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Our Ref: CE1413940

15 November 2023

Dear Mr Curtis

Polling Districts and Polling Places Review 2023 – Acting Returning Officer's Response

Thank you for your letter dated 3 November 2023 informing me of the decision of the London Borough Tower Hamlets to undertake a Parliamentary review of polling districts and polling places.

I am writing to you in my capacity as the recently appointed Acting Returning Officer for the newly created Parliamentary constituency of Stratford & Bow, in response to the compulsory Parliamentary polling districts and polling place review launched on Monday 2 October 2023.

I write to request that whilst undertaking the review, the review adheres to the published guidance by the Electoral Commission¹, with particular attention given to improving accessibility for voters and engaging with partners that have interest/expertise in relation accessibility for persons with different types of disability.

In addition, that the review be undertaken in accordance with the rules that apply to the designation of polling places. The Elections Act 2022 introduced changes with respect to providing greater flexibility and choice in how disabled voters are supported to vote at polling stations.

The Elections Act 2022 provides a duty for Returning Officers to provide each polling station with such equipment as it is reasonable to provide for the purposes of enabling, or making it easier for, relevant

¹ <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/reviews-polling-districts-polling-places-and-polling-stations>

persons to vote independently and in secret. The review should therefore include consideration of whether the building can accommodate the equipment required to provide support to disabled voters.

I note that an alternative polling place is being explored for polling place 'Hub 67' in polling district BE2, and therefore I would welcome if you could share with me the replacement for this polling place once confirmed.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the office.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Abi Gbago".

Abi Gbago
Chief Executive