

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report to: Constitutional and Nomination Committee – 4 February 2015
Subject: Polling Districts and Polling Places: Harpurhey Ward
Report of: Chief Executive

Recommendation

That the Committee approves the redesignation of the polling place for the HAG polling district in Harpurhey ward from the Embassy Club to The Factory Youth Zone.

Wards Affected:

Harpurhey

Financial Consequences – Revenue

It is anticipated that the proposed change to one polling place will be cost neutral.

Financial Consequences – Capital

None

Equal Opportunities

Yes

Risk Management

No

Legal Considerations

Yes – see report

Equal Opportunities Implications

The City Council has a statutory responsibility to seek to ensure that all electors in the local authority area have reasonable facilities for voting which are practicable in the circumstances and to ensure that in so far as is reasonable and practicable that the polling places are accessible to electors who are disabled. The accessibility of buildings and location of polling places has been a key factor in developing the proposal. The City Council will ensure reasonable adjustments are made to a polling place where required and that polling station staff are provided with the appropriate training.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

None

1.0 The designation of polling districts, polling places and polling stations

- 1.1 The designation of the city's polling districts and places is the responsibility of the Council and the relevant functions are delegated to the Constitutional and Nomination Committee in the Scheme of Delegation. This includes the Council's duties under the Representation of the People Act 1983 to divide constituencies into polling districts and also the power to divide wards into polling districts at local government elections.
- 1.2 The allocation of polling stations within polling places is not a Council function and is the responsibility of the Returning Officer.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 A statutory review of polling districts and polling places was undertaken at the end of 2013 and beginning of 2014. As a result, Full Council approved a new scheme on 29 January 2014, which came into effect when the 17 February 2014 electoral register was published. It is a legal requirement that these reviews take place on a five yearly cycle.
- 2.2 Further work was subsequently undertaken by officers in the autumn of 2014, in preparation for the local and general parliamentary general elections taking place on 7 May 2015. This focused on reviewing the existing polling places to ensure that they continued to provide suitable access, space and facilities for electors. This work was informed by feedback received from local councillors, candidates and agents, polling station inspectors working on the May 2014 local and European elections.

3.0 BLACKLEY AND BROUGHTON CONSTITUENCY

Harpurhey Ward

- 3.1 On 10 December 2014, this Committee approved the redesignation of the polling place for HAG polling district because of significant building work at Oasis Harpur Mount Academy which was currently the polling place, meaning that access, space and facilities at the site were subject to change. On this basis, the Embassy Club on Rochdale Road was designated as the polling place for HAG for the 7 May 2015 polls. However, in mid December 2014, officers learnt that the Embassy Club had been put up for sale by its owner and as a result its use could not be guaranteed.
- 3.2 It is therefore proposed that The Factory Youth Zone on Rochdale Road is designated as the polling place for HAG for 7 May polls. The Youth Zone is located approx 30 metres north of the Embassy Club and provides a good access and a high standard of facilities. There is some limited on the road parking available for electors nearby. The designation of this polling place will be reviewed after the next election.

4.0 Future changes to the designation of polling places

- 4.1 On occasion and as planning continues to take place for 7 May 2015 elections, it may be necessary to change the designation of a polling place outside the statutory review process or meeting of the Constitutional and Nomination Committee. This can arise as a result of premises being closed or unexpectedly becoming unavailable, often at short notice.
- 4.2 An existing delegation remains in place agreed by Full Council at its 29 January 2014 meeting, which gives authority for the Chief Executive, in consultation with the group leader, ward Councillors and the Chair of Constitutional and Nomination Committee, to make changes to the designation of polling places in these circumstances.

5.0 Financial implications

- 5.1 It is anticipated that the proposed change to one polling place will be cost neutral.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 Recommendations to the Committee appear at the front of the report.