



Constitutional and Nomination Committee

Date: Wednesday, 12 July 2023

Time: 9.00 am

Venue: Council Antechamber, Level 2, Town Hall Extension

Everyone is welcome to attend this committee meeting.

Access to the Council Antechamber

Public access to the Council Antechamber is on Level 2 of the Town Hall Extension, using the lift or stairs in the lobby of the Mount Street entrance to the Extension. That lobby can also be reached from the St. Peter's Square entrance and from Library Walk. **There is no public access from the Lloyd Street entrances of the Extension.**

Membership of the Constitutional and Nomination Committee

Councillors - Karney (Chair), Craig, Curley, Flanagan, Green, Leech, Midgley, Rahman, Reeves and Richards

Agenda

- 1. Urgent Business**
To consider any items which the Chair has agreed to have submitted as urgent.
- 2. Appeals**
To consider any appeals from the public against refusal to allow inspection of background documents and/or the inclusion of items in the confidential part of the agenda.
- 3. Interests**
To allow Members an opportunity to [a] declare any personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they might have in any items which appear on this agenda; and [b] record any items from which they are precluded from voting as a result of Council Tax/Council rent arrears; [c] the existence and nature of party whipping arrangements in respect of any item to be considered at this meeting. Members with a personal interest should declare that at the start of the item under consideration. If Members also have a prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interest they must withdraw from the meeting during the consideration of the item.
- 4. Minutes** 5 - 14
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2023.
- 5. Appointments and Changes to Council Committee Membership** 15 - 18
Report of the City Solicitor attached.
- 6. Elections Act 2022 and the 4 May 2023 local election - progress report on its impacts** 19 - 34
Report of the Chief Executive attached
- 7. Electoral Commission interim report on the impact of Voter ID on the May 2023 local election** 35 - 40
Report of the Chief Executive attached
- 8. Future activity of the Electoral Services Unit** 41 - 50
Report of the Chief Executive attached

Information about the Committee

The Constitutional and Nomination Committee deals with the appointment of councillors to serve on committees and certain external organisations.

The Committee also considers proposed changes to the Council Constitution and recommendations for the granting of civic honours to individuals and organisations.

Business for consideration at a meeting is set out on the agenda sheet.

Copies of the agenda are available beforehand from the reception area at the Main Entrance of the Town Hall in Albert Square and may be viewed on the Council's website up to seven days prior to the date of the meeting (see web information below). Some additional copies are available at the meeting from the Committee Officer.

It is the Council's policy to consult people as fully as possible before making decisions which affect them. Members of the public do not have a right to speak at meetings but may do so if invited by the Chair. If you have a special interest in an item on the agenda and want to speak, tell the Committee Officer, who will pass on your request to the Chair.

Agenda, reports and minutes of all Council meetings can be found on the Council's website www.manchester.gov.uk

Joanne Roney OBE
Chief Executive,
3rd Floor, Town Hall Extension,
Lloyd Street,
Manchester, M60 2LA

Further Information

For help, advice and information about this meeting please contact the Committee Officer:

Andrew Woods
Tel: 0161 234 3011
Email: andrew.woods@manchester.gov.uk

This agenda was issued on **Tuesday, 4 July 2023** by the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit, Manchester City Council, Level 2, Town Hall Extension (Library Walk Elevation), Manchester M60 2LA.

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Constitutional and Nomination Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 17 May 2023

Present:

Councillor Karney (Chair) – in the Chair
Councillors Curley, Johnson, Lanchbury, Rahman and Richards

Also present: Councillors:

Apologies: Councillor Craig, Flanagan and Reeves

CN/23/9 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2023 as a correct record.

CN/23/10 Proposed changes to the remit of Scrutiny Committees

Consideration was given to a report of the City Solicitor concerning proposed changes to the remits of the Council's Scrutiny Committees and the renaming of Economy Scrutiny Committee and the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee to reflect their full scopes.

The Committee noted an amend to the recommendation 3 made to Council regarding the renaming of the scrutiny committees with the inclusion of the Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee.

Decisions

1. To recommend that Council agree the proposed changes to the remits of the Council's Scrutiny Committees as set out in Appendix 2.
2. To recommend that Council agree the renaming of the Economy Scrutiny Committee to the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee to Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee.
3. To note the amendment made to the report the recommendation made to Council to include the Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee to any changes to remits made to the Council's Constitution by the City Solicitor.

CN/23/11 Appointment of Chairs of Committee and Committee Membership

A report was submitted which asked the Committee to make recommendations to the Council about the size and composition of the Council's committees and to appoint chairs and deputy chairs of the committees.

Decisions

- To recommend to Council the appointment of the following members to the Executive Standing Panel for 2023/24:

Executive Standing Consultative Panel

Councillors -

Ahmed Ali	Butt	Chambers	Douglas	Foley
Johnson	Leech	Moran	Lynch	

Chairs and Deputies

- To recommend to Council the appointment of the following members as chairs of scrutiny committees for the next municipal year:

Young People and Children	Councillor Reid
Communities and Equalities	Councillor Hitchen
Economy	Councillor Johns
Resources and Governance	Councillor Simcock
Environment and Climate Change	Councillor Shilton Godwin
Health	Councillor Green

- To recommend the Council to appoint the following members as chairs and deputy chairs of the non-executive committees for the next municipal year:

Committee	Chair	Deputy Chair
Audit	Councillor Lanchbury	
Planning & Highways	Councillor Lyons	
Licensing and Appeals	Councillor Grimshaw	Councillor Connolly
Licensing Committee	Councillor Grimshaw	Councillor Connolly
Licensing Policy	Councillor Grimshaw	Councillor Connolly
Constitutional and Nomination	Councillor Karney	
Personnel	Councillor Akbar	

Membership of Committees

- To recommend to Council the membership of committees for the municipal year 2023/24 as follows:

Scrutiny Committees

Children and Young People (at least 10 members)

Councillors -

Reid (Chair)	N. Ali	Alijah	Amin	Bell
Cooley	Fletcher	Gartside	Hewitson	Judge
Lovecy	Ludford	McHale	Nunney	Sadler

Co-opted Members

- Representative of the Diocese of Manchester – Canon Susie Mapledoram *
- Representative of the Diocese of Salford – Julie Miles*
- Parent governor representative – Yacob Yonis* (term ends 02/02/2025)
- Parent governor representative – Gary Cleworth* (term ends 02/02/2024)
- Parent governor representative – Katie McDaid* (term ends 30/11/2023)
- Secondary sector teacher representative – Saba Iltaf (term ends 30/11/2023)
- Primary sector teacher representative – Laura Smith* (term ends 30/11/2023)

* denotes members with voting rights on education matters

Communities and Equalities (at least 10 members)

Councillors -

Hitchen (Chair)	Azra Ali	Appleby	Good	Ogunbambo
Priest	Rawson	Sheikh	Whiston	Wills

Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods (at least 10 members)

Councillors -

Shilton Godwin (Chair)	Chohan	Collins	Doswell	Holt
Ilyas	McCaul	Razaq	Wiest	Wright

Economy and Regeneration (at least 10 members)

Councillors -

Johns (Chair)	Baker-Smith	Bano	Benham	Hussain
Iqbal	Northwood	Richards	I Robinson	Sharif Mahamed
Taylor				

Health (at least 10 members)

Councillors -

Green (Chair)	Bayunu	Curley	Hilal	Karney
Muse	Reeves	Riasat	Stogia	Wilson

Resources and Governance (at least 10 members)

Councillors -

Simcock (Chair)	Abdullatif	Andrews	Brickell	Connolly
Davies	Evans	Kilpatrick	Kirkpatrick	Lanchbury
Rowles	Wheeler			

Non-Executive Committees

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Art Galleries Committee - In addition to the members of the Council, 7 persons are to be nominated by University of Manchester. (14 elected members)

Councillors -

Rahman (Chair)	Akbar	Bridges	Craig	Hacking
Igbon	Johnson	Midgley	Rawlins	T Robinson
White				

Audit Committee (up to 11 members plus 2 independent co-opted)

Councillors -

Lanchbury (Chair)	Curley	Kilpatrick	Noor	Simcock
Stogia	Wheeler	Dr D Barker (Co-opted member)	Mr S Downs (Co-opted member)	

Planning and Highways Committee (up to 15 members)

Councillors -

Lyons (Chair)	Shaukat Ali	Andrews	Chohan	Curley
Davies	Gartside	Hassan	Hewtison	Hughes
Johnson	Kamal	Lovecy	Ludford	Riasat

Licensing and Appeals Committee (not less than 10 and not more than 15 members)

Councillors -

Grimshaw (Chair)	Connolly	Abdullatif	Andrews	Davies
Evans	Flanagan	Hewitson	Hilal	Hughes
Judge	Muse	Reid	Riasat	

Licensing Committee (not less than 10 and not more than 15 members)

Councillors -

Grimshaw (Chair)	Connolly	Abdullatif	Andrews	Davies
Evans	Flanagan	Hewitson	Hilal	Hughes
Judge	Muse	Reid	Riasat	

Licensing Policy Committee (up to 6 members)

Councillors -

Grimshaw (Chair)	Davies	Evans	Flanagan	Leech	Rawlins (Executive Member Environment)
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					and Transport
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Standards Committee (6 members of the Council, 1 Ringway Parish Councillor and 1 Independent member and 1 independent person)

Councillors -

Andrews	Connolly	Evans	Good	Lanchbury
Simcock				
Nicole Jackson (Co-opted Independent Chair) <i>Appointed from 18 November 2022 for 4 Years</i>	Parish Councillor Christopher O'Donovan (Ringway PC)	Geoff Linell (Co-opted Independent) <i>Appointed from 18 November 2022 for 4 Years</i>	Sarah Beswick (Co-opted Independent person)	

In accordance with Article 9 of the Council Constitution, to recommend the appointment of Councillor Andrews for the purpose of answering questions at Council on the work of the Standards Committee.

Personnel Committee - Membership formula comprises the Leader of the Council, all members of the Executive, the Deputy Executive Member for Resources and Finance.

Councillors -

Akbar (Chair)	Bridges	Craig	Hacking	Igbon
Midgely	Leech	Moran	Rahman	Rawlins
T Robinson	White			

Employee Appeals Committee (Formulaic Membership)

An Executive Member with a relevant portfolio (i.e. Executive Member for the service in which the employee was working or the Executive Member with a portfolio relevant to the specific subject area of the appeal) or an appropriate Deputy Executive Member.

Two members drawn from the Council's Executive Members or their Deputy Executive Members, or elected members drawn from a prescribed 'pool'; the nominated members are –

- Councillor Ahmed Ali
- Councillor Nasrin Ali
- Councillor Douglas
- Councillor Foley
- Councillor Lynch
- Councillor Reid
- Councillor Shilton Godwin

- Councillor Wheeler

Constitutional and Nomination Committee (10 members)

Councillors -

Karney (Chair)	Craig	Curley	Flanagan	Green
Leech	Midgley	Rahman	Reeves	Richards

Health and Wellbeing Board

Manchester City Council	Leader of the Council
Manchester City Council	Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care (Chair)
Manchester City Council	Executive Member for Children and Schools Services
Manchester City Council	Deputy Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care
Manchester City Council	Director of Public Health
Manchester City Council	Director of Adult Social Care
Manchester City Council	Director of Children's Services
Manchester NHS Foundation Trust	Chair
Greater Manchester NHS Mental Health Trust	Chair
Manchester Local Care Organisation	Chief Executive
NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care	Place Lead/Deputy Place Based Lead
Manchester Healthwatch	Chair
Manchester VCSE	Chief Executive, Manchester Alliance Community Care
Manchester GP Board	Three representatives covering North, Central and South Manchester

- Councillor Craig (Leader of the Council)
- Councillor T Robinson (Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care) (MCC) (Chair)
- Councillor Bridges (Executive Member for Children and Schools Services) (MCC)
- Councillor Chambers (Deputy Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care) (MCC)
- David Regan, Director of Public Health
- Paul Marshall, Strategic Director of Children's Services
- Bernadette Enright, Director of Adult Social Services
- Kathy Cowell, Chair, Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust
- Bill McCarthy, Chair, Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust

- Katy Calvin-Thomas - Manchester Local Care Organisation
- Tom Hinchcliffe, Deputy Place Based Lead
- Amanda Smith, Chair, Healthwatch
- Mike Wild, Voluntary and Community Sector representative
- Dr Murugesan Raja Manchester GP Board
- Dr Geeta Wadhwa Manchester GP Board
- Dr Doug Jeffrey, Manchester GP Board
- Dr Shabbir Ahmad Manchester GP Board (substitute member)
- Dr Denis Colligan, Manchester GP Board (substitute member).

CN/23/12 Appointments to the Combined Authority, Joint Authorities, Joint Committees and Boards

The Committee was invited to review the current appointments and make recommendations for appointments to the Combined Authority, joint authorities and joint committees together with the appointment of spokespersons to answer questions about the work of the joint authorities at meetings of the Council as outlined in Council Procedural Rule 24.

Decisions

1. To recommend to Council the appointment of the following members to serve on the Combined Authority, joint authorities and joint committees for the 2023/24 Municipal Year:

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Councillors Craig and Councillor Midgley (substitute)

Greater Manchester Waste and Recycling Committee

Councillors Igbon and Shaukat Ali (substitute)

GMCA Audit Committee

Councillor Lanchbury

Greater Manchester Transport Committee

Councillor Rawlins

GM Culture and Social Impact Fund Committee

Councillor Whiston

Integrated Care Partnership

Councillors Craig and T Robinson (substitute)

Clean Air Charging Authorities Committee

Councillors Tracey Rawlins and Foley (substitute)

Air Quality Administration Committee

Councillors Tracey Rawlins and Foley (substitute)

Greater Manchester Clean Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Shilton Godwin

GM Homelessness Programme Board

Councillor Midgley

Green City Region Board

Councillor Rawlins

AGMA Executive Board

Councillors Craig and Midgley (substitute)

Draft Joint Development Plan – Places for Everyone Committee

Councillor Rawlins

AGMA Statutory Functions Committee

Councillors Whiston and Flanagan (substitute)

GM Police, Crime & Fire Steering Group

Councillor Rahman

GM Police, Crime and Fire Panel

Councillor Rahman

GM Health Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Hussain

Planning and Housing Commission

Councillor White

GM Pensions Fund Management Panel

Councillor Moran

People History Museum

Councillor Douglas

Manchester Airport Consultative Committee

Councillors Judge and Taylor

Manchester Port Health Authority

Councillors Evans, Lanchbury, Andrews and Bayunu

North West Employers

Councillor Hacking

Schools Forum

Councillor Reid

CN/23/13 Appointment of Lead Members

Decision

To recommend that Council appoint the following lead members –

LGBT Men's Lead	Councillor Wills
LGBT Women's Lead	Councillor Baker-Smith
Intergenerational Issues	Councillor Iqbal
Race	Councillor Hussain
City Centre	Councillor Karney
Disability	Councillor Flanagan
Age Friendly Manchester	Councillor Davies
Women	Councillor Chambers
Active Travel	Councillor Shilton Godwin
Mental Health Champion	Councillor Douglas
Carers Champion	Councillor Collins
Race Women	Councillor Igbon
Trauma Informed	Councillor Doswell

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**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee – 22 June 2023
Constitutional and Nomination Committee – 12 July 2023

Subject: Elections Act 2022 and the 4 May 2023 local election – progress report on its impacts

Report of: The Chief Executive

Summary

To provide figures and a full update on how the new duties of the Elections Act 2022 impacted on the 4 May 2023 local election, with specific focus on voter registrations, polling station accessibility, voter ID requirements and the local GM / Manchester communications campaign to raise awareness of these changes.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to note:

1. Progress and statistics of the changes passed in the Elections Act 2022 and how they impacted on the Local Elections held in Manchester on 4 May 2023; and
 2. Statistics with the implementation of the communication plan for local residents in Manchester and Greater Manchester regarding the changes for the May 2023 polls.
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Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

The legislative changes brought about by the Elections Act had a small, negative impact on achieving the zero-carbon target across the city. This included requiring a greater number of polling stations across the city to handle longer transaction times, more staff travelling across the city to work in stations, with some staff required to use their cars for the role they carry out on polling day. In addition, there was more paperwork required in stations to capture voter information and report back to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) and the Electoral Commission (EC). As much as possible, the Electoral Services Unit actively tried to reduce the carbon impact of the local election.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments
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The Electoral Services Unit developed a Manchester Local Election Equality Impact

Assessment, which was approved by the Council's Equalities Unit and fully implemented. It focused on a wide range of actions in promoting photo ID and accessibility with all areas of the community, particularly groups that may be most affected by both duties. The assessment is now being reviewed and learning points will be brought into assessments for the elections planned and expected in 2024.

Voter Authority Certificates (free Voter ID requests) were processed via a new Government Portal and were not included as part of the Equality Impact Assessment, as this is not a site or process that the Electoral Services Unit have control over.

Alignment to the Our Manchester Strategy Outcomes (if applicable)

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	<p>The Our Manchester Strategy sets out the vision for the city to 2025.</p> <p>Local elections provide the opportunity for eligible Manchester residents to elect councillors to represent them and therefore to influence how the strategy is delivered.</p>
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

The introduction of the Electoral Integrity Programme places a burden on the local authority in various ways, including:

- the time administrative staff will need to process applications for Voter Authority Certificates,
- additional equipment that may be required for some offices or polling stations, and additional poll clerks that will need to be hired for polling day.

DLUHC are responsible for providing funding for this additional burden.

- Manchester received initial grant funding of **£79,496**.
- A further grant payment was timetabled to be provided to the Council in April 2023 with an indicative figure of **£127,431** but this was increased due to a further review of the financial challenges of implementing the new duties, as well as changes to inflation in March. The revised figure of **£158,908** (increase of £31,477) was made in April 2023.
- The final amount for 2024 has not yet been confirmed
- The JLB window for local authorities to retrospectively claim additional funding will be in Summer/Autumn 2023 and 2024.

Financial Consequences – Capital

None

Contact Officers:

Name: Fiona Ledden
Position: City Solicitor
Telephone: 0161 234 3087
E-mail: fiona.ledden@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Clare Travers Wilkins
Position: Electoral Services Corporate Delivery Manager
Telephone: 0161 219 6949
E-mail: clare.travers@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Alun Ireland
Position: Head of Strategic Communications
Telephone: 07971 385049
E-mail: alun.ireland@manchester.gov.uk

Background documents (available for public inspection): None

Appendices: None

1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 The Elections Act 2022 was introduced by the UK Government to make new provision for and amendments to existing electoral law. The Government claimed that it would ensure that UK elections remain 'secure, fair, modern, inclusive, and transparent'.

1.2 Two significant legislative changes relating to the delivery of elections came into effect for the Local Elections in May 2023. Other duties will come into effect later this year, and in 2024, and will impact on the combined Local / Mayoral Election in May 2024 and a UK Parliamentary General Election that needs to take place no later than January 2025. These changes are placing significant additional responsibilities and resourcing pressures on Electoral Registration Officers (ERO) and Returning Officers (RO), and the local authority in the widest sense.

1.3 The changes that came into effect for the May 2023 local election include:

- Voter ID – Requirement for voters to show an approved form of photo ID at polling stations before a ballot paper is issued.
- Accessibility Provisions – These relate to the requirement to provide reasonable equipment to assist voters with disabilities in polling stations.

1.4 This report outlines progress on how the required changes for the May 2023 local election were implemented, and it presents some statistics and initial 'lessons learned' from the local election. It may take a little longer to fully understand all the key issues from the local election, following the publication of wider research being undertaken by the Electoral Commission.

1.5 The report also includes information on the national, GM and Manchester approach to communications for the local election that sought to ensure that all residents were aware of the planned changes and were able to vote.

2.0 The Legal Duties implemented in May 2023

2.1 Voter ID

2.1.1 The Voter ID requirements were implemented for the May 2023 polls. This included a requirement for voters to show an approved form of photo ID at polling stations before a ballot paper is issued. Those who did not possess appropriate photo ID could apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate (VAC) no later than 5pm on the 25 April to vote in the 4 May poll.

2.1.2 The new government portal went live on the 16 January 2023. As of the 25 April deadline for the May poll, Manchester received a total of 1,058 applications from local electors for a VAC. Of the 1,058 applications, 124 VAC applications did not meet the criteria for being processed due to a lack of appropriate detail or issues with the photo. The national level of VAC

applications for the same date was around 86,000 applications. For both figures, this is a small proportion of the population calculated to not possess photo ID. It needs to also be noted that there was only a short timeline to encourage VAC applications – from 16 January to 25 April 2023 for this election.

- 2.1.3 After the 25 April cut off, there was a provision in exceptional circumstances to enable the ERO to issue a temporary certificate up to 5pm on polling day, where an elector had applied by the deadline, but the VAC was issued after the deadline and the elector had not received it. There were no temporary VAC applications issued in Manchester between the 25 April deadline and polling day. Electors who reported their existing acceptable ID as lost, stolen, destroyed or damaged beyond use after the application date were able to appoint an emergency proxy up until 5pm on polling day. There was a request for 4 emergency proxies to appoint an emergency proxy using one of these reasons.
- 2.1.4 The Council's Contact Centre/Customer Service Centre assisted the public with any enquiry over the new election duties and in applying for a VAC. Calls with queries from the public on photo ID had been very low prior to polling day. On polling day, the Customer Service Centre received 283 calls relating to the election. Of the 283 calls, 64 were around the issue of voter ID. The rest of the calls were around standard requests made at election time, such as whether a voter was registered on the electoral register.
- 2.1.5 Poll cards contained detailed information on the need for photo ID and the types of acceptable photo ID for electors who vote in polling stations. In addition, information on the need for photo ID when voting at a polling station went out with council tax bills sent to all householders. There was no significantly increased spike in applications for VACs or to register on the electoral register after these two postal deliveries.
- 2.1.6 Staff numbers were increased at each polling station to allow for the additional time required to check Voter ID and complete reporting documentation. An additional five stations were also added to polling places where historical information showed a larger turnout. There was a total of 242 polling stations at 200 polling places for this election.
- 2.1.7 All staff taking part in the local election receiving updated training packages that outlined the new duties relating to photo ID and increased accessibility requirements. A total of 12 online and 1 in-person briefings were held for staff. The briefings also provided scenario planning on dealing with difficult situations from electors that arrive at a polling station without photo ID, or who do not possess the correct photo ID. A detailed survey on the effectiveness of the briefings and training package, and issues on the day, is taking place with the 1,033 staff who took part in the election. Responses to the survey has been positive with a rate of 4.15 out of 5 from staff satisfied with the content of the training.

2.1.8 The Electoral Commission (EC) and the Department for Levelling-up, Housing and Communities (DLHUC) requested that all councils who held elections in May should fill in paperwork on how many electors attended the polling station without photo ID, or the required photo ID and were refused a ballot paper. Staff were also asked to record electors who then returned to the polling station with the correct photo ID, and tally up electors that did not return with photo ID. The figures for Manchester City Council, which were published on its website on the 18 May, are as follows:

- Total number of electors who were eligible to vote in person at the polling stations – 313,519
- Total number of electors who voted at this election in a polling station – 60,742
- Total number of polling station electors who applied for, but initially were not issued with, a ballot paper – 1,649
- Total number of polling station electors who were not issued with a ballot paper and who later returned with accepted ID and were issued with a ballot paper – 1,060 (64.3% returned)
- Total number of polling station electors who applied for but were not issued with a ballot paper by close of poll – 589 (35.7% did not return). This is 0.9% of the total votes cast.

2.1.9 The BBC has undertaken analysis of the published figures from around 160 of the 230 councils that held elections on 4 May. This found that 26,165 voters were initially denied ballot papers at polling stations. Of these, 16,588 people (63.3%) came back with valid ID, whilst 9,577 (36.7%) did not return. The BBC calculate that those electors that did not return from the 160 councils is around 0.2% of the votes cast, and that the average between the councils that have published figures varied between 0.1% and 1%.

2.1.10 The EC are taking the data from all 230 councils who held elections in May to produce a report evaluating the full impact of the voter ID requirement. They stress that the impact can only be revealed through detailed data collection and analysis. In their May bulletin to councils, the EC commented that they already know from associated research that the ID requirement posed a greater challenge for some groups in society, and that some people were regrettably unable to vote as a result. The EC added that it will be essential to understand the extent of this impact, and the reasons behind it before a final view can be taken on how the policy has worked in practice and what can be learnt for future elections. An interim report is expected to be published sometime in June 2023, and the full report on the May elections will be published in September 2023. Officers will seek to report the key findings of the report to the Scrutiny Committee when it is published.

2.1.11 VAC applications and electoral registration will continue to be processed now for elections planned for 2024 and the UK Parliamentary General Election, which can be held at any point until January 2025.

2.2 Accessibility

2.2.1 The May local election also included new duties requiring Returning Officers to provide “equipment as it is reasonable to provide for the purposes of enabling, or making it easier for, relevant persons to vote independently”. These rules also made changes to who will be allowed to be a companion of a disabled voter.

2.3 Reasonable equipment and processes at Polling Stations

2.3.1 With assistance from the Elections Strategic Lead for Greater Manchester, officers from the Manchester Elections Unit and an Equalities Specialist Officer from Policy, Performance and Reform, discussions and meetings were held with Manchester / GM Disabled persons groups and Manchester / GM Equality Panels. These meetings helped to disseminate the new duties on accessibility and how to communicate these provisions to disabled voters and other voters who could be affected by these changes.

2.3.2 Following suggestions on reasonable equipment provisions from the Electoral Commission (EC) and legislative provisions a considerable amount of equipment to support accessibility requirements was fully incorporated in Manchester for the 4 May local election. Much of this equipment had been in place in previous elections in Manchester. The full list included, with its use at the election in brackets, the following:

- A large sample copy of the ballot paper displayed in all polling stations and sample hand-held copies for voters to use (27 electors used this in the polling stations)
- Tactile Voting Devices to assist visually impaired voters to mark their vote on a ballot paper (5 electors used these in polling stations)
- A braille copy of the ballot paper (2 electors used these)
- Ramps to allow access and egress where required and relevant signage for access
- Appropriate lighting
- Chairs / seating for voters who could stand for long periods
- Magnifiers to increase the size of text on a document (26 electors used these)
- Polling booths which were at wheelchair level
- Name badges for polling station staff so voters were clear who are members of staff
- ‘Here to help’ signs
- Large chunky pencils and pencil grips (5 electors used each of these)
- Where available, parking spaces for disabled voters
- Temporary doorbells where doors are closed and where it may be difficult to get assistance from staff – or a workable alternative
- Access to audio versions of ballot papers
- Hearing loops where available / temporary provision to be considered
- Electors could use any specialist devices or Apps that required to assist them to cast their vote independently.

2.3.3 Other important considerations that were also implemented included:

- A consideration of what equipment could be provided in all stations in relation to more specialist equipment, and what could be provided on request
- A guide about voting and what assistance is available – including easy read / web versions / translations into a wide range of languages as noted in section 2.5.4 below
- A message on poll cards to request adaptations / equipment – some additional equipment was added following discussion with groups, such as an extra ruler to help dyslexic voters, and a mirror to assist people requesting a privacy check around their photo ID.

2.3.4 Detailed training took place for all staff working in polling stations to increase awareness and understanding of this new equipment, and how to use and promote it. The staff survey noted in section 2.1.7 above asked if any issues of concern took place around accessibility issues and none were reported. In addition, staff were asked to tally the use of such equipment on internal paperwork during polling day. This information from this is noted above in section 2.3.2.

2.4 Companions of disabled voters

2.4.1 From the local elections taking place on 4 May 2023 onwards, disabled voters who make a declaration in the polling station that they require assistance were able to bring any person over the age of 18 as a companion to assist them to cast their vote. All staff were notified of this change in the training sessions delivered to them. There were no reported issues with this change in the local election. 50 electors required assistance from staff in the polling station to cast their vote.

2.5 Communications Campaign

2.5.1 To support the changes outlined for May 2023, a comprehensive local communications campaign began on 16 January 2023, following the launch of the VAC application portal, running through to polling day on 4 May 2023. At the national level, the EC ran a four-phase high-profile campaign focusing on raising awareness of the requirement for eligible Voter ID, targeting those who may not already have the required photographic ID, so they understand how/where to apply, and ensuring electors know they need to take Voter ID with them to vote.

2.5.2 The EC undertook research into the effectiveness of its national communications campaign. It noted that in its opinion surveys public knowledge of the need to bring photo ID in a polling station had grown from 22% in December 2022 to 87% the week before the poll.

2.5.3 To supplement the EC's national campaign, a four-phased campaign was delivered across Greater Manchester to ensure key messages were consistently disseminated and to maximise campaign budget and reach. A Manchester specific channel plan was delivered alongside this with a focus on

Manchester only advertising sites, digital and social channels, community networks and free and partner channels.

- 2.5.4 The Council's Strategic Communications Team co-ordinated the Voter ID campaign across Greater Manchester, booking advertising channels, creating campaign assets and producing four campaign toolkits for GM local authorities to use at a local level, one for each of the four phases of the 5-month campaign.
- 2.5.5 A full channel advertising campaign was run across Greater Manchester which included; TfGM tram and bus advertising; out of home adverts; radio, mobile and in-App adverts; digital screens; newspaper adverts and editorial; and a wide range of social media channels. In Manchester, the Council also put up 166 lamppost banners and 71 railing banners outside or close to polling stations across the city a week before polling day to remind people of the need to bring voter ID on 4 May. The Council also secured the opportunity to 'wrap' an advertising campaign around the MEN newspaper, with a circulation of c.16,700 and a readership of c.40,000, on the Friday before polling day.
- 2.5.6 Alongside the out-of-home advertising campaign, a voter ID leaflet was printed and included in approximately 235,000 mailed council tax bill and all e-bills, articles on voter ID were included in the Council's resident e-bulletins each month up to the election. Standalone e-bulletins detailing voter ID, eligible ID and how to apply for a VAC were also sent to residents each month. These generated a combined 617 click throughs to the voter ID links. Libraries promoted voter ID and the support to apply online via their social channels, blogs and newsletter and Premise and Taxi Licensing, Work & Skills and many other service areas shared information via their e-bulletins.
- 2.5.7 An animation to explain voter ID, types of eligible ID and how to apply for a VAC was created and posted on the Council's website and social media channels, a BSL version was also created. Social media posts displaying the voter ID animation generated 34k impressions, 377 click throughs and 211 likes and shares.
- 2.5.8 Posters and pull-up banners were produced and printed for libraries to raise awareness of the weekly voter ID support sessions available in libraries across the city. Leaflets and posters were sent to libraries, the Council's Customer Contact Centre, Neighbourhood teams, Age Friendly Manchester colleagues, Parks and leisure centres and digital versions were shared with key resident-facing services across the Council.
- 2.5.9 The EC's voter ID guide and other key documents and notices for electors were made available in 22 languages covering the most requested community languages in Manchester and Greater Manchester. The guide was also available in 'Easy Read', large print and Braille and four British Sign Language videos were available. It should be noted that the Electoral Commission initially only provided and recommended translated information in 5 languages, but the Council provided additional resources in 17 other languages to support all parts of the community. In Manchester, in polling

stations, 16 electors directly used the translated documents in assisting them to vote. A further 3 electors used the available translation services of Language Line to speak to a translator who could explain the process of voting to them in their own language.

2.5.10 Voter ID was added to the Council's website homepage and a suite of web pages was created informing people of the need to bring eligible photo ID to polling stations on 4 May, how to apply for a VAC and to highlight the local support offer in libraries. A variety of voter ID information documents were made available online and information about how to access translated copies of the voter ID booklet was included.

2.5.11 Community toolkits were shared extensively with housing providers, VSCE organisations, food providers, schools, universities, colleges, NHS, community groups and support networks across the city to aid local awareness raising. The Council also presented at board meetings and spoke with equality and disability panels to reach key audiences and build relationships to enable further engagement. Although the co-design of communications information with key groups and organisations was not possible for these May elections due to the tight timescales there is opportunity with proposed plans to co-produce information for future elections.

2.5.12 A full breakdown of the communication and reach for the paid GM campaign can be found in Appendix 1.

2.6 Engagement Campaign

2.6.1 Neighbourhood Teams were activated to engage with local groups and communities across the city to promote awareness of changes in relation to Voter ID and new requirements. This was heavily promoted through local libraries providing information and advice and also opportunities to apply online with support from staff through drop-in sessions. An extensive word of mouth approach was adopted with neighbourhood teams ensuring the issue was raised at all possible occasions of community engagement to ensure the message was communicated.

2.6.2 Extensive use of the Neighbourhood Teams social media channels to share messaging was applied also alongside other Directorate comms including Manchester Libraries blog, parks, leisure services also.

2.6.3 Neighbourhood Teams worked closely with groups, individuals, traders, community centres and businesses to ensure appropriate materials e.g., posters were available, and provided information in multiple languages where that was requested. A detailed spreadsheet of activity by the teams across north, central and south wards is available as required.

2.7 Governance and Capacity

2.7.1 A Strategic Elections function at Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) continues to provide the 10 Greater Manchester districts and GMCA

with specialist knowledge and dedicated strategic resource for the elections in 2024/5.

- 2.7.2 A cross-departmental Manchester Elections Act Steering Group has been in place since June 2022, providing support to the Elections Team. From March 2023 until the May election the meeting was merged with the Elections Project Board, which kept a close overview of core activities required to be delivered for polling day. This joint group is alternately chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive & City Treasurer, and the City Solicitor. It has met since the election to look at initial lessons learned, and it will continue to meet to consider further action and deal with the next tranche of duties within the Elections Act.
- 2.7.3 As part of the Equalities Impact Assessment undertaken for the election, the Elections Team worked closely with the Equalities Team to disseminate core information to relevant networks and provide advice where required. This included discussion between the Equalities Team and Equalities Panels from across Manchester and GM to pro-actively disseminate information on Voter ID and accessibility issues to parts of the community which the Electoral Commission have identified as potentially negatively affected by these new duties. The local communications plan has disseminated key messages through these networks as well. This engagement will continue to ensure key messages are transmitted over the next year to support the elections planned in 2024.
- 2.7.4 As a part of this assessment, privacy screens were identified as essential to allow for sensitive checks of people who are wearing face masks or coverings, or where additional checks on identity are required. As a result, polling stations were provided with privacy screens. On polling day there were 88 requests for the use of a privacy screen in polling stations. A review is taking place of the use and type of privacy screens following feedback from staff in polling stations in the May poll and understanding what other councils with a similar sized electorate to Manchester used for their polls.
- 2.7.5 Elected members were regularly briefed on the changes that were being implemented as part of the Elections Act. The Member Working Group was also re-established, and the Elections Team provided it with regular and detailed updates from January up to the May poll.

3.0 Changes after July 2023

- 3.1 A second tranche of legislation arising out of the Elections Act will start to come into effect from July 2023 onwards, ahead of the combined Local and Combined Authority Mayoral Elections in May 2024, and the next UK Parliamentary General Election, which must take place no later than January 2025. The Council's Elections Team are closely engaging with the GM Strategic Lead for Elections to be fully prepared for these changes and in directly engaging with the Government.
- 3.2 These changes include:

- A gradual move to online postal voting applications, which will require elector ID checks at the point of application, similar to when applying for Voter ID. This process will initially start with new voters.
- Changes to postal vote handling rules that are delivered on polling day.
- Changes to restrictions on overseas voters allowing them to participate in UK Parliamentary General Elections.
- It should be noted that the timescales for the start of the review of entitlement for some EU citizens to remain on the electoral register has been moved from summer 2023 to summer 2024, and so it looks unlikely to be in place for the May 2024 combined local and Mayoral elections. Such citizens are currently not allowed to vote in a UK Parliamentary General election.

3.3 Revised proposals for future parliamentary constituency boundaries have been published by the Boundary Commission for England and the final recommendations will be made to the government by the start of July 2023. The new constituencies are expected to come into place by the end of October 2023. The draft recommendations suggest significant change to a few Manchester constituencies and in creating more cross-council boundary constituencies.

3.4 Local authorities will be required to undertake a polling district and polling place review to make the new boundaries work and to publish a revised electoral register to reflect the new scheme. Manchester City Council is commencing a public consultation on its polling districts over the summer. This will be followed up by a complimentary statutory review in 2024.

3.5 An update on these changes will be provided to a future meeting of the Council's Constitution and Nominations Committee.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The recommendations are set out on page 1 above of this report

5.0 Appendices

5.1 Appendix 1 - Breakdown of the communication and reach for the paid GM campaign

Appendix 1 - Breakdown of the communication and reach for the paid GM campaign

MEDIA CHANNEL(S)	ACTIVITY	LIVE DATES	ENGAGEMENT
Out Of Home Media			
Ocean & JC Decaux City Centre Outdoor	115 x large commercial digital screens in the city centre, Mancunian Way and all major routes into the city.	13 Feb to 4 May	11.2million Opportunities to See.
Digital screens in residences in Manchester	43 digital screens in lobbies and lifts in 30 residential buildings across the city.	10 second adverts running from 10 -23 April.	Combined Opportunities to See - 612k
Transport Advertising			
Bus Advertising - Panels, Rears & Sides	4-week bus advertising campaign on interior and exterior bus media covering Depots in Bolton, Wigan, Stockport, Queens Road, Hyde Road, Oldham, Wythenshawe.	20 March to 16 April	
TFGM	2 x 4 Week outdoor campaign cross the GM Tram network. Outdoor poster sites across the 93km Metrolink network, internal Coving Advertising Panels across 120 Metrolink trams. Bus network interchanges - Poster sites across GM. Plus 2 weeks on the Digital 48 screen on major roads: Talbot Road, Trafford Bar, Bowker Vale and Middleton Road and 2 Weeks of digital ads on TFGM website.	13 Feb to 12 March and 27 March to 23 April	OTS approx. 100k plus per day
TfGM Matrix screens	Messages on TfGM's matrix screens 87 locations across GM: Stockport x 14 locations Oldham x 5 locations Rochdale x 15 locations Wigan x 9 locations City Centre (1) x 25 locations City Centre (2) x 19 locations	1 week before polling day	

Radio			
DAX Radio adverts	30 Second Audio adverts delivered across streaming audio platforms: Tune In Radio Alexa/Echo Google Home In-station Radio Apps 2 x advert messaging - Voter ID, register to vote	22 March to 18 April 19 April to 4 May	30 Second adverts - 1.2 million opportunities to hear 220k Adverts - 220k opportunities to hear
Heritage Radio - 24-hour Islamic radio station	DAX adverts plus adverts in Urdu and Arabic. Also played in Mosques around prayer time. Advert and live read.	11 April to 17 April 12 April to 4 May	Over 1m listeners
MEN Online & Print			
MEN - Digital	Digital adverts In your area native ads sponsored content editorial	4 bursts between 20 February and 4 May	190k ads per week (19k per GM borough)
MEN - Print ads	Print adverts in MEN publications: MEN (Manchester) Rochdale Observer Saturday Heywood & Middleton Guardian (Oldham) Stockport Express	8 x Ads running in MEN publications from 20 Feb to 4 May	Combined readership 96k per week
MEN Newspaper wrap	Full printed wrap on paper, inners and outers	Friday 28 April	16.7k circulation - 40k plus readership
Local Print Media			
Tameside Reporter	Paid Print and digital adverts in localised GM council area papers/Websites	2 x Adverts in March and April Issues	Combined Readership 158k
Bolton Evening News			
Bury Times			
Oldham Times			
Wigan Observer & Wigan Post			

Trafford Messenger			
Wigan Observer & Wigan Post			
Asian Leader	Advertorial lead piece and paid advert	11 April issue	Readership 35k
Paid Mobile and In App Advertising			
Mobile Phone & App Ads	Targeted mobile display to reach the key audiences with demographic targeting to GM. Awareness messages and driving traffic to website, including key register to vote and voter ID messages.		Running 6 March to 4 May Impressions - 1.5m Clicks - 13,596
Paid social media			
Facebook (including Instagram and audience expanded partners)	Paid for Facebook adverts promoting Voter ID, register to vote, how to vote.	Phase 1,2,3 - Running ads from 15 March to 25 April Phase 4 running from 25 April to 4 May	Impressions - 6.1m Reach - 1.05m Clicks - 11,750 Comments - 54 Shares - 86 Reactions -372

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**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report to: Constitutional and Nomination Committee – 12 July 2023

Subject: Electoral Commission interim report on the impact of Voter ID on the May 2023 local election

Report of: The Chief Executive

Summary of the Report

To inform the Committee of the Electoral Commission’s interim findings of the impact of Voter ID on the recent May 4 local election, which was held in Manchester and in 229 other Councils.

Recommendations

1. To note the Electoral Commission’s interim report on the impact of photo ID on the recent local election.
 2. To support the Electoral Commission’s key recommendation around the collection of data at polling stations in upcoming elections.
 3. To await the findings of the Commission’s final report due out in September to determine other future actions.
-

Wards Affected: All

Alignment to the Our Manchester Strategy Outcomes (if applicable)

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	The Our Manchester Strategy sets out the vision for the city to 2025. The Electoral Commission’s interim report on the impact of photo ID has relevance to how the Councils organises future elections. Elections are a way the public can influence change in the city.
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city’s economic success	
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	

A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial consequences - Revenue

None.

Financial consequences - Capital

None

Contact officers:

Joanne Roney OBE
 Chief Executive
joanne.roney@manchester.gov.uk
 0161 234 3006

Fiona Ledden
 City Solicitor
fiona.ledden@manchester.gov.uk
 0161 234 3087

Clare Travers-Wilkins
 Electoral Services Manager
clare.travers@manchester.gov.uk
 0161 219 6949

Background documents / relevant legislation:

The full Electoral Commission interim report can be found at this weblink –
<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/our-views-and-research/our-research/voter-id-may-2023-local-elections-england-interim-analysis>

1. Background and context

- 1.1 The recent May 4 local election was the first to implement two new duties from the Elections Act 2022 – the use of photo ID in order for electors to vote in a polling station, and to increase accessibility to all voters at polling stations. A detailed report on the election and how the duties were implemented in Manchester can be found in a report to the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee held on the 22 June 2023 – <https://democracy.manchester.gov.uk/documents/s40661/Elections%20Act%20Update%20Report.pdf>
An identical copy of this report has also been tabled to the Constitutional and Nomination Committee meeting on the 12 July 2023 for its consideration.
- 1.2 On the 23 June 2023 the Electoral Commission (EC) published its interim report on the impact of Voter ID on the 4 May local election, at which 230 Councils held polls. As noted in section 1.1 above, this was the first election that this new duty was implemented for. The EC's interim analysis provides information and evidence about how the new Voter ID requirement was implemented and how voters found taking part in the election.
- 1.3 The EC comment that there are several areas where further analysis is necessary to establish a clearer and fuller picture. They will publish a final report on the May 2023 elections in September which will include this additional analysis.

2. Core findings of the EC interim report:

- 2.1 ***Awareness of the need to bring photo ID to vote at a polling station was high -***
- EC research found that immediately before polling day, 87% of people in England (excluding London, where there were no elections) were aware that they needed to show photo ID to vote at a polling station.
 - Awareness varied across the population and was lowest among younger age groups (82% for 18 to 24-year-olds), black and minority ethnic communities (82%) and those who said they never vote in local elections (84%).
 - Awareness was significantly lower among people who said they did not have an accepted form of ID (74%) compared with those who did have ID (94%).
 - While overall awareness levels were high, some groups of people were significantly less likely to know about the requirement. This means that some people may not have known that they needed to show ID until they arrived at the polling station.
- 2.2 ***Awareness and take-up of the Voter Authority Certificate was low -***
- Approximately 89,500 people applied for a Voter Authority Certificate before the deadline on 25 April. Around 25,000 certificates were used as a form of ID on 4 May.
 - In May 2023, awareness of the Voter Authority Certificate was at 57%, both among the overall population and those who said they did not

already have photo ID.

- The overall number of Voter Authority Certificates applied for and used was low compared with estimates of the number of voters who might not have any other accepted ID (250,000 to 300,000).

2.3 ***At least 0.25% of people who tried to vote at a polling station in May 2023 were not able to because of the ID requirement -***

- Data collected in polling stations from the 230 Councils shows that at least 0.25% of people who tried to vote at a polling station were not issued with a ballot paper because of the ID requirement. At least 0.7% of people who tried to vote at a polling station were initially turned away but around two-thirds of those people (63%) returned later in the day and were able to vote.
- In actual numbers for this election, **0.25% of polling station voters** at these elections is **approximately 14,000 voters** who were not issued with a ballot paper because they could not show an accepted form of ID.
- However, the EC say this is an underestimate, partly due to data quality issues but also because some people will have been reminded of the ID requirement before they could be recorded in the data.
- Returning Officers were required to separate out data for polling stations with and without staff acting as greeters. Where that data could be provided it shows that polling stations with greeters recorded that a smaller proportion of people were initially turned away (0.55%) compared to those without greeters (0.8%). Overall, the data shows that 38% of polling stations had a greeter.
- Among those recorded as being turned away from a polling station, 68% had not brought any ID and 28% brought a type of ID that was not accepted. The remainder were refused a ballot paper where the photo on their ID was not recognisable, the polling station staff suspected the ID was forged or where the person had failed to answer the statutory questions, which can be used to ask a voter to confirm their name and address.
- Any voter showing ID could ask to have their identity checked in a private area of the polling station. Approximately 2,250 voters were recorded as having asked to have this check done in private.

2.4 ***Around 4% of all non-voters said they did not vote because of the voter ID requirement -***

- Some people who would have wanted to vote at a polling station may have decided not to try, because they realised they did not have accepted ID before attempting to vote. To understand the broader impact of the voter ID requirement, the EC carried out a representative public opinion survey across the areas with elections in May. The survey asked people if they voted in the elections and, if not, why not.
- The survey found that 4% of people who said they did not vote in these elections gave an unprompted reason related to the ID rules – 3% said they did not have the necessary ID and 1% said they disagreed with the need to show ID. The proportion of non-voters giving an ID-related reason rose from 4% to 7% when survey respondents were selecting

from a list of reasons.

- There is evidence that some people found it harder than others to show accepted voter ID, including disabled people and the unemployed. However, further data collection and analysis are needed to establish a clearer picture and the EC have advised this will include additional information in its final report in September.

2.5 ***Levels of voter confidence and satisfaction were similar to in previous elections -***

- There were high levels of satisfaction with the process of voting, in line with previous comparable elections; 89% of polling station voters said they were very or fairly satisfied.
- Voters were significantly more likely than non-voters to say that voting is safe. 90% of all voters said voting in a polling station is safe compared to 79% of non-voters. These results are also similar to those recorded after previous comparable elections.
- One potential impact of the new ID rules could have been that more people chose to vote by post instead of at a polling station. The EC do not know if that was the case, as data on levels of postal voting at these elections is not yet available. The EC will include an assessment of any change in their full election report in September.

3. **Key recommendation of the EC interim report**

- 3.1 The EC provide one major recommendation in their interim report on the impact of photo ID on the May local election – that ***the UK Government and the wider electoral community should work to improve the collection of data at polling stations.***
- 3.2 The EC specifically recommends that the UK Government should ensure that Returning Officers are able to collect and report monitoring data on the impact of voter ID at future elections, and they also assert that work is also needed to improve the quality and reliability of data collected at polling stations in future.

4. **Next steps for the EC**

- 4.1 As highlighted throughout the EC report, there are areas it believes more research is required to understand the full impact of the new voter ID requirement. This will be covered in its September election report. These include how the implementation of voter ID:
- may have differently affected people across society who wanted to vote and what actions can be taken ahead of the next set of elections to address these issues. This includes looking at varying levels of awareness of the ID requirement, patterns in the numbers of people being turned away from polling stations and demographic / socio-economic differences in the data the EC has collected through its public opinion research
 - impacted on the administration of the polls. This will incorporate views from Returning Officers and their teams responsible for planning the elections, as well as the polling station staff responsible for managing

- the processes on 4 May (Manchester Electoral Services Unit has given its views to the EC on these matters)
- changed how political parties and election candidates approached their campaigns for these elections.
- 4.2 As noted, the final EC report is due to be published in September and it will also include its usual analysis of all other core aspects of the May local election. The UK Government has commented that it will also be publishing its own analysis on the impact of the local election later in the year. It welcomed the interim EC report and commented that it "...shows that the vast majority of voters – 99.75% – were able to cast their vote successfully. These encouraging findings are also reflective of the confidence we always had in the ability of local authorities to implement these changes while continuing to deliver our elections robustly and securely."
- 4.3 The Electoral Services Unit is considering the interim report and will determine full actions following the publication of the final EC report on the elections due in September 2023. Officers will keep the Committee informed on the conclusions of the final report and actions that are required as a result of it.

Recommendations

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

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report to: Constitutional and Nomination Committee – 12 July 2023

Subject: Future activity of the Electoral Services Unit

Report of: The Chief Executive

Summary

To inform the Committee of plans for conducting a future compulsory review of polling districts and polling places within the city. The review needs to take account of new Parliamentary Boundary changes that will come into effect for the next UK Parliamentary General Election (UKPGE). The report also informs the committee of plans to support the annual canvass for updating the electoral register and plans to promote and implement existing Tranche 1 and new Tranche 2 duties of the Elections Act 2022.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the need for, and issues with, a compulsory review of polling districts and polling places.
 2. Note the changes to parliamentary boundaries that have been submitted by the Boundary Commission of England to the Speaker of the House of Commons and which will come into effect at the next UK Parliamentary General Election.
 3. Note and support plans for the Annual Canvass of Electors, including ways the Electoral Services Unit, other sections of the Council and external stakeholders can encourage dissemination and engagement with a range of communities across the city of material and core messages to promote increased electoral registration.
 4. Note the timeline for the next tranche of duties from the Elections Act 2022 and that officers will consider ways to promote these duties in a similar manner to the annual canvass.
-

Wards Affected: All

Alignment to the Our Manchester Strategy Outcomes (if applicable)

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
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A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	The Our Manchester Strategy sets out the vision for the city to 2025.
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	The Council's scheme of polling districts and polling places operates for parliamentary, local elections and other polls (such as the GMCA Mayoral election). It is therefore a key part of the city's governance arrangements. The annual canvass also seeks to increase the number of registered electors in the city that are eligible to vote.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Local elections provide the opportunity for eligible Manchester residents to elect Councillors to represent them and therefore to influence how the Our Manchester strategy is delivered.

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial consequences - Revenue

The costs of conducting the Compulsory Polling District and Polling Place Review will be in the region of £5,000 to include the cost of publishing statutory notices, polling place visits and consultation activity. This will be funded from within the existing Electoral Services budget.

Financial consequences - Capital

None

Contact officers:

Joanne Roney OBE
 Chief Executive
 joanne.roney@manchester.gov.uk 0161 234 3006

Fiona Ledden
 City Solicitor
 fiona.ledden@manchester.gov.uk 0161 234 3087

Clare Travers-Wilkins

Electoral Services Manager
clare.travers@manchester.gov.uk

0161 219 6949

Background documents / relevant legislation:

Representation of the People Act 1983

The Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986

The Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections)
Regulations 2006

The Electoral Administration and Registration Act 2013

The Elections Act 2022

1. Background and context

- 1.1 As required by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, compulsory reviews of parliamentary polling districts and polling places must take place during a compulsory review period that recurs every 5 years.
- 1.2 The Council undertook its last compulsory review, which was combined with a review of local election arrangements, in the summer of 2019, coming into effect in February 2020. The Council is required to undertake the next compulsory review within the 16 month period beginning on 1 October 2023 and concluding by 31 January 2025 (that is during the period that is 5 years on from the last compulsory review period), although it is open to the Council to also undertake interim reviews outside of that period.
- 1.3 The Council's duty under the Representation of the People Act 1983 to divide constituencies into polling districts is distinct from its power to divide wards into polling districts at local elections. However, the Electoral Commission advises that polling districts for UK parliamentary and local government elections should always be the same. It therefore follows that any review of parliamentary polling districts and places should be conducted simultaneously with a review of local government arrangements, and of arrangements for any other type of election for which provision is made for the designation of polling districts and/or polling places (for example Combined Authority Mayoral elections).
- 1.4 It is to be noted that the Boundary Commission for England ('BCE') has undertaken a review of parliamentary constituencies and has delivered its final recommendations to the Speaker of the House of Commons (who will in turn lay them before Parliament). The final recommendations are available on the BCE's website, here: <https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/2023-review/>. The UK Government has four months to place an Order before the Privy Council for giving effect to the changes. While the Order will come into effect on a date specified within the Order itself (anticipated to be in the end of October / early November 2023), the new constituencies will only be effective for parliamentary elections held at the next UKPGE and thereafter (any parliamentary by-elections held before parliament is dissolved will be carried out on the old constituency boundaries). A UKPGE is possible at any time up to January 2025, and it could take place before, on the same day, or after the Local and Combined Authority Mayoral Elections scheduled for 2 May 2024. Initial consideration was given to holding an interim review of polling districts, beginning in mid-July this year and ending in late November with any changes being incorporated into the republished 1 December 2023 electoral register, but this option no longer appears viable due to the complexity of undertaking such a review when amended parliamentary boundaries have not been implemented by way of the Order mentioned above.
- 1.5 After receiving information relating to this matter from the Electoral Commission, and in seeking further guidance from the Council's Legal Services it has become apparent that unless the Order implementing the

boundary changes comes into force before an interim polling district review was due to officially start it would not be practical or sensible to start such a review. This is because, in such circumstances, an interim review will have been initiated based on constituencies that currently exist and consultation undertaken on that basis, only for there to be a significant risk that the Order implementing the new boundaries will come into effect part-way through the review process. Our current understanding is that this would make any 'in-progress' interim review null and void, thereby requiring the review process to begin afresh based upon the new parliamentary constituency boundaries.

- 1.6 It is to be noted that, even if a review could be initiated and completed on the originally proposed timescales referred to in paragraph 1.4 above, this would (due to the proposed start date) constitute an interim review and it would therefore still be necessary to hold a further "compulsory" review relatively shortly thereafter. It is also to be noted that any review undertaken before the next UKPGE would need to result in a polling district scheme that would enable both parliamentary by-elections to be run on the existing constituency boundaries and a UKPGE to be run on the new boundaries.
- 1.7 On the basis of the above, it is considered that the most appropriate course of action, that carries the least risk to the Council, is to delay the undertaking of a polling district and polling place review until after the Order implementing the new parliamentary boundaries is in force. However, based on the current understanding of when this is likely to happen, there would not be enough time left afterwards to initiate and complete a review ahead of publication of the revised register on 1 December 2023. Furthermore, undertaking a review early next year would risk compromising the effective delivery of the May 2024 elections, due to the impact that changes to polling districts and places would have on administrative activity that needs to be undertaken ahead of those elections.
- 1.8 Therefore, it is proposed that the next polling district and polling place review is a compulsory review beginning in July 2024. It is to be noted that if any urgent changes to polling places are needed before the completion of that review (e.g. due to existing premises closing or otherwise becoming unavailable), and if it is not possible for the Committee to meet in time to approve any changes that may be needed, authority is delegated to the Chief Executive to make, where necessary, alterations to the designation of any polling place in such circumstances, in consultation with group leaders, ward Councillors and the Chair of the Committee.
- 1.9 The timing of the next UKPGE and of the next polling district and place review will determine which polling districts and places are used at that election and what will be required as part of the overall polling district and polling place review work programme. The three possible scenarios are:
 - a) A UKPGE is called before the Order giving effect to the new Parliamentary boundaries comes into force and before any polling district and place review is completed. In this scenario the UKPGE would be run on the

existing parliamentary constituency boundaries and using the existing scheme of polling districts and polling places.

- b) A UKPGE is called after the Order giving effect to the new Parliamentary boundaries comes into force, but before any polling district and place review is completed. In this scenario the UKPGE would be run on the new parliamentary constituency boundaries and using the existing scheme of polling districts and polling places. When a polling district and place review is subsequently completed, it will be able to put in place a scheme that is fully focussed on the needs of the new constituencies, as there will be no requirement for the scheme to also accommodate potential parliamentary by-elections held on the former constituency boundaries.
- c) A UKPGE is called after the Order giving effect to the new Parliamentary boundaries comes into force and after a polling district and place review has been completed. In this scenario the UKPGE would be run on the new parliamentary constituency boundaries, using a new scheme of polling districts and polling places produced by the review. However, that scheme would not be fully optimised to the new parliamentary constituency boundaries, as certain “sub-optimal” arrangements will have had to have been retained to accommodate potential parliamentary by-elections held on the former boundaries (see further discussion of this at paragraph 2.2 below) and there would therefore need to be further work, via a further polling district and place review in 2025, to fully optimise the scheme.

The above scenarios have been taken into account when proposing that the next polling district and place review be undertaken in July 2024.

- 1.10 It is to be noted that the changes to parliamentary constituencies will also require the Electoral Services Unit to actively engage on the practicalities of cross-boundary changes with colleagues in Rochdale, Oldham, Tameside and Trafford councils in respect of the next UKPGE.

2. Preparations for the compulsory polling district and polling place review

- 2.1 The proposals for parliamentary constituency boundaries have now been finalised by the Boundary Commission for England and delivered to the Speaker of the House of Commons. The proposals recommend the following parliamentary constituencies which fall wholly or partly in the Manchester district:

- ***Blackley and Middleton South*** (taking in the existing Manchester wards of Charlestown, Crumpsall, Harpurhey, Higher Blackley and Moston, as well as the Rochdale Council wards of East Middleton and South Middleton).
- ***Gorton and Denton*** (taking in the existing Manchester wards of Burnage, Gorton & Abbey Hey, Levenshulme and Longsight, as well as the Tameside Council wards of Denton North East, Denton South and Denton West).

- **Manchester Central** (taking in the existing Manchester wards of Ancoats & Beswick, Cheetham, Clayton & Openshaw, Deansgate, Miles Platting & Newton Heath and Piccadilly, as well as the Oldham Council wards of Failsworth East and Failsworth West).
- **Manchester Rusholme** (taking in the existing Manchester wards of Ardwick, Fallowfield, Hulme, Moss Side, Rusholme and Whalley Range).
- **Manchester Withington** (taking in the existing Manchester wards of Chorlton, Chorlton Park, Didsbury East, Didsbury West, Old Moat and Withington).
- **Wythenshawe and Sale East** (taking in the existing Manchester wards of Baguley, Brooklands (Manchester), Northenden, Sharston and Woodhouse Park, as well as the Trafford Council wards of Brooklands (Trafford), Priory and Sale Moor).

2.2 In order to ensure that both parliamentary and local elections (standalone or combined) can be delivered using the same scheme and also that any parliamentary by-election can be run on existing boundaries, there are a small number of polling districts (with accompanying polling places) where the boundaries cannot be changed ahead of the UKPGE as these polling districts are currently 'cross-constituency' (i.e., these polling districts fall within a different parliamentary constituency to the other polling districts within the same local authority ward). These occur in the following wards:

- Charlestown ward, mainly within the existing Blackley and Broughton constituency: polling districts 2CNH and 2 CNJ fall within the existing Manchester Central Constituency.
- Deansgate ward, mainly within the existing Manchester Central constituency: polling district 1DGA fall within the existing Blackley and Broughton constituency.
- Moss Side ward, mainly within the existing Manchester Central constituency: polling district 3MSG fall within the existing Manchester Gorton constituency.
- Moston ward, mainly within the existing Manchester Central constituency: polling districts 1MOK and 1MOL fall within the existing Blackley and Broughton constituency.
- Fallowfield ward, mainly within the existing Manchester Gorton constituency: polling district 2FAF falls within the existing Manchester Central constituency.
- Whalley Range ward, mainly within the existing Manchester Gorton constituency: polling districts 2WRF, 2WRG, 2WRH and 2WRJ falls within the existing Manchester Central constituency.
- Burnage ward, mainly within the existing Manchester Withington constituency: polling districts 3BUE and 3BUF falls within the existing Manchester Gorton constituency.
- Chorlton ward, mainly within the existing Manchester Withington constituency: polling districts 3CLG and 3CLH falls within the existing Manchester Gorton constituency.

- Chorlton Park ward, mainly within the existing Manchester Withington constituency: polling district 3CPF and 3CPG falls within the existing Manchester Gorton constituency.

The recently recommended Parliamentary boundary changes would resolve the issues above by constituting the new constituencies using entire wards, but as detailed above resultant changes to 'cross-constituency' polling districts cannot be made until after the UKPGE has taken place.

- 2.4 The Electoral Commission and The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) are continuing to look into these issues and further information and guidance is expected over the coming weeks detailing the different scenarios of when a UKPGE may occur, taking into consideration the position in the Elections calendar and the legislation relating to the Parliamentary Boundary Changes, Annual Canvass and Tranche 2 of Elections Act 2022 changes at that time.
- 2.5 Following the significant number of changes from the Elections Act implemented in the 2023 local elections, with additional duties to follow later this year and in early 2024, officers in the Electoral Services Unit have been actively monitoring the effectiveness of the current arrangements. This includes considering the number of electors and overall turnout at different polls, with the best interests of the elector in mind. In addition, an ongoing record has been kept of any comments received to date from stakeholders, including previous representations made by elected representatives, council officers and premises holders, for consideration once the review of polling districts and places is formally underway. This will remain an active and ongoing process up to the compulsory review starting, it is proposed, in July 2024.

3. Annual Canvass 2023

- 3.1 The Electoral Services Unit plans to commence the Annual Canvass to encourage increased electoral registration at the end of July 2023. Decisions as to how the canvass should be undertaken and managed over the summer period taking into account the proposed tranche 2 duties noted in section 4 below, is already in discussion. The canvass will continue until the end of November in readiness for the new Electoral Register to be published on the 1 December 2023.
- 3.2 The Annual Canvass also provides an opportunity to publicise the ongoing need to promote existing Elections Act duties for example encouraging the take up of Voter Authority Certificates (VACs) for new voters who do not possess the necessary photo ID, as well as encouraging feedback on the accessibility of existing polling stations.
- 3.3 Elections Officers are engaging with Council staff and external stakeholders to publicise electoral registration across the city and to particular parts of the community including through:

- Community networks through Neighbourhood Teams, MACC and the Our Manchester VSCE scheme.
- Disabled groups through Breakthrough UK, the Manchester Disabled People Forum and internal staff networks.
- Older voters through Age Friendly Manchester.
- Younger voters through established networks that the Council's Youth Services connects with, as well as in interacting with the University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester College and other relevant institutions.
- Relevant equalities networks as advised by the Council's Equalities and Diversity Unit.
- Homelessness support networks as advised by the Council's Homelessness Advisory Service.
- Care sector networks as advised by the Council's Adult Social Services and Children's & Education Services Directorates.
- Veterans' groups such as the Royal British Legion and SSAFA.

3.4 Discussions have commenced with these groups as to the type of information that needs to be disseminated, and the type of networks / forum meetings that relevant officers could attend to support this process.

4. Elections Act Tranche 2 duties

4.1 A second tranche of legislation arising out of the Elections Act will start to come into effect over the next 12 months, and they will impact on the Local and Combined Authority Mayoral Elections in May 2024, and the next UKPGE. The Council's Elections Team are closely engaging with the GM Strategic Lead for Elections to be fully prepared for these changes and in directly engaging with the Government.

4.2 These changes include:

- A gradual move to online postal voting applications, which will require elector ID checks at the point of application, similar to the process in applying for Voter ID. This process will initially start with new voters. A portal is currently being developed by DLUHC and the Council is engaging closely with the government on these changes (coming into place in October 2023).
- Changes to postal vote handling and secrecy rules and proxy limits (coming into force for any polls from May 2024).
- Changes to restrictions on overseas voters allowing them to participate in UK Parliamentary General Elections beyond the former 15 year time limit (coming into place in January 2024).

4.3 DLUHC, the Electoral Commission and local authority Electoral Service Units are aware that the existing duties and implementation of new duties in the Elections Act, coupled to the number of elections likely in the next 12-18 months (in Greater Manchester there will be Local and Combined Authority Mayoral Elections as well as a UKPGE), and the requirement for a compulsory review of polling districts and polling places, puts a considerable burden on all Councils. Considerable discussion is taking place to use the

next few months to prepare for extensive change. Officers will engage with the Council's Elections Steering Group and the Elections Member Working Group to look at ways to prioritise these changes and achieve them through existing staffing and expenditure.

5. Recommendations

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