

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report To: Constitutional and Nomination Committee - 1 October 2010

Subject: Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places: Draft Final Proposals

Report Of: Chief Executive

Purpose of the report

To consider the Council's final proposals on the statutory review of Polling Districts and Polling Places.

Recommendations

1. To note the submissions made to the Council in respect of the review of polling districts and polling places for the City of Manchester.
2. To note the final proposals in respect of the review.
3. To recommend to the full council the adoption of parliamentary polling districts and parliamentary polling places as set out in the scheme contained in Appendix one.
4. To recommend to the full council the approval of the reasons given in the report for the decisions taken in respect of the designation of parliamentary polling districts and parliamentary polling places.
5. To recommend to full council that the scheme contained in Appendix one be adopted in relation to local government elections.
6. To recommend to full council that the Chief Executive be requested to publish such notices and other documentation required by law on completion of the review.
7. To recommend that the full council request that the Electoral Registration Officer make the necessary adaptations to polling districts in the 1st December 2010 electoral register and give notice of such alteration on that date.
8. To note that final proposals have yet to be made in respect of the polling places for proposed polling districts CLD, HBJ, NOD and SHH and recommend to full council that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to designate those polling places in consultation with ward councillors, group leaders and the Chair of Constitutional and Nomination Committee.
9. To recommend to full council that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to make, where necessary, alterations to the designation of any polling place, prior

to the next full review, in consultation with ward councillors, group leaders and the Chair of Constitutional and Nomination Committee.

10. To approve the proposed interim designation of polling places for Hulme ward for the purposes of any poll arising out of the election to fill the present casual vacancy in the ward.

Financial consequences for revenue budget:

The costs of undertaking the review is in the region of £16,000. The costs for the implementation of the final proposals is approximately £40,000.

Financial consequences for capital budget:

None

Wards affected:

All

Implications for:

Antipoverty	Equal Opportunities	Environment	Employment
No	Yes	No	No

The accessibility of polling stations is a key consideration in the designation of polling places and districts. Consultation with electors and representatives of disability groups has been undertaken and the City Council will continue to work with representatives of disability groups to implement recommendations regarding reasonable adjustments to polling places and training for polling station staff.

Background documents:

- Representation of the People Act 1983
- The Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections)
- Regulations 2006
- Report to Constitutional and Nomination Committee 18 June 2010
- Report to Constitutional and Nomination Committee 29 July 2010
- Summary of representations received by the City Council and the Acting Returning Officer in connection with the review

Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Final Proposals for changes to polling districts and polling places
- Appendix 2: Summary of responses to the consultation
- Appendix 3: Consultation Response from Manchester Disabled Person's Access Group
- Appendix 4: (Acting) Returning Officer's Comments on the Council's Initial Proposals (published 30 August)
- Appendix 5: Polling Place Assessment Criteria
- Appendix 6: Ward Maps detailing existing and proposed Polling District boundaries

Contact officers:

Sir Howard Bernstein
Chief Executive
h.bernstein@manchester.gov.uk 0161 234 3006

Michelle Chard
Head of Democratic and Statutory Services
m.chard@manchester.gov.uk 0161 234 4098

Tricia Rigby
Electoral Services Manager
t.rigby@manchester.gov.uk 0161 234 3283

Kate Brown
Democratic Services Project Officer
k.brown3@manchester.gov.uk 0161 234 4269

1. Background

- 1.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2006, introduced a duty for all parliamentary polling districts and polling places to be reviewed every 4 years. Manchester last conducted such a review in 2007 and the next full review was scheduled to take place in 2011. However, as part of the general review of the 2010 combined elections and of problems at a number of existing polling stations it was proposed that a statutory review should be commenced immediately.
- 1.2 At its meeting on 29 July 2010, this Committee authorised the initiation of a statutory review of the City's parliamentary polling districts and polling places, to be combined with a review of local government polling districts. The Committee approved the Council's initial proposals for changes to polling districts and polling places, which have been subject to consultation throughout the summer.
- 1.3 This report and the appendices set out the Council's final proposals for changes to polling districts and polling places.

2. Terminology used in this Report

- 2.1 **Polling district:** the area created by the division of a constituency, ward or European Parliamentary electoral region into smaller parts, within which a polling place can be determined which is convenient to electors.
- 2.2 **Polling place:** the geographical area in which polling stations will be sited by the Returning Officer.
- 2.3 **Polling station:** the actual area where the poll takes place and which must be located within the polling place. Chosen by the Returning Officer and publicised in the Notice of Situation of Polling Stations and communicated to electors via their poll cards. As part of a statutory review the Returning Officer must formally comment on both the existing polling stations used and the polling stations that would probably be used based on any newly recommended polling places.

3. The designation of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations

- 3.1 The designation of the City's polling places and districts is the responsibility of the Council and the relevant functions are delegated to the Constitutional and Nomination Committee in the Scheme of Delegation.
- 3.2 The allocation of polling stations within polling places is not a Council function and is the responsibility of the Returning Officer.
- 3.4 Although the allocation of polling stations is the responsibility of the Returning Officer for the election concerned, in practice the consideration of the location of likely polling stations will have an important impact on the choice of polling places and the boundaries of polling districts, particularly in some areas of the city where suitable premises have been hard to locate. The Electoral

Commission's Guidance on statutory reviews of polling places and polling districts recognises that the identification of suitable locations for polling stations is a key factor in determining polling places and districts, and consequently this has been a significant factor in forming the basis of final proposals attached to this report.

- 3.5 Polling districts for local government elections are not automatically part of the statutory review. However, the Electoral Commission advises that reviews of parliamentary polling arrangements should always be conducted simultaneously with a review of local government arrangements and that the polling districts for UK parliamentary and local government elections should always be the same. Consequently, polling places and polling districts adopted by the Council for parliamentary elections will also be effective for local government elections.
- 3.6 In conducting a statutory review the Council must, when designating polling districts, seek to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
- 3.7 In designating polling places it must:
- (a) seek to ensure that all the electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
 - (b) seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places it is responsible for are accessible to all electors who are disabled;
 - (c) have regard to the accessibility of disabled persons to potential polling stations in the polling place;
 - (d) other than in special circumstances, locate the polling place in the polling district it serves; and
 - (e) ensure the polling place is small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the polling district how they will be able to reach the polling station.
- 3.8 Whilst ideally the Council would have the choice of a range of fully accessible buildings, conveniently located for the electors in the area, this is not always the case and there may be little choice available particularly in some areas of the City. However, the focus of the review was to identify wherever possible polling places /polling stations which met set criteria, relating to:
- Location
 - Facilities
 - Accessibility
 - Health and safety, and
 - Space
- 3.9 In certain circumstances, it has not been possible to identify polling places / polling stations that met these criteria exactly, particularly around accessibility.

In such cases, the Returning Officer has identified the reasonable adjustments that will be undertaken to provide access for all electors.

- 3.10 The Returning Officer must make representations to the Council, which must include information as to the location of polling stations (whether existing or proposed) within (existing or proposed) polling places. The local authority is required to publish these proposals within thirty days of receipt.

4. The Review Process

4.1 Intelligence and data collection

- 4.1.1 A Cross-Party Member Working Group (Membership - Councillors Ashley, Battle and Fender) was established to work with the Returning Officer in formulating a methodology for identifying particular areas where polling station provision required review taking into account intelligence provided by officers and stakeholders.

Statistical information was collated about parliamentary electorates, postal voters, turnout and population projections and trends for each polling district. The Returning Officer also wrote to all Councillors, MPs, candidates and agents for the local and parliamentary elections and polling station staff inviting comments or suggestions regarding the suitability of polling places and districts in the city.

4.2 Polling Station Visits

- 4.2.1 Following an analysis of statistical data and stakeholder representation, the Working Group undertook visits to polling places across the city during July. The purpose of these visits was to assess the suitability of existing premises and to evaluate alternative venues where these were available. The Electoral Services Unit undertook further visits throughout July, August and September in light of comments and representations received throughout the consultation process.
- 4.2.2 The criteria used to assess polling places is attached at Appendix 3 and included:
- the proximity of the polling place to populated areas
 - accessibility
 - signage
 - management and configuration of the polling station
 - capacity of polling places to accommodate more than one polling station if necessary
 - the number of electors within the district
 - recent development and population changes

5. Consultation

5.1 During the review any elector in a constituency located in wholly or partly in the Council's area may make representations. By law, representations must also be sought from such persons as the Council considers to have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability; such persons must also have an opportunity to make representations and comment on the Returning Officer's representations.

5.2 The consultation process was divided into two separate parts: during June and July, the (Acting) Returning Officer sought comments from key stakeholders and disability groups about the suitability of polling stations across the city. Public consultation with electors and key stakeholders on the Council's Initial proposals (previously agreed by this Committee) was then undertaken between 29 July and 15 September.

5.3 Consultation with Electors

5.3.1 Copies of the Council's Initial Proposals and the (Acting) Returning Officer's representations were published on the current consultations section of the City Council's website and provided an online form for visitors to submit comments. The proposals were available for inspection in the following locations together with information about how representations could be submitted.

Constituency	Location
Blackley and Broughton	North City Library, Harpurhey
Manchester Central	Electoral Services Unit, Manchester Town Hall City Library, Deansgate
Manchester Gorton	Gorton Library
Manchester Withington	Chorlton District Library
Wythenshawe and Sale East	Forum Library, Wythenshawe

5.3.2 A total of four responses were received from electors via the online feedback form. Of these, one related to a postal voting issue, two requested that consideration be given to alternative voting mechanisms such as online and text voting and to allowing voters to cast their vote at an alternative location such as close to their workplace. The remaining representation related to specific arrangements in the Whalley Range ward and this suggestion is reflected in the final proposals set out in this report.

5.4 Disability Groups

5.4.1 The Council sought representations on both its initial proposals and the (Acting) Returning Officer's representations from the following groups:

- Manchester Disabled Persons Access Group

- Greater Manchester Coalition for the Disabled
- DIAL UK
- Scope
- Leonard Cheshire Disability
- Equality and Human Rights Commission

5.4.2 A copy of the report submitted by Manchester Disabled Persons Access Group as part of the consultation is attached at appendix three. This submission sets out general comments about the experience of disabled electors and this includes a series of recommendations for how access to polling stations can be improved, including:

- That all existing polling places to identify reasonable adjustments required to ensure polling places are accessible to all electors;
- Bespoke training for polling station staff on access issues and the provision of guidance to polling station staff on dealing with disabled voters.

5.4.3 The Electoral Services Unit is compiling detailed reports on all polling stations within the city and this will include specific instructions to polling station staff about temporary reasonable adjustments required to ensure the station is accessible. All polling station staff receive a copy of the Electoral Commission's Handbook and this includes guidance on dealing with disabled electors.

5.4.5 The Equality and Human Rights Commission advised that they do not have the resources to respond to consultations unless they are matters which are directly related to the work of the Commission. No responses were received from the other groups listed above.

5.5 Stakeholders

5.5.1 The (Acting) Returning Officer wrote to the following groups to seek their views regarding the suitability of existing polling stations:

- Councillors and MPs
- Polling Station Inspectors
- Presiding Officers
- Premises Managers

5.5.2 Representations received by key stakeholders are summarised in Appendix two to this report. Where possible, representations have been reproduced exactly as received, however where this is not practicable due to the length of the submission or where it has been received orally, the key points have been summarised instead.

6. Timetable for the Review

Date	Activity
18 June	Initiation of review by publication of statutory notice
18 June-5 July	Intelligence gathering to identify polling stations requiring further review
12,15,19 and 20 July	Polling Station visits undertaken by Cross Party Working Group
29 July	Consultation on Initial Proposals commences following approval by Constitutional and Nomination Committee
29 August	Publication and circulation of (Acting) Returning Officer's comments on the Council's Initial Proposals
15 September	Consultation closes

7. The Final Proposals

- 7.1 The final proposals are intended to meet the statutory requirements that the Council must consider when designating polling districts and polling places. In particular, the Council is required consider the criteria set out at para 3.7 above.
- 7.2 Throughout the review, consideration was also given to the following factors:
- (a) geographical size of polling districts;
 - (b) size of the electorates of polling districts (however, a large polling district electorate may not itself be an issue, provided that its polling place is such that the required number of polling stations can be properly accommodated). This also included consideration of merging smaller polling districts, particularly in areas of low turnout, so that resources can be targeted effectively to where they are most required;
 - (c) need for Ringway Parish to have its own polling district;
 - (d) need for polling districts to have boundaries that enable it to contain a suitable polling place;
 - (e) distance of the polling place from all areas of the polling district;
 - (f) other features of the polling district's geography that may make reaching a polling place difficult for some or all of its electors;
 - (g) accessibility of the polling place to disabled electors;

(h) the likely location of any polling station(s) within the polling place, including consideration of their accessibility for disabled electors;

(i) suitability of the polling place in terms of the space required to effectively conduct polling.

(j) the need to minimise disruption caused to schools and other premises. The (Acting) Returning Officer is entitled to use free of charge schools maintained or assisted by the local authority as well as those schools that receive grants made out of monies provided by parliament. However, where alternative venues are available within the polling district, the use of schools has been avoided.

7.3 A summary of the final proposals in respect of polling districts are set out below and a more detailed analysis of the nature of these changes, including the streets affected and electorate numbers, is attached at appendix one. The electorates in this report and in the appendices are based on parliamentary electorates as at 1st May. Where changes to polling districts are proposed, the electorate figures are indicative only as final electorate figures cannot be determined until after the publication of the 1st December 2010 electoral register. In all cases the proposed parliamentary polling districts are the proposed local government polling districts.

7.4 The final proposals for changes to polling places have been identified following representations received from stakeholders and from a review of premises in the areas affected. It should be noted that proposals to change polling places are still subject to further discussion and negotiation with premises owners/managers and will require detailed inspection before any changes can be finalised. The Committee is therefore requested to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with ward councillors, group leaders and the Chair of the Committee, to determine polling places for these districts. A summary of the final proposals in respect of parliamentary polling places is set out below and a more detailed analysis is attached at appendix one to this report.

7.5 For the purposes of the review, the description of the polling place should be read as to be not only the building itself, but also the immediate environs. This will provide sufficient flexibility for the Returning Officer to site additional or alternative stations on the site as required.

8. BLACKLEY AND BROUGHTON CONSTITUENCY

8.1 No changes are proposed for the Charlestown ward.

8.2 Cheetham Ward

8.2.1 CTF is a large polling district both in geographical terms and in the size of the electorate. Over the past five years, the population of CTF has increased with developments such as the Green Quarter, and electors east of Cheetham Hill

Road are required to travel to the west of the district to vote. It is therefore proposed that the current CTF polling district should be divided into two new districts – CTF and CTH with electorates of approximately 1521 and 1682 respectively. St Chad's Primary School, will be retained as the polling district for CTF and the Park Inn Hotel will be designated as the polling place for the new CTH district.

8.2.2 The existing polling district CTH has a small electorate and the current polling place is located in Queen's Park, which is poorly lit. It is proposed that the north section of this district should be merged with CTB and vote at Allotments Pavillion and that properties to the south of the district should be merged with the CTD district and vote at Saviour Church. The estimated new electorate of CTB is 845 and 534 for CTD.

8.3 Crumpsall Ward

8.3.1 The polling place for the CRF district is currently Cravenwood Primary School.

8.3.2 Due to building work at the school on 6th May, electors voted at a temporary building on the school grounds. The school have subsequently advised that further work will be undertaken during the remainder of 2010 and into 2011. The Electoral Services Unit will continue to work with the school to identify a suitable location for a polling station on its premises where possible, however it may be necessary to review the designation of this polling place closer to the election if it possible to find a location for a temporary facility within the school grounds. Members are requested to authorise the Chief Executive to designate the polling place for this district in consultation with [ward councillors, the chair of Constitutional and Nomination Committee and Group Leaders.]***

8.4 Harpurhey Ward

8.4.1 Electors in both HAE and HAF vote at St Augustine's Primary School. It is proposed to merge these two polling districts to create a one polling district of approximately 1246 electors. The new HAE district will continue to vote at St Augustine's Primary School. If this proposal is approved, remaining polling districts will be amended to ensure sequential naming.

8.5 Higher Blackley Ward

8.5.1 HBJ was created in 2009 so that electors living on the Riverdale estate would not have to walk up a steep hill to Crab Lane Primary School to vote. At the last two elections, electors in this district have been served by a temporary facility situated on Sandyhill Court. There are no alternative permanent facilities within this polling district, however it is proposed that the polling place for this district should be changed to land to the west of shops at Riverdale Road, which is more central for electors in the district. Members are requested to authorise the Chief Executive to designate the polling place for this district in consultation with ward councillors, the chair of Constitutional and Nomination Committee and Group Leaders.

8.5.2 HBB is a large polling district of 2800 electors. It is proposed that this district should be divided into two separate districts and that electors in the new HBB district vote at the Higher Blackley Education Village. Electors in the new HBK district would continue to vote at St Clare's RC Primary School.

9. MANCHESTER CENTRAL CONSTITUENCY

9.1 No changes are proposed for the Ancoats and Clayton and Ardwick wards.

9.2 Bradford Ward

9.2.1 BDA and BDL currently both vote at Ashbury Meadow Primary School. It is proposed to merge these polling districts to create a new district with an electorate of approximately 1322 electors. Although no change is proposed to the polling place, the Returning Officer has indicated that the polling station will be in the Nursery area at future elections rather than in the Foyer, which has been used at previous elections. The Nursery has self contained access and provides suitable facilities for voting.

9.2.2 BDB currently votes at CE School of the Resurrection, BDC at St Brigid's RC Primary School and BDH at St Anne's Church. The electorates of all three districts are relatively small, and so it is proposed that these should be merged to create a single polling district of 1348 electors and that CE School of the Resurrection should be designated as the polling place for the new district.

9.2.3 BDD and BDE currently vote at St Barnabas C.E. Primary School. It is proposed to merge these districts to create a combined electorate of approximately 1596. The polling place for this new district will be St Barnabas.

9.2.4 If these proposals are approved, remaining polling districts will be amended to ensure sequential naming.

9.3 City Centre Ward

9.3.1 The polling place for CCF is the Town Hall, which means that electors from this district had to cross the city to vote. Representations were received from Manchester Disabled Person's Access Group regarding the accessibility to the polling place for CCB, the Lesbian and Gay Foundation, as electors were required to access the polling station by a lift or by stairs.

9.3.2 The Sheena Simon Campus of the Manchester College is an accessible building located in a good location for both CCB and CCF. It is proposed that this is designated as the polling place for these districts.

9.4 Hulme Ward

9.4.1 HUC is a large polling district both geographically and in the size of the electorate (over 4000). Electors in this district currently vote at Hulme Library. It is proposed that this district should be divided into two new districts (HUC

and HUB); that North Hulme Adventure Playground should be designated as the polling place for the new HUB district; and that the Hulme Centre (Hulme Hall) should be designated as the polling place for the new HUC district.

9.4.2 HUB is a small polling district of just over 300 electors and the polling place for this district is Webster Primary School, which is currently also the polling place for the MSH district of the Moss Side ward. Representations have been received about the suitability of this polling place from polling station staff and from an election agent. HUD has 800 electors and currently votes at St Peter's Chaplaincy in the Ardwick ward with voters from the ARJ district. The polling place for the HUE district is Martenscroft Early Education Centre. Representations have been received about the suitability of this polling place from the premises manager and polling station staff.

9.4.3 It is proposed that the current HUB, HUD and HUE districts are abolished and that two districts are created instead. The electorate of the new HUD would be 2497 and it is proposed that the polling place be New Union Methodist Church. The electorate of the new HUE district would be approximately 1304 electors and it is proposed that the polling place should be Wesleyan Holiness Centre.

9.5 Miles Platting and Newton Heath Ward

9.5.1 Electors in the MNB and MNC wards currently vote at Newton Heath Cultural Centre (Library). It is proposed to merge these two districts, and to extend the boundary of this new larger district to Hulme Hall Lane, currently part of the MNA district. The electors of the new MNB district will be 1211.

9.5.2 MNA is a small polling district of 309 electors and currently votes at Park View Community Centre. It is proposed that the electorate to the west of Hulme Hall Lane in this district is merged with the neighbouring MNJ district to create a larger district (MNA) of 1303 and that these electors vote at Miles Platting Library.

9.5.3 MND currently votes at All Saints Primary School. It is proposed to designate Newton Heath Sure Start Centre as the polling place for this district instead as this is located in the centre of the district, is well know locally, and offers good facilities for voting.

9.5.4 Further amendments are proposed to the boundaries of MND/MNC and MNE/MND and MNG/MND and MNB/MNG and these are set out on the maps attached at appendix six. These changes are to better reflect the layout of the ward and to improve access to polling places for electors living in these areas. If these proposals are approved, remaining polling districts will be amended to ensure sequential naming

9.6 Moston Ward

9.6.1 The polling place for the MOA district is currently St Dunstan's Primary School. The school has requested that it is no longer used as a polling station and

suggested that the neighbouring St Luke's Church Hall may offer more suitable facilities. St Luke's Church Hall is well located to serve electors in the district, is accessible and has a large space to accommodate a polling station. It is therefore proposed that the hall is designated as the polling place for MOA.

9.6.2 Following representations received from a ward councillor and polling station staff at Moston Children's Centre (MOB), the Returning Officer has recommended that access to the polling station should be via double doors on the car park so that electors are not required to go through the main building.

9.7 Moss Side Ward

9.7.1 Electors in the MSG and MSD wards currently vote at Divine Mercy Primary School. It is proposed to retain this polling place but to merge these districts to create a larger district of 2136 electors. If this proposal is approved, remaining polling districts will be amended to ensure sequential naming.

9.7.2 The polling place for MSH is currently Webster Primary School, which is in the HUB district of the Hulme ward. Representations have been received from polling station staff and an election agent regarding the suitability of this premises. It is therefore proposed that Manchester Active Lifestyle Centre be designated as the polling place for this district instead.

10. **MANCHESTER GORTON CONSTITUENCY**

10.1 No changes are proposed for the Rusholme ward.

10.2 Fallowfield Ward

10.2.1 The polling place for FAA and FAF is Wilbraham Infant and Junior School. It is proposed that these districts are merged to create a larger district of 3094 and that these electors continue to vote at the school.

10.3 Gorton North Ward

10.3.1 GNH has a small electorate of 369 and votes at West Gorton Youth Centre. It is proposed to merge the GNH district with GNA to create a single district of approximately 1416 and for electors in this new district to vote at Emmanuel Church, which is the current polling place for GNA and which is well located for electors in both districts.

10.3.2 The polling place for GNJ is Old Hall Drive Primary School, which is located in the Gorton South Ward. The polling place for GNB is Gorton North Neighbourhood Office, however this premises is no longer available for election purposes. It is therefore proposed to merge GNB and GNJ districts (new electorate 1861) and for Gorton Library to be designated as the polling place for this new district. Due to concerns expressed about the parking

facilities at the Library, Tesco and the Gymnastics Club have agreed that electors can be directed to use their parking facilities for these premises and this information will be included on the poll cards sent to electors in the new district.

10.3.3 The polling place for both GNE and GNF is St Paul's with St John's Church. It is proposed to retain this polling place but that these districts are merged to create a single district of approximately 1655 electors.

10.4 Gorton South Ward

10.4.1 Following representations received from a ward councillor, it is proposed to designate Sunnybrow Lodge as the polling place for GSC as this is better located to serve the needs of electors in this district.

10.5 Levenshulme Ward

10.5.1 The Polling Place for LEB is Birchfields Primary School in the Rusholme ward. Electors from the RUB district also vote at this polling place and so it is proposed that Hawthorne GP Surgery is designated as the polling place for LEB as this is within the district and is in a good location.

10.6 Longsight Ward

10.6.1 The Polling Place for LOD and LOF is currently St Agnes Church Hall. Representations have been received from ward councillors and polling station staff regarding the accessibility and capacity of the current premises at the last election. It is therefore proposed that the polling place for these districts is St Agnes School.

10.7 Whalley Range Ward

10.7.1 WRD has a small electorate of 655 and currently votes at Wilbraham St Ninians Church. It is proposed to merge this district with WRC to create a larger district of approximately 2679 electors and that Wilbraham St Ninians is designated as the polling place for this new district because it is a large hall with capacity to host a double polling station to serve the new district.

10.7.2 WRB has a large electorate of 3168 and covers a large geographical area. It is therefore proposed that the boundary of WRB and WRF be revised to create two more equitably sized polling districts of approximately 2554 and 2146 respectively. Following representations received from a ward councillor and polling station staff about access issues at the Scout Hut, it is proposed that English Martyrs Church Hall is designated as the polling place for WRF.

10.7.3 Following a representation received from an elector regarding the location of the polling place for electors in the top of the WRE district, it is proposed that the boundary between WRA and WRE is revised so that Woodlawn Court, Green Walk and Wood Road is moved to WRA district.

10.7.4 If these proposals are approved, remaining polling districts will be amended to ensure sequential naming

11. MANCHESTER WITHINGTON CONSTITUENCY

11.1 No changes are proposed for the Chorlton Park and Didsbury East wards.

11.2 Burnage Ward

11.2.1 Representations were received from polling station staff and an election agent regarding access to the polling place for BUB St Margaret's Church Hall, which is located at the end of an unlit road. The polling place for this district was Green End Primary School but was relocated due to building work in 2009 and so it is proposed that Green End be redesignated as the polling place for this district.

11.2.2 Currently, electors in some properties in the BUD district have to cross Kingsway to vote. It is therefore proposed that the boundaries of BUC and BUD are revised along Kingsway.

11.3 Chorlton Ward

11.3.1 CLA is a large polling district of approximately 2821 electors with traditionally high turnout and votes at Oswald Road Primary School.

11.3.2 CLB is a smaller polling district of 1511 electors and the polling place for this district is currently Wilbraham St Ninians Church, which is located in the Whalley Range ward in the Manchester Gorton Constituency.

11.3.3 Representations have been received from ward councillors regarding the suitability of these arrangements, particularly with regards to capacity at Oswald Road Primary School, where turnout is often high, and the location of the polling place for CLB, which is outside the ward.

11.3.4 With regards to the polling district boundaries, it is suggested that the boundary between CLA and CLB is amended so that electors west of Manchester Road continue to be part of CLA and electors east of Manchester Road become part of the CLB district.

11.3.5 Oswald Road Primary School has been used as a polling place for the CLA district for a number of years, is familiar to electors and is well located to serve the electorate of the district. In view of the relatively large electorate and high turnout, the Nursery part of the school is no longer considered to be a suitable location for the polling station and instead the Returning Officer wishes to site the polling station in the main School Hall.

11.3.6 Representations have been received from polling station staff and ward councillors regarding access issues experienced by some electors voting at Brookburn Primary School in the CLD district. Access to the polling station is

via a cobbled path some way from the main road and was difficult for electors to find. Manchester Disabled Persons Access Group has also expressed concern about the accessibility of this polling place. Alternative venues within this district have been explored but were not suitable and so it is proposed to retain Brookburn Primary School subject to further discussions with the school. Members are requested to authorise the Chief Executive to designate the polling place for this district in consultation with ward councillors, the chair of Constitutional and Nomination Committee and Group Leaders.

11.3.7 The polling place for CLE is currently St John's Social Club. Electors in this district have voted in this venue for a number of years and it is in a good location for the district. It is also accessible. Representations have been received from a ward councillor expressing concern about the use of this venue as polling place for this district. The Councillor indicated that there are strong links between the congregation and the club, and that the Parish Priest urged members of the congregation not to vote for the Liberal Democrat party at the 6th May elections. Suggested alternative venues included the Chorlton Irish Centre and the Buddhist Centre.

11.3.8 The Buddhist Centre advised that it is not possible to use their premises as a polling station. Officers visited Chorlton Irish Centre to review the suitability of the venue. The room is considered to be sufficiently large to accommodate voting and reasonable adjustments can be made to ensure that the venue is accessible.

11.3.9 St John's Social Club also offers good facilities for voting, is well located for the district, is familiar to electors and is accessible. Clearly, it is important for all polling places to be politically neutral and it is not acceptable for a venue to display party political materials or to support or favour one political party. However, St John's Social Club does not display such materials, nor is the polling station located within the church. Consideration has therefore been given to whether the views purportedly expressed by the parish priest compromises the use of the polling place at future elections, particularly given that the venue is well established and has been used as a polling place for a number of years. Given that the City Council will ensure that all polling places are aware of the requirement for political neutrality, and that this will be highlighted in both the request for premises use and the terms and conditions of the agreement, it is proposed that the polling place for this district should continue to be St John's Social Club.

11.4 Didsbury West Ward

11.4.1 Due to issues experienced at Didsbury United Reformed Church on 6th May, the cross-party member working group reviewed the current polling districts and polling places within Didsbury West ward in detail and visited a number of polling places in the ward to review facilities.

11.4.2 Representations were received from a ward councillor emphasising the need for each polling district to have its own designated polling place and

suggesting a number of alternative venues. These representations were taken into account by the working group.

11.4.3 No changes to the polling districts are proposed. Although not located within the polling district, it is proposed that electors in DWA continue to vote at Didsbury United Reformed Church as this has good accessible facilities, is located on a main road and is well known to electors who have voted at this location for a number of years. It is proposed that the polling place for DWD should be St James and Emmanuel Church as this has good accessible facilities for voting and although it is located in the south west corner of the district, it is on Barlow Moor Road and close to Wilmslow Road, which are well known to electors.

11.4.4 It is proposed that Ivy Cottage Evangelical Church should remain the polling place for DWE and that the polling station should be located in the main church and that the Polling Place for DWB should be Manchester College Fielden Campus, which is located within the district.

11.5 Old Moat Ward

11.5.1 OME is a very small polling district of 19 electors and was created for administrative reasons following the Boundary Commission's last review of parliamentary boundaries. It is proposed that this district be merged with OMC and that electors continue to vote at Fallowfield Bowling and Lawn Tennis Club.

11.6 Withington Ward

11.6.1 Due to issues experienced with at Ladybarn Community Centre on 6th May, the cross-party member working group reviewed the current polling districts and polling places within Withington ward in detail and visited a number of polling places in the ward to review facilities.

11.6.2 Ladybarn Community Centre is located in the WTA district and offers good facilities for electors. On 6th May the centre was also the polling place for WTB. Following consultation with ward councillors, it is proposed that Ladybarn Community Centre should be designated as the polling place for WTB due to the links between residents of this district and the centre, and that St Chad's Church Hall is designated as the polling place for WTA.

11.6.3 Following representations received from the Headteacher at St Paul's Primary School regarding the use of the building as a polling station, it is proposed that Gandhi Hall should be designated as the polling place for the WTD district. The hall offers good facilities for voting and is well located to serve electors in the district. The premises will also be requested to permit electors to use their car parking facilities to minimise the impact of additional vehicles on local residents.

11.6.4 WTB currently includes a number of properties which are south of Ladybarn Park. Geographically, it is easier for these electors to vote at St Cuthbert's

Primary School and so it is therefore proposed to transfer these properties to WTC. This change would affect 140 electors.

12. WYTHENSHAW AND SALE EAST CONSTITUENCY

12.1 No changes are proposed for the Baguley ward.

12.2 Brooklands Ward

12.2.1 Electors in the BKC district vote currently vote at a temporary facility located at the Park Pub. Temporary facilities are only used in those polling districts where no alternative permanent buildings are available. Following the refurbishment of St Aidan's Church Hall, it is proposed that this building should be designated as the polling place for this district as it offers better facilities and is still well located to serve electors in the district.

12.3 Northenden Ward

12.3.1 In light of representations received from polling station staff regarding the accessibility of the polling place for NOD, Methodist Church Hall, the City Council's Electoral Services Unit visited the premises with a representative of Manchester Disabled Person's Access Group. Due to the access issues identified during this visit, the ESU are liaising with the premises manager of the National Autistic Centre, which is located next door to ascertain whether this can be used as a polling station. Members are therefore requested to authorise the Chief Executive to designate the polling place for this district in consultation with ward councillors, the chair of Constitutional and Nomination Committee and Group Leaders.

12.4 Sharston Ward

12.4.1 Due to building work at Haverley Hey Primary School, electors in the SHH district have voted at a temporary facility at the past two elections. Family Action Benchill is located close to Haverley Hey School, has self contained access from the main road and offers good facilities for voting. Officers are continuing to liaise with the School and the owners of Family Action Bench Hill to identify suitable permanent premises for electors in this district. Members are therefore requested to authorise the Chief Executive to designate the polling place for this district in consultation with ward councillors, the chair of Constitutional and Nomination Committee and Group Leaders.

12.4.2 The polling place for the SHB and SHK districts is St John Fisher and St Thomas More School. SHK is a small polling district of 347 electors and so it is proposed that these districts are merged to create a larger polling district of approximately 1184 electors and that the polling place continues to be St John Fisher and St Thomas More.

12.5 Woodhouse Park Ward

12.5.1 Manchester Enterprise Academy is the designated Polling Place for the WPB district, which is a large district of over 2500 electors. Due to building work taking place on 6th May, electors in this district voted at a temporary facility on the premises. Building work has now been completed, and so the Returning Officer has recommended that the Academy remains the polling place for this district but that the polling station is located in the Foyer.

12.5.2 The polling place for WPG and WPA is the Lifestyle Centre. It is proposed that these districts are merged to create a larger district of 2212 electors and that the polling place is retained.

13. Interim arrangements for the Hulme By-Election

13.1 Proposals to change polling districts and polling places in the Hulme ward have been informed by representations received from polling station staff and the electoral services unit and in consultation with Ward Councillors and a cross-party member working group.

13.2 In summary, it is proposed that Hulme will still have five polling districts but that the boundaries of four of these districts should be changed to create more equitably sized districts. Polling places for these four districts will also be changed to reflect the new boundaries and in light of comments received as part of the consultation. Site visits have been undertaken to all new premises and these meet with the polling station specification attached at appendix five

13.3 In order to give effect to changes to polling district boundaries, the Electoral Registration Officer is required to amend the register of electors accordingly. This involves the allocation of properties to the appropriate new polling districts and the reallocation of elector numbers. If changes to polling districts boundaries were made before the by-election, these two databases would not be compatible.

13.4 For these reasons, it is recommended that changes to polling district boundaries in Hulme are not given effect until 1st December 2010, and that the by-election is run on existing boundaries.

13.5 However, it may be possible to implement some changes to polling places for the 4th November by election. The proposed new polling places correspond to the new boundaries and do not tie in with the existing boundaries, specifically:

- The existing HUC will become HUB and HUC, each with its own polling place. However each polling district can only have one polling place and so it would not be possible to use both places at the by-election.
- HUB, HUD and HUE will be abolished to create two new polling districts, each with new polling places.

13.6 Subject to the views of this Committee, it is recommended that interim arrangements are adopted for the by-election to designate alternative polling places for those venues considered to be no longer be suitable. The Electoral Services Unit will ensure that information is provided to electors affected by

these arrangements in advance of polling day via poll cards and supplementary communications.

District	Electorate at 1st May	Existing Polling Place	Designation of Polling Place for 4th November
HUA	3381	New Hope Fellowship Church	No change
HUB	336	Webster Primary School	Wesleyan Holiness Centre
HUC	4064	Hulme Library	Hulme Library (double station)
HUD	962	St Peter's Chaplaincy	Union Hall Evangelical Church
HUE	2842	Martenscroft Early Education Centre	Wesleyan Holiness Centre

14. Publication of final proposals

14.1 Once the final proposals are approved by the Constitutional and Nomination Committee and by the full Council, the Council's reasons for its decisions must be published. The Council must also publish:

(a) all correspondence sent to the Returning Officer in connection with the review;

(b) all correspondence sent to any person whom the authority thinks has particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability;

(c) all representations made by any person in connection with the review;

(d) the minutes of any meeting held by the authority to consider any revision to the designation of polling districts or polling places within its area as a result of the review;

(e) details of the designation of polling districts or polling places within its areas of as a result of the review; and

(f) details of the places where the results of the review have been published.

15. Further Reviews

15.1 Once the review is completed, another review must take place in four years time. However, the Council has discretion to review polling places and polling districts before that time if necessary.

- 15.2 On occasion, it may be necessary to change the designation of a polling place outside of the statutory review process. This can arise as a result of premises being closed, or where better facilities are identified.
- 15.3 The Committee is requested to authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with group leaders and the Chair of Constitutional and Nomination, to make changes to the designation of polling places which occur outside of the formal review process.

16. Costs of the Review

- 16.1 The total costs of conducting the review to date has been £15,822.86. This was used to pay for the printing and production of consultation documents, transport costs, reasonable expenses incurred by Manchester Disabled Person's Access Group, and dedicated staffing resource to undertake polling station visits and temporary staff undertake the duties to permanent staff during the period of the review.
- 16.2 The cost of a polling place is dependant on a number of external factors, including staffing and premises hire costs where these are payable and these vary depending on the venue. Council owned premises and schools do not attract premises hire costs (although these premises can levy a charge for heating, lighting and the caretaker) and so the only costs such polling stations incur are staffing, which is in the region £400 for a single polling station on council premises and £800 for districts with a high electorate requiring a split station and two sets of staff. The cost of temporary polling stations is in the region of £1500 per station taking into account premises hire and staffing.
- 16.3 If adopted, the final proposals recommend a range of options, including:
- the creation of a number of new polling districts in Cheetham, Hulme and Higher Blackley
 - the designation of new polling places for existing districts (e.g. Didsbury West, Withington)
 - the merger of some polling districts, leading to the disestablishment of some polling places
 - the redesignation of some polling premises, such as schools, to other premises which attract room hire costs
- 16.4 The Electoral Services Unit will liaise with premises owners to quantify the costs of premises hire for new and existing premises at future elections. Additionally, the number of polling stations at each election is determined by the Returning Officer based on a number of factors, including the size of the electorate of the district, the number of elections being held and turnout at previous elections. The (Acting) Returning Officer's comments on the Council's initial proposals (attached at appendix four) identify a number of polling places which are likely to require two sets of polling station staff at combined and parliamentary elections. The coalition government has announced a range of proposals which may require referenda or elections to be held in 2011 and 2012 and beyond, possibly combined with local elections.

- 16.5 It is therefore not possible to give an accurate assessment of the increased cost of the implementation of this review. However, it is estimated that this will be in the region of £40,000 and an increase in the cash limit budget will be required should the final proposals be adopted.

17. Recommendations

Recommendations to the Committee appear at the front of this report.