

**REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES
BASILDON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**COMMENTS OF THE ACTING RETURNING OFFICER FOR THE
BASILDON AND BILLERICAY COSTITUENCY**

Introduction

I am writing to provide my comments regarding the suitability of existing polling stations that fall within the Parliamentary Constituency wholly within the Basildon Local Authority area for which I am the Acting Returning Officer.

I am the Acting Returning Officer for the following Parliamentary Constituency: -

Basildon and Billericay Constituency – this is a borough constituency that is wholly within the Basildon Local Authority area and encompasses the following wards: -

- Billericay East
- Billericay West
- Burstead
- Crouch
- Fryerns
- Laindon Park
- St Martin's
- Vange

The remainder of the borough wards fall within constituencies that have a different Acting Returning Officer and it is for them to make comments on the suitability of those polling places.

My comments focus on the suitability of the existing and any proposed polling station in relation to: -

- Access for all electors including those with a disability
- Facilities for the required staff

My comments have been informed by the following:

- The outcome of the previous statutory review of polling places and polling stations undertaken by the council which found that the vast majority of the polling stations provided good access for all electors including those with a disability
- Previous visits to polling stations on various occasions to assess their suitability
- Any complaints received from electors at previous elections
- The findings of polling station supervisors who undertook an assessment on polling day in May 2023

No complaints were received from electors at the last election held in May 2023 and they had the benefit of voting at the same polling station which they were familiar with. Whilst the council has the option of moving a polling place, electors could find it more difficult to get to the new one and consideration should be a considered as to whether a change in polling district or place will bring a benefit to the electors in that area.

Specific Issues

Ward: Billericay East

Polling District: BB Norsey

Polling Place: Mayflower School, Stock Road, Billericay CM12 0RT

Mayflower School is used as a polling place and is a 'double polling station'. Previously we have used the two demountable classrooms that are separate from the main school building. The school has since raised concerns over safeguarding for the pupils and if we are to continue to use the demountable classrooms then the school will have to close to the pupils on polling day.

Complaints were received from the parents when the school did close for a previous election and concerns raised that if the school does have to close for elections, this will cause disruption to the pupil's education and families in arranging care.

At the May 2023 polls we used an alternative classroom at the front of the school, but this caused issues for the staff to accommodate the electorate as it was too small to accommodate a double polling station. After several meetings with the school, it has been agreed that they will allocate two classrooms at the front of the school which have access to them without entering the main school premises and has a ramp for wheelchair access.

I have considered this option and I am confident that this can work for future elections for both the electors, election staff and the school, but monitoring will be necessary to ensure no difficulties are encountered in the future.

My conclusion is that I consider that all polling stations in the Basildon and Billericay Constituency are suitable in relation to access for all electors including those with a disability and facilities for the staff are met.

Scott Logan

Acting Returning Officer for Basildon and Billericay Constituency