# Executive Summary

1.1 This report asks Council to review the findings of the current review of Polling Districts and Places in Newham and to agree the minor changes set out in the recommendations. It is a statutory requirement to complete a review by 31 January 2020. Members should also note that this is an entirely independent statutory obligation to the current Ward Boundary Review and consequently a further review will have to take place after the Boundary Review is completed. For this reason, the current review will be “light touch”, addressing necessary changes only to be applied to the electoral register published on 1 December 2019 and all elections before May 2022 (when the new ward boundaries will take effect).

# Recommendations

2.1 For the reasons set out in the report, Council is recommended to agree that the current arrangements for Polling Places and Stations at Appendix 1 remain in place save for the following changes to polling stations within the borough:

2.1.1 **East Ham Central (EECB)** The Hub at Hartley Primary School, Hartley Avenue, London E6 1NT be used as a Polling Place in Polling District ECB replacing The Salvation Army, 42 Wakefield Street, London E6 1NQ.
2.1.2 **East Ham North (EENA)** The Katherine Road Community Centre, 254 Katherine Road, London E7 8PN be used as a Polling Place in Polling District EENA replacing Newham Registrar’s Office, Passmore Edwards Building, 207 Plashet Grove, London E6.

2.1.3 **Green Street West (WGWB)** The Plaistow Seventh Day Adventist Church, 97 St. Antony’s Road, London E7 9QB be used as a Polling Place in Polling District WGWB replacing Campbell Hall, Elmhurst School, Upton Park Road, London E7 9PG.

2.1.4 **Stratford and New Town (WSNB)** Community Road Community Centre, Community Road, London E15 1JT be used as a Polling Place in Polling District WSNB replacing Colegrave Primary School, Henniker Road, London E15 1JY.

2.1.5 **Stratford and New Town (WSNE)** Get Living London, 5 Celebration Avenue, London E20 1DB to remain as a polling place but to approve Timber Lodge as an alternative polling place

2.1.6 To agree that the following Polling Places be changed from single station to double stations if and when there are more than 2,500 registered electors at the station, in line with Electoral Commission guidance

   a) **EBED** – Gallions Primary School, Warwall, London E6 6WG.

   b) **EECC** – Newham Town Hall, Barking Road, London E6 2RP.

   c) **EECD** – St Michaels School Sports Hall, Howard Road, London E6 6EE.

   d) **ERDD** – Thames Barrier Park Pavillion Café, North Woolwich Road, London R16 2HP.

   e) **WCNA** – Gainsborough Learning Centre, 1 Hamilton Road, London E15 3AE.

   f) **WCSB** – St Lukes School, Ruscoe Road, London E16 1JB.

   g) **WCSC** - Keir Hardie Methodist Church, 14 Plymouth Road, London E16 1PA.

   h) **WSNF** – Albert Bigg Point, Godfrey Street, London E15 2SE.

3 **Background**

3.1 Under the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, every Council in England and Wales must undertake and complete a review of all of the polling districts and polling places in its area within a 16 month period commencing from 1 October 2018 to 31 January 2020. Following each election, officers review the running of the election and specifically look at any issues that have arisen in relation to the polling places.

3.1.1 The aims of the review are to ensure that:

   - As far as possible, polling places are accessible to all, especially those with mobility problems.
   - Polling places fall within the polling district wherever possible.
• Account is taken of justifiable complaints by electors, and any responses received from this consultation.

3.1.2 Due to the negative impact of potential school closure for the day, officers always try to find alternatives to using schools as polling stations or where they are used arrangements are made that schools can stay open. However, in some densely populated residential areas, schools remain as the only available building that meet the requirements above.

4 Key Considerations and Proposals

4.1 Public Notice of commencement of the Polling District and Station Review was published on Newham’s website on 22 July 2019 with a four-week consultation period ending on 16 August 2019, A list of those consulted is attached as Appendix 2.

4.1.1 Only two comments were received during the consultation period. One to confirm that no changes were required in respect of the polling place Manor Park Methodist Church Hall within Polling District EMPD and the other from a ward Councillor requesting that the following points be investigated:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultation response</th>
<th>Management response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WSNG &amp; WSNC: still concerned that the WSNC Polling Station Carpenters and Docklands Centre is a more difficult walk than the WSNG Polling station the Chobham Academy for residents of Glasshouse Gardens E20</td>
<td>These points have been noted and will be considered at the conclusion of the Ward Boundary Review, to assess for potential impact on the new warding pattern.</td>
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<tr>
<td>WSNC &amp; WSNF in Canning Road E15: the two converted office blocks are in different Polling Districts. I would expect that Max House would find it easier to vote in the same place as Channelsea House.</td>
<td>These points have been noted and will be considered at the conclusion of the Ward Boundary Review, to assess for potential impact on the new warding pattern.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ERDA &amp; ERDD: residents of new dwellings in Knights Road and North Woolwich Road might find it easier to vote in the same place as those on Bradfield Road.</td>
<td>These points have been noted and will be considered at the conclusion of the Ward Boundary Review, to assess for potential impact on the new warding pattern.</td>
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The polling places listed below are no longer available, so alternatives have been found within the Polling Districts as follows:
4.1.2 East Ham Central (EECB) The Salvation Army has closed down therefore the Hub at Hartley Primary School was used at the European Parliamentary Election in May 2019. The Hub is located within a very short distance and worked well at the recent election, this also enabled the school to remain open. It is recommended that this change to Polling Place venue be continued.

4.1.3 East Ham North (EENA) Newham Registry Office is no longer available therefore the Katherine Road Community Centre was used at the European Parliamentary Election in May 2019. Although geographically located at the edge of the Polling District, no complaints were received and the venue worked well. It is recommended that this change to Polling Place venue be continued.

4.1.4 Green Street West (WGWB) Campbell Hall, Elmhurst School was unavailable for the European Parliamentary Election in May 2019, due to extensive building works taking place. In addition there have been issues with this venue in the past in relation to this very large primary school remaining open whilst Polling takes place. The Plaistow Seventh Day Adventist Church at 97 St Antony’s Road was used as a Polling station at the last election and although geographically located at the edge of the Polling District. No complaints were received and the venue worked well. It is recommended that this change to Polling Place venue be continued.

4.1.5 Stratford and New Town (WSNB) Colegrave Primary School was unavailable at the European Parliamentary Election in May 2019. The Community Road Community Centre was used as an alternative and worked well. It is recommended that this change to Polling Place be continued and avoids the closure of a school.

4.1.6 Stratford and New Town (WSNE) Get Living London. Currently this Polling Place is working well, although it is felt that based on projected electorate figures this venue may not be large enough to accommodate electors during peak periods. It is recommended that the situation is kept under review and that if required Timber Lodge be approved as an alternative

5 Policy Implications and Mayoral Priorities

a. The Review is based on statutory criteria, which are entirely apolitical

6 Alternatives Considered

7 The review is a statutory requirement. As stated, a “light touch” review was carried in view of the impending boundary review outcome.

8 Consultation

Appendix 1 sets out the consultees and the body of this report sets out the consultation responses and the management response.
9 Implications

a. Financial Implications

Any increase in the amount of polling stations would incur additional costs in terms of building hire, equipment and polling station staff. The cost incurred from using Council maintained buildings is limited to covering heating, lighting and cleaning costs.

These costs are met by the Council only when used for Council elections or by-elections, which can be found within budget.

b. Legal Implications

There is a legal requirement to complete a full polling district review by 31 January 2020. The proposals ensure that polling places and stations meet statutory requirements.

The Representation of the People Act 1983 section 18D requires that local authorities designate the polling places within the Parliamentary Constituencies. Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, Returning Officers have the right to use certain public buildings (including schools that receive public funds) for use as polling stations at elections.

c. Equalities Implications

It is an express purpose of the review is to ensure that all eligible electors can access a polling station. All existing Polling Stations had an accessibility checklist completed at the European Parliamentary Election held in May 2019. Electoral services considered a review of all possible places and used a suitability access checklist this checklist take into account Scope recommendations and Electoral commission guidance.