

## **Manchester City Council Report for Resolution**

**Report to:** Constitutional and Nomination Committee – 28 November 2018

**Subject:** Polling Districts and Polling Places: proposed changes to the current scheme and proposed timing of the next compulsory review

**Report of:** The Chief Executive

---

### **Summary or Purpose of the report**

To propose changes to the current scheme of polling places for two polling districts in the Charlestown and Clayton & Openshaw wards, and to approve the initiation of a compulsory review of parliamentary polling districts and polling places within the Council's area, to be combined with a review of the equivalent local government polling arrangements beginning in July 2019.

### **Recommendations**

1. To note the background to the proposed timetable for the next compulsory review of polling districts and polling places.
  2. To authorise the initiation of a review of the parliamentary polling districts and polling places within the Council's area, and that this be combined with a review of the equivalent local government polling arrangements, beginning in July 2019, with further details of the timetable and process to be brought to the Committee, closer to the time.
  3. To approve the changes to the current scheme as set out in paragraphs 5.1, 5.1.1, 6.1 and 6.1.1 overleaf, to come into effect on 1 December 2018.
  4. To adopt the changes, referred to in recommendation 3 above, to the scheme for both parliamentary and local elections.
- 

### **Wards Affected:**

All

### **Alignment to the Our Manchester Strategy Outcomes (if applicable)**

<b>Manchester Strategy outcomes</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS</b>
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. Local elections provide the opportunity for eligible Manchester residents to elect Councillors to represent them and therefore

A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	<p>to influence how the strategy is delivered.</p> <p>The Council's scheme of polling districts and polling places is a key part of the city's governance arrangements.</p> <p>The updated scheme will recognise and reflect feedback following 3 May 2018 local elections and any changes in availability of polling place locations in advance of the 2 May 2019 local elections, with the compulsory review of polling districts and polling places beginning in July 2019.</p>
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**

It is anticipated that the costs of the proposed changes to polling place arrangements will be neutral, given the costs of the new polling place designations will not be greater than the costs of existing arrangements.

### **Financial Consequences – Capital**

None

---

### **Contact Officers:**

Joanne Roney OBE  
Chief Executive  
j.roney@manchester.gov.uk  
Tel: 0161 234 3006

Fiona Leddon  
City Solicitor  
fiona.ledden@manchester.gov.uk  
Tel: 0161 234 3087

Emma Burnett  
Head of Electoral Services  
e.burnett@manchester.gov.uk  
Tel: 0161 234 3146

---

**Background documents (available for public inspection):** None

**Appendices:** None

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 As part of preparations for the local elections taking place on 2 May 2019, work has been undertaken by officers to ensure that polling places have the suitable access, space and facilities for electors. This work has been based on practical considerations relating to the availability of polling places as well as feedback from local councillors and comments received from polling station inspectors and other senior officers who worked at the 3 May 2018 local elections. This work has also considered the most suitable timings for the next compulsory review of polling districts and polling places.

## **2.0 The designation of polling districts, polling places and polling stations**

- 2.1 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 the power to divide wards into polling districts at local elections. 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 arrangements should be conducted simultaneously with one of local government arrangements.
- 2.2 On occasion, 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 usually occurs as a result of premises being closed or unexpectedly becoming unavailable, often at short notice, or if an unscheduled poll takes place. 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 Constitutional and Nomination Committee, as agreed by Council at its 24 January 2018 meeting.
- 2.3 The allocation of polling stations within polling places is not a Council function and is the responsibility of the Returning Officer.

## **3.0 Context and approach to undertaking Polling District and Polling Place Reviews**

- 3.1 All local authorities have a duty to complete a compulsory review of polling districts and polling places every 5 years, in accordance with the Fixed Term Parliament Act. The last compulsory review in Manchester was undertaken in the autumn of 2013 and came into effect in February 2014. This means that the next compulsory review must take place within a 16 month period beginning on 1 October 2018 and concluding by 31 January 2020.
- 3.2 In the autumn of 2017, an interim review of the city's parliamentary polling districts and polling places took place, which was conducted simultaneously with a review of the equivalent local government polling arrangements. This

review was necessary in order to take into account the city's 32 new ward boundaries, following the conclusion of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) Electoral Review of Manchester. For reasons of clarity and transparency the interim review followed the same approach and steps as a compulsory review. The new scheme was agreed by the Council on 24 January 2018 and came into effect when the register was re-published on 1 February 2018, in preparation for May's local elections.

- 3.3 It was originally intended for the Council to conduct its next compulsory review of parliamentary and local polling districts and polling places in the autumn of 2018. However, after taking into considerations points set out in 3.3.1 to 3.3.3 below, it is proposed to the Committee that the compulsory review begins in July 2019, with consultation taking place during the summer/autumn of 2019. Proposals agreed would then come into effect on 1 December 2019, when the electoral register is published.
- 3.3.1 The scheme which operated at the local elections in May 2018, and took into account the city's new ward boundaries, worked well overall and feedback has been positive. Conducting the compulsory review after the local elections in May 2019, will allow further learning from the delivery of these elections to be taken into consideration. Officers are maintaining a record of any feedback from Councillors which relates to the review of polling districts, for consideration at this time.
- 3.3.2 The LGBCE's Electoral Review of the city recognised that there will be a significant growth in the electorate between 2018 and 2022, with the new wards boundaries developed on this basis. Over the next year, a significant number of new residential developments within the city centre and its fringes will become occupied. The configuration of polling districts and polling places within the relevant wards needs to be reviewed in order to take into account the volume and distribution of new electors. This will be done using the Council's wider knowledge and intelligence relating to demographics, residential planning and development.
- 3.3.3 The Boundary Commissions' recommendations for parliamentary constituencies in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland were laid in Parliament in early September 2018. However, at the moment there is no clear timetable for when the required legislation will be prepared or voted on by both Houses of Parliament. If approved, the new boundaries would come into place at the next General Election, currently scheduled for May 2022. The current scheme has been designed to deliver both parliamentary elections on the current constituency boundaries (which are based on pre May 2018 wards), local elections on the new wards and any combined polls. However, it is hoped that by the time the compulsory review is undertaken in the summer/autumn of 2019, there will be clarity on the future of the Boundary Commissions' recommendations.

#### **4.0 Proposed changes to the current scheme**

- 4.1 Undertaking the compulsory review beginning in July 2019, will allow detailed consideration of the issues identified and raised during the consultation period to be examined and best understood, as well as the issues outlined in the previous section. However, ahead of this review, a small number of changes to the scheme are required as part of preparations for 2 May 2019 local elections.
- 4.2 Officers have undertaken visits to the possible polling places in the polling districts where changes to the current scheme are required, to assess their suitability and to evaluate any alternatives which may exist.
- 4.3 When assessing the suitability of polling places an assessment of the following issues have been taken into account:
- 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
- 4.4 The Committee is asked to consider the following proposals for the two new polling place designations as set out in sections 5 and 6 below.

#### **5. BLACKLEY AND BROUGHTON CONSTITUENCY**

- 5.1 Changes are proposed for one polling place within the Blackley and Broughton Constituency, in the Charlestown ward.

##### **5.1.1 Charlestown ward – polling district 1CNG**

For the 2 May 2019 local elections and future polls it is proposed that the polling place for 1CNG is St Mary's Church on Nuthurst Road. The church is well known to the local community and the building has good disabled access. The space within the church is of a suitable size and is easily accessible to all electors. It also has the advantage of being located next door to St. Matthew's RC High School, which is currently designated as the polling place for this polling district. In recent years, the polling place in this polling district has been located in three different premises (two within the St. Matthew's RC High School, and also on a temporary basis in St. Mary's C of E Primary School, which is located in the neighbouring Moston ward), with varying levels of space and accessibility. It is proposed that moving the polling place to St. Mary's Church will bring stability and a long term solution as the polling place for this polling district, which will be of benefit to electors.

This change of polling place will be communicated to electors through their poll card and additional signage will be placed at the entrance to St. Matthew's RC High School on polling day to signpost electors to the new polling place.

## **6. MANCHESTER CENTRAL CONSTITUENCY**

6.1 Changes are proposed for one polling place within the Manchester Central Constituency in the Clayton & Openshaw ward.

### **6.1.1 Clayton & Openshaw ward – polling district 2COE**

It is proposed that the polling place for 2COE becomes St. Clement's Church Hall, which is situated next to St. Clement's Church on Ashton Old Road. Both the Church and Hall are both well-known and used by the local community. The hall has its own dedicated entrance, which will be made accessible to all electors, and is a suitable size for use as a polling place.

This change in designation is required because the New Roundhouse, which is the current polling place is no longer available, due to the redevelopment of part of the premises.

This change of polling place will also be communicated to electors through their poll card and additional signage will be placed at the New Roundhouse on polling day to sign post electors to the new polling place.

## **7. MANCHESTER GORTON, MANCHESTER WITHINGTON AND WYTHENSHAW AND SALE EAST CONSTITUENCIES**

7.1 No changes are proposed for any polling places in the Manchester Gorton, Manchester Withington and Wythenshawe and Sale East Constituencies.

## **8. Recommendations**

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