

<b>Ickleford Parish</b>	
<p>The Community Governance Review 2025, (CGR) determined that the parish of Ickleford be split to create two separate parish wards: Lavender Grange to the North, and Ickleford to the South.</p> <p>These changes come into force on the ordinary day of election in 2027. This change requires the creation of a new polling district, in addition to two separate polling stations for each parish ward.</p>	
<b>Representations</b>	
<p>The Council received one representation from a District Councillor on the polling arrangements in Ickleford; stating that the current polling place, Ickleford Village Hall, was unacceptably far away for electors to the North.</p> <p>The Council received no concerns over the suitability of Ickleford Village Hall or Holwell Village Hall for use as polling places.</p>	
<b>Current polling arrangements</b>	
Polling district	H-CA-ICK - Cadwell (Ickleford)
Polling station	Ickleford Village Hall
Electors	1773
<p>Ickleford Village Hall is currently the sole polling place for the parish of Ickleford and situated at the south of the current polling district on Arlesey Road. The village hall is central to the built-up residential area in the South and convenient to many electors within the Ickleford parish ward. For this reason, no changes are proposed to the existing arrangements for electors within the Ickleford parish ward. For electors in Lavender Grange, there is no suitable venue which could be used as a polling place within the Lavender Grange area.</p> <p>To support the changes brought in by the CGR, the current polling district of Ickleford should be split into two separate polling districts and follow the boundary of the new Lavender Grange parish ward.</p> <p>The Council has considered alternate polling places within North Hertfordshire for electors within Lavender Grange. The closest polling place is Holwell Village Hall, approximately two miles to the South-East. Holwell Village Hall is the current polling place for H-CA-HOL - Cadwell (Holwell) (338 electors); whilst outside of the polling district, the village hall could accommodate two polling stations within the village hall. Prior to the creation of the Lavender Grange parish ward, the polling place for the electors was Ickleford Village Hall, approximately three miles to the South. There are bus routes which run from Lavender Grange towards Holwell and Ickleford. Both village halls have carparks.</p> <p>These options were subsequently discussed with the local district ward member for Cadwell who suggested that of the two options it would be preferable to retain the polling district at Ickleford Village Hall.</p> <p>This is the position supported in the 2023 polling district review where it was originally proposed whether the now Lavender Grange parish ward would be better served by polling at Holwell Village Hall, but feedback suggested this was no closer than the existing arrangements, and an alternative venue which was more suitable could not be identified without looking outside of the district (Ickleford shares a border with Central Bedfordshire district). Therefore, with the available options, remaining at Ickleford Village Hall ensures that voters are familiar (as it is their existing station) and that they remain with the rest of the parish of Ickleford.</p>	
<b>Proposals</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That the polling district H-CA-ICK – Cadwell (Ickleford) be amended and a new polling district be created to align with the new parish wards, following the boundary determined by the CGR and named as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>H-CA-ICK – Cadwell (Ickleford) (1509 electors)</li> <li>H-CA-LG – Cadwell (Lavender Grange) (244 electors)</li> </ul> </li> <li>That Ickleford Village Hall be the designated polling place for Ickleford parish ward and Lavender Grange parish ward.</li> </ul>	

<b>Proposed polling arrangements summarised:</b>		
Polling district	H-CA-ICK – Cadwell (Ickleford)	H-CA-LG – Cadwell (Lavender Grange)
Polling station	Ickleford Village Hall	Ickleford Village Hall
Electors	1509	244

**Baldock, Bygrave, and Clothall**

Changes to Baldock, Bygrave, and Clothall following the Community Governance Review 2025 (CGR) come into effect for scheduled elections taking place from May 2027. These changes are as follows:

- N-BE-BYW - Baldock East (Bygrave West) will become part of unparished area of Baldock.
- N-BE-CL - Baldock East (Clothall) will cease to be part of the parish of Clothall and become part of unparished area of Baldock.
- N-BW-CL - Baldock West (Clothall) will cease to be part of the parish of Clothall and become part of unparished area of Baldock

There are currently two polling places within the Baldock area, Baldock Community Centre (Baldock East) and Tapps Garden Centre (Baldock West).

**Representations**

The Council received five representations for Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall.

A District Councillor suggested that the polling districts could be significantly simplified, while residents suggested that the mergers set out in the RO's recommendations could be problematic prior to the introduction of new authorities.

No concerns have been raised over the use of Baldock Community Centre as a polling place.

The council received comments regarding Tapps Garden Centre stating that it was cramped, with a comment from polling station staff on a dog freely roaming in and out of the polling place. A representation as part of this review suggested that one of the schools or the library could be a suitable alternative.

A further comment was made over the placement of security cameras at Tapps Garden Centre within the polling station with regards to visibility of the polling booths. This is something which can be mitigated by changing the layout of the polling station and will be addressed with polling station staff as part of their training.

<b>Current polling arrangements – Baldock East</b>			
Polling district	N-BE-1 – Baldock East 1	N-BE-BYW - Baldock East (Bygrave West)	N-BE-CL- Baldock East (Clothall)
Polling station	Tapps Garden Centre	Tapps Garden Centre	Tapps Garden Centre
Electors	2294	29	0
District Ward	Baldock East	Baldock East	Baldock East
County Electoral Division	Baldock and Letchworth East	Royston West and Rural	Royston West and Rural
<p>Following feedback from staff at elections in May 2025 and a representation as part of this review alternatives for Tapps Garden Centre have been considered. Suggested alternatives were one of the schools or the library.</p> <p>The polling station at Tapps Garden Centre is situated in the Café. The polling place has ample parking to the front and bus stop around 100m North East on Wallington Road. Access to the garden centre is level through double doors at the front of the building and the café is through a single door - the first right upon entering. The café is glass fronted allowing for ample natural light during the day, in addition to suitable indoor lighting. The room is suitably sized for two polling stations. Tables and chairs within the café are moved to accommodate the polling station,</p> <p>The ARO acknowledges that the use of schools and other educational institutions can be disruptive to the community and pose an inconvenience to parents for the day of poll therefore Hartsfield Junior Mixed &amp; Infant School has not been considered as part of this review.</p> <p>As there is a suitable venue within the polling district and Baldock Library is situated outside of the polling district to the West, across the road from Baldock Community Centre, it has not been considered as part of this review.</p> <p>The amalgamation of N-BE-CL (0 electors) and N-BE-BYW (29 electors) will support the changes brought in with the CGR where both polling districts become part of the unparished area of Baldock, although it is noted that the polling place is marginally outside of the polling district boundary line.</p> <p>Polling arrangements for the district ward of Baldock East could be further simplified with the merger of N-BE-1 (2294 electors), N-BE-BYW, and N-BE-CL to create a single polling district for the Baldock East District Ward (2323 electors). This arrangement could only be considered under special circumstances due to the low number of electors within N-BE-BYW and N-BE-CL.</p> <p>While it is not anticipated that County Council Elections will take place in 2028 as a result of LGR, it is worth noting that electors in N-BE-CL fall under the County Electoral Division for Royston West and Rural, whereas electors for N-BE-1 fall under the County Electoral Division for Baldock and Letchworth East; therefore, and for this reason, the merger of all three polling districts has not been proposed at this time.</p>			
<b>Proposals – Baldock East District Ward (effective May 2027)</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The following polling districts be amalgamated to form a new polling district called N-BE-2 – Baldock East 2 (29 electors): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N-BE-BYW (29 electors)</li> <li>N-BE-CL (0 electors)</li> </ul> </li> <li>That Tapps Garden Centre become the designated polling place for N-BE-2 – Baldock East 2</li> </ul>			

<b>Current polling arrangements – Baldock West</b>				
Polling district	N-BW1-1 – Baldock West 1	N-BW-2 – Baldock West 2	N-BW-3 – Baldock West 3	N-BW-CL –Baldock West (Clothall)
Polling station	Baldock Community Centre	Baldock Community Centre	Baldock Community Centre	Baldock Community Centre
Electors	1304	2355	2147	2
District Ward	Baldock West	Baldock West	Baldock West	Baldock West
County Electoral Division	Baldock and Letchworth East	Baldock and Letchworth East	Baldock and Letchworth East	Royston West and Rural

No concerns have been raised over the use of Baldock Community Centre as a polling place.

Consideration has been given to the merger of polling districts within Baldock West, to simplify polling arrangements. Were this to be undertaken, there would still be a need for multiple (double/triple) polling stations at the designated polling place to effectively support electors voting on the day of poll. The Electoral Commission recommends that a polling station should have no more than 2,250 electors allocated, assuming the poll is not combined.

The amalgamation of N-BW-CL (2 electors) and N-BW-3 (2147 electors) will support changes brought in with the CGR where N-BL-CL becomes part of the unparished area of Baldock. The amalgamation of these two polling districts will support the simplification of polling districts within Baldock.

While it is not anticipated that County Council Elections will take place in 2028 as a result of LGR, it is worth noting that electors in N-BW-CL fall under the County Electoral Division for Royston West and Rural, whereas electors for N-BW-3 fall under the County Electoral Division for Baldock and Letchworth East; therefore, and for this reason, the merger of these two polling districts has not been proposed at this time.

<b>Proposals – Baldock West District Ward (effective May 2027)</b>
Due to N-BW-CL –Baldock West (Clothall) having a different County Electoral Division to the remaining polling districts, no changes to the current polling arrangements are proposed at this time.

## Royston

Changes to Royston following the Community Governance Review 2025 (CGR) come into effect for scheduled elections taking place in May 2026. These changes are as follows:

- Existing parish wards are to be abolished
- The parish of Royston shall be divided into the following three parish wards to align with the district ward boundaries:
  - Royston Heath
  - Royston Meridian
  - Royston Palace
- Each parish ward shall comprise the area of the district ward bearing the same name.

The civil parish of Royston is a highly populated town. There are rural areas towards the South and the East, and a retail area in the North-West. There are currently eleven polling districts. Following the recent CGR, there is scope to reduce the number of polling districts and, in turn, reduce the number of polling places used.

## Representations

The Council received seven representations for Royston in total. Three representations specifically for Royston Heath, three for Royston Meridian, and none for Royston Palace.

A resident considered that the polling district boundaries were satisfactory but challenged the relevance of this review considering it a waste of council resources.

### ***Royston Heath***

One resident considered that N-RHR-4 relocate to either the Old School House or Market Hill Rooms as the Museum was considered somewhat out of the way. Two residents suggested that any changes could be problematic prior to mergers resulting from LGR.

### ***Royston Meridian***

One resident requested that the Royston Leisure Centre (and all other polling stations) remain unchanged as they are conveniently placed for all electors.

A district councillor suggested that RMR-3 and RMR 4 be co-located to reduce the number of polling places within Royston Town Centre.

Current polling arrangements – Royston Heath Parish Ward (effective May 2026)					
Polling district	N-RHE-1 - Royston Heath 1	N-RHE-2 - Royston Heath 2	N-RHE-3 - Royston Heath 3	N N-RHE-4 - Royston Heath 4	N-RHE-5 - Royston Heath 5
Polling station	Royston Evangelical Church	Royston Evangelical Church	Royston Museum	Royston Museum	The Old Schoolhouse
Electors	140	738	1660	1281	201
District Ward	Royston Heath	Royston Heath	Royston Heath	Royston Heath	Royston Heath
County Electoral Division	Royston East and Ermine	Royston West and Rural	Royston West and Rural	Royston West and Rural	Royston East and Ermine
<p>Royston Heath currently consists of five separate polling districts, with N-RHE2 and N-RHE-3 separated by the train line running along the boundary. Polling districts N-RHE-1 (140 electors) and N-RHE-5 (201 electors) will form part of the Royston Heath parish ward for elections taking place in May 2026.</p> <p>One representation suggested the amalgamation of N-RHE-3 (1660 electors) and N-RHE-4 (1281 electors) into a single polling district; this would support the streamlining of polling arrangements within Royston Heath and create a polling district of 2941 electors. Any further mergers of polling districts within Royston Heath would need to be considered under special measures due to the current boundaries corresponding with those for county electoral divisions.</p> <p>Royston Evangelical Church is situated to the North East of Royston Heath, on the corner of Old North Road and York Way. There is a carpark, and bus stops a short walk from the polling place. The church is well lit and can comfortably accommodate at least two polling stations. It is worth noting that there is currently no internet at this polling place.</p> <p>Royston Museum is located to the East of Royston Heath. The museum does not have any parking, or a drop off point, including disabled parking. There are bus stops to the north on Kneeworth Street and to the South on Baldock Street. To access the polling place there is a ramp. The museum itself is well lit and there is room to manoeuvre a wheelchair. The Museum is currently used as a double polling station. At present the museum is closed, and due to re-open February 2026.</p> <p>Centrally located to the East of Royston Heath (but just outside of the polling district) The Old School House on Market Hill has limited nearby pay and display parking (on the road), further parking at Priory Gardens Carpark, and a short walk away. There are bus stops to the North on Baldock Street, Melbourn Street, and to the South at Royston Bus Station. Access to the polling place is via a slight step, and the hall could accommodate two polling stations.</p> <p>No concerns were raised over the current polling places, therefore, were the recommendation to reduce polling districts from five to four approved, consideration could be given to moving the polling place for N-RHE-3 and N-RHE-4 to co-locate with N-RHE-5 at the Old School House.</p> <p>The amalgamation of N-RHE-1 (140 electors) with N-RHE-2 (738 electors) will support changes brought in with the CGR where N-RHE-1 becomes part of the parish ward of Royston Heath. These could be amalgamated to create a single polling district with 878 electors which would support the simplification of polling districts within Royston. The designated polling place for both polling districts is currently Royston Evangelical Church.</p> <p>Furthermore, the amalgamation of N-RHE-5 (202 electors) with N-RHE-3 (1660 electors) and N-RHE-4 (1281 electors) will support changes brought in with the CGR where N-RHE-5 becomes part of the parish ward of Royston Heath. This could be amalgamated to create a single polling district with 3143 electors and support the simplification of polling districts within Royston. The designated polling places are currently Royston Museum and The Old School House</p> <p>While it is not anticipated that County Council Elections will take place in 2028 as a result of LGR, it is worth noting that Royston Heath contains two different County Electoral divisions. N-RHE-2, N-RHE-3, and N-RHE-4 are part of the county electoral division for Royston West and Rural, while N-RHE-1 and N-RHE-5 are part of the county electoral division for Royston East and Ermine; therefore, and for this reason, the mergers considered above have not been proposed at this time.</p>					

<b>Proposals – Royston Heath Parish Ward (effective May 2026)</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The following polling districts within the Royston Heath parish ward be amalgamated into one new polling district, N-RHE-3 – Royston Heath 3 (2941 electors):           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N-RHE-3- Royston Heath 3 (1635 electors)</li> <li>N-RHE-4 Royston Heath 4 (967 electors)</li> </ul> </li> <li>That the designated polling place for Royston Heath 3 become The Old School House.</li> <li>That N-RHE-5 - Royston Heath 5 is renamed N-RHE-4 – Royston Heath 4.</li> </ul>				
<b>Proposed polling arrangements summarised – Royston Heath Parish Ward (effective May 2026)</b>				
Polling district	N-RHE-1 - Royston Heath 1	N-RHE-2 - Royston Heath 2	N-RHE-3 – Royston Heath 3	N-RHE-4 – Royston Heath 4
Former Polling District	N-RHE-1 - Royston Heath 1	N-RHE-2 - Royston Heath 2	N-RHE-3 - Royston Heath 3 N-RHE-4 - Royston Heath 4	N-RHE-5 - Royston Heath 5
Polling Place	Royston Evangelical Church	Royston Evangelical Church	The Old Schoolhouse	The Old Schoolhouse
Former Polling Place	Royston Evangelical Church	Royston Evangelical Church	Royston Museum	The Old Schoolhouse
Electors	140	738	2941	201
District Ward	Royston Heath	Royston Heath	Royston Heath	Royston Heath
County Electoral Division	Royston East and Ermine	Royston West and Rural	Royston West and Rural	Royston East and Ermine

Current polling arrangements – Royston Meridian Parish Ward (effective May 2026)				
Polling district	N-RMR-1 - Royston Meridian 1	N-RMR-2 - Royston Meridian 2	N-RMR-3 - Royston Meridian 3	N-RMR-4 - Royston Meridian 4
Polling station	Royston Leisure Centre	Royston Leisure Centre	Royston Library	Market Hill Rooms
Electors	1240	1872	1344	967
District Ward	Royston Meridian	Royston Meridian	Royston Meridian	Royston Meridian
County Electoral Division	Royston East and Ermine			

Royston Meridian currently consists of four separate polling districts, two to the North of Newmarket Road, sharing a single polling place, and two to the South with separate polling places.

The merger of N-RMR-1 and N-RMR-2 to create a new polling district will streamline polling arrangements with no impact to the elector.

Merging N-RMR-3 and N-RMR-4 would streamline polling arrangements, with the impact on half the electorate being a change in polling station.

This would reduce the number of polling districts in Royston Meridian parish ward from four to two, with the boundary running along New Market Road creating a North South divide.

Royston Leisure Centre is the current polling station for N-RMR-1 and N-RMR-2. The Returning Officer currently uses the sports hall as a polling station. There is building work currently underway with a new studio due to complete in early spring, which has potential to be a suitable alternative to the sports hall. Due to the size of the hall, location and high footfall, Royston Leisure Centre has been identified for use as a polling hub at potential elections pilots taking place in May 2026.

Market Hill Rooms is located on the corner of Market Hill and Fish Hill, just outside of the polling district boundary for N-RMR-3. Priory Garden Car Park is the closest car park to the Market Hill Rooms, and bus stops are located to the South-West on Barkway Street and to the North-East on Priory Lane. Access to the polling place is level, and the main hall can comfortably accommodate a double polling station. There is potential to allocate limited disabled parking at the back of the polling place.

Royston Library is located on Market Hill, to the South of The Old School House also outside of the polling district. There is public parking nearby, with disabled parking bays). A review of the polling station in 2023 states that bookshelves can be moved to create space and that it may be able to accommodate two polling stations.

Were N-RMR-3 and N-RMR-4 to be amalgamated, the Market Hill Rooms is the recommended polling place to co-locate the polling stations. This is due to the hall being of a sufficient size to comfortably accommodate a double polling station. While the Priory carpark is a similar distance to both polling places, the Market Hill Rooms are located just over the boundary and therefore closer to the parish ward.

Proposals – Royston Meridian Parish Ward (effective May 2026)				
1.	The following polling districts within the Royston Meridian parish ward be amalgamated to create a new polling district, N-RM-1 - Royston Meridian (North) (3112 electors)			
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N-RMR-1 (1240 electors)</li> <li>N-RMR-2 (1872 electors)</li> <li>That the designated polling place for Royston Meridian North be Royston Leisure Centre</li> </ol>			
2.	The following polling districts within the Royston Meridian parish ward be amalgamated to create a new polling district, N-RM-2 - Royston Meridian (South) (2311 electors)			
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N-RMR-3 (1344 electors)</li> <li>N-RMR-4 (967 electors)</li> <li>That the designated polling place for Royston Meridian South be Market Hill Rooms</li> </ol>			

<b>Proposed polling arrangements summarised – Royston Meridian Parish Ward (effective May 2026)</b>		
Polling district	N-RM-1 - Royston Meridian (North)	N-RM-2 - Royston Meridian (South)
Former Polling District	N-RMR-1 - Royston Meridian 1 N-RMR-2 - Royston Meridian 2	N-RMR-3 - Royston Meridian 3 N-RMR-4 - Royston Meridian 4
Polling Place	Royston Leisure Centre	Market Hill Rooms
Former Polling Place	Royston Leisure Centre	Royston Library Market Hill Rooms
Electors	3112	2311
District Ward	Royston Meridian	Royston Meridian
County Electoral Division	Royston East and Ermine	Royston East and Ermine

<b>Royston Palace Parish Ward</b>		
<b>Representations</b>		
No representations were received specifically for the Royston Palace parish ward.		
<b>Current polling arrangements</b>		
Polling district	N-RPA-1 - Royston Palace 1	N-RPA-2 - Royston Palace 2
Polling station	Coombes Community Centre	Royston Town Hall
Electors	2370	1882
<p>Coombes Community Centre is located toward the North East of the parish ward and situated within a residential area. The polling place has sufficient parking to the side and the rear of the polling place, in addition to bus stops to the West along Burns Road.</p> <p>There is sufficient space to access the polling place for electors with mobility issues and designated disabled parking to the front of the venue. The hall at the community centre is the preferred polling station and located towards the North East corner of the building; however, this is not always available for use.</p> <p>The Returning Officer has previously used the Rainbow Room located in the West corner of the building. The Rainbow Room is suitable for polls where a lower turnout is anticipated but could be problematic for electors with mobility concerns navigating around the polling station. No concerns have been raised over the polling place; therefore, it is recommended that Coombes Community Centre remain the designated polling place for this polling district.</p> <p>Due to the size of the hall and central location, Coombes Community Centre has been identified for use as a polling hub at potential elections pilots taking place in May 2026.</p> <p>Royston Town Hall is situated towards the South East of the parish ward. The polling station has ample parking on site, and has a bus stop outside of the polling place. Access to the polling station is through the front of the building, via the entrance on Melbourn Street, and easily accessible for those with mobility concerns. The polling place is of a size sufficient to accommodate a double polling station within the hall.</p> <p>Due to the size of the hall and central location, Royston Town Hall has been identified for use as a polling hub at potential elections pilots taking place in May 2026.</p>		
<b>Proposals - Royston Palace Parish (effective May 2026)</b>		
No changes to the current polling arrangements are proposed at this time.		

The following areas were not impacted as part of the Community Governance Review 2025 (CGR).

Caldecote (12 electors)-and Newnham (79 electors)
Due to Caldecote and Newnham being two separate Parish Wards, any merger between the two electorates is not feasible.

Hitchin Bearton																																				
The Returning Officer highlighted in their recommendations that the electorate for H-HBE- 4 - Hitchin Bearton 4 could be co-located to a closer polling place, The Catholic Parish Church, situated within H-HBE- 3 - Hitchin Bearton 3.																																				
Representations																																				
One representation was received regarding Hitching Bearton, suggesting that mergers could be problematic prior to moving to new unitary authorities.																																				
Current polling arrangements																																				
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Polling district</th> <th>H-HBE-1 - Hitchin Bearton 1</th> <th>H-HBE-2 - Hitchin Bearton 2</th> <th>H-HBE-3 - Hitchin Bearton 3</th> <th>H-HBE-4 - Hitchin Bearton 4</th> <th>H-HBE-5 - Hitchin Bearton 5</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Polling station</td> <td>Hitchin Scout Hut/Shop</td> <td>Hitchin Rugby Clubhouse</td> <td>Catholic Parish Church Hall</td> <td>Walsworth Road Baptist Church</td> <td>Walsworth Road Baptist Church</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Electors</td> <td>759</td> <td>2498</td> <td>2896</td> <td>12</td> <td>681</td> </tr> <tr> <td>District Ward</td> <td>Hitchin Bearton</td> <td>Hitchin Bearton</td> <td>Hitchin Bearton</td> <td>Hitchin Bearton</td> <td>Hitchin Bearton</td> </tr> <tr> <td>County Electoral Division</td> <td>Hitchin North</td> <td>Hitchin North</td> <td>Hitchin North</td> <td>Hitchin South</td> <td>Hitchin South</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parliamentary Constituency</td> <td>Hitchin</td> <td>Hitchin</td> <td>Hitchin</td> <td>Hitchin</td> <td>Hitchin</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Polling district	H-HBE-1 - Hitchin Bearton 1	H-HBE-2 - Hitchin Bearton 2	H-HBE-3 - Hitchin Bearton 3	H-HBE-4 - Hitchin Bearton 4	H-HBE-5 - Hitchin Bearton 5	Polling station	Hitchin Scout Hut/Shop	Hitchin Rugby Clubhouse	Catholic Parish Church Hall	Walsworth Road Baptist Church	Walsworth Road Baptist Church	Electors	759	2498	2896	12	681	District Ward	Hitchin Bearton	County Electoral Division	Hitchin North	Hitchin North	Hitchin North	Hitchin South	Hitchin South	Parliamentary Constituency	Hitchin	Hitchin	Hitchin	Hitchin	Hitchin				
Polling district	H-HBE-1 - Hitchin Bearton 1	H-HBE-2 - Hitchin Bearton 2	H-HBE-3 - Hitchin Bearton 3	H-HBE-4 - Hitchin Bearton 4	H-HBE-5 - Hitchin Bearton 5																															
Polling station	Hitchin Scout Hut/Shop	Hitchin Rugby Clubhouse	Catholic Parish Church Hall	Walsworth Road Baptist Church	Walsworth Road Baptist Church																															
Electors	759	2498	2896	12	681																															
District Ward	Hitchin Bearton	Hitchin Bearton	Hitchin Bearton	Hitchin Bearton	Hitchin Bearton																															
County Electoral Division	Hitchin North	Hitchin North	Hitchin North	Hitchin South	Hitchin South																															
Parliamentary Constituency	Hitchin	Hitchin	Hitchin	Hitchin	Hitchin																															
Electors in H-HBE-4 - Hitchin Bearton 4 (12 electors) currently travel through H-HBE-3 - Hitchin Bearton 3, passing the Catholic Parish Church Hall to get to their polling place, Walsworth Road Baptist Church.																																				
Due to geographical placement of the two polling districts, it is not viable to merge them, however relocating the electors to the Catholic Parish Church Hall on Nightingale Road while closer to the polling district from an administrative point of view at a County level election would be more difficult as they would be required to vote in a different polling station and could result in confusion for those electors. Based on this no changes to the polling arrangements are recommended at this time.																																				
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**H-HBE-5 – Hitchin Bearton 5 - Benslow Music****H-HHI-1 – Hitchin Highbury 1 - Walsworth Rd Baptist church**

The Council has received a request raising concerns over the placement of polling places for electors in H-HBE-5 and H-HHI-1, siting that the hill is problematic for some electors.

The current polling places serve the polling districts which they are situated within, and while the council acknowledge that Benslow Lane is a hill, no other concerns have been raised over the polling arrangements.

During the 2023 polling district review it is noted in the consultation responses were overwhelmingly in favour of retaining the polling place at Benslow Music.

The boundary between the polling districts is the boundary line between the district wards of Hitchin Bearton and Hitchin Highbury. Alternate polling places within H-HHI-1 could be the William Ranson Primary School or the Hitchin Girls School, however the ARO acknowledges that the use of schools and other educational institutions can be disruptive to the community and pose an inconvenience to parents for the day of poll and does not consider this to be a practical alternative.

As no concerns over the polling places have been raised, no changes are recommended to the current polling arrangements at this time.

**Hitchwood (Langley)**

Following the Hertfordshire County Council elections in May 2025, the Council was approached by a resident of Langley offering use of his garden shed/home office as a polling place within the H-HWO-LAN – Hitchwood (Langley) polling district.

It is not recommended that residential properties are used as polling places, where this is part of someone's house or shed, due to the potential safeguarding concerns this could pose.

The Council acknowledges that there are limited options for polling places within Langley and have approached Almshoe Glamping, White Lane, St Ippolts, as to whether they may have a suitable venue. At time of writing a response is outstanding.

The current polling place for the polling district is New Fellowship Hall, Whitwell which is also the designated polling place for H-HWO - SPW (St Pauls Walden). No concerns have been received regarding the New Fellowship Hall; therefore, no changes are recommended at this time.

<b>H-HWA-1 – Hitchin Walsworth (Billing Place)</b>		
<b>Representation</b>		
One representation was received suggesting that elector's resident on the Billing Place, Hitchin Walsworth would be better moved from polling district H-HWA-1 to H-HWA-2.		
<b>Current Polling Arrangements</b>		
<b>Polling District</b>	H-HWA-1 – Hitchin Walsworth 1	H-HWA-2 – Hitchin Walsworth 2
<b>Electors</b>	1475	1591
<p>Billing Place has 24 properties (numbered 1 through 24), with 21 registered electors and part of H-HWA-1. Access to Billing Place is from Hampden Road, not Cambridge Road, and electors currently drive past the polling place at the New Testament Church of God to attend their polling place at Walsworth Community Centre. Electors in dwellings 1, 3, 5, and 7 Hampden Road are currently part of H-HWA-2. If Billing Place were to be moved from H-HWA-1 to H-HWA-2 electors would be reallocated to the New Testament Church of God as a polling place which is significantly closer.</p>		
<b>Proposal</b>		
That the polling district boundary for H-HWA-2 Hitchin Walsworth be moved to incorporate dwellings 1 through 24 at Billing Place (21 electors).		
<b>Proposal summarised</b>		
<b>Polling District</b>	H-HWA-1 – Hitchin Walsworth 1	H-HWA-2 – Hitchin Walsworth 2
<b>Electors</b>	1454	1612

<b>S-KN-CDE – Knebworth (Codicote – East)</b>		
<b>Representation</b>		
In January 2025 the Council was approached with a request from two electors to vote at the Oaklands Primary School as it was closer than the designated polling place.		
<b>Current Polling Arrangements</b>		
The current polling place for S-KN-CDE – Knebworth (Codicote – East) is John Clements Sports and Community Centre, Codicote. This polling place is located within North Hertfordshire, in the neighbouring polling district of S-CK-CVL – Codicote and Kimpton (Codicote Village). The community centre is close to the boundary of the polling district which runs from the North round to the South-East, making it accessible to electors' resident towards the North and North-East of S-KN-CDE – Knebworth (Codicote – East). The ARO acknowledges that the use of schools and other educational institutions can be disruptive to the community and pose an inconvenience to parents for the day of poll. Due to the lack of concerns over the existing polling arrangements, in addition to Oaklands Primary School being located outside of the North Hertfordshire district, no changes to the current polling arrangements are recommended at this time.		
<b>Proposal</b>		
No changes to the current polling arrangements are proposed at this time.		

<b>Letchworth South West</b>				
<b>Representation</b>				
<b>Current Polling Arrangements</b>				
Polling district	N-LSW-1 – Letchworth South West 1	N-LSW-2 – Letchworth South West 2	N-LSW-3 – Letchworth South West 3	N-LSW-4 – Letchworth South West 4
Polling station	Museum at One Garden City	The Cloisters	The Cloisters	Willian Village Hall
Electors	2665	2146	1671	159
<p>The current polling district boundary between N-LSW-1 and N-LSW-2 runs along the back of the property boundary between residents on Meadow Way and Pixmore Way. To consider the change proposed by the representation would require the changing of polling district boundaries of N-LSW-1 and N-LSW2. These changes would an increase in the electorate polling at the museum.</p> <p>The Museum One Garden City (OGC) states on its website that it is a micro museum. There is limited parking available at the museum, however it is centrally located to the polling district. Moving the boundary of the polling district as suggested in the representation would increase the electorate to over the recommended number of electors per polling station and require a second polling station to be created at the museum.</p> <p>A double station has been attempted at this polling place previously, with one polling station located within the museum and a second in an office space further into the building. Election staff have previously commented that the museum is very small. It is acknowledged that there is no other suitable venue for hire within the polling district.</p> <p>There is no dedicated parking at the museum, with limited free parking bays on Arena Parade, and some surrounding roads. The closest carparks are available at Morrisons or Letchworth Town Hall.</p> <p>During the statutory PDR in 2023, consultation responses from Members of the public were generally in favour of retaining the polling place at OGC raising its close walking distance and accessibility. Similar comments were received from responses in relation to The Cloisters.</p> <p>The Cloisters is a large venue, with ample space and currently hosts a two polling stations for the Letchworth South West District Ward. There is ample free parking on site, which supports the accessibility needs for electors with mobility issues who can park at the rear of the venue which has in bays next to the entrance to the polling place.</p> <p>As the difference in distance travelled is minimal for electors to their designated polling place, from an accessibility perspective The Cloisters is considered the preferred venue.</p> <p>As no further comments were received regarding polling arrangements in Letchworth South West, no changes are proposed at this time.</p>				
<b>Proposals</b>				
That no changes are made to the current polling arrangements at this time.				

<b>Letchworth Wilbury</b>
Due to the district ward boundaries not being coterminous with the country divisional boundaries, no changes are recommended to the current polling arrangements at this time.

**Nuthampstead and Barkway**

Due to the Nuthampstead and Barkway being separate parishes, no changes are recommended to the current polling arrangements at this time.

**Preston Village Hall, Preston (362 electors)**

The Council received one response to the PDR regarding Preston Village Hall. The village hall as a polling place was considered suitable, however the resident somewhat disagreed that there was adequate disabled parking available.

As there was no request to consider an alternate polling place no further action has been taken.

**Whitehill Junior School, Hitchin**

The Council was approached by the Head Teacher of Whitehill Junior School following the Hertfordshire County Council elections in May 2025 requesting that an alternate polling place be sought, due to the disruption this causes students the week prior to taking their SATs and concerns and complaints received by the school from parents.

An alternative polling place could be St. Johns Community Centre. St. Johns Community Centre currently provides a small hall for use as a polling station. There is also a larger hall which has regular bookings.

There is potential to relocate electors from the Whitehill Junior School to St. Johns Community Centre, however this would require access to both halls due to the Returning Officer hosting three polling stations across two halls.

At time of writing the Council has not heard back from St. Johns Community Centre, therefore no changes are recommended but we will continue to seek alternative locations prior to any future elections.

**Wymondley****Representations**

The parish council submitted a response to the PDR that they disagreed with the suitability of Great Wymondley Village Hall for use as a polling place, stating that there is no parking and limited public transport. They suggested that a polling place should be designated within Little Wymondley – suggesting the Wymondley Junior Mixed and Infant School or the Baptist Church.

**Current polling arrangements**

Polling district	H-GW-GTW - Grv St Ipps & W` ley (Wymondley - Gt Wymondley)	H-GW-LTW - Grv St Ipps & W` ley (Wymondley - Lt Wymondley)	H-GW-WTG - Grv St Ipps & W` ley (Wymondley - Todds Green)
Polling station	Great Wymondley Village Hall	Great Wymondley Village Hall	Great Wymondley Village Hall
Electors	134	655	117
Parish Ward	Wymondley (Great Wymondley)	Wymondley (Little Wymondley)	Wymondley (Todds Green)

Wymondley Baptist Church is located on Stevenage Road, and central to Little Wymondley. The Church Hall was previously used as a polling station and delegated as part of the Polling District and Polling Places Review 2023, but in early 2024 the RO was advised that the Church Hall was no longer available for hire.

There was extensive consideration of other venues in the area, and these were considered within the delegated decision taken on 8 March 2024 as follows:

*Wymondley JMI School* - This has previously been used as a polling station and the school would accommodate a polling station, provided certain safeguarding measures were put in place, essentially providing additional members

of staff to act as security to prevent pupils from being able to leave the premises or members of the public being able to access parts of the school building that they were not authorised to do so.

As the main school hall would be used as the polling station, a member of staff would need to be positioned to act as security at the main reception door to manage people entering the building and to direct them to the main hall. Entering via the main entrance does pose accessibility issues as there are some large steps to access the main hall.

Due to the access issues an alternative entrance to the main hall was considered. However, that access opened to a path in the school playground. Although there are less steps to negotiate, which could be resolved via a temporary ramp, the fact that access is directly in the school playground creates wider safeguarding and security issues when children are using the playground.

This venue has therefore been discounted, given the complications of having to provide additional equipment and staff to resolve the issues mentioned. In addition, from a staff welfare point it is less than ideal to expect a member of polling station staff to be permanently stationed outside in potentially inclement weather and temperatures.

#### *St Marys Church*

The church is in the parish, near to the Baptist Church. Following a site visit, although the room itself is suitable as a polling station, there is concern regarding the facilities available for staff. The toilet is a porta loo, there is no running water or heating facilities, and outside lighting may be an issue when dark.

#### *Wymondley Tennis Club*

The Tennis Club advised that the facilities are very small.

#### *Little Wymondley Playing Field*

The Parish Council indicated that the football facilities consisted of changing rooms, a kitchen and showers.

#### *Needham House*

Unavailable for hire.

#### *Plume of Feathers pub*

Following a site visit the proposed room is a temporary structure outside in the pub garden, rather than the actual main building itself. It was therefore felt that this would not be appropriate as a polling station as it lacked the facilities required, particularly if the election was in the colder months.

#### *Portacabin*

Renting a portacabin creates the same issues as mentioned regarding St Marys Church in terms of facilities for staff. Land to site the portacabin, along with permission would need to be sought. The hire costs of a portacabin, along with the required generator and Portaloo is significant and are not an easy solution.

The Council has approached Wymondley Junior Mixed and Infant School, Wymondley Baptist Church, and the Plume and Feathers (public house) to see whether they may have a suitable space available for use. At time of writing the Council is yet to receive a response.

The ARO acknowledges that the use of schools and other educational institutions can be disruptive to the community and pose an inconvenience to parents for the day of poll therefore consideration of the Wymondley Junior Mixed and Infant School has been considered where no other viable option is available.

Alternate venues were considered in March 2024, and it was determined that due to the combined electorate being small (currently 906) the Great Wymondley Village Hall would be the best option.

#### **Proposals**

That Great Wymondley Village Hall remain the designated polling place.

No further changes are proposed at this time.