

## Constitutional and Nomination Committee

### Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 12 July 2023

#### Present:

Councillor Curley – in the Chair  
Councillors Flanagan, Leech, Rahman and Reeves

**Apologies:** Councillor Karney

#### **CN/23/14 Appointment of Chair**

#### **Decision**

The Committee agreed to appoint Councillor Curley as Chair of the meeting

#### **CN/23/15 Minutes**

#### **Decision**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2023 as a correct record.

#### **CN/23/16 Appointments and Changes to Council Committee Membership**

The Committee considered the report of the City Solicitor providing information about the Council's current appointments to Council Committees. The Committee was invited to review the appointments and make recommendations to Council about the Council's representatives for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

The following amendments were proposed:-

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Member(s) to be added</b>	<b>Member(s) to be removed</b>
Resources and Governance Scrutiny		Councillor Abdullatif
Children and Young People Scrutiny	Councillor Bano Councillor Muse Councillor Sharif Mahamed	Councillor Cooley
Economy and Regeneration	Councillor Abdullatif Councillor Shilton Godwin	Councillor Bano Councillor Sharif Mahamed
Health	Councillor Cooley	
Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods		Councillor Doswell
Communities and Equalities	Councillor Doswell	

Licensing		Councillor Abdullatif Councillor Davies Councillor Muse
Licensing and Appeals		Councillor Abdullatif Councillor Davies Councillor Muse
Audit		Councillor Wheeler
GM Pension Fund Advisory Committee	Councillor Sheikh	Councillor Moran
Agma Joint Development Committee	Councillor White	Councillor Rawlins

The Committee was also requested to recommend to Council appointment of Councillors Bell and Chohan to the Council's Adoption Panel.

## Decisions

The Committee:-

1. Recommend Council approve the amendments to committee appointments as follows:-

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Member(s) to be added</b>	<b>Member(s) to be removed</b>
Resources and Governance Scrutiny		Councillor Abdullatif
Children and Young People Scrutiny	Councillor Bano Councillor Muse Councillor Sharif Mahamed	Councillor Cooley
Economy and Regeneration	Councillor Abdullatif Councillor Shilton Godwin	Councillor Bano Councillor Sharif Mahamed
Health	Councillor Cooley	
Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods		Councillor Doswell
Communities and Equalities	Councillor Doswell	
Licensing		Councillor Abdullatif Councillor Davies Councillor Muse

Licensing and Appeals		Councillor Abdullatif Councillor Davies Councillor Muse
Audit		Councillor Wheeler
GM Pension Fund Advisory Committee	Councillor Sheikh	Councillor Moran
Agma Joint Development Committee	Councillor White	Councillor Rawlins

2. Recommend that Council agree the appointment of Councillors Bell and Chohan to the Council's Adoption Panel.

### **CN/23/17 Elections Act 2022 and the 4 May 2023 local election - progress report on its impacts**

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive which provided 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.

Key points within the report included:

- Figures on the number of applications for a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC) received by the Council;
- The number of enquiries received by the Contact Centre before and on Polling Day;
- 60, 742 electors voted in person at the election out of a total of 313,519 eligible;
- 1,060 polling station electors were not initially issued with a ballot paper but later returned with accepted ID;
- 589 polling station electors applied for but were not issued with a ballot paper by close of poll;
- The reasonable equipment provisions that were in place at polling stations;
- The impact of the communications campaign; and
- The changes expected from July 2023 as a result of the second tranche of legislation through the Act.

The Committee noted the hard work of the staff involved with the local elections in May. The Committee also thanked those staff involved in the running of polling stations on the day of the election.

### **Decisions**

The Committee note the report.

### **CN/23/18 Electoral Commission interim report on the impact of Voter ID on the May 2023 local election**

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive which provided details on the Electoral Commission's (EC) 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.

Core findings included:-

- An awareness of the need to bring photo ID to vote at a polling station was high;
- An awareness and take-up of the Voter Authority Certificate was low
- 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;
- Around 4% of all non-voters said they did not vote because of the voter ID requirement;
- Levels of voter confidence and satisfaction were similar to in previous elections

The EC provided 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.

In addition, the EC specifically recommended that the UK Government should ensure that Returning Officers were able to collect and report monitoring data on the impact of voter ID at future elections, and they also assert that work was also needed to improve the quality and reliability of data collected at polling stations in future.

The final EC report was due to be published in September and it would also include its usual analysis of all other core aspects of the May local election. The Electoral Services Unit was considering the interim report and would determine full actions following the publication of the final EC report on the elections. Officers would keep the Committee informed on the conclusions of the final report and actions that were required as a result of it.

### **Decision**

The Committee notes the report.

### **CN/23/19 Future activity of the Electoral Services Unit**

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive which informed of plans for conducting a future compulsory review of polling districts and polling places within the city. The review needed to take account of new Parliamentary Boundary changes that would come into effect for the next UK Parliamentary General Election (UKPGE). The report also informed 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.

The proposals for parliamentary constituency boundaries had now been finalised by the Boundary Commission for England and delivered to the Speaker of the House of Commons. The proposals recommended the following parliamentary constituencies which fell 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).

In order to ensure that both parliamentary and local elections (standalone or combined) could be delivered using the same scheme and also that any parliamentary by-election could be run on existing boundaries, there were a small number of polling districts (with accompanying polling places) where the boundaries could not be changed ahead of the UKPGE as these polling districts were currently 'cross-constituency' (polling districts that fell within a different parliamentary constituency to the other polling districts within the same local authority ward).

The Electoral Services Unit was planning to commence the Annual Canvass to encourage increased electoral registration at the end of July 2023 and would continue until the end of November in readiness for the new Electoral Register to be published on the 1 December 2023. Elections Officers were engaging with Council staff and external stakeholders to publicise electoral registration across the city and to particular parts of the community

It was reported that a second tranche of legislation arising out of the Elections Act would start to come into effect over the next 12 months, and this would impact on the Local and Combined Authority Mayoral Elections in May 2024, and the next UKPGE. The Council's Elections Team were closely engaging with the GM Strategic Lead for Elections to be fully prepared for these changes as well as indirectly engaging with the Government.

## **Decisions**

The Committee:-

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.