	Consult on changing the polling place for AB St Michaels (East) polling district

Polling District	Electorate	Current Polling Place
AA – St Michaels	1,854	Bethel Prayer House, Queen Mary
(West)		Avenue, Camberley, GU15 3BH
AB – St Michaels	2,655	Adult Education Centre, France Hill
(East)		Drive, Camberley

Polling District	Electorate	Proposed Polling Place
AA – St Michaels	1,854	Bethel Prayer House, Queen Mary
(West)		Avenue, Camberley, GU15 3BH
AB – St Michaels	2,655	It is proposed to consult on whether
(East)		to retain the current polling place or
		designate a new polling place for this
		polling district.

# **Comments by the Returning Officer and Options Considered**

It is proposed to consult on whether to retain the Adult Education Centre as the designated polling place for the AB polling district. The Centre is identified as a development site in the Local Plan. The following alternative venues will be considered as part of this review:

- St Tarcisius Church, 227 London Road, Camberley.
- New Apostolic Church, France Hill Drive, Camberley.

Representations on alternative options are also welcomed.

# Town Ward

Number of Polling Districts:	Two
Number of Polling Places:	Two (One proposed)
Electorate:	4,421

#### Proposed changes

It is proposed to abolish the BA and BB polling districts and create a single polling district for the ward

Polling District (current)	Electorate	Current Polling Place
BA - Town	4,389	Camberley Theatre, Knoll Road, GU15 3SY
BB – The Terrace	32	Bethel Prayer House, Queen Mary Avenue, Camberley, GU15 3BH

Polling District (proposed)	Electorate	Proposed Polling Place
B - Town	4,421	Camberley Theatre, Knoll Road, GU15 3SY

#### Comments by the Returning Officer and Options Considered

It is proposed to abolish the BA and BB polling districts and create a single polling district for this ward. The new polling district will be given the reference 'B - Town'. The county division and borough ward boundaries are now coterminous, enabling this change. Camberley Theatre will be the designated polling place for this new polling district. The electors currently in BB polling district will have a new polling place.

# Old Dean Ward

Number of Polling Districts:	One
Number of Polling Places:	One
Electorate:	3,975
Proposed changes	None, but representations are welcomed on whether to create a new polling district for the southern section of the ward.

Polling District	Electorate	Current and Proposed Polling Place
C – Old Dean	3,975	Surrey Heath Young People and Family Centre, Kingston Road, Camberley

# **Comments by the Returning Officer and Options Considered**

Representations have been received prior to this review regarding the suitability of the current polling place for electors in the roads located to the south of the London Road, a busy A road that must be crossed to access the polling place. This area had been in the St Pauls ward prior to the changes to ward boundaries that came into effect in 2019, with electors voting at St Pauls Church. Alternative locations within

the area in Old Dean ward to the South of the A30 were sought following the publication of the boundary changes but no suitable options, including options for siting a temporary structure within the area, were identified.

Any such changes would necessitate the creation of a new polling district and the designation of a polling place for this polling district. The representation suggested designating St Pauls Church as the polling place for these electors. If this proposal was adopted, it would result in electors voting for different wards within the same polling place at borough council elections, which could cause confusion.

# Watchetts Ward

Number of Polling Districts:	Three (One proposed)
Number of Polling Places:	Тwo
Electorate:	4,162
Proposed changes:	It is proposed to abolish the DC polling
	district.

Polling District (current)	Electorate	Current Polling Place
DA – Watchetts (West)	1,351	Camberley Guide Headquarters, Crabtree Road, Camberley.
DB – Watchetts (East)	2,594	St Mary's Church Hall, Park Road, Camberley
DC – Watchetts (Outer)	217	St Mary's Church Hall, Park Road, Camberley

Polling District (proposed)	Electorate	Proposed Polling Place
DA – Watchetts (West)	1,351	Camberley Guide Headquarters, Crabtree Road, Camberley.
DB – Watchetts (East)	2,811	St Mary's Church Hall, Park Road, Camberley

# **Comments by the Returning Officer and Options Considered**

It is proposed to abolish the DC polling district and alter the boundary of the DB polling district to include this area, as the county division and borough ward boundaries are now coterminous. St Mary's Church Hall will be the designated polling place for this extended polling district.

# St Pauls Ward

Number of Polling Districts:	Two (One proposed)
Number of Polling Places:	One
Electorate:	4,026
Proposed changes:	It is proposed to abolish the EA and
	EB polling districts and create a
	single polling district for the ward.

Polling District (current)	Electorate	Current Polling Place
EA - St Pauls (West)	3,249	St Paul's Church, Church Hill, Camberley
EB - St Pauls (East)	777	St Paul's Church, Church Hill, Camberley

Polling District (proposed)	Electorate	Proposed Polling Place
E – St Pauls	4,026	St Paul's Church, Church Hill, Camberley

It is proposed to abolish the EA and EB polling districts and create a single polling district for this ward. The new polling district will be given the reference 'E'. The county division and borough ward boundaries are now coterminous, enabling this change. St Paul's Church will be the designated polling place for this new polling district.

# **Frimley Ward**

Number of Polling Districts:	One
Number of Polling Places:	One
Electorate:	3,950
Proposed changes:	The options for consultation on the
	future of polling districts and polling places in this ward are set out below

Polling District (current)	Electorate	Current Polling Place
F - Frimley	3,950	St Peter's Church Hall, Parsonage Way, Frimley

Polling District (proposed)	Electorate	Proposed Polling Place
FA – Frimley (West)	1,928*	St Peter's Church Hall, Parsonage Way, Frimley
FA – Frimley (East)	*2,022	It is proposed to consult on the preferred polling place.

\*indicative numbers based on the anticipated split of polling districts to reflect the revised county division boundaries.

# Comments by the Returning Officer and Options Considered

The alteration of county council divisions necessitates the creation of a new polling district in the eastern part of Frimley ward. From May 2025, the section of the ward to the east of Lakeland Drive and Sycamore Drive (inclusive) will fall within Heatherside & Parkside county division, with the remainder of the ward remaining in the Camberley West & Frimley division (previously call Camberley West division). The new polling district will reflect the county division boundaries. A polling place will need to be designated for this new polling district. Options include:

- St Peter's Church Hall, Parsonage Way. The polling place would be outside the polling district. However, the Church Hall is currently the allocated polling place for the electorate that will be in the FB polling district. It would not cause the electorate any confusion to attend their current polling place, although if this proposal was adopted it would result in electors voting for different divisions within the same polling place at county council elections, which could cause confusion. This is the Returning Officer's preferred option.
- Frimley Baptist Church, Balmoral Drive. The polling place would be slightly outside the polling district. It could cause a degree of confusion for some electors within the Frimley Green ward, who would pass this polling place to attend their designated polling station at Frimley Community Centre, Balmoral Drive. This would be subject to the Church agreeing to its use as a polling place.
- Lakeside School, Alphington Avenue. This site is located centrally in the new polling district and has previously been allocated as a polling place for the eastern part of Frimley ward. The new facility at this site is not currently operational and its future use as a SEN school conflicts with the Returning Officer's intention to not use educational facilities where possible.

# **Parkside Ward**

Number of Polling Districts:	One
Number of Polling Places:	One
Electorate:	4,021
Proposed changes:	None

Polling District	Electorate	Current and Proposed Polling Place Polling Place
G - Parkside	4,021	St Francis' Church Hall, Upper Chobham Road.

# **Comments by the Returning Officer and Options Considered**

The polling district and polling place in this ward are considered appropriate and there are no recommendations for changes.

# **Heatherside Ward**

Number of Polling Districts: One

Number of Polling Places:	One
Electorate:	5,912
Proposed changes:	None

Polling District	Electorate	Current and Proposed Polling Place
H - Heatherside	5,912	Heatherside Community Centre,
		Martindale Avenue, Camberley

The polling district and polling place in this ward are considered appropriate and there are no recommendations for changes.

# Frimley Green Ward

Number of Polling Districts:	Three
Number of Polling Places:	Three
Electorate:	5,380
Proposed changes:	Proposed change of polling place for
	IB polling district.
	Consultation to be undertaken on the
	future of IC polling district.

Polling District (current)	Electorate	Current Polling Place
IA – Frimley Green (North)	2,974	Frimley Community Centre,
		Balmoral Drive, Frimley
IB – Frimley Green (South)	2,368	Frimley Green Youth Centre,
		Wharfenden Way, Frimley Green
IC – Frimley Green (Parsonage Way)	38	St Peter's Church Hall, Parsonage Way, Frimley

Polling District (proposed)	Electorate	Proposed Polling Place
IA – Frimley Green (North)	2,974	Frimley Community Centre,
		Balmoral Drive, Frimley
IB – Frimley Green (South)	2,368	Frimley Green Club, Sturt Road
IC – Frimley Green	38	St Peter's Church Hall, Parsonage
(Parsonage Way)		Way, Frimley
It is proposed to consult on		
whether to merge this polling		
district with the IA polling		
district, with Frimley		
Community Centre, Balmoral		
Drive, Frimley as the		
designated polling place.		

# **IB – Frimley Green (South)**

It is proposed to change the polling place for IB polling district to Frimley Green Club, Sturt Road. Due to non-availability of Frimley Green Youth Centre at the postponed Frimley Green election in June 2023 an alternative location was sought. Frimley Green Club was successfully used for that election and subsequently the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May 2024 and the UK Parliamentary General Election in July 2024. No adverse comments on its use have been received. The continued use of Frimley Green Club avoids any disruption to the educational activities at Frimley Green Youth Centre. It is therefore proposed to designate Frimley Green Club as the polling place for this polling district.

# IC – Frimley Green (Parsonage Way)

It is proposed to review whether to retain the IC polling district, or merge it with IA polling district. Whilst it would be preferable to abolish a small polling district, which is possible as the county division and borough ward boundaries are now co-terminus, consideration has been given to the convenience for the electorate of this small polling district as their existing polling place is adjacent to their road. The polling place for IA polling district is therefore significantly less convenient than the existing arrangements for electors in Parsonage Way.

If the existing polling district is retained, it could be extended slightly to incorporate Bryant Close as this road is immediately adjacent to Parsonage Way. However, it is not proposed to redraw polling district boundaries to include the Ansell Road estate in the IC polling district as it is within a reasonable distance the polling place for IA polling district and the electorate is used to attending that polling place.

If this proposal was adopted, it would result in electors voting for different contests within the same polling place at county and borough council elections, which could cause confusion. However, it only affects a small number of electors and reflects existing arrangements for borough council elections.

The Returning Officer's preferred option is to retain the existing arrangements without alteration.

# **Mytchett & Deepcut Ward**

Number of Polling Districts:	Two
Number of Polling Places:	Two
Electorate:	5,916
Proposed changes	None

Polling District	Electorate	Current and Proposed Polling Place
JA - Mytchett	3,996	Mytchett Centre, 140 Mytchett Road, Mytchett GU16 6AA

JB - Deepcut	1,920	Deepcut Village Centre,
		Swordsmans Road,

The polling districts and polling places in this ward are considered appropriate and there are no recommendations for changes. However, the Returning Officer welcomes representations on whether the creation of a new polling district is required to serve the Mindenhurst development, with the intention of designating of a new polling place for that area.

# **Bagshot Ward**

Number of Polling Districts:	Three
Number of Polling Places:	Three
Electorate:	5,896
Proposed changes	None.

Polling District	Electorate	Current and Proposed Polling Place
KA – Bagshot (North)	3,433	Windle Valley Day Centre, Park
KB – Bagshot (South)	1,434	Connaught Pavillion, Whitmoor Road, Bagshot
KC – Windlesham (North)	1,029	Windlesham Club & Theatre, Kennell Lane, Windlesham

# **Comments by the Returning Officer and Options Considered**

The polling districts and polling places in this ward are considered appropriate and there are no recommendations for changes.

# Lightwater Ward

Number of Polling Districts:	Two
Number of Polling Places:	Two
Electorate:	5,411
Proposed changes:	None

Polling District	Electorate	Current and Proposed Polling Place
LA – Lightwater (East)	3,682	All Saints Church Hall, Broadway Road,
		Lightwater
LB – Lightwater (West)	1,729	Briars Centre, Briars Avenue, Lightwater

# Comments by the Returning Officer and Options Considered

The polling districts and polling places in this ward are considered appropriate and there are no recommendations for changes.

# **Bisley & West End Ward**

Number of Polling Districts:	Two
Number of Polling Places:	Two
Electorate:	7,151
Proposed changes:	None

Polling District	Electorate	Current and Proposed Polling Place
MA - Bisley	2,917	Bisley Village Hall, School Close, Bisley
MB – West End	4,234	Tringham Hall, Benner Lane, West End.

#### **Comments by the Returning Officer and Options Considered**

The polling districts and polling places in this ward are considered appropriate and there are no recommendations for changes.

# Windlesham & Chobham Ward

Number of Polling Districts:	Three
Number of Polling Places:	Three
Electorate:	5,752
Proposed changes:	None

Polling District	Electorate	Current and Proposed Polling Place
NA – Windlesham	2,509	Windlesham Club & Theatre, Kennell
(North)		Lane, Windlesham
NB - Chobham	3,112	Chobham Village Hall, Station Road,
		Chobham
NC – Valley End	131	Valley End Institute, Highams Lane,
_		Valley End

# Comments by the Returning Officer and Options Considered

The polling districts and polling places in this ward are considered appropriate and there are no recommendations for changes.

# Appendix C Definitions and Criteria for Polling Districts and Polling Places

# Definitions

# **Polling District**

A polling district is a geographical area created by the sub-division of a UK Parliamentary constituency for the purposes of a UK parliamentary election.

In England, each parish is to be a separate polling district, unless there are special circumstances. This means that a parish must not be in a polling district which has part or either a different parish within it, or any un-parished part of the local authority area within it, unless special circumstances apply. These special circumstances could arise if, for example, the parish has only a small number of electors and it is not practicable for the parish to be its own polling district.

# **Polling Place**

A polling place is the building or area in which polling stations will be selected by the (Acting) Returning Officer. A polling place within a polling district must be designated so that polling stations are within easy reach of all electors from across the polling district.

Section 18B(4)(e) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 states that "the polling place must be small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the district how they will be able to reach the polling place". It is therefore considered that polling places should be defined more specifically than simply the polling district and by designating the name of the polling place (normally a particular building and its environs.)

# **Polling Stations**

A polling station is the room or area within the polling place where voting takes place. Unlike polling districts and polling places, which are fixed by the local authority, polling stations are chosen by the relevant Returning Officer for the election.

# **Criteria for Polling Districts and Polling Places**

There are a number of factors to take into account when considering polling districts and polling places. Electoral Commission Guidance lists the following key considerations:

# **Polling District Boundaries:**

- Boundaries: Are they well defined? For example, do they follow the natural boundaries of an area? If not, is it clear which properties belong in the polling district?
- Location: Are there suitable transport links within the polling districts and how do they relate to the areas of the district which are most highly populated? Are there any obstacles to voters crossing the polling districts and reaching the polling place, e.ge steep hills, impassable main roads, railway lines, rivers etc.

# **Polling Places**

- Location: Is it reasonably accessible within the polling district? Does it avoid barriers for the voter? Are there convenient transport links?
- Size: Can it accommodate more than 1 polling station if required? If multiple polling stations are required, is the polling place ample enough to accommodate all voters going into and out of the polling stations, even when there is a high turnout?
- Suitability: Is the building readily available in the event of an unscheduled poll? Is there any possibility that the building may be demolished as part of a new development? Is the building accessible to all those entitled to attend the polling place?

The Returning Officer will be mindful of Electoral Commission Guidance with regard to the allocation of no more than 2,250 electors to a polling station.

Consideration will be given to the confusion and delays which could be caused by allocating separate polling districts to the same polling place and therefore, where possible, this will be avoided.

In practice, the review of polling districts and places will involve an element of compromise between several factors, including those listed above. The availability of car parking at a venue and preventing the use of schools unless absolutely necessary are factors which will be taken into account when reviewing polling district boundaries and polling places. The accessibility of a polling place is a key consideration for the Returning Officer.