

## Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form is a template for analysing a policy or proposed decision for its potential effects on individuals with protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010.

The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

The three parts of the duty apply to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.

Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.

### 1. Responsibility for the Equality Impact Assessment

<b>Name of proposal:</b>	<b>Review of polling districts, polling places and designation of polling scheme 2023/2024</b>
<b>Service Area:</b>	<b>Electoral Services</b>
<b>Officer Completing Assessment:</b>	<b>Lesley Rennie</b>
<b>Equalities Advisor:</b>	<b>Maddie Milner</b>
<b>Cabinet meeting date (if applicable):</b>	<b>General Purposes Committee, 21 December 2023</b>
<b>Director/Assistant Director</b>	<b>Mark Stevens, Assistant Director Direct Services</b>

### 2. Executive summary

A full review of polling places was carried out in 2021 and was revisited in 2022, to incorporate feedback from the May 2022 elections. All local authorities are required

to conduct a review of its polling districts (the areas within the authorities' administrative boundaries where voting can take place), and polling places (the buildings within those areas where electors can vote) between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025. It is essential that Haringey Council completes this 'polling scheme' review work by January 2024 so that any necessary changes are in place in time for the preparations for the May 2024 GLA Mayoral and Assembly Elections.

Four amendments to the boundaries of the polling districts are proposed to make the walking distances to polling places more even:

- The boundary between CEN-A and CEN-B in the Crouch End ward is moved to the north to make walking distances to the polling stations in those polling districts more even.
- The boundary between WHL-A and WHL-B in the White Hart Lane ward is moved to the south to make walking distances to the polling places in those polling districts more even.
- The boundary between HRN-A and HRN-D moved to put the whole of Nightingale Lane in HRN-D
- The boundary between STG-A and STG-B moved to allocate the electors in Chettle Court to the polling place Hornsey Vale Community Centre

Communications will be sent to the electors who will be subject to these changes. All electors will be sent a poll card with a map of the station. Polling station maps and routes will be available online on polling day. Communications about voter ID and postal and proxy voting will also be shared widely in the lead up to elections.

### **3. Consultation and engagement**

3a. How will consultation and/or engagement inform your assessment of the impact of the proposal on protected groups of residents, service users and/or staff? Detail how your approach will facilitate the inclusion of protected groups likely to be impacted by the decision.

Consultation is required for the review by statute. The Electoral Commission Guidance states that, as well as political stakeholders and the electorate as a whole, we must in particular:

- seek representations from those who have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability. Such persons must have an opportunity to make representations and to comment on the representations made by the (Acting) Returning Officer(s).

3b. Outline the key findings of your consultation / engagement activities once completed, particularly in terms of how this relates to groups that share the protected characteristics

A list of representative groups was contacted during the consultation process. A public notice of the review was displayed at a Council building and on the website inviting feedback. All elected representatives were also invited to comment.

Nine responses were received to the consultation. A full summary of the issues raised, and the responses given, are included in an appendix to the report and will be published on the Council's website after the conclusion of the review. The summary position is:

- three responses commented favourably on retaining the current arrangements.
- two responses set out proposals for new portable buildings to be put in place – for all these, the existing arrangements were found to be within the guidelines set for the review with one exception where an amendment to the boundaries was proposed as a result (White Hart Lane ward)
- two responses commented on the clarity of the proposals. Further clarification was provided.
- one response proposed changing back an amendment that had been made in the last polling district and polling place review. This was not taken forward at this point to minimise voter confusion
- one response suggested a change to the boundary, and this was taken forward in the proposals (Crouch End ward)

The two proposed changes were developed for consideration by the General Purposes Committee, resulting from the consultation feedback.

## 4. Data and Impact Analysis

**Note:** officers may want to complement their analysis with data from the State of the Borough and ward profiles, found here: <https://www.haringey.gov.uk/local-democracy/about-council/state-of-the-borough>.

**Please consider how the proposed change will affect people with protected characteristics.**

### 4a. Age

#### Data

##### Borough Profile<sup>1</sup>

- 54,422: 0-17 (21%)
- 71,660: 18-34 (27%)
- 63,930: 35-49 (24%)
- 46,516: 50-64 (18%)
- 27,706: 65+ (10%)

#### Target Population Profile

---

<sup>1</sup> Census, 2021 – [Population and household estimates, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/population-and-household-estimates)

This data is not available as not all electors have their date of birth on the electoral register.

ONS age data <sup>2</sup>of the population as a whole (as opposed to the electorate) was used as a proxy to understand the age profiles of the two wards where changes were being proposed. It was also looked at in relation to the ward where changes were proposed and the walking distance needed to be considered.

---

<sup>2</sup> [Build a custom area profile - Census 2021, ONS](#)

Area	Percentage of population age 65+
Haringey	10.4
Crouch End	13.0
South Tottenham	7.8
White Hart Lane	10.8
England	18.4

The 65+ age population in Haringey is lower than the national average.

In terms of a broader picture of the impact of the review, it is a fact that all electors must be 18 and over. For all age groups, the issue of voting is more one of general infirmity in terms of ability to get to and from polling stations – and, in that respect, all age groups are considered equitably in trying to both standardise and minimise walking distances. The two proposed amendments seek to address the distance needed to be covered to reach a polling station.

Voting age is eighteen, with registration permitted from age sixteen. Eligibility to register is also restricted by nationality which is set by statute for each election. Some older people may be less used to technology. If their polling station has changed because of the recent reviews, they may be less familiar with online methods of finding the venue. Changes have only been proposed where they were needed to try to minimise voter confusion.

Paper poll cards with maps of the polling station location will be provided to all electors and a full communications plan is being put in place to communicate this message. Information on the changes has been included in print and digital media to meet the different requirements of all age groups, such as:

- the Haringey People magazine,
- posters on notice boards
- letters posted directly to electors about elections and to their households such as canvass forms
- emails where we hold email addresses for electors
- digital adverts and posters,
- on social media (posted messages and targeted advertising).

Under the Elections Act 2022, there is a new duty to ensure polling places are accessible to disabled people. The Electoral Commission (EC) has produced guidance to implement it. This guidance is being used along with the EC checklist for venues to ensure that details about venues and any reasonable adjustments required are fully recorded. This includes checks to make sure that doors can be opened by older people and that the doors can either be easily opened or be propped open.

Polling districts are decided based on the residence of the elector so those of all age groups do not need to travel far from their familiar locality.

Issues of physical accessibility have also been considered and may impact on different age groups.

Some schools may need to close if they are used as a polling station. If an alternative venue is not available, then efforts to reduce the impact of this are made. This includes using spaces on school sites that can be kept separate so that the school can remain open. Advanced warning of dates will be given where possible.

Amendments were requested of in two wards, Crouch End and White Hart Lane. The percentage of the population that is aged 65+ is higher than the Haringey average in both these wards. The walking distances from the boundaries to the polling places were found to be imbalanced. This imbalance would have had a larger impact on the older people of these wards, due to the slightly higher percentage of older people. The walking distance impact is being reduced by proposing changes to the boundaries to make the walking distances more even and this will also mitigate the impact on the older people in that ward.

One of the responses to the consultation expressed concern about the walking distance in one of the districts in the South Tottenham ward and how this could impact on older and/or disabled people.

A uniform approach is taken in determining the walking times to and from all polling places. The time to walk from the furthest point to Crowland Primary School is evaluated as eleven minutes which is within the limits set for the review. Whilst some electors may take less time than this, the time taken to walk that maximum distance for more elderly electors could be longer, although it is worth noting that the population in this ward aged 65+ is lower than the borough average. However, in considering equalities impacts, we need to balance the walking distance to a fixed building with the impact of using a portable building. Through its more recent reviews, the Council has moved away from the use of portacabins as much as possible unless there are absolutely no viable alternative options. The use of portable buildings is being minimised due to the limited facilities and the access challenges for both staff and electors. This impact is also being mitigated by the availability of postal and proxy votes.

## **Potential Impacts**

There will potentially be negative impacts on age due to the location of polling places. The main impact on an older elector will be the distance from their home to the polling place, influenced by their normal level of physical activity and, thereby, their general mobility and the extent to which they might ordinarily take a walk of ten minutes or longer.

Mitigations include:

- ensuring that information on the locations of polling places is available in a range of digital and paper formats to ensure that electors go to the correct location first time.
- a walking distance limit of 10-15 minutes was set for polling places to make them as close to as many people as possible.
- Alternative voting options are available and advertised such as voting by post or proxy for those who are not able to attend their local polling station.

## 4b. Disability

### Data

#### Borough Profile

- Disabled under Equality Act – 13.7%<sup>3</sup>
  - Day to day activities limited a lot – 6.1%
  - Day to day activities limited a little – 7.5%
- 7.5% of residents people diagnosed with depression<sup>4</sup>
- 1.7% of residents diagnosed with a severe mental illness<sup>5</sup>
- 0.4% of people in Haringey have a learning disability<sup>6</sup>

#### Target Population Profile

This data is not recorded in the electoral register.

ONS disability data <sup>7</sup>of the population as a whole (as opposed to the electorate) was used as a proxy to understand the profiles of the two wards where changes were being proposed. It was also looked at in relation to the ward where changes were proposed, and the walking distance needed to be considered.

	Percentage of population disabled under the Equality Act
Haringey	13.7
Crouch End	13
South Tottenham	11.7
White Hart Lane	16.1
England	17.3

The percentage of the Haringey population who are disabled is lower than the national average.

Most of the buildings are in daily use as public spaces, but some are more refined than others. The number of buildings that we need to use on polling day means that we will need to use some spaces that are not yet entirely accessible. The review of all polling places means that we fully understand the requirements of each venue and how to make them as accessible as possible.

Under the Elections Act 2022, there is a new duty to ensure polling places are accessible to disabled people. The Electoral Commission (EC) have produced

<sup>3</sup> Census, 2021 – [Disability, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/disabilityandlongtermhealth/bulletins/disabilityinenglandandwales/2021)

<sup>4</sup> NHS Quality Outcomes Framework – [Prevalence of diagnosed depression among GP registered population age 18+](https://www.nhs.uk/quality-improvement/quality-outcomes-framework/prevalence-of-diagnosed-depression-among-gp-registered-population-age-18/)

<sup>5</sup> NHS Quality Outcomes Framework – [Prevalence of diagnosed mental health diagnosis among GP registered population age 18+](https://www.nhs.uk/quality-improvement/quality-outcomes-framework/prevalence-of-diagnosed-mental-health-diagnosis-among-gp-registered-population-age-18/)

<sup>6</sup> PHE Learning disability profiles – <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/learning-disabilities#page/0/gid/1938132702/pat/6/par/E12000007/ati/102/are/E09000014>

<sup>7</sup> [Build a custom area profile - Census 2021, ONS](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/disabilityandlongtermhealth/bulletins/build-a-custom-area-profile-census-2021)

guidance to implement it. This guidance is being used alongside the EC checklist for venues to ensure that details about venues and any reasonable adjustments required are fully recorded.

The Electoral Commission sheet requires us to account for a number of physical accessibility criteria, which may impact all electors but disproportionately affect those with a disability.

These include:

- Ramp access including on the building approach – where there is not existing ramp access, this will be put in place by the Election Team for polling day.
- Width of doors – this is to ensure that larger size motorised wheelchairs can be accommodated. In the main, venues have doors that are wide enough for such access although, for the two possible exceptions to this, alternatives to having suitable width doors were sought but not found. Full data is being gathered on the details of access to each polling place so that, where this may be an issue, this can be communicated. In those rare circumstances, signage will be put in place at the venues to ensure that electors are not disenfranchised. This will inform electors in motorised wheelchairs that we are aware of the issue and, to mitigate the impact, we will bring the required polling materials (ballot paper/ballot box) to them, while maintaining the secrecy of the ballot
- Transport access – all the polling stations are within easy access of public transport; some have accessible parking and others have nearby on-street parking.
- Doormats being level with the floor and floor surface – it is inevitable that some floor surfaces will become slippery in wet weather. Awareness of this risk on a wet day will be highlighted in training and materials will be provided to ensure the hazard is minimised.
- Although not the subject of this review, it is worth noting that accessible materials are available to assist electors in voting if required.

One impact on disabled people that can be addressed by this review is adjusting the boundaries to make the distances from the furthest points in the district to the polling places as even as possible. Amendments were requested in two wards - Crouch End and White Hart Lane. The percentage of the population that is disabled is higher than the Haringey average in one of these wards (WHL) and is very close to the average in the other (CEN). The walking distances from the boundaries to the polling places were found to be imbalanced. This imbalance would have had a larger impact on the disabled people of these wards, due to the slightly higher percentage of disabled people. The walking distance impact is being reduced by proposing changes to the boundaries to make the walking distances more even and this will also mitigate the impact on the disabled people in that ward.

One of the responses to the consultation expressed concern about the walking distance in the one of the districts in the South Tottenham ward and how this could impact on older and/or disabled people.

A uniform approach is taken in determining the walking times to and from all polling places. The time to walk from the furthest point to Crowland Primary School is



evaluated as eleven minutes which is within the limits set for the review. Whilst some electors may take less time than this, the time taken to walk that maximum distance for more elderly electors could be longer, although it is worth noting that the population in this ward aged 65+ is lower than the borough average. However, in considering equalities impacts, we need to balance the walking distance to a fixed building with the impact of using a portable building. Through its more recent reviews, the Council has moved away from the use of portacabins as much as possible unless there are absolutely no viable alternative options. The use of portable buildings is being minimised due to the limited facilities and the access challenges for both staff and electors. This impact is also being mitigated by the availability of postal and proxy votes.

### **Potential Impacts**

There will be potential negative impacts on disabled people due to the location of polling places. The main impact on a disabled elector will be the distance from their home to the polling place and being able to find the correct location/entrance.

Mitigations include:

- ensuring that information on the locations of polling places is available in a range of digital and paper formats to ensure that electors go to the correct location first time.
- a walking distance limit of 10-15 minutes was set for polling places to make them as close to as many people as possible.
- Alternative voting options are available and advertised such as voting by post or proxy for those who are not able to attend their local polling station.
- Support is provided at polling places to allow people to vote independently.

## **4c. Gender Reassignment**

### **Data**

#### **Borough Profile<sup>8</sup>**

- Gender Identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given – 0.5%
- Trans woman – 0.1%
- Trans man - 0.1%

### **Target Population Profile**

Gender reassignment data is not recorded on the electoral register, but the proposed changes will not disproportionately impact residents with a gender different to that assigned at birth, so the potential impacts will be neutral.

## **4d. Marriage and Civil Partnership**

---

<sup>8</sup> Census, 2021 – [Gender identity, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/identityandgender/articles/genderidentityenglandandwales/2021)

**Note:** Only the first part of the equality duty (“*Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act*”) applies to this protected characteristic.

## Data

### Borough Profile <sup>9</sup>

- Divorced or formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved: (9.9%)
- Married or registered civil partnership: (35.8%)
- Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a same-sex civil partnership): (2.9%%)
- Single (never married or never registered a same-sex civil partnership): (45.3%)
- Widowed or surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership: (6.1%)

### Target Population Profile

Marriage and Civil Partnership data is not recorded on the electoral register, but there will not be disproportionate impact to people based on marriage or civil partnership status, so the potential impacts will be neutral.

## 4e. Pregnancy and Maternity

### Note<sup>10</sup>:

- Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby.
- Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

## Data

### Borough Profile <sup>11</sup>

Live Births in Haringey 2021: 3,376

### Target Population Profile

Pregnancy and maternity status are not recorded on the electoral register. Arrangements to mitigate any barriers that may result from this protected characteristic have been considered for all venues. Seating will be provided for those who need it, and children are allowed into polling places with their parents.

## 4f. Race

---

<sup>9</sup> Census, 2021 – [Marriage and civil partnership status in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/relationshipsandmarriage/articles/marriageandcivilpartnershipstatusinenglandandwales/2021)

<sup>10</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2022 – [Pregnancy and maternity discrimination](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/2022-03-22-pregnancy-and-maternity-discrimination).

<sup>11</sup> Births by Borough (ONS)

In the Equality Act 2010, race can mean ethnic or national origins, which may or may not be the same as a person's current nationality.<sup>12</sup>

## Data

### Borough Profile <sup>13</sup>

#### Arab: 1.0%

- Any other ethnic group: 8.7%

#### Asian: 8.7%

- Bangladeshi: 1.8%
- Chinese: 1.5%
- Indian: 2.2%
- Pakistani: 0.8%
- Other Asian: 2.4%

#### Black: 17.6%

- African: 9.4%
- Caribbean: 6.2%
- Other Black: 2.0%

#### Mixed: 7.0%

- White and Asian: 1.5%
- White and Black African: 1.0%
- White and Black Caribbean: 2.0%
- Other Mixed: 2.5%

#### White: 57.0% in total

- English/Welsh/Scottish/Norther Irish/British: 31.9%
- Irish: 2.2%
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller: 0.1%
- Roma: 0.8%
- Other White: 22.1%

## Target Population Profile

Race and ethnicity data are not recorded on the electoral register, but there will not be disproportionate impact based on race, so the potential impacts will be neutral.

## 4g. Religion or belief

---

<sup>12</sup> [Race discrimination | Equality and Human Rights Commission \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/anti-discrimination-law/race-discrimination)

<sup>13</sup> Census 2021 - [Ethnic group, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/ethnicity/bulletins/census2021)

## Data

### Borough Profile <sup>14</sup>

- Christian: 39%
- Buddhist: 0.9%
- Hindu: 1.3%
- Jewish: 3.6%
- Muslim: 12.6%
- No religion: 31.6%
- Other religion: 2.3%
- Religion not stated: 8.0%
- Sikh: 0.3%

### Target Population Profile

Religion and belief are not recorded on the electoral register. Some of the venues are faith-based buildings. These are being used as community spaces, not for the purposes of practising a religion so there will be a neutral impact.

## 4h. Sex

### Data

#### Borough profile <sup>15</sup>

- Females: (51.8%)
- Males: (48.2%)

### Target Population Profile

Sex is not recorded on the electoral register, but residents will not be disproportionately impact based on sex, so the potential impacts will be neutral.

## 4i. Sexual Orientation

### Data

#### Borough profile <sup>16</sup>

- Straight or heterosexual: 83.4%
- Gay or Lesbian: 2.7%
- Bisexual: 2.1%
- All other sexual orientations: 0.8%
- Not answered: 11.0%

### Target Population Profile

---

<sup>14</sup> Census, 2021 – [Religion, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk)

<sup>15</sup> Census 2021 – [Gender identity: age and sex, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk)

<sup>16</sup> Census, 2021 – [Sexual orientation, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk)

Sexual orientation is not recorded on the electoral register, but residents will not be disproportionately impacted based on sexual orientation, so the potential impacts will be neutral.

## 4j. Socioeconomic Status

### Data

#### Borough profile

##### Income

- 6.9% of the population of Haringey were claiming unemployment benefit as of April 2023<sup>17</sup>
- 19.6% of residents were claiming Universal Credit as of March 2023<sup>18</sup>
- 29.3% of jobs in Haringey are paid below the London Living Wage<sup>19</sup>

##### Educational Attainment

- Haringey ranks 25<sup>th</sup> out of 32 in London for GCSE attainment (% of pupils achieving strong 9-5 pass in English and Maths)<sup>20</sup>
- 3.7% of Haringey's working age population had no qualifications as of 2021<sup>21</sup>
- 5.0% were qualified to level one only<sup>22</sup>

##### Area Deprivation

Haringey is the 4<sup>th</sup> most deprived in London as measured by the IMD score 2019. The most deprived LSOAs (Lower Super Output Areas, or small neighbourhood areas) are more heavily concentrated in the east of the borough, where more than half of the LSOAs fall into the 20% most deprived in the country.<sup>23</sup>

##### Target Population Profile

Socioeconomic status is not recorded on the electoral register, but residents will not be disproportionately impacted based on socioeconomic status, so the potential impacts will be neutral.

## 5. Key Impacts Summary

### 5a. Outline the key findings of your data analysis.

The visits to the proposed new polling places, and consultation about the proposals, concluded that the venues that we plan to use either meet the

---

<sup>17</sup> ONS – [ONS Claimant Count](#)

<sup>18</sup> DWP, StatXplore – [Universal Credit statistics, 29 April 2013 to 9 March 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>19</sup> ONS – [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings \(ASHE\) - Estimates of the number and proportion of employee jobs with hourly pay below the living wage, by work geography, local authority and parliamentary constituency, UK, April 2017 and April 2018 - Office for National Statistics](#)

<sup>20</sup> DfE – [GCSE attainment and progress 8 scores](#)

<sup>21</sup> LG Inform – [Data and reports | LG Inform \(local.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>22</sup> LG Inform – [Data and reports | LG Inform \(local.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>23</sup> IMD 2019 – [English indices of deprivation 2019 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

requirements of all electors or that reasonable adjustments can be made to make the venues accessible.

### **5b. Intersectionality**

- Many proposals will predominantly impact individuals who have more than one protected characteristic, thereby transforming the impact of the decision.
- This section is about applying a systemic analysis to the impact of the decision and ensuring protected characteristics are not considered in isolation from the individuals who embody them.
- Please consider if there is an impact on one or more of the protected groups? Who are the groups and what is the impact?

The focus of delivery of the polling scheme is to make voting as accessible as possible to everyone who is eligible. Much of the considerations in this report are about physical access so this will address the requirements where those intersect e.g. age and disability. These will be addressed by either using accessible venues, making venues accessible or, through the associated communications plan, promoting alternative ways of voting e.g. postal or proxy. The accessibility requirements of the Elections Act 2022 also include the accessibility of the electoral process at all stages. An important aspect of this will be to share information on polling places and the facilities at each as part of the engagement plan.

### **5c. Data Gaps**

Based on your data are there any relevant groups who have not yet been consulted or engaged? Please explain how you will address this

The electoral register is a statutory database and does not hold data on many of the characteristics. The guidance requires that the proposals for the polling districts and polling places are sent to local experts in disability. This was sent to the available contacts for representative groups. No responses were received from these groups. As part of the wider work that Electoral Services is doing on implementing and communicating the Elections Act 2022, other activities are being developed with a whole range of community groups to ensure that the information is cascaded, and feedback is gathered.

## **6. Overall impact of the policy for the Public Sector Equality Duty**

Summarise the key implications of the decision for people with protected characteristics.

In your answer, please consider the following three questions:

- Could the proposal result in any direct/indirect discrimination for any group that shares the relevant protected characteristics?
- Will the proposal help to advance equality of opportunity between groups who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not?

- Will the proposal help to foster good relations between groups who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not?

As noted in the relevant sections above, there will be both direct and indirect impacts on disabled and/or older electors, but the mitigations set out will be implemented - such as ensuring information about polling places is readily available and that reasonable adjustments are identified and made.

Electors have the choice to go to a polling station or to use an absent vote (either by post or proxy). This allows people a range of opportunities for participating in the electoral process. The review has aimed to ensure an even spread of accessible polling places across the borough where these are available.

The work on this review built on the previous reviews and their respective EqIAs.

The requirements for polling places have been established to make the venues accessible for all in terms of distance and location and inspections of all venues are being planned. Management of the polling stations to ensure that they provide a welcoming environment on election day is a separate issue from accessibility. Planning for this will be put in place using Electoral Commission guidance on the accessibility elements of the Elections Act 2022.

## **7. Amendments and mitigations**

### **7a. What changes, if any, do you plan to make to your proposal because of the Equality Impact Assessment?**

**No major change to the proposal:** this EqIA demonstrates the proposal is robust and there is no potential for discrimination or significantly adverse impact. All opportunities to promote equality have been taken. Mitigation has been identified for all the inequalities and negative impacts.

### **7b. What specific actions do you plan to take to remove or mitigate any actual or potential negative impact and to further the aims of the Equality Duty?**

Action:

The key limitation that is faced in developing a polling scheme is identifying a suitable set of fully accessible buildings that are conveniently located. Alternative options have been sought wherever this has been an issue. Where it has not been possible to make changes, this will be mitigated using information. Early information on polling station locations and their accessibility provisions will assist electors in making informed choices about how to vote. Communication about alternative voting methods and how to utilise them (postal or proxy) will allow people to vote without attending a polling station.

Lead officer: **Lesley Rennie**

Timescale: Ongoing as part of preparations for elections and as part of the electoral registration and absent vote application processes

Please outline any areas you have identified where negative impacts will happen because of the proposal, but it is not possible to mitigate them.

Please provide a complete and honest justification on why it is not possible to mitigate the:

**N/A**

## **7. Ongoing monitoring**

Feedback is sought after each election on the suitability of the polling scheme and the size of the electorate allocated to each polling place as well as the location and facilities there. This information is gathered from a variety of sources (polling station staff, political party representatives and public feedback). This polling scheme review was triggered by feedback from this type of information gathering.

### **Date of EqlA monitoring review:**

The Polling Stations will be reviewed following the 2 May 2024 Mayor and Greater London Assembly Elections, which are the next planned elections.

## **8. Authorisation**

EqlA approved by **Mark Stevens, Assistant Director Direct Services**

Date **6<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

## **9. Publication**

Please ensure the completed EqlA is published in accordance with the Council's policy.

Please contact the Policy & Strategy Team for any feedback on the EqlA process.