

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Resolution**

**Report to:** Constitutional and Nomination Committee – 30 January 2019

**Subject:** Polling Districts and Polling Places: proposed changes to the current scheme

**Report of:** The Chief Executive

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**Summary or Purpose of the report**

To propose changes to the current scheme of polling places for four polling districts in the Gorton and Abbey Hey, Longsight, Old Moat and Sharston wards.

**Recommendations**

1. To approve the changes to the current scheme as set out in paragraphs 4.1, 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 5.1, 5.1.1, 6.1 and 6.1.1 – being:
    - Gorton and Abbey Hey Ward - the polling place for 3GAE be Active Me Studios on Abbey Hey Lane
    - Longsight Ward – the polling place for 3LOG be Gorton Primary School on Mount Road
    - Old Moat Ward – the polling place for 4OMC be Withington Girls’ School on the corner of Wellington Road and Victoria Road
    - Sharston Ward - the polling place for 5SHB be Manchester College Wythenshawe Campus on the corner of Hollyhedge Road and Brownley Road
  2. To adopt the changes, referred to in recommendation 1 above, to the scheme for both parliamentary and local elections.
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**Wards Affected:**

Gorton and Abbey Hey, Longsight, Old Moat and Sharston.

**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 to influence how the strategy is delivered.
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	governance arrangements.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	The updated scheme will recognise and reflect feedback following 3 May 2018 local elections and any changes in availability of polling places.
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

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### **Background documents (available for public inspection):**

None

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 As part of preparations for the local government 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 in the current scheme and feedback from stakeholders.

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

- 2.1 The designation of the city's polling districts and polling places within them 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 Polling Place visits**

- 3.1 Following the report which went to the Constitutional and Nomination Committee on 28 November 2018, a small number of further changes are required to the current scheme.
- 3.2 Officers have undertaken visits to the potential polling places in the polling districts where these changes are needed, to assess their suitability and to evaluate any alternatives which may exist.
- 3.3 When assessing the suitability of polling places an assessment of the following issues were taken into account:
- the proximity of the polling place to populated areas
  - accessibility
  - signage

- the management and configuration of the polling station
- the capacity of polling places to accommodate more than one polling station if necessary
- the number of electors within the district
- recent developments and population changes

3.4 The Committee is asked to consider the following proposals for the four new polling place designations as set out in sections 4 to 6 below.

#### **4. MANCHESTER GORTON CONSTITUENCY**

4.1 Changes are proposed for two polling places within the Manchester Gorton Constituency, in Gorton and Abbey Hey and Longsight wards.

##### **4.1.1 Gorton and Abbey Hey Ward – polling district 3GAE**

For future polls it is proposed that the polling place for 3GAE is Active Me Studios on Abbey Hey Lane. Electors currently vote at Abbey Hey Primary Academy which is located within the adjoining polling district 3GAD. This is an arrangement which has been in place following the loss of premises in 3GAE several years ago. Local councillors supported the reinstatement of a polling place in 3GAE to make it more convenient for electors and assist in encouraging voter participation.

Active Me Studios is centrally located within 3GAE and is already well used within the local community due to the classes it runs for local residents. The room to be used is of a good size and will be made fully accessible on polling day.

##### **4.1.2 Longsight Ward – 3LOG**

For future polls it is proposed that the polling place for 3LOG is Gorton Primary School on Mount Road. Electors currently vote at the Grange School, which is further down Mount Road on the edge of the polling district, with the entrance round the back of Mount Road rather than directly from it.

Gorton Primary School is better located on Mount Road, closer to the majority of electors. A new school is currently under construction on the site. However, there is already a permanent building, which has a suitable room in it. This is a large suitable space which will be made fully accessible on polling day. It also benefits from being directly accessible from Mount Road.

#### **5. MANCHESTER WITHINGTON CONSTITUENCY**

5.1 Changes are proposed for one polling place within the Manchester Withington Constituency, in Old Moat ward.

##### **5.1.1 Old Moat Ward – polling district 4OMC**

For future polls it is proposed that the polling place for 4OMC is Withington Girls' School on the corner of Wellington Road and Victoria Road. A re-designation is required in this polling district because the current polling place Fallowfield Bowling and Social Club is no longer available for use.

Withington Girls' School has offered the use of a suitable room in the newly built gymnasium area of the school. A larger space is also available if two polling stations are required. Both rooms are fully accessible. The school building is located across the road from the current polling place, and will be well known to local residents. Electors will use an entrance on Victoria rather than Wellington Road.

## **6. WYTHENSHAW AND SALE EAST CONSTITUENCY**

6.1 Changes are proposed for one polling place within the Wythenshawe and Sale East Constituency, in Sharston ward.

### **6.1.1 Sharston Ward – polling district 5SHB**

For future polls it is proposed that the polling place for 5SHB is Manchester College Wythenshawe Campus on the corner of Hollyhedge Road and Brownley Road. These premises are more centrally located than the current polling place Wythenshawe Community Church, which is on the edge of the polling district. Manchester College is well known to the local community and will be more conveniently situated for the majority of electors.

Manchester College Wythenshawe Campus has offered the use of the foyer area outside their campus theatre as the polling place. The space is large, accessible and will have its own entrance which can be accessed via the side of the main building close to Brownley Road.

## **7. BLACKLEY AND BROUGHTON AND MANCHESTER CENTRAL CONSTITUENCIES**

7.1 No changes are proposed for any polling places in Blackley and Broughton and Manchester Central Constituencies.

## **8. Communication to electors**

8.1 Changes to all polling places will be communicated to electors via their poll card. In addition, on polling day, signs directing electors to their new polling place will be attached to the previously use premises in Longsight, Old Moat and Sharston wards.

## **9. Recommendations**

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