



City of Westminster

# Committee Agenda

Title: **General Purposes**

Meeting Date: **Wednesday 5th November, 2014**

Time: **6.00 pm**

Venue: **Rooms 3 & 4 - 17th Floor, City Hall**

Members: **Councillors:**

Melvyn Caplan (Chairman)  
David Boothroyd  
Tim Mitchell  
Robert Davis

**Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussion Part 1 of the Agenda**

**Admission to the public gallery is by ticket, issued from the ground floor reception at City Hall from 6.00pm. If you have a disability and require any special assistance please contact the Committee Officer (details listed below) in advance of the meeting.**



**An Induction loop operates to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter. If you require any further information, please contact Naomi Stauber, Senior Committee and Governance Officer.**

**Email: [nstauber@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:nstauber@westminster.gov.uk)  
Corporate Website: [www.westminster.gov.uk](http://www.westminster.gov.uk)**

**Note for Members:** Members are reminded that Officer contacts are shown at the end of each report and Members are welcome to raise questions in advance of the meeting. With regard to item 2, guidance on declarations of interests is included in the Code of Governance; if Members and Officers have any particular questions they should contact the Head of Legal & Democratic Services in advance of the meeting please.

## **AGENDA**

### **PART 1 (IN PUBLIC)**

#### **1. MEMBERSHIP**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services to note any changes to the membership

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive declarations by Members and Officers of the existence and nature of any personal or prejudicial interests in matters on this agenda.

#### **3. MINUTES**

To sign the minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2014.

**(Pages 1 - 2)**

#### **4. POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACE REVIEW**

The report presents the outcome of the polling district and polling place review and makes recommendations accordingly.

**(Pages 3 - 72)**

#### **5. OPENNESS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES REGULATIONS 2014**

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 came into force on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2014. The report details the key provisions contained in the Regulations; explains how these provisions impact upon the City Council's current practices and sets-out the action taken by officers to date, to ensure the City Council is fully compliant with the new legislation.

**(Pages 73 - 80)**

#### **6. SCHEME OF DELEGATIONS**

The report presents the new Scheme of Delegations which has been revised to reflect the new operating model agreed by the Cabinet on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2014.

**(Pages 81 - 110)**

**7. CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES: SUPERANNUATION  
COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**(Pages 111 -  
114)**

This report recommends a revised Terms of Reference and title for the Superannuation Committee.

**8. PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2015-16**

**(Pages 115 -  
120)**

The programme of formal meetings for 2015/16 is submitted to the General Purposes Committee for review and approval. The Committee is also requested to recommend the dates of full Council Meetings to the Council for approval.

**Peter Large  
Head of Legal & Democratic Services  
28 October 2014**

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CITY OF WESTMINSTER

## MINUTES

### GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

#### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**Minutes of a meeting of the General Purposes Committee held at 6.00pm on Wednesday 30 April 2014 at** Porchester Hall, Porchester Road, Bayswater, London, W2 5DU

**Present:** Councillors Melvyn Caplan (Chairman), David Boothroyd, Robert Davis, Tim Mitchell and Alastair Moss

**Also Present:** Councillors Michael Brahams, Ruth Bush, Tony Devenish, Louise Hyams and Alastair Moss

#### 1. MEMBERSHIP

1.1 There were no changes to the Membership. Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ian Adams.

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

#### 3. MINUTES

3.1 The Chairman, with the consent of the Members present, signed the minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2014 as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

#### 4. AMENDMENTS TO THE MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT (see report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services)

4.1 Peter Large, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, introduced the report and outlined the reasons for the report.

4.2 Members of both committees confirmed that the changes proposed met the concerns which had been expressed by the General Purposes Committee.

**4.1 Resolved:**

That the General Purposes Committee be asked to approve the amended wording of the Members' Code of Conduct for inclusion in the Council's Constitution, attached to the report as Appendix A, and recommended this accordingly to the Council for adoption.

**5. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting ended at 6.19pm.

CHAIRMAN \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_



## General Purposes Committee Report

**Date:** 5 November 2014

**Classification:** For General Release

**Title:** Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

**Report of:** Head of Legal and Democratic Services

**Report Author and Contact  
Details:** Martin Pyroyiannos  
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### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places. The previous City of Westminster review took place in 2011. The 2013 Act requires that a compulsory review be completed by 31 January 2015.
- 1.2 Subsequent compulsory reviews must be started and completed within the period of 16 months that starts on 1 October of every fifth year after 1 October 2013.
- 1.3 A public consultation was commenced on 1 September inviting views on the current pattern of polling districts and polling places and this report addresses the issues raised in the responses made and sets out recommendations for change by officers.
- 1.4 The principles underlying the approach to establishing polling districts and polling places in the review have been:
  - a) To retain the current network of polling places and polling districts. As far as possible to minimise disruption to voters;
  - b) To try and identify new polling places in areas where the existing provision is inadequate;
  - c) To aim, but only as a guideline, to have an average of three polling places per ward wherever practicable;

- d) To ensure, as far as practicable, that any new polling places are accessible to people with disabilities;
  - e) To try and minimise disruption to schools.
- 1.5 The initial Returning Officer's proposals sought views on whether any polling places, those for CHB, KBC, LGA, MHA, SJB, TBC, WAA, WEB polling districts being most prominent, should be re-designated and whether any polling districts should be changed or new polling districts created.
- 2. Recommendations**
- 2.1 That the Committee approve the following proposed changes in polling places for the reasons given (to be effective from the publication of the new electoral register on 1 December 2014):
- a) CHA( Churchill) from Churchill Gardens Youth Club, Churchill Gardens Estate to Churchill Gardens Residents Hall, Churchill Gardens Estate (the Residents Hall is more accessible than the Youth Club as it is closer to main roads and bus stops.)
  - b) MVA ( Maida Vale ) from the Maida Centre, 221 Lanark Road to St George's School, Lanark Road (The Maida Centre is being redeveloped and cannot be used as a polling place at the next General Election. Although we have sought to move away from using schools, St George's School is the best replacement for the Maida Centre and has been used before as a polling place).
  - c) WBA ( Westbourne) arising out of the polling district boundary changes detailed below, from Warwick Community Centre, 300 Harrow Road to Our Lady of Lourdes & St Vincent de Paul Church Hall, 337 Harrow Road ( with officers looking again at the Westminster Adult Education Centre in Amberley Road when building works are completed there in early 2015).
  - d) WBC ( Westbourne) arising out of the polling district boundary changes detailed below, from Stowe Centre, 258 Harrow Road to Warwick Community Centre, 300 Harrow Road.
- 2.2 That the Committee agree to a small change being made to the polling district boundary between the WBA and WBC polling districts in Westbourne Ward in order that there is a more even distribution of registered electors across each of the three polling districts within the ward and in order that voters on the Warwick and Brindley Estates vote at the same polling place. The change recommended is shown on a map as Appendix E, and in terms of properties/ electors affected as Appendix E plus addendum, and unites the whole of the Warwick and Brindley Estates with the Grand Union Canal as the northern boundary.

2.3 That the Committee note that the Chief Executive has delegated powers to designate alternative polling places in the event of any polling place not being available at any election or better provision being identified , following consultation with the Party Whips and respective ward councillors.

### **3. Background**

3.1 This paper sets out the current pattern of polling districts and polling places within the City of Westminster and details officer findings on all the suggestions received at consultation and presents officer recommendations for change.

3.2 The current pattern of electoral wards within Westminster was determined by the Government on the recommendation of the (then) Local Government Commission.

3.3 The existing Westminster ward boundaries are set and are not part of this review.

3.4 The two parliamentary constituencies covering the City of Westminster are made up of the following City of Westminster wards:

#### **(a) Cities of London and Westminster constituency:**

Bryanston & Dorset Square  
Churchill  
Hyde Park  
Knightsbridge & Belgravia  
Marylebone High Street  
St James's  
Tachbrook  
Vincent Square  
Warwick  
West End  
and the City of London

#### **(b) Westminster North constituency:**

Abbey Road  
Bayswater  
Church Street  
Harrow Road  
Lancaster Gate  
Little Venice  
Maida Vale  
Queen's Park  
Regent's Park  
Westbourne

- 3.5 Attached is a map, Appendix A, showing the existing ward boundaries. This map shows the polling district boundaries and polling places used at the combined elections which took place on 22 May 2014. The polling places used at the elections on 22 May 2014 are the currently designated polling places and formed the starting point for this review.
- 3.6 A ward is the basic building block on which parliamentary constituencies are put together. The wards, polling districts and polling places are the same in Westminster for both local government and parliamentary elections
- 3.7 Attached as Appendix B is an alphabetical listing by ward of the current polling places and their electorates as at 1 July 2014. The number of polling stations at each polling place will be determined by the Returning Officer in advance of any election and will vary according to the size of the eligible electorate at that election and the likely turnout. A “polling station” is a desk in the polling place/ building at which ballot papers are issued – there may be up to 3 such “stations” or desks in a polling place. Polling districts such as HPB have relatively high electorates and may be assigned more polling stations than polling places with smaller electorates such as KBA and WEC,
- 3.8 The map and Appendix also identify those polling places that currently have inadequate disability access ( door chimes are used at all polling places where there is inadequate disability access).
- 3.9 The current pattern of polling district boundaries within wards and the location of polling places was comprehensively reviewed during 2000 and 2001 and again in 2007 and 2011. This new pattern first came into effect at the City Council elections in May 2002.
- 3.10 The opportunity has been taken since May 2002 to change polling places where more convenient or better polling places have been identified or where a change had to be made because the existing polling place was no longer available for whatever reason.
- 3.11 The principles underlying the City Council’s approach to polling districts and polling places in the 2000, 2001, 2007 and 2011 reviews were:
- a) To retain the current network of polling places and polling districts. As far as possible to minimise disruption to voters;
  - b) To try and identify new polling places in areas where the existing provision is inadequate;
  - c) To aim, but only as a guideline, to have an average of three polling places per ward wherever practicable;
  - d) To ensure, as far as practicable, that any new polling places are accessible to people with disabilities;
  - e) To try and minimise disruption to schools.

- 3.12 The pattern of provision will never be ideal or suit all electors, but the current boundaries and places were drawn to try and maximise convenience to electors by using the best locations available.
- 3.13 Council officers continue to look for possible alternative locations, particularly where disability access is currently inadequate or the existing polling place location could be improved. The number of inaccessible polling places has gradually been declining as building owners have sought to improve access or alternative places are used instead.
- 3.14 At the combined elections on 22 May 2014 all Senior Presiding Officers at polling places were required to complete and return a polling place review evaluation of their polling place - attached as Appendix C. This is a document produced by the Electoral Commission which is designed to identify any issues pertaining to a polling place. Senior Presiding Officers were also required to complete and return a log book- attached as Appendix D. The log book included specific questions pertaining to a polling place review i.e. whether any voters had difficulty in finding a polling place; were unhappy about the location of a polling place; or were unhappy with the access to their polling place. The two documents provided a wealth of information for the review and provided the means by which a detailed analysis could be made before the Returning Officer's initial proposals were presented.
- 3.15 Elections happen very infrequently and sometimes with very little notice, so the City Council is appreciative of the co-operation of polling places in providing their buildings for the day – often at considerable inconvenience including to parents of school children – so that local electors have a convenient place where they can go and vote.
- 3.16 Consultation proposals were issued by the Returning Officer on 1 September 2014 and comments on the current provision were invited. All suggestions made are addressed in this report.

#### **4. POSSIBLE CHANGES**

- 4.1. At the start of this review there was no proposal to look into the creation of an additional polling district or polling place within any of the wards. The combined elections held on 22 May 2014 did not appear to present any significant issues which require that changes of this type be made in the run-up to the General Election on 7 May 2015. It may be the case that following the completion of the transition phase to Individual Electoral Registration (IER) ( the Government has legislated for existing electors who have not been matched to Department for Work and Pensions lists or other locally held records- and who have not made an IER application- to be finally deleted from the register of electors in either December 2015 or December 2016), that there may be a need to carry out a further more detailed analysis. At the polling district and polling place review in 2011 there was an initial proposal to look into the creation of an additional polling district/ place in the north part of Hyde Park ward as further residential developments had been completed post the previous 2007 review. Similarly in 2011 the possibility of the creation of an

additional polling district and polling place within the south-east part of Maida Vale ward was looked into. There was also a further proposal in 2011 to reconfigure the polling districts within Westbourne ward and create a fourth polling district. These proposals were not accepted by the General Purposes Committee at that time on the basis that the proposals could result in confusion and disruption to voters, may result in polling places having to be used which were not as suitable as those currently used, and would possibly also transfer the issue of having higher numbers of voters in one polling district to another polling district. In terms of Westbourne ward any issues appeared to arise out of the shape of the ward and the review could not make any changes to ward boundaries. At this review a suggestion was received that the boundary between the WBA and WBC polling districts be changed, for reasons detailed in other parts of this Report- but that the number of polling districts within the ward remain as three.

- 4.2. In terms of changes of polling place from those polling places used at the 22 May 2014 elections it was proposed at the start of the review, in the Returning Officer's initial proposals, that concerted efforts be made to find an alternative polling place in respect of SJB polling place ( Charing Cross Library) which has no disabled access and where on 22 May 2014 the Chief Presiding Officer raised concerns in respect of voters not having exclusive access to the library. It was however noted that although the polling place is on the margin of the polling district, it is nevertheless close to the main concentration of electors in the district, and so in this respect is well situated.
- 4.3. It was proposed that efforts be made to find alternative polling places in respect of the following polling districts. Matters for consideration are as shown;
- 4.4. CHB (St Barnabas School). Disability access into the school is currently limited.
- 4.5. KBC (St Peter's Church Hall). The Church Hall is on the very edge of the polling district so not ideally geographically located. It is however a well-known building. ( St Peter's School in Ebury Street was used at elections before the 2011 referendum)
- 4.6. LGA (St Mathew's Church ), LGB (St James & St John Primary School – previously St James & St Michael's School). The two polling places have inadequate disability access, but are currently the best locations that have been identified and are well-known buildings in the area.
- 4.7. MHA (St Vincent's School), MHB (Central Synagogue). St Vincent's School is on the edge and not central to the polling district. The Central Synagogue has steps and so has no disability access. Both polling places are well-known buildings in the area.

- 4.8. TBC ( Lillington Gardens Estate Hall). Although the Hall is well known and centrally located in terms of the main body of voters, there were problems with signage at the 22 May 2014 elections in terms of those electors who were unfamiliar with its location.
- 4.9. WAA (Holy Apostles Church Hall) and WAC (Victoria Library) are on the edge of their polling districts but are currently the best available locations within the districts and are well- known buildings in the area.
- 4.10. WEB polling place ( Dance Works) has no disabled access.
- 4.11. Officers have used the opportunity of this review to try and identify better alternative locations and to deal with those instances, where for building works or other reasons, a re-designation of polling place is required. Any new polling places will need to be booked in good time to be used at the General Election on 7 May 2015. The Returning Officer's initial proposals sought to keep any changes to a minimum. Over the 13 years that the current map of electoral wards has been in place voters have become used to the current and well-established network of polling places and polling districts. The overarching objective is therefore, wherever possible, to minimise confusion and disruption for voters in terms of their polling place provision, while ensuring, as far as practicable, that any new polling places are accessible to people with disabilities.

A brief rationale explaining the current provision, initial consultation proposals and comments and suggestions made at consultation, in each ward (listed alphabetically) is set out below:

### **1. Abbey Road Ward**

1. The most northerly of Westminster's wards is divided into three separate polling districts by two major roads running north/south. The three districts follow a historic pattern and so most long-standing electors in the ward are voting where they have voted for many years.
2. It has been suggested at previous polling district and polling place reviews that the ARA (St Mark's Church Hall) and ARB (St John's Wood Synagogue) polling districts could be realigned on an east/west axis. Although comments were invited on this proposal and any suggestions of a possible alternative polling place in the north of the ward were welcomed it is not proposed to make any changes of this type.
3. The third polling place for the ward is in the ARC Polling district (St John's Wood Library). It is geographically well located next to the St John's Wood underground station, but is small and cramped. Despite the drawback of its size, the location is good and it currently appears to be the best available option.

4. At consultation. General comments were received that it did not seem sensible to change or merge anything in any way in advance of the General Election next year on the basis that this would be confusing for the voters, all of whom know exactly where to go in order to cast their votes.

## **2. Bayswater**

5. The polling place for the BWA polling district is a well-known local landmark (Small Hall, Porchester Centre) and is geographically central. The polling place for the BWB polling district was changed prior to the elections on 22 May 2014. It moved from Bayswater Families Centre in Newton Road to St Paul's Bayswater United Reformed Church in Newton Road. ( Bayswater Families Centre had undergone building works and no longer had a space suitable for voting). Fortunately the new polling place is next door to the previously used polling place. The polling place for the BWC polling place ( St Stephen's School in Westbourne Park Road) is well established and has disabled access.
6. At consultation. A suggestion was received which supported the principle of not using schools, wherever this was possible, and also suggested that officers should look to minimise disruption caused by elections- perhaps by reconfiguring which rooms within a school are used. Officers will seek to apply this extension to the schools principle when considering which polling places should be used at future elections. In the context of the Bayswater ward review and the use of St Stephen's School in BWC polling district, officer notes indicated that it would be very difficult to set up any arrangement by which some school classes could take place on polling day due to issues surrounding the entrance to the building.
7. A suggestion was also received that in terms of BWA polling district the polling place could be moved from the Small Porchester Hall in Porchester Road to Westbourne Baptist Church Hall on the corner of Westbourne Park Villas and Porchester Road (entrance from Porchester Road). The existing place for the BWA polling district is a well-known local landmark, is geographically central, and no issues were reported from its previous use as a polling place. Officers visited the church and found that its hall is just 2 minutes walk from Small Porchester Hall. The Church Hall is a large hall with all the facilities needed and has good disabled access. There is no strong reason as to why the polling place should be changed from Small Porchester Hall to the Church Hall- but it is good to have the Church Hall in reserve should an issue be identified with Small Porchester Hall.
8. Officers looked for alternatives in BWC polling district to St Stephen's School. Officers visited the Brunel Family Centre on the Brunel Estate, Westbourne Park Road, and noted that the Centre did not meet the requirements for use as a polling place. A social worker at the Brunel Family Centre advised that the Centre was made up of small rooms used for counselling purposes-and that there were no rooms large enough for a polling place. A visit to St Mary of the Angels Catholic Church in Moorhouse Road found that there was a church studio and a church hall. There were however disability access issues.

The studio ( which is classroom size) is on the mezzanine floor and has 10 steps. The church hall which is on the first floor has 18 steps.

### **3. Bryanston & Dorset Square**

9. The BDA (West London Synagogue) and BDB (Seymour Leisure Centre) polling districts have well located polling places. At the polling district and polling place review in 2011 the polling place at BDC was moved from St Paul's Church in Rossmore Road to St Cyprian's Church in Glentworth Street ( to provide an improved location closer to the main concentration of residents.
10. Representation was made in 2011 that St Paul's Church was well away from the main concentration of residents and that elderly residents of Dorset Square and Glentworth Street had to take the bus to get to their polling place. St Cyprian's Church in Glentworth Street therefore became the designated polling place for BDC polling district.)

At consultation. No suggestions were received and the Returning Officer's initial proposals did not include any proposals for change.

### **4. Church Street**

11. The CSA (Gateway Academy- previously Gateway Primary School) is a well - established polling place. The CSB polling place was moved, prior to the 2011 Referendum on the UK Parliament voting system, from Christ Church Bentinck School to Church Street Library. Church Street Library is located on the boundary of CSA and CSB and it has been suggested at previous reviews that it can serve both CSA and CSB polling districts. The proposal is that CSA (Gateway Academy) and CSB ( Church Street Library) be retained as polling places for each of the two districts in order to minimise confusion for voters. The area within Church Street Library which can readily be used as a polling place is not large enough to house two polling stations and certainly not two polling districts. The Greenside Community Centre is a relatively new polling place and well located within the CSC polling district.

At consultation. No suggestions were received and the Returning Officer's initial proposals did not include any proposals for change.

### **5. Churchill**

12. The ward is geographically bisected by the main railway line into Victoria Station, which also forms the polling district boundary.
13. All electors in polling district CHA to the east vote in the Churchill Gardens Youth Club and to the west in CHB polling district at St Barnabas School. Disability access into the school is currently limited.
14. At consultation. The Returning Officer's initial proposals included a proposal to look at the CHB polling district provision on the basis of St Barnabas School not providing disabled access. A suggestion was received that in respect of

CHA polling district, Churchill Gardens Residents Hall be used instead of Churchill Gardens Youth Club. Officers visited the area and found that the Residents Hall is closer to the main roads and bus stops than is the Youth Club. This closer proximity will make it easier for elderly and disabled voters to vote. Officers walked down Glasgow Terrace, just off 137 Lupus Street and where City West Homes South Area Service Centre is located, and found the Residents Hall straight ahead. The big hall in the building is perfectly sized- CHA has three polling stations/issuing tables. The only drawback being that there are 7 or so steps leading into the big hall. Although there is a wheelchair lift- officers are of the opinion that polling place staff do not need to make use of it- polling staff will immediately be aware of a wheelchair voter at the top of the stairs and will be able to take the ballot papers and ballot box to the voter.

15. The Residents Hall is only 3 or so minutes walk (for a non elderly voter), from the Youth Club and therefore most of the concerns in respect of not wishing to confuse voters through changing their polling place may not arise. It is recommended that the polling place for CHA polling district be re-designated as Churchill Gardens Residents Hall, Churchill Gardens Estate.
16. It was also suggested that, in terms of CHA polling district provision, officers look at the Thamesbank Centre, Turpentine Lane, SW1V 4BD. Officers visited the Centre and could not find any obvious benefits in using it which override those benefits provided through the Residents Hall being in such close proximity to the Youth Club. The Centre is also closer to the edge of the polling district and away from the main concentration of voters.
17. In terms of CHB, and the want of disabled access at St Barnabas School, a suggestion was received that officers look at using the small courtyard outside the side entrance to St Barnabas Church just for disabled voters who cannot gain entry to the main polling place – in order that they are not seen to be voting in public when the Presiding Officer takes the ballot boxes and ballot papers out to the voter. Officers have written to the school to find out if this is possible and the head teacher has advised that the courtyard does not belong to the school- officers will therefore liaise with the churchwardens. A better solution and one offered by the head teacher is that the school opens the playground gates. There is a ramp in the playground leading to a small lobby area that might be helpful in case of rain. The head teacher has advised that this area has been used in the past for disabled voters. As the playground door is right next to the main school door, it will probably be easier for the staff at the polling station to manage, rather than taking people along the road to the Church courtyard. Polling station staff will be instructed accordingly.

## **6. Harrow Road**

18. All three polling districts in the ward have clear boundaries and well located polling places – HRA (Emmanuel Church Hall), HRB (Methodist Church Hall, Fernhead Road ) and HRC (St Peter's Primary School).

19. At consultation. The Returning Officer's initial proposals did not include any proposals for change. Suggestions were received that HRA polling place be changed from Emmanuel Church Hall to Queen Elizabeth School and that HRC polling place be changed from St Peter's Primary School on Elgin Avenue to St Peter's Church.
20. Representation was also received that the current polling places for HRA and HRC should be retained as Emmanuel Church (HRA) is prominently located on Harrow Road and both the HRA and HRC polling places are very well known buildings in their areas.
21. There was also a comment made in respect of HRA Emmanuel Church Hall being used and religious sensitivities attached to voting in churches or church halls- the comment being that voters did not appear to see this as an issue which would prevent them from voting in person at their designated polling place.
22. Officers visited Emmanuel Church Hall, 389E Harrow Road which is the designated polling place for HRA. Officers then visited Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee School, Kennet Road to ascertain if the suggested alternative could be a viable replacement for Emmanuel Church Hall. The Church Hall is well positioned in the polling district as it is on Harrow Road which is a well known road in the area and the church hall also has good disability access.
23. Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee School is on Kennet Road which is behind Harrow Road and it is not clear where the entrance to the school is. This could cause access issues and confusion to electors who may not be aware of the school or its location. Using a school instead of a church hall would also cause disruption to parents and electors if the school were to close. It is recommended that Emmanuel Church Hall should remain the polling place for HRA.
24. In respect of HRC polling district St Peter's Primary School is currently used as the polling place. In order to reduce disruption to schools other locations were sought as alternatives. St Peter's Church on Elgin Avenue was suggested as a possible alternative. The church is geographically central to the polling district and offers disability access. Access could not be gained to the church hall as the vicar is currently away- so no firm conclusions could be drawn by the end date for this review. Officers will make arrangements to visit the church to carry out a site inspection.

## **7. Hyde Park**

25. The ward currently has two polling districts with long-established polling places – HPA (St James and St John School Nursery – previously St James and St Michael's School Nursery ) and HPB (St John's Parish Hall ). As more residential properties are being built in the northern part of the ward within the Paddington redevelopment and the electorate increases, there were discussions at previous polling district and polling place reviews as to whether a justification could be found for a third polling district and a new polling place

north of Praed Street. Comments and suggestions of possible polling places were invited although it is not proposed to make any changes at this review.

26. At consultation. No suggestions were received and the Returning Officer's initial proposals did not include any proposals for change

## **8. Knightsbridge & Belgravia**

27. The ward is well-served by three polling districts and polling places – KBA (St Paul's Hall), KBB (Royal Geographical Society) and KBC (St Peter's Church Hall). The Church Hall is on the very edge of the polling district so not ideally geographically located, but is a well-known building. St Peter's School in Ebury Street was used at elections before the 2011 Referendum.
28. At consultation. No suggestions were received. The Returning Officer's initial proposals included a proposal that KBC polling place provision be looked at on the basis that St Peter's Church Hall, 119 Eaton Square is on the edge of the polling district.

Officers visited the KBC polling district area and could not find a building better suited to being a polling place than the one currently in use.

## **9. Lancaster Gate**

29. The ward has three polling districts, with two of the three, LGA and LGB having long-standing polling places – LGA (St Mathew's Church ), LGB (St James & St John Primary School). LGC ( Hallfield Primary School, Hallfield Estate) replaced Pickering Hall, Hallfield Estate, at the 2011 review. The first two polling places have inadequate disability access, but are currently the best locations that have been identified. It is proposed that Hallfield School continue to be the polling place for LGC polling district.
30. At consultation. No suggestions for change were received. The Returning Officer's initial proposals included a proposal to look at polling place provision in LGA and LGB polling districts on the basis of want of disability access.
31. In respect of LGA polling district, officers visited St Sophia's Greek Cathedral in Moscow Road and found that there were 7/8 steps leading to a hall in the basement.
32. Officers also visited the currently designated polling place for LGA polling district, St Matthew's Church and spoke to the reverend. The reverend advised that the church would be getting 2 detachable disability ramps for their front steps by the end of 2014.
33. In respect of LGB polling district and the currently designated polling place – St James and St John Primary School, Craven Terrace- officers were advised that there will be development works. The school advised that they are envisaging two phases of development. The first phase to be completed by January 2015 – and which will involve one of the classrooms which is

normally used at elections. The second phase of development will involve the basement of the school and may impact on access arrangements. A start date for this second phase of phase is yet to be confirmed, but may be in spring 2015. As works may be in progress in May 2015, officers have looked into contingency planning for an alternative polling place.

34. One of the places visited for contingency planning purposes in LGB polling district was the York Hall, in the Lancaster Hall Hotel, 35 Craven Terrace, There is a main entrance and an emergency exit into/out of the York Hall. Both the access points have disability access and the hall has disabled toilets. Officers raised concerns as to how well known the Lancaster Hall Hotel is in the area and whether voters will have exclusive access to the polling place. Officers will make a provisional booking of York Hall for next year's General Election, which they can cancel nearer the time if the school is proven to be ready to house the poll.

#### **10. Little Venice**

35. The ward and polling district boundaries were unchanged in 2002, so electors benefit from a long-established pattern of no change. The polling districts are LVA (St Joseph's School), LVB (St Saviour's School) and LVC (Paddington Green Primary School). Paddington Green Primary School has been used since the 2012 London Mayor and GLA election – prior to that St Mary's Church Hall was used. All three polling places have disability access.

At consultation. The Returning Officer's initial proposals did not include any proposals for change.

36. A suggestion was received that the Catholic Apostolic Church, Maida Avenue be looked as a possible polling place for LVC polling district, instead of Paddington Green Primary School, on the basis of not using schools wherever possible and the long driveway to the school entrance.
37. Officers visited the Catholic Apostolic Church and found that the church is not too far from the current polling place- approximately a 3-5 minute walk. The church is set just back from the street so is clearly visible and has disabled access. Officers have spoken with a church representative and discussed availability and which areas of the church, if any, may be used. The church representative has agreed to discuss the matter at a meeting with church trustees, which is scheduled to take place in November. The church has listed status.

#### **11. Maida Vale**

38. The ward and polling district boundaries were similarly unchanged in 2002. The polling districts are MVA (Maida Centre) and MVB (Essendine Primary School). It has been stated at previous polling district and polling place reviews that the ward may benefit from a third polling district and polling place if a suitable location could be identified in the south-east part of the ward below Elgin Avenue. It is not currently proposed that such a change be made.

39. At consultation. A suggestion was received that, as the Maida Centre (MVA) is being redeveloped, consideration should be given to using St George's School in Lanark Road or St Augustine's Primary School or the Children's Centre next door.
40. In respect of MVB a suggestion was made that the City of Westminster College on Elgin Avenue could be used if building works were completed and the College reopened well in advance of the General Election.
41. A further suggestion was received that an extra polling district be created with a new polling place, the Portuguese Synagogue on the corner of Ashworth Road and Lauderdale Road, being designated.
42. As part of two separate proposals suggestions were also made that the Paddington Sports Club on Castellain Road would make a good polling place.
43. In respect of MVA polling district, officers visited the area to ascertain if there was a suitable replacement for the Maida Centre.
44. Officers visited the Training House Gym, Westminster Education Support Centre and Paddington Youth Club which are next to the Maida Centre. All three sites were contained within the same building with various entrances which could prove to be confusing to electors even with appropriate signage. As such the sites are not suitable to house a polling place.
45. Officers then visited St George's School, Lanark Road as was suggested in a few of the consultation responses. St George's School has been used in previous years and would be a suitable replacement for the Maida Centre due to its location and history as a polling place.
46. St Augustine's Primary which was also suggested as a possible replacement for the Maida Centre is not ideally situated. St Augustine's Primary is at the northern most point of the polling district and would be very inconvenient for electors who reside in the south of the polling district.
47. In respect of MVB polling district, officers visited a number of locations to see if an alternative polling place could be found. Paddington Sports Club on Castellain Road was visited and although in very many respects it provides an alternative to using Essendine School there are a number of significant disbenefits to its use. Despite its central location within the polling district, the entrance to Paddington Sports Club off the street is slightly secluded and may cause difficulties for electors. The reception itself is quite a long way from the street entrance. Electors would need to pass tennis courts to access the polling place and the reception itself is not immediately visible. There is a fear that the sports club would be difficult to access for residents.
48. Officers also visited the Portuguese Synagogue on Lauderdale Road. The Portuguese Synagogue is currently in MVA, and borders the polling district MVB and would therefore be inconvenient for electors due to its location. It is

not proposed to make any changes to polling district boundaries to accommodate the synagogue's use as a polling place.

49. Officers also visited the Westminster College on Elgin Avenue. Although the site is ideally located it is currently a guardianship and there are no clear indications when the College will be ready to be inspected by officers.

## **12. Marylebone High Street**

50. The polling places within the ward are not ideal. MHA (St Vincent's School) is on the edge and not central to the polling district. MHB's polling place (Central Synagogue) has steps and so has no disability access. MHC ( The Hellenic Centre ) replaced St Marylebone School as the polling place for this polling district at the combined elections on 6 May 2010. It has been suggested at a previous review that the Hellenic Centre also be used as the polling place for MHA on cost grounds as it is big enough. It is though proposed that separate polling places be retained for MHA and MHC so as to minimise disruption and confusion for voters.

At consultation. The Returning Officer's initial proposals included proposals to look at the provision provided in MHA and MHB polling districts on the basis of location in the polling district and disability access reasons respectively.

51. A suggestion was received that MHA and MHC could be served from just one polling place, at the Hellenic Centre.
52. A further suggestion was received that All Souls Club House could serve as the polling place for MHB, albeit that it is on the edge of the ward.
53. In respect of the MHA polling district, officers visited a number of sites- The Wigmore Hall (although there are currently no events listed for 7 May 2015 this may not be the case if a check is made closer to polling day), The Holiday Inn in Welbeck Street( exclusivity of access and 6 steps leading into the premises), the School of Economic Science at 11 Mandeville Place ( steps and not well enough known and students arriving for classes), and the Methodist Church in Hinde Street (7 steps)- none of which were deemed suitable for the reasons shown.
54. In respect of the MHB polling district, officers visited the Hallam Conference Centre, 44 Hallam Street and found there to be 3 large steps leading into the building. The Synagogue is relatively better located being closer to the main road and closer to bus stops. All Souls Clubhouse, 141 Cleveland Street has good disabled access but is situated at the edge of the polling district on the border with LB Camden and its use may therefore cause a great deal of confusion amongst voters.

### **13. Queen's Park**

55. This ward benefits from having four polling districts with four relatively newly identified and well appointed polling places so no changes were contemplated - QPA (St Jude's Church Hall), QPB ( Beethoven Centre), QPC (New Avenues Youth Project) and QPD (St Luke's Church Hall). A suggestion has been made at previous reviews that QPD could go to/merge into QPB if numbers of polling places are to be reduced. This was not recommended as a change of this type would prompt redrawing of all polling district boundaries within this ward.

At consultation. The Returning Officer's initial proposals did not include any proposals for change.

56. A suggestion was received that the number of polling districts in Queen's Park be reduced from four to three. As part of this suggestion it was mooted that in QPB polling district the Dorothy Gardner Nursery could be used instead of the Beethoven Centre and that in QPC, New Avenues Youth Project in Third Avenue could remain as the polling place for the polling district
57. A consultation response was received which expressed a view that the current four polling stations in the ward work well and should not be changed and that reducing the number of polling places could make it more difficult for some people to vote which would be a backward step-and that the four polling places in the ward reflect the geography of the ward..
58. Officers also noted that any changes made to polling districts will also impact on arrangements in place for the Queen's Park Community Council. Elections to the Queen's Park Community Council on 22 May 2014 were held on the basis of three Community Councillors being elected to represent each of four Community Council wards- the areas of the Community Council wards being the same as the Queen's Park ward polling districts.

### **14. Regent's Park**

59. No change was contemplated for this ward's three polling districts in terms of the polling places used at the 22 May 2014 elections – RPA (Village Club, Allitsen Road), RPB (Rudolf Steiner House) or RPC (Liberal Jewish Synagogue). Although Rudolf Steiner House is on the edge of the polling district it is geographically well located for the bulk of electors within the district. The space used as a polling place at Rudolf Steiner House is not ideal and as part of this review electoral services staff will seek to identify whether an area on the ground floor of Rudolf Steiner can be used in future. (NB The Royal College of Gynaecologists has been used as an RPB polling place at an election before 2010).

At Consultation. The Returning Officer's initial proposals did not include any proposals for change.

60. A suggestion was received that in RPA polling district there should be a change to polling place made from The Village Club in Allitsen Road to Barrow Hill School on visibility and access grounds.
61. Officers visited the RPA district designated polling place at the Village Club, (Behind Swallow House) in Allitsen Road, NW8 7BD and found there to be no real issues in terms of visibility and access. The Village Club is immediately visible as you enter through an archway on Allitsen Road- with a nursery to the left and the Village Club to the right. Although the name plaque on the Village Club front wall is somewhat indistinct there will be a polling place sign supplied for polling station staff to put up. Further thought needs to be given as to where a sign is put up in Allitsen Road. Officers would not wish to use a school where a suitable good alternative exists-as it does here.

## **15. St James's**

62. This ward has a wide geographical spread so has 4 rather than the average 3 polling districts to improve accessibility to electors, The polling places for SJA (St Clement Danes School) and SJD (Abbey Centre) polling districts are geographically centrally located. The polling places for SJB (Charing Cross Library) and SJC ( Methodist Central Hall) are on the margin of their polling districts, but nevertheless are close to the main concentration of electors in both districts. Charing Cross Library has no disabled access and elections staff have been advised of other issues, including issues attached to exclusivity of access.
63. At consultation. The Returning Officer's initial proposals included a strong proposal to seek to identify whether an alternative polling place could be found to Charing Cross Library in SJB polling district, for disability access and exclusivity of access reasons. No suggestions were received at consultation.
64. Officers visited the SJB polling district to look for alternatives to Charing Cross Library. Officers walked the area but were not able to find a suitable alternative. As was the case at the 2011 polling district and polling place review only St Martin's Crypt ( St Martin- in –the- Fields ), Trafalgar Square offered any polling place possibilities. Access via a long spiral staircase would in all likelihood dissuade disabled voters from voting and would not permit elections staff to put in place alternative arrangements for the assistance of voters with disabilities i.e. through the use of door chimes. Other issues would include signage, where tellers should sit, and security issues attached to non voter visitors. The recommendation is therefore to retain Charing Cross Library as the polling place for SJB polling district and to tighten up the access arrangements to the library while the poll is in progress.

## **16. Tachbrook**

65. All three polling places in the ward are long-standing and centrally located within their polling districts – TBA (St Saviour’s Church ); TBB (Westminster Cathedral School) and TBC (Lillington Gardens Estate Hall). The Estate Hall is located in the middle of the Estate so requires more directional signage for residents unfamiliar with its location.

At consultation. The Returning Officer’s initial proposals included a proposal to look at whether better polling place provision could be found in TBC polling district- where Lillington Gardens Estate Hall is used and where signage has been an issue at previous elections.

66. Officers visited the area and found that there are many official estate signs pointing in the general direction of the Hall and which can all be seen from all entrances into the estate (Entrances are on Moreton Street, Tachbrook Street and Charlwood Street). Although there are signs on the periphery of the estate once you walk into the estate, there are many open areas and no further signs pointing to the Hall. There is a complex set of walkways and open areas that lead from one block of flats to another and it is hard to find the Community Hall as it is underneath Morgan House. It is advised that officers look into how the signage to the polling place can be improved upon prior to the General Election taking place.
67. As alternatives to the current provision in TBC polling district officers visited a number of sites. Principal among them was St James the Less Church in Moreton Street. Officers spoke to the reverend. The church has 2 halls, one on the ground floor and one on the first floor. Both are currently under renovation so officers were not able to gain access but were advised that each hall holds a capacity of 80 people. The ground floor hall has disabled access. Officers were advised that building works would be completed by the General Election but there is obviously a concern that if the building works take longer than expected that this will present a real problem in respect of election administration and conveying clear messages to voters before the election. It is recommended therefore that officers look at this Church again as a possible polling place for TBC polling district for elections after the General Election.

## **17. Vincent Square**

68. All three polling places are reasonably well located within each of the polling districts – VSA (Millbank Academy); VSB (Hide Tower Hall) and VSC (Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace).

At consultation. The Returning Officer’s initial proposals did not include any proposals for change. No suggestions were received at consultation.

## **18. Warwick**

69. The polling place for WAB (Dryburgh Hall) is well located. The other two polling places for WAA (Holy Apostles Church Hall) and WAC (Victoria Library) are on the edge of their polling districts but are the best available locations within the districts.

At consultation. The Returning Officer's initial proposals included a proposal to look at the polling place provision for WAA and WAC polling districts on the basis that the polling places were on the edge of their respective polling districts.

No other suggestions were received.

70. Officers visited the WAA polling district and could not find any suitable alternative locations, especially given that the WAA polling place will need enough space to house 3 polling stations. Officers also visited the WAC polling district and could not find any suitable alternative locations, especially given how well known Victoria Library is by residents living in that area. Both buildings have very good disabled access

## **19. West End**

71. This ward is geographically large and so is well served with four polling places. WEA (St Anne's Church Hall) and WEC (Grosvenor Chapel, South Audley Street) are adequate. WEB (Dance Works, Balderton Street) has inadequate disabled access. At the polling district and polling place review in 2011 the WED polling place was changed from All Souls School in Foley Street to the Fitzrovia Community Centre in Foley Street (to avoid closure of the school on polling day and to provide disabled access).

At consultation. The Returning Officer's initial proposals included a proposal to look at whether better polling place provision can be found for WEB polling district, partly on the basis that Dance Works in Balderton Street does not provide disability access.

72. A consultation response was received that the polling place provision in WEB polling district was less than satisfactory and that not only is there the issue of disabled access which is non-existent but also the fact that there is a sharing of the facility with dance classes throughout the day, entered by the same entrances. A suggestion was received that officers should consider the following sites - The Ukrainian Cathedral; The Territorial Army building in Davies Street; and whether a room in the new Beaumont Hotel on the ground floor would be suitable. A further suggestion was made that there may be an opportunity to amalgamate north and south Mayfair into a single venue in or around Grosvenor Square.
73. Officers visited the area. The Ukrainian Cathedral has 8 large steps. Disabled access was also identified as an issue in respect of the Cathedral at previous polling district and polling place reviews.

74. In respect of The Territorial Army building in Davies Street it was found that the entrance to numbers 52-54 Davies Street has no indication of what the building is used for- there is a flag attached to the front of the building but this is not sufficient for identification purposes. Number 56 has the inscription 'Queen Victoria's Rifles'. There are steps leading into both entrances-five steps into numbers 52-54 and three steps into number 56.
75. In respect of the Beaumont Hotel, officers found that there was no ground floor room available. The only room available was the 'Lotus Room' which was accessed down a flight of stairs. Those voters not able to use the stairs would be required to get to the Lotus room by lift. Voters would have to walk through the hotel reception to get to the stairs leading to the Lotus Room which could cause confusion as to who were hotel guests and who were voters. Also in the basement there is a hotel gym which could cause issues in terms of security. Polling station staff based in the Lotus Room would not be able to see voters entering the hotel and would not be in a position to ensure that voters were not wandering about into other parts of the hotel. The hotel also had no name visible from the street and therefore officers were only able to identify the hotel by asking the concierge outside the hotel if they were at the correct address. Claridges Hotel, Davies Street was deemed to be too expensive and there were all sorts of other considerations around security and exclusivity of access.
76. Officers were of the opinion that although Dance Works in Balderton Street is not ideal that it should continue to be used as a polling place on the basis that voters have voted there at recent elections and are used to the arrangements. If better provision can be found between now and the General Election then officers will make the necessary changes.

## **20. Westbourne**

77. This ward was described in the Returning Officer's initial proposals as being relatively well served with its three polling places – WBA (Warwick Community Centre), WBB (Bayswater Childrens Centre) and WBC (The Stowe Centre). The Stowe Centre was briefly replaced at a previous election, while undergoing refurbishment, by Edward Wilson School. Suggestions have been made at previous polling district and polling place reviews that the Westbourne Ward is of a size and shape which does not lend itself to having three polling districts and that it should have four polling districts. This has raised attendant issues as to where the existing three polling places should best be placed within the ward. It is proposed that a fourth polling district should not be created as the solution appears to lie in changing ward boundaries at the next review of ward boundaries.

At consultation. The Returning Officer's initial proposals did not include any proposals for change.

78. At consultation a suggestion was received that the WBA polling place be changed to Maida Vale library, Sutherland Avenue and that the WBC polling place be changed to St Mary Magdalene's Church, Rowington Close (currently located in WBA)
79. A further suggestion was received that the boundary between the WBA and WBC polling districts be changed but in so doing that the WBB polling district boundaries ( and polling place) should remain as they are. As part of this suggestion it was suggested that the polling place for WBC polling district should become the Warwick Community Centre (which is the currently designated polling place for WBA) and that the WAES Amberly Road building should become the polling place for WBA polling district. The benefits of the change would include voters on the Brindley and Warwick Estates voting at the same polling place- with the Grand Union Canal as the northern boundary- and a more even distribution of registered electors across each of the three polling districts within the ward.
80. This suggestion to change the WBA and WBC polling district boundaries was strongly supported by others. The suggestions made by others also included a polling place change proposal for WBA polling place to be the Westminster Adult Education Centre, with our Lady of Lourdes & St Vincent de Paul as a reserve option –and the WBC polling place to be the Warwick Community Centre ( thus changing that Centre from a WBA to WBC polling place).
81. As part of the WBA and WBC polling district change suggestions other comments were received in terms of the suitability of other buildings as polling places-, Our Lady of Lourdes & St Vincent de Paul on Harrow Road , and Maida Vale Library for WBA polling district and St Mary Magdalene's Church for WBC polling district

Officers made the following site inspections in respect of a polling place for

WBA polling district:

82. Maida Vale Library- The building is geographically located in the north east corner of the polling district. The main entrance has a large flight of stairs although disabled access (a lift to the upper floor) is available through another entrance on Shirland Avenue. On taking a look inside there is no clearly defined area which could be used for polling. Almost all the book shelves are bolted to the ground and the surrounding space is too small. Officers did not deem the library suitable to be used for voting purposes.
83. Our Lady of Lourdes & St Vincent de Paul Church Hall-The church is situated in the very northwest corner of the polling district currently, a 10/12 minute walk from Warwick Community Centre. The postal address is 337 Harrow Road W9 3RB and the church can be approached from East Gate Western Road junction, near Westbourne Park tube station. The hall is on the right hand side as the church grounds are entered- the church is straight ahead. There is good access into the hall-with just a very small ridge evident upon entering the hall. If deemed necessary-although officers believe it will not be

necessary- wheelchair users can be directed to the main entrance to the church and then right and right again into the voting area. The hall appears large enough to accommodate three polling stations. The hall was also suggested at the 2011 review as an alternative to the community centre.

84. Westminster Adult Education Service-Currently located in a temporary building in Lord Hills Road, the site manager stated that the main building is being refurbished and this work will not be completed until January 2015 at the earliest. Another visit would need to be arranged to assess suitability. Although the site manager was confident that the place would meet all polling place requirements and is keen for officers to visit and inspect next year, it was not considered proper to make a firm commitment and designate the building as the polling place without first inspecting it after all works are complete. The WAES building is about a two/three minute walk from the Harrow Road and clearly visible from the street. It has the potential to be a good alternative for the Warwick Community Centre.

WBC polling district

85. St Mary Magdalene Church-The church is located on the south east side of WBA polling district, on the outer edge of a housing estate. If the boundary between the two polling districts were changed it would fall within WBC. However it is not a suitable replacement as it has a set of large steps leading into the entrance with no other disabled access.
86. As part of a more detailed analysis of WBA and WBC polling place provision at the elections on 22 May 2014, attached as Appendix F and Appendix G, are the polling place reports completed by Presiding Officers on polling day. The polling places used on 22 May 2014 were deemed to provide good provision by those who worked there.

## **21. A whole of Westminster response**

87. A response was received expressing the view that it appears that it is considerably easier for some voters to reach their polling places than others with many places positioned on the edge of polling districts and that this has a direct impact on demographic fairness. The response further suggested that the decision to locate polling places should be based on the distance that each elector needs to travel to, rather than population density, as the number of electors in an area can be dealt with by the number of booths and personnel in the place- ease of voting being a significant contributor to turnout.
88. The Returning Officer's initial proposals did seek to identify those polling places which are close to the edge of a boundary and make alternative provision if more suitable polling places could be found. It was however decided that a discrete piece of work should be commissioned to look at this suggestion in more detail as the suggestion was an interesting and important one which was applicable across all wards.

89. This work is presented as Appendix H. The work involved applying an average walking speed analysis for those voters over the age of 65 to the current polling district and polling place provision. There were a number of layers to the work which also included incorporating an analysis of % of population over the age of 65 from the 2011 census. In order to arrive at a starting point officers took the view that not more than 10 minutes walking time to get to a polling place was 'reasonable'( for clarity we have presented an over 15 minute analysis.)
90. From the work it is evident that there are very few pockets around which voters aged over 65 will need to walk more than 15 minutes to get to their polling place. These pockets are around St. James's, Knightsbridge & Belgravia and the St John's Wood area in the far north of the Borough.
91. As a result of this work officers are better placed to understand what provision may need to be made in future and will be better able to incorporate an extra layer of consideration into any future review. Using the current analysis- where medium and, in Knightsbridge and Belgravia's case, high levels of persons aged over 65 live- who are over 15 minutes walk from a polling place- it could therefore be argued at future reviews that these are the areas where a strong case can be made for a change of polling place. A further step to this analysis could be to produce a map of the area's best locations to locate a new polling place. Priority could be given to council owned properties to keep down costs.

## **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 The cost of using polling places is met from the Government grant in respect of UK and European Parliamentary elections and referendums, from the GLA in respect of London Mayor and GLA elections and by the City Council for its own elections.

## **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1 These are set out in the body of the report.

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1 This report presents an opportunity to review polling district and place provision for electors in advance of the General Election on 7 May next year, and the Committee is asked to consider the recommendations made in the report.

**If you have any questions about this report, or wish to inspect one of the background papers, please contact:  
Martin Pyroyiannos on 020 7641 2732**

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**CITY OF WESTMINSTER**  
**Appendix B - Polling District and Polling Place Review**

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Polling Places as at Combined Elections on 22 May 2014 (starting point of this review)</b>	<b>Electorate</b> (based on 1st July 2014 published electorate)	<b>Disability Access</b>
<b>1. Abbey Road</b>			
ARA	St Mark's Church Hall, Abercorn Place, NW8	3228	YES
ARB	St John's Wood Synagogue, 37/41 Grove Road End, NW8 9NG	1860	YES
ARC	St John's Wood Library, 20 Circus Road, NW8	1486	YES
<b>2. Bayswater</b>			
BWA	Small Porchester Hall, Porchester Road, W2	3162	YES
BWB	St Paul's Bayswater United Reformed Church, Newton Road	1646	YES
BWC	St Stephen's School, Westbourne Park Road, W2	1893	YES
<b>3. Bryanston &amp; Dorset Square</b>			
BDA	West London Synagogue, 35 Upper Berkley Street Entrance, W1H	1959	YES
BDB	Seymour Leisure Centre, Shouldham Street Entrance, W1H	2755	YES
BDC	St Cyprian's Church, Glentworth Street, NW1	2270	YES
<b>4. Church Street</b>			
CSA	Gateway Academy, Capland Street, NW8	2306	YES
CSB	Church Street Library, Church Street, NW8	2575	YES
CSC	Greenside Community Centre, Lillestone Street, NW8	2461	YES
<b>5. Churchill</b>			
CHA	Churchill Gardens Youth Club, Churchill Gardens Estate, SW1V	3688	YES
CHB	St Barnabas School, St Barnabas Street, SW1	2885	NO
<b>6. Harrow Road</b>			
HRA	Emmanuel Church Hall, 389 Harrow Road, W9	2812	YES
HRB	Methodist Church Hall, Fernhead Road, W9	1746	YES
HRC	St Peter's Primary School, Chippenham Mews, W9	3280	YES
<b>7. Hyde Park</b>			
HPA	St James's and St Michael's School Nursery, Sussex Gardens, W2	2625	YES
HPB	St John's Parish Hall, Hyde Park Crescent, W2	4552	YES
<b>8. Knightsbridge &amp; Belgravia</b>			
KBA	St Paul's Hall, 77 Kinnerton Street, NW1X	738	YES
KBB	Royal Geographical Society, Kensington Gore, SW7	3067	YES
KBC	St Peter's Church Hall, 119 Eaton Square, SW1W	1898	YES
<b>9. Lancaster Gate</b>			
LGA	St Matthew's Church, St Petersburg Place, W2	2767	NO
LGB	St James's & St Michael's School, Craven Terrace, W2	2812	NO
LGC	Hallfield Primary School, Hallfield Estate, W2	1916	YES
<b>10. Little Venice</b>			
LVA	St Joseph's School, Sutherland Avenue, W9	2365	YES

LVB	St Saviour's School, Shirland Road, W9	2214	YES
LVC	Paddington Green Primary School, Park Place Villas, W9	2087	YES
<b>11. Maida Vale</b>			
MVA	Maida Centre, Lanark Road, W9	3333	YES
MVB	Essendine Primary School, Essendine Road, W9	3573	YES
<b>12. Marylebone High Street</b>			
MHA	St Vincent's School, St Vincent Road, W1U	1618	YES
MHB	Central Synagogue, Hallam Street, W1W	1380	NO
MHC	Hellenic Centre, 16-18 Paddington Street, W1U	3470	YES
<b>13. Queen's Park</b>			
QPA	St Jude's Church Hall, 67 Ilbert Street, W10	2624	YES
QPB	Beethoven Centre, Third Avenue, W10	2080	YES
QPC	New Avenues Youth Project, Third Avenue, W10	1584	YES
QPD	St Luke's Church Hall, Fernhead Road, W9	1632	YES
<b>14. Regent's Park</b>			
RPA	Village Club, Allitsen Road, NW8	2480	YES
RPB	Rudolf Steiner House, 35 Park Road, NW1	1260	YES
RPC	Liberal Jewish Synagogue, St John's Wood Road, NW8	3547	YES
<b>15. St James's</b>			
SJA	St Clement Danes School, Drury Lane, WC2B	1965	YES
SJB	Charing Cross Library, 4 Charing Cross Road, WC2H	1217	NO
SJC	Methodist Central Hall, Storey's Gate, SW1H	1326	YES
SJD	Abbey Community Centre, 34 Great Smith Street, SW1P	2761	YES
<b>16. Tachbrook</b>			
TBA	St Saviour's Church Pimlico, St George's Square, SW1V	3175	YES
TBB	Westminster Cathedral School, Bessborough Place, SW1	1300	YES
TBC	Lillington Gardens Estate Hall, Morgan House, Lillington Gardens, SW1V	1489	YES
<b>17. Vincent Square</b>			
VSA	Millbank Academy, Erasmus Street, SW1P	3650	YES
VSF	Hide Tower Hall, Regency Street, SW1P	1518	YES
VSC	Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, SW1P	2065	YES
<b>18. Warwick</b>			
WAA	Holy Apostles Church Hall, Cumberland Street, SW1V	3475	YES
WAB	Dryburgh Hall, Alderney Street, SW1V	1537	YES
WAC	Victoria Library, 160 Buckingham Palace Road, SW1	1710	YES
<b>19. West End</b>			
WEA	St Anne's Church Hall, Dean Street, W1D	1726	YES
WEB	Dance Works, 16 Balderton Street, W1K	1363	NO
WEC	Grosvenor Chapel Meeting Room, South Audley Street, W1K	1053	YES
WED	Fitzrovia Community Centre, Foley Street, W1W	2152	YES
<b>20. Westbourne</b>			
WBA	Warwick Community Centre, 300 Harrow Road, W2	4056	YES
WBB	Bayswater Childrens Centre, Shrewsbury Road, W2	2265	YES
WBC	Stowe Centre, 258 Harrow Road, W2	1702	YES
Total		139139	

**(To be placed in Packet 5 at close of poll)**

Date reviewed	Officer initials

**Polling Place Review**

**Polling place – evaluation checklist**

Part A – Current polling place details		
Polling place identifier (Polling District letters)		
Polling place name		
Polling place address		
Number of electors (Electoral Services to complete)		
Building availability for future elections/referendums (Electoral Services to complete)		
Polling place review		
Check	√	Comment
• Are there suitable transport links?		
• Are there any access issues regarding main/busy roads, railways, etc?		
• Is the polling place capable of accommodating more than one polling station together with the necessary staff and equipment? If so, could it accommodate all voters going in and out of the polling stations, even where there is a high turnout?		
• Is the building readily available in the event of any unscheduled elections? • Is there any possibility that the building may be demolished as part of a new development?		

***Identify any complaints/comments received from stakeholders at previous electoral events***

Date reviewed	Officer initials

Part B – External areas access and facilities		
Check	(√)	Comments
• Is the approach to the building safe and free from obstructions and does it have a dropped kerb?		
• Is the building clearly identifiable?		
• Does the polling place require extra signage from the road?		
• Is there the facility to put up the required signage for polling day?		
• Are there parking facilities for disabled people?		
• Are there parking facilities for polling staff?		
• Does the approach to the building have external lighting?		
• Does the building have level access? Yes/No. If no -		
• Has a purpose built ramp been installed?		
• If so, does it have a handrail?		
• Does the ramp have a gentle slope?		
• Does the building require a temporary ramp or is there an alternative disabled route?		
• Is the entrance door wide enough for a disabled person using a motorised wheelchair?		
• Are the doors light enough for frail/elderly voters to open, as well as wheelchair users?		
• Can the 'Guidance for voters' notice be clearly displayed outside the premises, fitting with the election rules?		
• Are there any external security concerns? If Yes – please advise		
• Can tellers be accommodated outside the building?		

***Please complete template B1 showing external layout, street names, car parking, ramps, steps, lighting and appropriate places for signage.***

Date reviewed	Officer initials

## External plan – B1

Show external layout, street name(s), car parking (including disabled car parking), ramps, steps, lighting, appropriate places for signage, etc.

***Sketch layout; provide photographs as appropriate.***

Date reviewed	Officer initials

Part C – Internal areas access and facilities		
Check	(√)	Comments
• Are all doors easy to open (including by wheelchair users) or do they need to be permanently locked back?		
• Are there any internal steps or obstructions/hazards?		
• Are any doormats level with the floor? If not can they be removed?		
• Is the floor covering non-slip (especially in wet weather)?		
• Are there any corridors that may cause access problems?		
• Is there adequate lighting in the corridors?		
• Are there toilet facilities?		
• Is there a kitchen that staff can use?		
• Is the area adequately lit for day and night time?		
• Is there adequate space for signage?		
• How many polling stations can the building accommodate?		
• Does the building have a telephone for use in emergencies?		

***Please complete template C1 below showing internal areas including corridors, internal doors, kitchen, toilets and highlighting any possible signage requirements and potential hazards in relation to access to the polling station itself.***

Date reviewed	Officer initials

## Internal access leading to polling station(s) – C1

Show internal areas of the building, excluding the actual polling station where voting will take place, including corridors that link to the polling station, kitchen, toilets and highlighting any possible signage requirements and potential hazards. Also indicate any areas of poor lighting, door swing direction and ease of opening, and areas of uneven floor, etc.

***Sketch layout; provide photographs as appropriate.***

Date reviewed	Officer initials

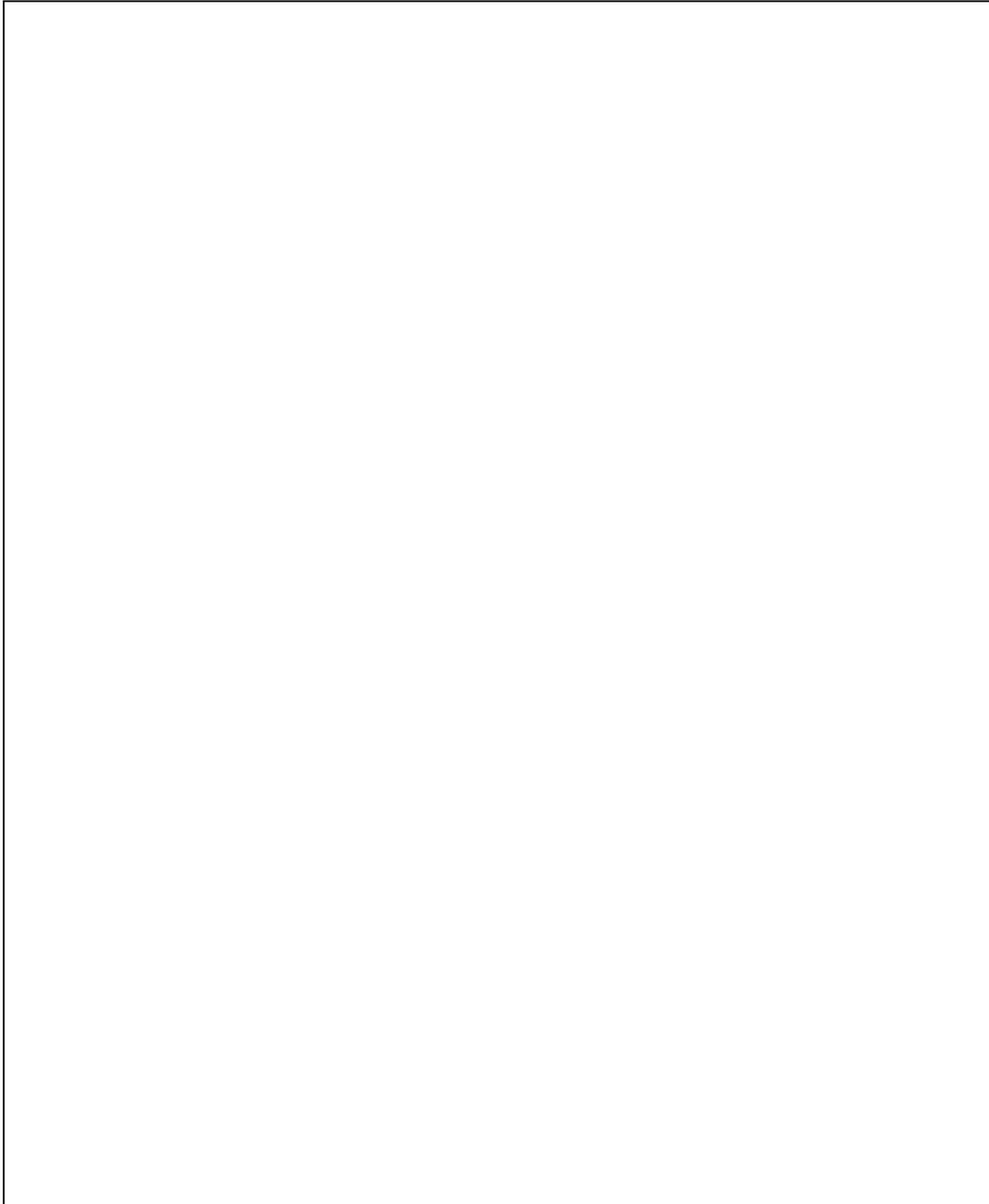
Part D – The polling station(s)		
Check	(√)	Comments
• Is there sufficient space inside the polling station to comfortably accommodate staff, voters, polling agents and observers?		
• Is there sufficient space for administering all types of elections, including combined elections?		
• If multiple polling stations need to be provided, are there other rooms available, or can the space be divided to provide adequate room for more than one polling station?		
• In case of high turnout, is there sufficient space for managing the flow and accommodating a high volume of electors? If yes, could ballot booths be positioned in a way that would preserve the secrecy of the ballot?		
• Is there adequate lighting for day and night time?		
• Is there suitable furniture (tables and chairs) available for all types of election for polling staff and those voters who may need to rest?		
• Can the official notices be clearly displayed, including the large-print version of the ballot paper(s)?		

***Please complete template D1 indicating how the polling station should be laid out to accommodate all those entitled to be inside the polling station, taking into account access requirements for all voters, including those in wheelchairs, and demonstrating how the space should be used to ensure the most efficient flow of voters and the effective administration of the voting process.***

Date reviewed	Officer initials

## Internal – The polling station(s) – D1

Identify the space and shape of the area available for polling. Include the position of the door(s), any windows and how the furniture and equipment should be laid out to ensure the effective administration of and best possible access to the voting process.



Date reviewed	Officer initials

**Part E – Comments from stakeholders during consultation**

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Name/organisation</b>

***Comment from (A)RO***

**Presiding Officer  
Polling Station  
Log Book  
22 May 2014  
(To be placed in Packet 5 at close of poll)**

<p>Polling place address: .....</p>
---

**This Log Book will not be looked at until after the election.**

**Any urgent information must be reported to Electoral Services immediately and the procedures detailed in your instructions should be followed.**

**The purpose of this Log Book is to provide additional information which can help Electoral Services to improve the service we provide.**

**The Log Book should be completed during quieter periods of the polling day and should obviously not interfere with the important tasks you need to perform.**

**Thank you for completing this Log Book.**

**Signature of Presiding Officer .....**

## **Plan of the Polling Station Layout (CPO)**

**(please draw a rough sketch of the layout used, including position of Presiding Officer, Poll Clerks table(s), ballot box, notices and polling booths)**



## RISK ASSESSMENT FORM (CPO)

	TICK IF OKAY	MINOR PROBLEM GIVE DETAILS	MAJOR PROBLEM GIVE DETAILS AND INFORM ELECTORAL SERVICES	TICK IF OFFICE INFORMED
<b>PATHWAYS</b> -Are there any obstructions? Were you able to remove them?				
<b>TRIP HAZARDS</b> -inside building(e.g.carpets, mats, slippery floors)				
<b>ENTRANCE</b> -Is it accessible to wheelchair users? If not is there an alternative entrance?				
<b>STEPS</b> - Are the steps an obstacle to easy access? If so, is a ramp required in the future?				
<b>LIGHTING</b> - Is the internal lighting adequate? Were the power switches easy to find? Is outside lighting required ?				
<b>STAFF FACILITIES</b> -Are there good facilities for staff( e.g. toilets, drinking water, kitchen etc)				
<b>OTHER HAZARDS</b> - Please give details.				

**POLLING STATION STAFF APPRAISAL FORM**

**Chief Presiding Officers are asked to complete the following form:**

**Did you find the work of any of the staff appointed to your polling place unsatisfactory?**

**(Please give detailed reasons-this will be treated in the strictest confidence)**

**Do you think that any of the poll clerks would be suitable for promotion to the role of Presiding Officer at future elections?**

**Are there any other comments that you think should be brought to the attention of the Returning Officer?**

## **ASSISTANCE TO VOTERS**

**( PRESIDING OFFICERS ARE ASKED TO COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING FORM)**

**How many voters in the following categories voted at your polling station  
(Record as 5-bar gates (e.g. ||||| , ||||| ) ?**

**Voters in wheelchairs:**

**Voters using large print ballot paper:  
(both affixed to wall & hand-held)**

**Blind voters using aid for blind voters**

**Partially sighted voters using magnifying sheet**

**Disabled voters assisted by companions**

**Disabled voters or voters with learning difficulties assisted by Presiding Officers**

**Voters needing help to understand the voting procedure**

**Voters whose first language was not English and who would have benefited from any additional translation aids**

## **GENERAL COMPLAINTS FROM VOTERS**

**( PRESIDING OFFICERS ARE ASKED TO COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING FORM )**

**How many voters at your polling station complained about the following (record as 5-bar gates ( e.g. ||||| , ||||| ) ?**

**Did not receive a poll card:**

**Difficulty in finding a polling place:**

**Unhappy about location of polling place:**

**Access to polling place:**

**Unhappy about the service provided by polling station staff:**

**Unhappy about the service provided by the elections office:**









## Advice to the Presiding Officer regarding personation

1. By the day of the election a Presiding Officer should have some understanding of the level of police presence and response that a polling station may expect from the local police.
2. Where an incident occurs inside or near a polling station that a Presiding Officer believes may constitute an offence, then they may consider calling the police and asking those involved to await the arrival of a police officer.
3. Where there is confrontation, or a reasonable expectation of confrontation, then the Presiding Officer should consider their own safety and the safety of all other people present as a priority.
4. In such circumstances, confrontation should be avoided but consideration may be given to other ways of supporting a police investigation, such as recording registered numbers of vehicles and preserving items touched by a person involved in an incident if it is safe to do so until the arrival of an officer.
5. Should an incident arise, the form on the reverse of this advice may be used to make a record of events.

# Statement supporting an allegation of personation

Statement of (print name in block capitals) .....

This statement, consisting of .... page(s), each signed by me, is true to the best of my knowledge and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have willfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

Dated ..... (insert day, month and year)

On ..... (insert day, month and year) I was in attendance

at .....polling station, at

..... (address)

in the following capacity:

Presiding Officer/Poll Clerk/Candidate/Agent/Police Officer (please delete as appropriate) or other, please state.....

At .....am/pm the Presiding Officer asked the person seeking to vote the statutory questions:

1. In response to the first question (regarding identity)

The person (who I know/believe to be ..... ) replied

‘.....’

2. In response to the second question (about whether the person had previously voted)

The person (who I know/believe to be ..... ) replied

‘.....’

Signature of person making statement .....

Witnessed by (signature) .....

(print name) .....

3. Further comments may be added on the reverse of this form or on another piece of paper. Please make sure each sheet is signed and witnessed.

# Proposed WBA/WBC Polling District Boundary changes

Version 1 (08/10/14)

District: HRC  
St Peter's Primary School,  
Chippenham Mews  
Wheelchair Access: YES

HRC

WBA

District: WBA  
Warwick Community Centre,  
300 Harrow Road  
Wheelchair Access: YES

LVB

LVB

WBC

District: WBC  
Stowe Centre, 258 Harrow Road  
Wheelchair Access: YES

WBB

BWC

BWA

Page 51



Date: 15/10/2014

Job Reference: 8xx

0 20 40 80



Metres

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Westbourne Ward

Polling Districts	Current No of Properties	Current Electorate	No of Affected Properties	No of Affected Electors	Revised No of Properties	Revised No of Electors
WBA	2,936	4,119	667	1,003	2,269	3,116
WBB	1,603	2,300			1,603	2,300
WBC	971	1,743	667	1,003	1,638	2,746
<b>Total Ward Figures</b>	<b>5,510</b>	<b>8,162</b>			<b>5,510</b>	<b>8,162</b>

Properties in WBA affected by the proposed change

moved from WBA to WBC

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Address	Name	Properties	Electors
Alfred Road	Astley House	24	52
Alfred Road	Brindley House	31	63
Alfred Road	Langley House	33	36
Alfred Road	Oversley House	127	178
Alfred Road	Polesworth House	127	177
Alfred Road	Radway House	16	23
Senior Street	Dartington House	55	108
Woodchester Square	Princethorpe House	127	186
Woodchester Square	Wilmcote House	127	180
	<b>Total</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>1003</b>

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**(To be placed in Packet 5 at close of poll)**

Date reviewed	Officer initials

## Polling Place Review

### Polling place – evaluation checklist

Part A – Current polling place details		
Polling place identifier (Polling District letters)	W15A	
Polling place name	300 Harrow Road Warwick Community Centre	
Polling place address	300 Harrow Rd	
Number of electors (Electoral Services to complete)		
Building availability for future elections/referendums (Electoral Services to complete)		
Polling place review		
Check		Comment
• Are there suitable transport links?	√	
• Are there any access issues regarding main/busy roads, railways, etc?	✓	
• Is the polling place capable of accommodating more than one polling station together with the necessary staff and equipment? If so, could it accommodate all voters going in and out of the polling stations, even where there is a high turnout?		We have 3 stations, which is fine. It could <u>not</u> accommodate 4
• Is the building readily available in the event of any unscheduled elections? • Is there any possibility that the building may be demolished as part of a new development?		? Don't know

***Identify any complaints/comments received from stakeholders at previous electoral events***

Date reviewed	Officer initials

Part B – External areas access and facilities		
Check	(√)	Comments
• Is the approach to the building safe and free from obstructions and does it have a dropped kerb?	✓	
• Is the building clearly identifiable?	✓	
• Does the polling place require extra signage from the road?	✓	
• Is there the facility to put up the required signage for polling day?	✓	
• Are there parking facilities for disabled people?		Limited
• Are there parking facilities for polling staff?		Limited
• Does the approach to the building have external lighting?		✓
• Does the building have level access? Yes/No. If no -	✓	
• Has a purpose built ramp been installed?		
• If so, does it have a handrail?		
• Does the ramp have a gentle slope?		
• Does the building require a temporary ramp or is there an alternative disabled route?		
• Is the entrance door wide enough for a disabled person using a motorised wheelchair?	✓	
• Are the doors light enough for frail/elderly voters to open, as well as wheelchair users?	✓	
• Can the 'Guidance for voters' notice be clearly displayed outside the premises, fitting with the election rules?	✓	
• Are there any external security concerns? If Yes – please advise.		No
• Can tellers be accommodated outside the building?		✓ Yes

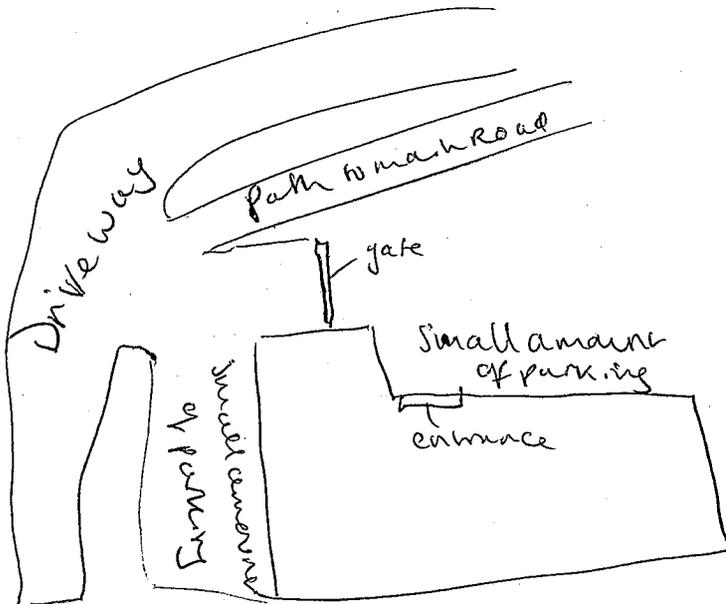
**Please complete template B1 showing external layout, street names, car parking, ramps, steps, lighting and appropriate places for signage.**

Date reviewed	Officer initials

## External plan – B1

Show external layout, street name(s), car parking (including disabled car parking), ramps, steps, lighting, appropriate places for signage, etc.

**Sketch layout; provide photographs as appropriate.**



Date reviewed	Officer initials

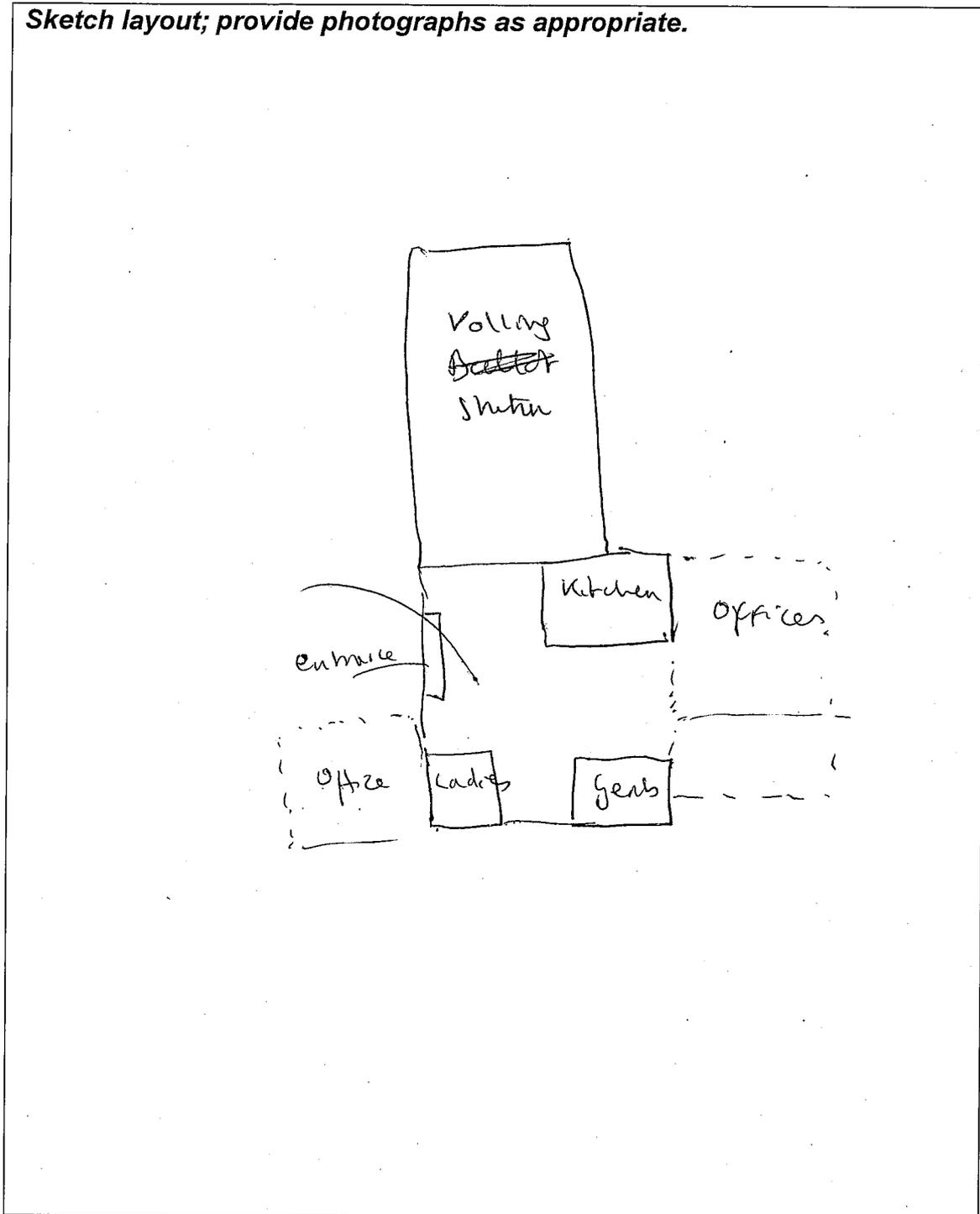
Part C – Internal areas access and facilities		
Check	(√)	Comments
• Are all doors easy to open (including by wheelchair users) or do they need to be permanently locked back?	✓	
• Are there any internal steps or obstructions/hazards?		No
• Are any doormats level with the floor? If not can they be removed?		No
• Is the floor covering non-slip (especially in wet weather)?		Yes
• Are there any corridors that may cause access problems?		No
• Is there adequate lighting in the corridors?		Yes
• Are there toilet facilities?		Yes
• Is there a kitchen that staff can use?		Yes
• Is the area adequately lit for day and night time?		Yes
• Is there adequate space for signage?		Yes
• How many polling stations can the building accommodate?		?
• Does the building have a telephone for use in emergencies?		?

**Please complete template C1 below showing internal areas including corridors, internal doors, kitchen, toilets and highlighting any possible signage requirements and potential hazards in relation to access to the polling station itself.**

## Internal access leading to polling station(s) – C1

Show internal areas of the building, excluding the actual polling station where voting will take place, including corridors that link to the polling station, kitchen, toilets and highlighting any possible signage requirements and potential hazards. Also indicate any areas of poor lighting, door swing direction and ease of opening, and areas of uneven floor, etc.

**Sketch layout; provide photographs as appropriate.**



reviewed	initials

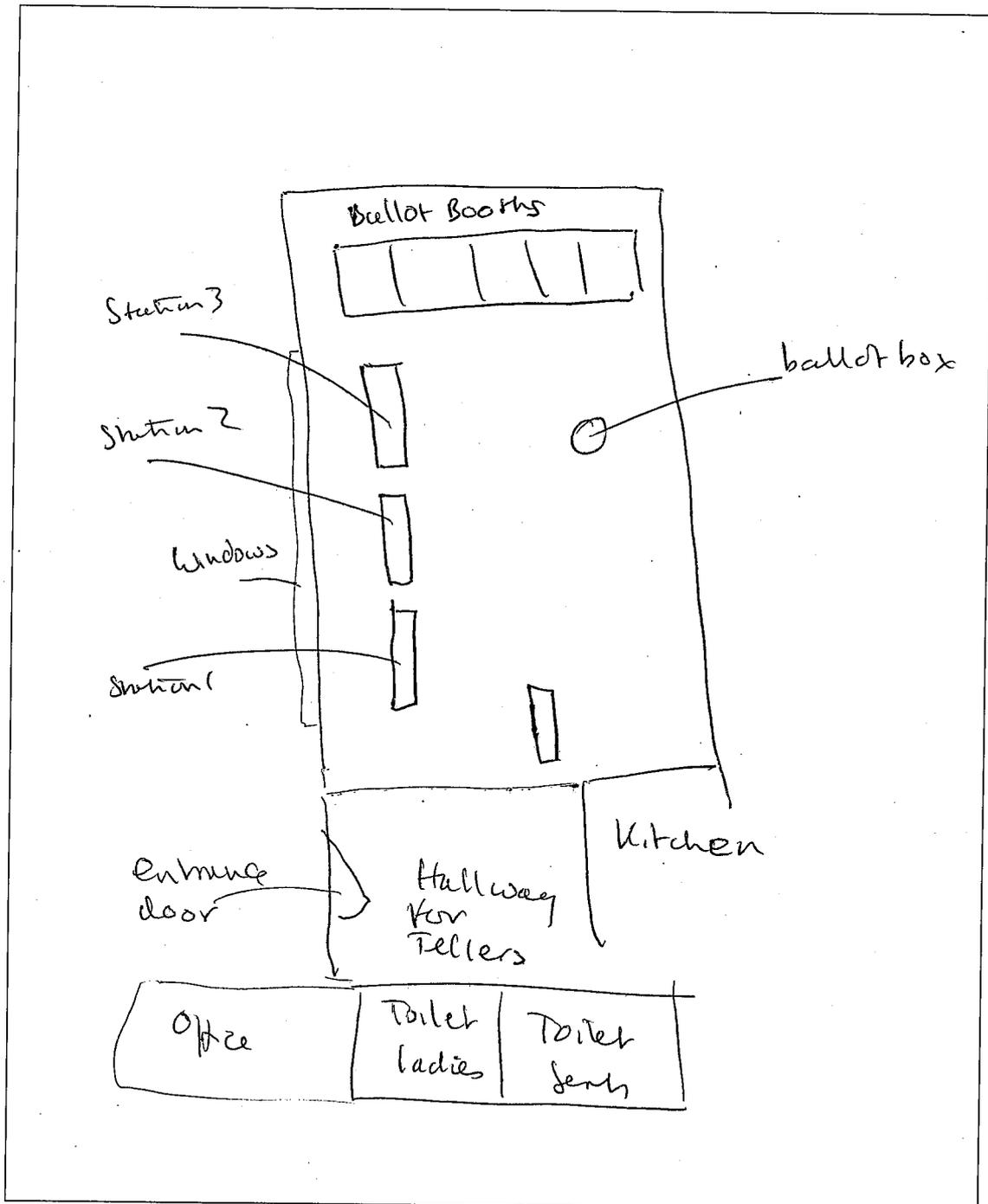
Part D – The polling station(s)		
Check	(√)	Comments
• Is there sufficient space inside the polling station to comfortably accommodate staff, voters, polling agents and observers?		Yes
• Is there sufficient space for administering all types of elections, including combined elections?		Yes
• If multiple polling stations need to be provided, are there other rooms available, or can the space be divided to provide adequate room for more than one polling station?		3 polling stations within WBA
• In case of high turnout, is there sufficient space for managing the flow and accommodating a high volume of electors? If yes, could ballot booths be positioned in a way that would preserve the secrecy of the ballot?		Yes - a slightly higher turnout than today could be coped with
• Is there adequate lighting for day and night time?		Yes
• Is there suitable furniture (tables and chairs) available for all types of election for polling staff and those voters who may need to rest?		Yes
• Can the official notices be clearly displayed, including the large-print version of the ballot paper(s)?		Yes

**Please complete template D1 indicating how the polling station should be laid out to accommodate all those entitled to be inside the polling station, taking into account access requirements for all voters, including those in wheelchairs, and demonstrating how the space should be used to ensure the most efficient flow of voters and the effective administration of the voting process.**

Date reviewed	Officer initials

## Internal – The polling station(s) – D1

Identify the space and shape of the area available for polling. Include the position of the door(s), any windows and how the furniture and equipment should be laid out to ensure the effective administration of and best possible access to the voting process.



**Part E – Comments from stakeholders during consultation**

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Name/organisation</b>

*Comment from (A)RO.*

**(To be placed in Packet 5 at close of poll)**

Date reviewed	Officer initials

## Polling Place Review

### Polling place – evaluation checklist

Part A – Current polling place details	
Polling place identifier (Polling District letters)	WBC
Polling place name	STONE CENTRE
Polling place address	258 HARROW ROAD LONDON W2 5ES
Number of electors (Electoral Services to complete)	
Building availability for future elections/referendums (Electoral Services to complete)	

Polling place review		
Check	√	Comment
• Are there suitable transport links?	✓	ON A MAIN ROAD. TUBE STN NEARBY
• Are there any access issues regarding main/busy roads, railways, etc?		NO
• Is the polling place capable of accommodating more than one polling station together with the necessary staff and equipment? If so, could it accommodate all voters going in and out of the polling stations, even where there is a high turnout?		THERE IS A BIG HALL THAT MAY CATER FOR 2 DISTRICTS. ONLY ONE HALL, THOUGH
• Is the building readily available in the event of any unscheduled elections? • Is there any possibility that the building may be demolished as part of a new development?		

***Identify any complaints/comments received from stakeholders at previous electoral events***

Date reviewed	Officer initials

Part B – External areas access and facilities		
Check	(√)	Comments
• Is the approach to the building safe and free from obstructions and does it have a dropped kerb?	✓	
• Is the building clearly identifiable?	✓	
• Does the polling place require extra signage from the road?		NO, ONE APPEARS SUFFICIENT
• Is there the facility to put up the required signage for polling day?	✓	
• Are there parking facilities for disabled people?		NO, PAY & DISPLAY ONLY UNLESS ORGANISED BEFORE-HAND
• Are there parking facilities for polling staff?	✓	
• Does the approach to the building have external lighting?		
• Does the building have level access? Yes/No. If no -		NO, THERE ARE STAIRS DOWN TO THE POLLING PLACE - BUT THERE IS ALSO A LIFT.
• Has a purpose built ramp been installed?		
• If so, does it have a handrail?		
• Does the ramp have a gentle slope?		
• Does the building require a temporary ramp or is there an alternative disabled route?		
• Is the entrance door wide enough for a disabled person using a motorised wheelchair?	✓	
• Are the doors light enough for frail/elderly voters to open, as well as wheelchair users?	✓	
• Can the 'Guidance for voters' notice be clearly displayed outside the premises, fitting with the election rules?	✓	
• Are there any external security concerns? If Yes – please advise		
• Can tellers be accommodated outside the building?		THERE IS A WIDE PAVEMENT

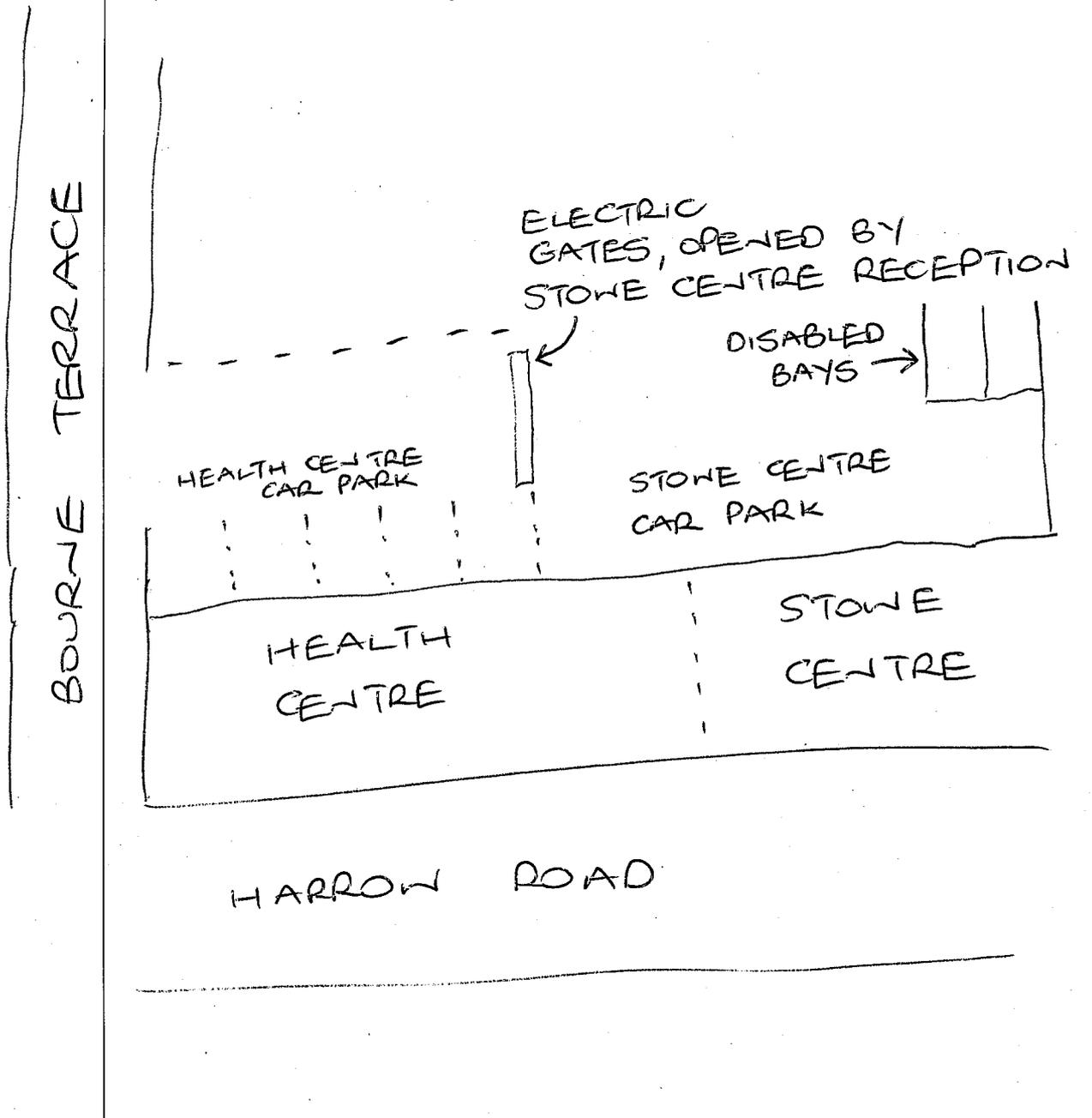
**Please complete template B1 showing external layout, street names, car parking, ramps, steps, lighting and appropriate places for signage.**

Date reviewed	Officer initials

## External plan – B1

Show external layout, street name(s), car parking (including disabled car parking), ramps, steps, lighting, appropriate places for signage, etc.

**Sketch layout; provide photographs as appropriate.**



Date reviewed	Officer initials

Part C – Internal areas access and facilities		
Check	(√)	Comments
• Are all doors easy to open (including by wheelchair users) or do they need to be permanently locked back?	✓	SECURITY DOORS BUT 'ENABLED' BY CARETAKER
• Are there any internal steps or obstructions/hazards?	✓	STEPS DOWN - BUT THERE IS A LIFT*
• Are any doormats level with the floor? If not can they be removed?	X	
• Is the floor covering non-slip (especially in wet weather)?	✓	
• Are there any corridors that may cause access problems?	X	
• Is there adequate lighting in the corridors?	✓	MOVEMENT ACTIVATED
• Are there toilet facilities?	✓	AT LEAST 4
• Is there a kitchen that staff can use?	✓	BIG. GOOD FACILITY
• Is the area adequately lit for day and night time?	✓	
• Is there adequate space for signage?	✓	
• How many polling stations can the building accommodate?		TWO. IF ORGANISED PROPERLY
• Does the building have a telephone for use in emergencies?	✓	

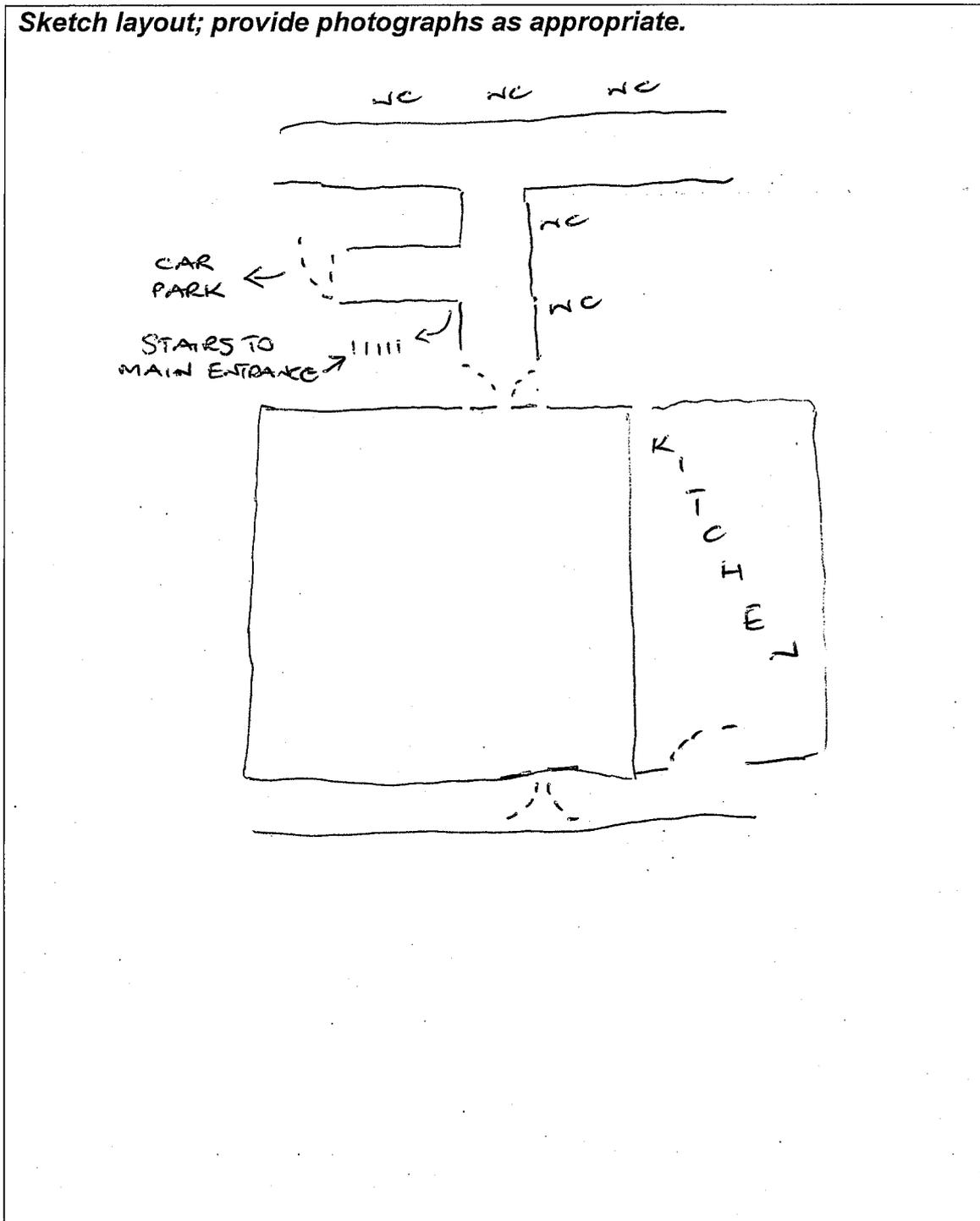
**Please complete template C1 below showing internal areas including corridors, internal doors, kitchen, toilets and highlighting any possible signage requirements and potential hazards in relation to access to the polling station itself.**

\* BY PRIOR ARRANGEMENT, DISABLED VOTERS MAY BE ABLE TO USE THE STONE CENTRE CAR PARK WHICH HAS TWO DISABLED BAYS (ONE OF WHICH IS USED BY POLLING STAFF WHO DRIVE TO QMSC AFTERWARDS), AS THIS IS ON THE SAME LEVEL AS THE POLLING PLACE

## Internal access leading to polling station(s) – C1

Show internal areas of the building, excluding the actual polling station where voting will take place, including corridors that link to the polling station, kitchen, toilets and highlighting any possible signage requirements and potential hazards. Also indicate any areas of poor lighting, door swing direction and ease of opening, and areas of uneven floor, etc.

**Sketch layout; provide photographs as appropriate.**



reviewed	initials

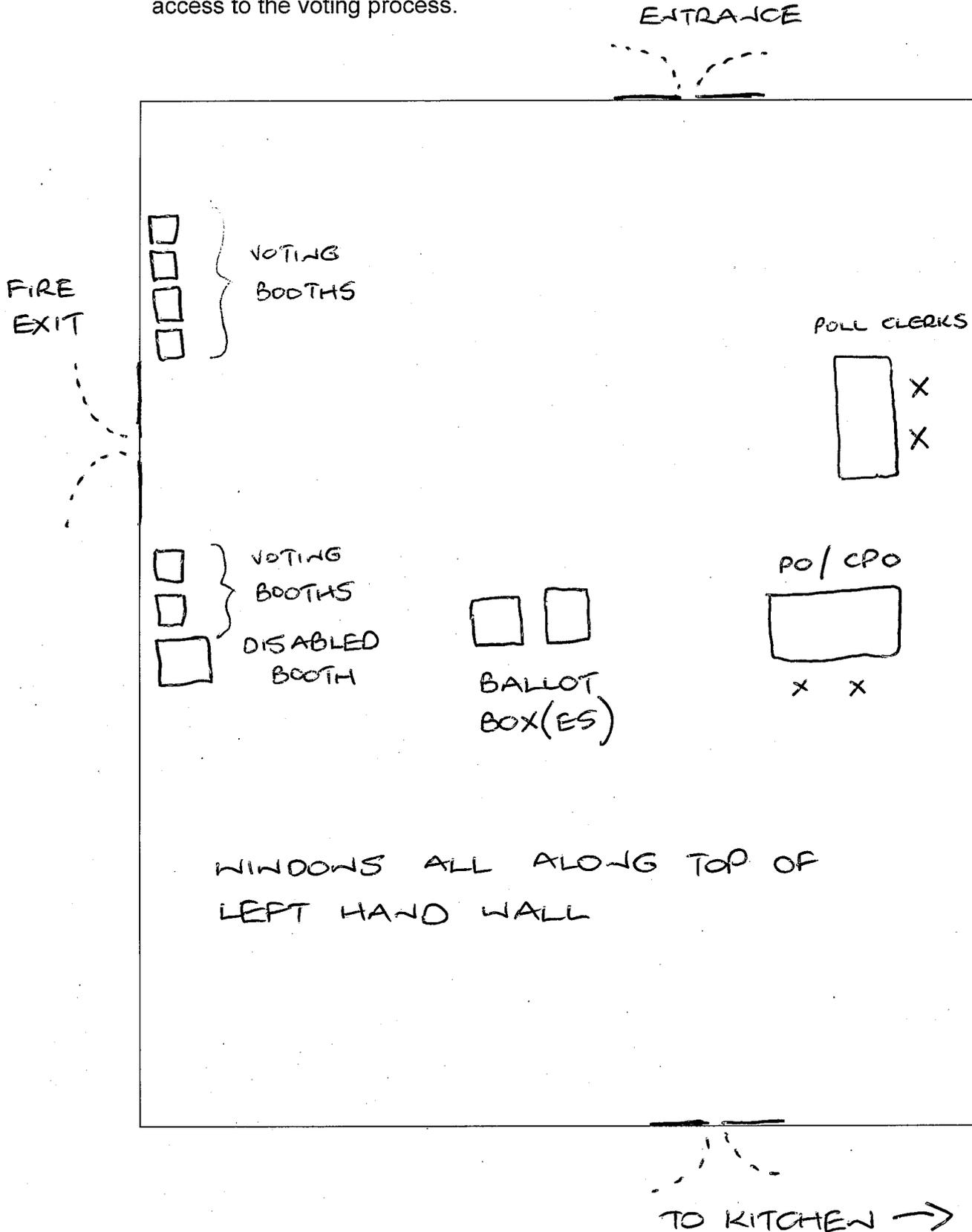
Part D – The polling station(s)		
Check	(√)	Comments
• Is there sufficient space inside the polling station to comfortably accommodate staff, voters, polling agents and observers?	✓	
• Is there sufficient space for administering all types of elections, including combined elections?	✓	
• If multiple polling stations need to be provided, are there other rooms available, or can the space be divided to provide adequate room for more than one polling station?	X	NO. ONE BIG HALL ONLY. COULD ACCOMMODATE 2 POLLING STATIONS
• In case of high turnout, is there sufficient space for managing the flow and accommodating a high volume of electors? If yes, could ballot booths be positioned in a way that would preserve the secrecy of the ballot?	✓	BIG HALL
• Is there adequate lighting for day and night time?	✓	
• Is there suitable furniture (tables and chairs) available for all types of election for polling staff and those voters who may need to rest?		PLENTY OF CHAIRS TO SIT ON. TABLES MAY BE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST
• Can the official notices be clearly displayed, including the large-print version of the ballot paper(s)?	✓	LOTS OF WALL SPACE

**Please complete template D1 indicating how the polling station should be laid out to accommodate all those entitled to be inside the polling station, taking into account access requirements for all voters, including those in wheelchairs, and demonstrating how the space should be used to ensure the most efficient flow of voters and the effective administration of the voting process.**

Date reviewed	Officer initials

## Internal – The polling station(s) – D1

Identify the space and shape of the area available for polling. Include the position of the door(s), any windows and how the furniture and equipment should be laid out to ensure the effective administration of and best possible access to the voting process.



**Part E – Comments from stakeholders during consultation**

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Name/organisation</b>

***Comment from (A)RO***



# Elderly Voter Walking Analysis

## Estimated Average Walking Times for Elderly Persons

Page 71

- Polling Stations
- Ward Boundaries
- Polling District Boundaries
- ABC** Polling Districts
- Disabled Access
- Constituency Boundary

- KB KNIGHTSBRIDGE AND BELGRAVIA**
- 43 KBA St Paul's Hall, 77 Kinnerton Street, SW1X 8ED
  - 44 KBB Royal Geographical Society, 1A Kensington Gore, SW7 2AR
  - 45 KBC St Peter's Church Hall, 119 Eaton Square, SW1W 9AL
- CH CHURCHILL**
- 46 CHA Churchill Gardens Youth Club, Churchill Gardens Estate, SW1V 3AL
  - 47 CHB St Barnabas School, St Barnabas Street, SW1W 8PF
- WA WARWICK**
- 48 WAA Holy Apostles Church Hall, Cumberland Street, SW1V 4LY
  - 49 WAB Dryburgh Hall, Alderney Manor Estate, SW1V 4ET
  - 50 WAC Victoria Library, 160 Buckingham Palace Road, SW1W 9UD
- TB TACHBROOK**
- 51 TBA St Saviour Church Pimlico, St George's Square, SW1V 3QW
  - 52 TBB Westminster Cathedral School, Bessborough Place, SW1V 3SE
  - 53 TBC Lillington Gardens Estate Hall, Morgan House, Lillington Gardens, SW1V 2LF
- VS VINCENT SQUARE**
- 54 VSA Millbank Academy, Erasmus Street, SW1P 4HR
  - 55 VSB Hide Tower Hall, Regency Street, SW1P 4AB
  - 56 VSC Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, SW1P 1QW
- SJ ST JAMES'S**
- 57 SJA St Clement Danes' School, Drury Lane, WC2B 5SU
  - 58 SJB Charing Cross Library, 4 Charing Cross Road, WC2H 0HF

Average elderly 15minute walking distance

**% of population over the age of 65 (Census 2011)**

- Low (1 - 10%)
- Med. (11 - 20%)
- High (21 - 70%)

% bands defined with natural breaks (Jenks) method, Low/Med/High are relative descriptions.

Average elderly walking distances quoted from a BBC News article on walking speeds. These speeds were estimated between the two sexes as being 0.76 metres per second for women to 0.9 metres per second for men, therefore a figure of 0.8 was chosen to account for the difference of speed between the sexes.

BBC: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-18428042>  
 HSE Report: <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB01184/heal-surv-heal-old-peo-eng-2005-rep-v5.pdf>  
 Other source: <http://www.usroads.com/journals/p/rei/9710/re971001.htm>

- QP QUEEN'S PARK**
- 1 QPA St Jude's Church Hall, 67 Ilbert Street, W10 4QH
  - 2 QPB Beethoven Centre, Third Avenue, W10 4JL
  - 3 QPC New Avenues Youth Project, 3-7 Third Avenue, W10 4RS
  - 4 QPD St Luke's Church Hall, Fernhead Road, W9 3EH

- HR HARROW ROAD**
- 5 HRA Emmanuel Church Hall, 389E Harrow Road, W9 3NA
  - 6 HRB Methodist Church Hall, Fernhead Road, W9 3EA
  - 7 HRC St Peter's Primary School, Chippenham Mews Entrance, W9 2AN

- MV MAIDA VALE**
- 8 MVA Maida Centre, 221 Lanark Road, W9 1NX
  - 9 MVB Essendine Primary School, Essendine Road, W9 2LR

- AR ABBEY ROAD**
- 10 ARA St Mark's Church Hall, Abercorn Place, NW8 9UT
  - 11 ARB St John's Wood Synagogue, 37/41 Grove End Road, NW8 9NG
  - 12 ARC St John's Wood Library, 20 Circus Road, NW8 6PD

- RP REGENT'S PARK**
- 13 RPA Village Club (Behind Swallow House), Allitsen Road, NW8 7BD
  - 14 RPB Rudolf Steiner House, 35 Park Road, NW1 6XT
  - 15 RPC Liberal Jewish Synagogue, 28 St John's Wood Road, NW8 7HA

- CS CHURCH STREET**
- 16 CSA Gateway Academy, Capland Street, NW8 8LN
  - 17 CSB Church Street Library, Church Street, NW8 8EU
  - 18 CSC The Greenside Community Centre, Lilestone Street, NW8 8SR

- LV LITTLE VENICE**
- 19 LVA St Joseph's School, Sutherland Avenue, W9 1DF
  - 20 LVB St Saviour's School, Shirland Road, W9 2JD
  - 21 LVC Paddington Green Primary School, Park Place Villas, W2 1SP

- WB WESTBOURNE**
- 22 WBA Warwick Community Centre, 300 Harrow Road, W2 5HG
  - 23 WBB Bayswater Childrens Centre, Shrewsbury Road, W2 5PR
  - 24 WBC Stowe Centre, 258 Harrow Road, W2 5ES

- BW BAYSWATER**
- 25 BWA Small Porchester Hall, Porchester Road, W2 5HS
  - 26 BWB St Paul's Bayswater United Reformed Church, Newton Road, London, W2 5LS
  - 27 BWC St Stephen's School, Westbourne Park Road, W2 5QH

- LG LANCASTER GATE**
- 28 LGA St Matthew's Church, St Petersburg Place, W2 4LA
  - 29 LGB St James's and St Michael's School, 4 Craven Terrace, W2 3QD
  - 30 LGC Hallfield Primary School, Hallfield Estate, W2 6JJ

- HP HYDE PARK**
- 31 HPA St James and St Michael's School Nursery, Sussex Gardens, W2 3QD
  - 32 HPB St John's Parish Hall, Hyde Park Crescent, W2 2QD

- BD BRYANSTAN AND DORSET SQUARE**
- 33 BDA West London Synagogue, Upper Berkeley Street, W1H 5AU
  - 34 BDB Seymour Leisure Centre, Shouldham Street, W1H 5TJ
  - 35 BDC St Cyprian's Church, Glentworth Street, NW1 6AX

- MH MARYLEBONE HIGH STREET**
- 36 MHA St Vincent's School, St Vincent Street, W1U 4DF
  - 37 MHB Central Synagogue, 36 Hallam Street, W1W 6NW
  - 38 MHC Hellenic Centre, 16-18 Paddington Street, W1U 5AS

- WE WEST END**
- 39 WEA St Anne's Church Hall, 55 Dean Street, W1D 6AF
  - 40 WEB Dance Works, 16 Balderton Street, W1K 6TN
  - 41 WEC The Grosvenor Chapel, South Audley Street, W1K 2PA
  - 42 WED Fitzrovia Community Centre, 2 Foley Street, W1W 6DL



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City of Westminster

## General Purposes Committee

<b>Date:</b>	<b>5 November 2014</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>For General Release</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Financial Summary:</b>	<b>There are no financial implications</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Head of Legal and Democratic Services</b>
<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Naomi Stauber, Senior Committee and Governance Officer</b>

### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 came into force on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2014. The Regulations allow any person attending a public local government meeting to take photographs, film and audio-record the proceedings, and report on the meeting. They also require local government officers to make a written record of certain decisions and to make the record available for inspection by members of the public on request. It will therefore be an offence for an officer, without reasonable excuse, either to intentionally obstruct a person exercising the right to inspect, or to refuse a request to provide a written record or background papers.
- 1.2 This report details the key provisions contained in the Regulations; explains how these provisions impact upon the City Council's current practices and sets-out the action taken by officers to date, to ensure the City Council is fully compliant with the new legislation.

### **2. Recommendations**

2. 1 That the Committee agrees the revised wording of Standing Order 18 (Disorder) detailed in paragraph 3.7 and recommends the revised Standing Order to the full Council for adoption;

- 2.2 That the Committee considers and agrees the threshold of £500,000 at which officers must give notice of decisions to award a contract or incur expenditure, as detailed in paragraph 3.10; and
- 2.3 That the Committee notes the action taken by officers to date to ensure the City Council is fully compliant with the 2014 Regulations and advises on any further actions to be taken.

### **3. Background Information**

- 3.1 The Government has communicated its belief that local government decision-making should be as open and transparent as possible and that local people should have the right to report on meetings of local government bodies that are open to the public. Openness and transparency are important for robust accountability and, in the Government's view, this can only be achieved when local people have adequate rights to access meetings and information of local government bodies, thus allowing residents to be involved in decisions that will affect their day to day lives.
- 3.2 To date the Government has encouraged local government bodies to voluntarily embrace transparency by not only allowing local people to attend their meetings but also allowing them to report on public meetings by using modern communication methods such as filming, audio-recording and tweeting. Whilst some authorities have adopted this approach as a matter of good practice, some councils are still reportedly reluctant to embrace the change the digital world has brought. The Government has therefore extended and strengthened the rights of the public to utilise modern media in this way through the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 ("the 2014 Regulations").

#### **Filming, Photographing and Reporting on Local Authority (Public) Meetings**

- 3.3 The 2014 Regulations provide the public with strengthened rights to report at meetings of local government bodies by filming, photographing, audio-recording or by any other means to report the proceedings of an open meeting. Local people are therefore now able to film, make audio-recordings and provide written commentaries during a meeting and provide oral commentaries outside the meeting, thereby allowing those who are unable to attend the meeting to follow the proceedings.
- 3.4 The City Council already has in place an agreed 'Protocol on Conduct at Meetings and the use of Modern Media' which provides detailed guidance relating to conduct within meetings which is acceptable, particularly in the context of the use of modern media tools such as tweeting, blogging, filming and audio/video recording at meetings. The principles of protocol are reflected in the Council's Standing Order 18 contained in the Constitution.

- 3.5 The protocol details that no restrictions will be placed on members of the public attending Part 1 (public) meetings in relation to the use of modern media including still photography or filming, provided that their actions do not affect the conduct of the meeting. Under the Council's aforementioned Standing Orders, the Chairman of each meeting has powers to deal with issues relating to the conduct of those present to ensure the due and orderly despatch of business. Whilst the Council promotes and adheres to the principles of openness and transparency, including the right of the public to film and alike, any actions which adversely affect the meeting, other members of the public, sitting Councillors or the proper transaction of business will not be acceptable or tolerated. The Council therefore reserves the right to refuse the use of any type of recording equipment, if there are exceptional reasons to do so in the interests of good order.
- 3.6 The filming and recording of meetings by representatives of the media shall also be permitted provided the detailed arrangements for the use of any equipment beyond small hand-held devices (such as mobile phones or dictaphones) are agreed beforehand with the Chairman of the meeting and the Director of Communications, Policy and Performance. Through experience, representatives of the media are more likely to utilise larger and more intrusive recording equipment (such as standalone cameras, tri-pods etc) which require more planning and preparation to accommodate.
- 3.7 The priority of the City Council is to ensure that the business of its public meetings is not, in any way, adversely affected by the use of recording tools. The Council also has a duty to ensure that members of the public are not restricted from observing and witnessing our meetings due to the media's presence or otherwise negatively impacted. For these reasons, the City Council works in collaboration with representatives of the media to ensure the appropriate arrangements are agreed in advance, for logistical reasons and out of courtesy to Members, officers and the public. This has been the long-standing practice and has been implemented without issue to date. These Regulations should therefore have no impact upon the Council's positive relationship with media organisations. We would expect the media to continue to work collaboratively with the Council when requesting to film or report upon our public meetings and the Council will continue to permit and facilitate the media's requests as appropriate.
- 3.8 In light of the 2014 Regulations, officers have taken the opportunity to review the Council's Standing Orders. Officers consider that two additional standing orders which specifically address reporting on public meetings and the use of modern media tools accordingly should be introduced to ensure the Council's position on this matter is agreed, formalised and clearly set-out for Members, officers and the public.

The following additional Standing Order is suggested and is applicable to both full Council meetings as Standing Order 18(a), and Committee/Sub-Committee/Cabinet meetings as Standing Order 36(a).

### **Standing Orders 18(a) and 36(a)**

#### **Reporting on Public Meetings**

**“Members of the public, including representatives of the media, shall be permitted to report on the Part 1 (public) part of the Council’s formal meetings. Reporting may include filming, photographing or making an audio recording of proceedings at a meeting; using any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later; or reporting or providing commentary on proceedings at a meeting, orally or in writing, so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present. The Chairman may only refuse permission if there is just reason for doing so, in exceptional circumstances, in the interests of good conduct and in accordance with Standing Orders 18 or 36 (Disorder). Such decisions shall not be open to challenge”.**

#### **Access to Information relating to Officer Decisions**

- 3.9 The public can already access documents relating to those decisions made by officers under delegation from the executive of the council (i.e. executive decisions) through the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. The new 2014 Regulations widens this provision to include access to documents relating to decisions taken by officers acting under powers delegated to them by a local government body, their committees, sub-committees or joint committees (i.e. non-executive decisions). These documents must include record of decisions taken, the reason for the decisions, any alternative options considered and rejected, and any other background documents. These documents must be available for inspection as soon as reasonably practicable. Where a person who has custody of these documents, without reasonable excuse, intentionally obstructs or refuses to disclose the whole or part of the documents, such a person can be charged with a criminal offence.
- 3.10 The 2014 Regulations specifically require all decision-making officers to produce a written record of any decision, the effect of which is:
- a) to grant a permission or licence;
  - b) to affect the rights of an individual; or

- c) to award a contract or incur expenditure which materially affects the council's financial position.

In respect of provision (c) above, officers suggest that the threshold at which officers should give notice of decisions to award a contract or incur expenditure, which is considered to "materially affect the council's financial position" should be set at £500,000. The Committee's views are sought on this figure.

3.11 It should be noted that the Council's Financial Regulations (contained in the Constitution) determine which levels and types of expenditure officers can authorise. On the basis of the suggested threshold of £500,000, the following officer decisions would require notification:

- (i) Contract awards between £500k and £1.5M (authority in excess of £1.5M is reserved to Cabinet Members)
- (ii) Authorising payment of invoices over £500k
- (iii) Expenditure relating to treasury management and investments between £500k and £1.5M (authority in excess of £1.5M is reserved to Cabinet Members)
- (iv) Expenditure relating to the operating of contracts for the pension fund over £500k
- (v) Placing of pension fund investments between £500k and £1.5M (authority in excess of £1.5M is reserved to the Superannuation Committee)

3.12 The vast majority of decisions which officers take on a daily basis either do not fall within the scope of the Regulations or have been determined locally to be exempt from the requirement. Some key examples of those decisions which do not need to be recorded are the following:

- Decisions which are already in the public domain in the form of a formal Cabinet or Cabinet Member Report or published as a result of other statutory requirements.
- Decisions which are already in the public domain through the respective service area's existing practices, providing the notice contains all the required information
- Routine administrative and organisational decisions. This includes expenditure and contract awards below the respective thresholds (as detailed above) and minor reorganisations.

- Decisions relating to an individual which contains sensitive and/or legally exempt information such as Housing Benefit, care packages or redundancy packages.
- Functions exercised under the Licensing Act 2003 for which local authorities have no discretion to refuse (i.e. no 'decision' has been taken – an admin function has been completed).

3.13 In order to comply with the Regulations, and to adhere to the principles of openness and transparency, the City Council has implemented an online facility which allows officers to quickly and easily record the relevant decisions they have taken under delegated powers. This information is published on the Westminster City Council website and is accessible by any member of the public. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services has informed all senior council officers of the new requirements and provided practical guidance in respect of the City Council's interpretation and application of the Regulations, including usage of the new online notification facility. In practice, a very similar online facility was already in use by the council in response to the aforementioned 2012 Regulations and officers are simply now required to alter which decisions they formally notify. This will be monitored by Governance Services to ensure compliance.

#### **4. Legal Implications**

- 4.1 Section 40 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 gives the Secretary of State power, by regulations, to make provision for allowing persons to film, photograph or make sound recordings of proceedings of meetings of certain local government bodies; for allowing those not present at meetings to see and hear the proceedings; and for allowing reporting and commentating on the proceedings.
- 4.2 Section 40 also gives the Secretary of State power, by regulations, to make provision for the keeping of written records of decisions made by officers of local government bodies. Section 40(6) specifies the local government bodies to which section 40 applies.
- 4.3 Part 5A of the Local Government Act 1972 makes general provision for access to meetings and documents of certain authorities, committees and sub-committees. Section 100A concerns admission to meetings of principal councils – they must be open to the public except to the extent that they are excluded (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings) under subsection (2) or by resolution under subsection (4) (these concern proceedings where confidential or exempt information as defined in section 100I are to be discussed). Part 5A applies to principal councils (nonmetropolitan counties, districts and London boroughs) and also applies to the authorities specified in section 100J. Part 5A is applied to overview and scrutiny committees of local authorities by virtue of section 9FA(6)(a) of the Local Government Act 2000.

4.4 The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 make provision for public access to meetings and to information relating to decisions of local authority executives, and their committees. In addition, they provide for access to information relating to decisions made by joint committees of local authorities where these are solely comprised of executive members and are discharging executive functions. The Regulations also make provision for public access to documents where executive decisions are made by individual members or officers.

4.5 The 2014 Regulations in question essentially expand the requirement of the above cited 2012 Regulations to include both executive and certain non-executive decisions taken by officers acting under powers delegated to them by a local government body, their committees, sub-committees or joint committees.

## **5. Financial Implications**

5.1 The proposals detailed in this report involve no financial implications. The online facility referred to above has been created at no additional cost to the Council as part of the existing Modern.Gov committee management system.

## **6. Consultation**

6.1 The Regulations came into force on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2014 and required immediate implementation. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services was consulted on the interim approach, prior to the General Purposes Committee's consideration of the full proposals presented in this report.

6.2 The Corporate Leadership Team, which comprise the senior officers responsible for taking officer decisions at the levels impacted by the Regulations, have been consulted. Officers were consulted on an individual basis in the cases of Planning, Licensing, Transportation and Building Control, which are areas specifically cited by Regulation guidance as falling within the scope of the provisions.

6.3 The Director of Communications, Policy and Performance has been consulted specifically in relation to the Council's approach to the filming of public meetings by media organisations and has confirmed her agreement with the long-standing arrangements referred to in section 3 above.

## **7. Summary and Conclusion**

7.1 The Government considers that these Regulations require little or no preparatory work by affected bodies. As evidenced in this report, the City Council already adheres to good practices and actively promotes transparency and openness in respect of its decision-making. Accordingly, the impact of the Regulations upon our current practices is indeed minimal.

- 7.2 The requirements relating to the right of members of the public to film and record our public meetings mimic those good practices already in place at the City Council. The use of modern media tools to record or report on the Council's public meetings will generally be allowed without restriction, unless the usage of those tools or the conduct of the individuals using those tools in any way adversely affects the transaction of business.
- 7.3 Appropriate interim action has already been taken to ensure the City Council is fully compliant with the expanded officer decision requirements and will continue to be enforced going forward, subject to the views of the Committee on the matters set-out in the report.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact:**

**Naomi Stauber, Senior Committee and Governance Officer**

**Tel: 7641 2341, Email: [nstauber@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:nstauber@westminster.gov.uk)**

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

- Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014
- Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012
- Westminster City Council Constitution
- Westminster City Council Protocol on Conduct at Meetings and the use of Modern Media



## General Purposes Committee Report

<b>Date:</b>	<b>5 November 2014</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>General Release</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Officer Scheme of Delegations</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Head of Legal and Democratic Services</b>
<b>Wards Involved:</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Policy Context:</b>	<b>Good Corporate Governance and Management of the City Council</b>
<b>Financial Summary:</b>	<b>There are no financial implications arising from this report</b>
<b>Report Author and Contact Details:</b>	<b>Naomi Stauber Senior Committee and Governance Officer Tel: 7641 2341 Email: <a href="mailto:nstauber@westminster.gov.uk">nstauber@westminster.gov.uk</a></b>

### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 At its meeting 21<sup>st</sup> July 2014 the Cabinet agreed a range of measures to establish a new operating model which will place the City Council on a more robust footing in order to address both the funding reductions and the changes that local government will need to make to meet the growth in demand in some service areas. These proposals included the abolition of the previous Strategic Executive Board and the creation of a new Executive Management Team (EMT), represented by Executive Directors.
- 1.2 These management changes resulted in the need to reallocate a number of functions and duties assigned to the affected senior posts. A revised Scheme of Delegations is therefore required to be reflective of the new organisational model. The proposed new Scheme of Delegations, which has been advised by the Chief Executive, is attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.3 The approach to the Scheme accords with the principles agreed by the Council on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2010, which involves an intrinsically less bureaucratic approach than had been adopted historically. It proceeds on the assumption that ultimate responsibility for the exercise of the City Council's functions,

below Member-level, rests with the Executive Management Team and its individual members, whilst recognising that Executive Directors will, in many cases, authorise senior members of staff to exercise the function on his or her behalf; or in some cases sub-delegate these.

1.4 A group of Deputy Chief Officers and other senior officers comprise the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT). The CLT has a core membership, which is detailed in Appendix 1 of the schedule. The Chief Executive has authority to add or remove officers from CLT.

1.5 A separate report will be submitted to the General Purposes Committee seeking approval for the revised Officer Scheme of Delegations in respect of Non-Executive functions.

## **2. Recommendation**

2.1 That the Scheme of Delegations in respect of non-executive functions attached as Appendix 1, be recommended to the Council for approval

2.2 That it be noted that the Leader of the Council will be asked to approve the Scheme of Delegations in respect of executive functions.

## **3. Reason for Decision**

3.1 Following the review of the Council's organisational model and management structure, and subsequent reallocation of functions to the new Executive Management Team, the City Council's existing Scheme of Delegations requires updating.

## **4. Background Information**

4.1 At its meeting 21<sup>st</sup> July 2014 the Cabinet agreed a range of measures to establish a new operating model, including:

- Authorisation to the Chief Executive to implement the agreed restructure, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Members;
- The establishment of a Tri Borough Corporate Services function (subject to Tri Borough partners' agreement of the business cases to be reported to a future Cabinet meeting);
- The disestablishment of the existing Built Environment and Housing, Regeneration and Property Directorates and creation of a new Growth, Housing and Planning Directorate.
- A revamp of the existing City Management Directorate to be revised as a City Management and Communities Directorate, with a wider remit
- An integrated City and Corporate Policy function; and

- Authorisation to the Chief Executive and Head of Legal and Democratic Services to propose consequential changes to the Constitution, including the revised allocation of existing officer delegations which arise from the implementation of the new operating model, subject to the approval of the full Council via the General Purposes Committee.
- 4.2 In addition to the above-mentioned changes the aforementioned creation of a new Executive Management Team requires the reallocation of functions contained in the Scheme of Delegations amongst the following EMT posts:
- Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)
  - Executive Director, City Management and Communities
  - Executive Director, Growth, Housing and Planning.
  - Executive Director, Corporate and Commercial Services
  - Executive Director, Children’s Services
  - Executive Director, Adult’s Services
  - Director of Strategy and Communications
- 4.3 The Head of Legal and Democratic Services and City Treasurer, whilst not EMT members, also hold specific delegations in their capacity as Chief Solicitor to the Council and the statutory Monitoring Officer, and statutory Section 151 Officer, respectively. These delegations are also included in the Scheme.
- 4.4 The Scheme also includes an updated list of CLT members which has been determined and advised by the Chief Executive.

## **5. Proposed Scheme of Delegations**

- 5.1 The proposed Scheme of Delegations follows the approach agreed by the Cabinet at its meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2010, in that it involves an intrinsically less bureaucratic approach than the City Council’s Scheme prior to that time. It proceeds on the assumption that ultimate responsibility for the exercise of the City Council’s functions, below Member-level, rests with EMT and its individual members. In some cases there would be legal difficulties with a model under which the Executive Director was not so responsible. This creates a streamlined way of working and reducing bureaucracy whilst maintaining good corporate governance.
- 5.2 The allocation of delegated powers to Executive Directors is consistent with both the strategic role of EMT and the fact that it is the Directorates which are responsible for day-to-day delivery “on the ground”. Delegated powers do not have to be exercised by Executive Directors personally.

- 5.3 The proposed Scheme of Delegations also enables delegated functions to be sub-delegated to a Deputy Chief Officer who may then exercise the function him or herself. Although the Executive Director would retain the power to recall any matter for decision, the Deputy Chief Officer receiving the delegated function would be responsible for the exercise of that function in practical terms. The Deputy Chief Officer can, in turn, authorise any member of staff to exercise the function on his or her behalf and each EMT member is required to maintain an up-to-date list of authorised officers and sub delegations.
- 5.3 The Executive Director, Growth, Planning and Housing recognises that with his range of responsibilities there is the risk of a perceived or possible conflict of interest in relation to some of the activities delegated to the role. To manage the perceived or possible conflicts of interests the Executive Director for Growth, Planning and Housing confirms the proposed following sub-delegations:
1. In respect of the duty to make recommendations to the Planning Applications Committee, to the Operational Director for Development Control.
  2. In respect of the Council's own planning applications which are not determined by a Planning Applications Committee, these will be determined by the Operational Director for Development Control.
  3. In respect of the power to make planning applications, to the Head of Investments.
  4. In respect of advice on the proportion of affordable housing in planning applications, to the Head of Affordable and Private Sector Housing.
- 5.4 No additional delegations arise from the report. A review of delegations will be conducted over the next few months, with the findings reported in March 2015.

## **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1 The power for local authorities to delegate functions to officers is contained in Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972. The Proposed Scheme of Delegations will ensure that the City Council can correctly and legally exercise their powers and that decisions can be taken by officers on behalf of the City Council.

**If you have any queries about this report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact:**  
**Naomi Stauber, Senior Committee and Governance Officer**  
**Tel: 020 7641 2341; Email: [nstauber@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:nstauber@westminster.gov.uk)**

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Cabinet Report: *Better City, Better Lives* – Further Reform of Local Government Services in Westminster (21<sup>st</sup> July 2014)

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# **CITY OF WESTMINSTER**

## **Delegated Authority to Officers**

Peter G Large LL.B  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services  
November 2014

# DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO OFFICERS

## OFFICER DELEGATIONS

1. Executive Directors are authorised to exercise those powers and duties of the Council in relation to the service and activities for which they are responsible which are not reserved to the Council, the Cabinet/a Cabinet Member or a Committee, and to exercise the professional and managerial responsibilities of their posts. They are accountable to the elected members of the Council for the efficient and economic discharge of these responsibilities. Elected members are accountable to the public and are responsible for all major matters which impact upon the public in the course of the Council exercising its powers and duties. Accordingly officers may exercise only the powers delegated to them and these are exercisable only subject to:
  - (a) the strategies, policies, and priorities determined by the members of the Council
  - (b) The Council's Financial Regulations, Procurement Code and Human Resources Policies
  - (c) referral to the appropriate body of members for consultation or decision on all matters of public controversy or undecided matters of policy or substantial change from previous practice or which involve difficult or major issues relating to (a) above where custom and practice or initial consultation with elected members indicates that such referral should take place;
  - (d) members with specific functional responsibilities and ward members receiving appropriate information about the exercise of the powers;
  - (e) compliance with the law and all policies, regulations, orders, codes, protocols, and similar documents approved by the Council, Cabinet, the Standards Committee or a Regulatory Committee;
  - (f) consultation with appropriate officers and proper regard to any advice given;
  - (g) other specific delegations in this scheme or similar documents to another officer;
  - (h) decisions by the Chief Executive or the Monitoring Officer on whether officers should exercise any delegated power.
2. In addition to the constraints referred to above, there are limitations upon all delegated powers. In particular there is no delegation to officers of:
  - (a) matters specifically reserved to members by resolution of Council or the Cabinet;

- (b) approval to exceed the provision in the revenue or capital budgets for their service responsibilities;
  - (c) decisions on permanent savings in the budget to achieve the Council's policies;
  - (d) the making of an order for the compulsory acquisition of land;
  - (e) the right to make appointments to posts which are made by the Appointments Sub-Committee;
  - (f) the right to determine a major employee re-organisation.
3. The Chief Executive shall have all the powers delegated to other Executive Directors and any other Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) Member and shall be able to exercise those powers in their place. In the event of any dispute or doubt as to the delegated powers of any other Executive Director or CLT member, the Chief Executive shall have the power to determine which officer is to exercise the power.
  4. Where any new power or duty, other than a local choice function, is conferred on the Council the exercise of that power or duty will be undertaken by the relevant Executive Director or other CLT member until such time as the allocation of responsibility has been determined by the Leader or the Council.
  5. Where a function is delegated to an Executive Director, the Executive Director may (without prejudice to the ability to authorise any member of staff to exercise the function) sub-delegate the function to any other CLT member who may then exercise the function him or herself. Where any function is sub-delegated in this way the Executive Director retains the power to recall any matter for decision.
  6. Subject to the above constraints and limitations, officers may exercise all powers within their respective areas of responsibility, and the absence of a specific delegation to an officer shall not be taken as implying an absence of authorisation to act.
  7. The Leader and each Cabinet Member shall, in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules, retain the right to amend or withdraw any delegation upon written notice to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

## **DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, EACH EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM**

The officers listed in Appendix 1 are the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) (this list is subject to change and is not attached to this version. It is available upon request).

Any power delegated to the Chief Executive or any other CLT member may also be exercised by any member of staff who has been so authorised by the Chief Executive or CLT member to whom the said power is delegated, or in their absence or non-availability, by the officer having responsibility for the relevant Unit.

The Chief Executive, each Executive Director and other members of the Corporate Leadership Team are delegated the following authority:

1. To exercise the powers conferred on members of the Corporate Leadership Team by Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, the Human Resources Policies and the Procurement Code.
2. To serve notices requiring the provision of information relating to ownership and use of property where such information is necessary to enable the Council to discharge or exercise any of its functions and the Council is authorised by statute to require such information.
3. To give officers within their respective departments authority to enter premises where powers of entry are conferred by Act of Parliament for the purposes of fulfilling a function for which the CLT member concerned is the proper officer.
4. To authenticate documents as a proper officer in accordance with Section 234(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, or with any enactment within the meaning of Section 234(3) of that Act, where such document is required in connection with a function for which the officer concerned is the proper officer, and to authorise members of staff to affix a facsimile stamp bearing his name for the purpose of the said authentication.
5. To appoint, promote and dismiss permanent and temporary staff (save in relation to posts to which appointments are made by the Appointments Sub-Committee) within approved budgets and in accordance with the Council's agreed Human Resources Policies. The power to appoint staff shall only be exercised where the Cabinet Member for Finance has authorised the recruitment.
6. To remunerate and reward staff within approved budgets and in accordance with the Council's Human Resources Policies, consulting where appropriate with the Director of Human Resources.
7. To exercise the discretionary powers in relation to all staffing matters detailed in the Human Resources Policies.

8. To attend or nominate members of their staff to attend conferences and seminars convened by institutional or professional associations and like bodies, and to authorise the payment of proper expenses incurred in respect of such attendance.
9. To authorise officers of the Council to give evidence on behalf of the Council in Courts or at Inquiries or before Tribunals or Committees.
10. To consult with all relevant bodies on behalf of the Council on a scheme or proposal that has been included in the budget and has received approval by the Cabinet or the Cabinet Member.
11. To respond to consultation documents where the response would not amount to a key decision.
12. To approve, in consultation with the Chief Executive where appropriate, foreign visits by officers, in accordance with Council policy (detailed in the Code of Governance).
13. To approve bids to undertake cross boundary tendering in accordance with agreed policy and criteria.
14. To undertake, in consultation with the Director of Human Resources, minor re-organisations of staff structure (directly affecting a maximum of 25 posts) provided no post subject to Member appointment procedures is affected, there is no increase in cost and the relevant Cabinet Member is advised in advance about forthcoming minor re-organisations.
15. To make staff redundant and incur the payment of appropriate redundancy and severance payments in carrying out minor re-organisations within their departments where the staff directly affected by the re-organisation do not exceed a maximum of 25 posts.
16. To enter into arrangements or do anything else which is considered necessary or expedient in respect of functions delegated to them.
17. To deal with lost and uncollected property.

## DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. To be the Head of the Paid Service in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
2. To have authority over all other officers including the exercising and allocation of any of the delegations set out in this schedule so far as is necessary for the efficient management and execution of the Council's affairs, functions or services except:
  - (i) where officers are exercising specific responsibilities imposed on them under statute;
  - (ii) that where the professional judgment or expertise of a Director is involved the officer shall have full opportunity to explain his or her views.
3. Subject to observance of the appropriate procedures and rights of appeal, to decide disciplinary, incapability and salary related matters concerning Executive Directors.
4. To appoint or remove officers from the Corporate Leadership Team.
5. To exercise the powers of the Council under S. 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 (well-being powers).
6. To be responsible for the preparation of key corporate policies as appropriate, for agreement by the Cabinet, Council and Cabinet Members.
7. To co-ordinate, direct and monitor the Council's initiatives to achieve efficiency and best value in the delivery of its functions.
8. To designate "Authorised Officers" for the purposes of particular statutory functions from time to time and so authorise them to perform the functions of such a person under relevant legislation.
9. To discharge the functions of Electoral Registration Officer.
10. To be responsible for the Council's responsibilities as an employer under Health and Safety legislation.
11. To approve requests for the flexible retirement scheme submitted by Executive Directors, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Members.

**DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO THE OFFICER APPOINTED TO EXERCISE THE DUTIES OF THE OFFICER APPOINTED FOR THE PURPOSES OF SECTION 151 OF THE LGA 1972 (THE CITY TREASURER)**

1. To be responsible for the proper administration of the financial affairs of the Council in accordance with section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, which responsibility shall include all arrangements concerning financial planning, financial control, banking, accounts, income, insurances, investments, bonds, loans, leasing, borrowing (including methods of borrowing), trust and pension funds (within the scope of the Council's pension fund investment policies that are approved by the Superannuation Committee), the payment of creditors and the payment of salaries, wages, pension scheme benefits and gratuities.
2. To be responsible for the provisions of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 (as amended) in respect of the need to maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting records and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper internal audit practices.
3. To be the Proper Officer of the Council in relation to the following statutory provisions:

Local Government Act 1972

- (1) Section 115(2) - the officer to whom all money due from every officer employed by the Council shall be paid.
- (2) Section 146 - the officer to make any statutory declaration in connection with the transfer of securities.

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

- (3) Section 30 - the officer to write off overpayment of salary, allowances or pensions which occur as a result of the death of an employee or pensioner.

Local Government Finance Act 1988

- (4) Section 114-115 - the officer responsible for reporting on unlawful expenditure decisions or where expenditure exceeds the resources available.

## DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1. To exercise the functions of the Council in the following areas
  - (a) Education services — the Council's functions in its capacity as a local education authority, except those excluded under Section 18(3) of the Children Act 2004 (namely certain functions relating to further education, higher education and adult education).
  - (b) Social services — the Council's social services functions within the meaning of the Local Authorities Social Services Act 1970, insofar as they relate to children, and the Council's functions for children and young people leaving care.
  - (c) Health services — any health related functions exercised on behalf of an NHS body under Section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006, insofar as they relate to children and young people.
  - (d) Inter-agency co-operation — the Council's functions as set out in the Children Act 2004, in particular building and leading the arrangements for inter-agency co-operation as set out below:
    1. Section 10— the duty to make and sustain arrangements to promote co-operation between the Council and its partner organisations to improve the well being of children in the Council's area.
    2. Section 11 — the duty to make arrangements to ensure the Council's functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
    3. Section 12— any duty to establish, maintain and operate a database of basic information on all children in the authority or, if the duty to create a database or databases is placed on another body, to participate in its operation.
    4. Sections 13, 14, 15 and 16 — the duty to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to co-ordinate and ensure the effectiveness of board members' activities for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the Council's area.
    5. Section 17— the duty to prepare and publish a Children and Young People's Plan to set out the Council's strategy for discharging their functions in relation to children and young people.
    6. Section 20(8)(d) — subject to consultation and the laying of Regulations, responsibility for co-ordinating statements of proposed action in light of a Joint Area Review report, in consultation with partners. In addition, the Strategic Director will also exercise a key role in monitoring and evaluating implementation of the proposed action.

(e) Other responsibilities

1. Seconding at least one children's social worker and at least one education professional to the Youth Offending Team as required by section 39(5) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
2. The duty to promote the educational achievement of looked after children. This function is set out in the Children Act 1989 (as amended); and
3. The duty to provide the Secretary of State, if s/he so directs, with information on individual children. This function is set out in the Children Act 1989 (as amended).
4. To exercise all functions, powers and duties of a Children's Services Authority under all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, Education, Social Services and Health functions.

## **DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH SERVICES**

1. To exercise the functions of the Council with regard to the delivery of those functions in respect of adults as set out in Schedule 1 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 (as amended), other than those functions for which the Executive Director for Children's Services is responsible.
2. To safeguard vulnerable adults within Westminster and secure provisions of first steps and personal and community development learning to meet the needs of the community.
3. To arrange for the effective operation of the Council's responsibilities for the assessment, purchase and provision of social care services for adults including people disabilities, older people, people with mental health needs, people with substance misuse problems, adults with learning disabilities (including people with autistic spectrum disorder and a dual diagnosis incorporating mental health needs and learning disability) and people with HIV/AIDS.
4. To implement the Council's statutory functions as follows:
  - to assess the need for, and where necessary provide, services and/or residential accommodation for those suffering from a disability, including a mental disability, pursuant (but not limited) to the National Assistance Act 1948, the Mental Health Act, the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act, the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act, the National Health Service and Community Care Act, the Health and Social Care Act and the Mental Capacity Act.
  - To assess, and plan to meet, the needs of carers of vulnerable people in accordance with the provisions of the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000.
  - To act as the "appropriate adult" within the definition of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act in relation to persons with a mental disorder (which may include a learning disability) who are detained at a police station.
5. To promote the welfare and independence of, and ensure the protection of vulnerable adults through the assessment of needs, the arrangement of services and the provision of facilities and assistance, where appropriate, to meet those needs, for adults and their carers.
6. To lead and direct the continuous improvement of high quality services to the customer in the area of Council funded care and housing support services to adults. These services include:
  - Development of commissioned care and support services (including supported accommodation)
  - Delivery of Assessment/Care management services (including ensuring resource allocations to eligible individuals to buy care

and support)

- Performing management and quality assurance (including information, IT and contract monitoring).
7. To represent the Council in joint planning with the Health Service and other agencies.
  8. To exercise all functions, powers and duties of an Adult Services Authority under all relevant legislation including, but not limited to Social Services, safeguarding adults, Deprivation of Liberty, Mental Health services and Health functions.
  9. To be authorised to agree expenditure on relevant public health budgets subject to each Tri-Borough Council's constitution. Such authority can be delegated in writing to others.
  10. To lead on personnel decisions, including recruitment, appraisal and disciplinary decisions, subject to the City of Westminster's internal procedures only.
  11. To report to the Chief Executive and relevant Cabinet Councillors and relevant Scrutiny Committee. To provide policy advice, if requested, to any political party represented on any of the participating councils.
  12. To exercise the statutory functions of the Director of Public Health. These responsibilities may be delegated in writing to named public health consultants in each borough.
  13. To report to each Council's Chief Executive on the performance of the function and to support the accountability of the Chief Executive for grant expenditure.
  14. To ensure that each participating authority has up-to-date plans, meeting statutory requirements and the demands of good practice.
  15. To be the officer responsible for leadership, expertise and formal advice on all aspects of the Public Health Service.
  16. To provide advice to the public in any period where local health protection advice is likely to be necessary or appropriate, in conjunction with each Council's communications team.
  17. To promote action across the life course, working together with local authority colleagues such as the Executive Director of Children's Services and the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and with NHS colleagues.
  18. To work through local resilience fora to ensure effective and tested plans are in place for the wider health sector to protect the local population from risks to public health.
  19. To work with local criminal justice partners and Police and Crime Commissioners to promote safer communities.

20. To work with the wider civil society to engage local partners in fostering improved health and wellbeing.
21. To be an active member of the Health and Wellbeing Board, advising on and contributing to the development of joint strategic needs assessments and joint health and wellbeing strategies and commission appropriate services accordingly.
22. To take responsibility for the management of their authority's public health services with professional responsibility and accountability for their effectiveness, availability and value for money.
23. To play a full part in their authority's action to meet the needs of vulnerable children, for example by linking effectively with the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
24. To contribute to and influence the work of NHS Commissioners, ensuring a whole system approach across the public sector.

## **DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR CITY MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITIES**

1. To be responsible for the Council's licensing and registration functions generally, including specifically (but not exclusively) functions under the Licensing Act 2003, the Gambling Act 2005 and the City of Westminster Act 1999.
2. To be responsible for the Council's on-street and parking enforcement services.
3. To be responsible for the Council's functions with respect to the regulation of waste management and the cleansing of streets.
4. To take enforcement action on behalf of the Council in relation to waste management, licensing, transportation and highways, trading standards, food hygiene, weights and measures and consumer protection legislation.
5. To be responsible for environmental enforcement activities
6. To be responsible for parks and cemeteries.
7. To be responsible for all matters relating to the Council's functions relating to crime and disorder. To exercise the functions of the Council under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, save for the secondment of officers to the Youth Offending Team as required by section 39(5).
8. To be responsible for the Council's obligations as an enforcing authority in respect of Health and Safety legislation.
9. To be responsible for all of the Council's public conveniences
10. To be responsible for the Council's functions relating to Sports and Leisure.
11. To be responsible for emergency planning and business continuity and undertake executive powers where necessary in the event of a civil emergency.
12. To incur, in exercise of his role as Emergency Controller, un-programmed revenue expenditure in the event of an emergency affecting the Council, or the inhabitants of its area, up to a maximum of £500,000 in dealing with the immediate effects of the emergency, subject to such expenditure being reported at the first opportunity to the Leader.
13. To be responsible for the Council's functions relating to Libraries Services (including Registrars).
14. To be responsible for enforcement action in relation to transportation and highways.
15. To be responsible for the functions of the Council as Road Traffic

Authority including its powers under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

16. To be responsible for the Council's functions under the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991.
17. To either act as the Traffic Manager for purposes of Section 17 (2) of the Traffic Manager Act 2004 or to appoint a person to exercise the Network Management Duty under Section 16 of the Act, including:
  - (a) the functions of the Council under the Highways Act 1989.
  - (b) the functions of the Council as road traffic authority including its powers under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
  - (c) the Council's functions under New Roads and Street Works Act 1991.
18. To be responsible for the Council's functions in relation to area working and neighbourhoods.
19. To be responsible for highways maintenance and the management of utility works.
20. To be responsible for the management of the Council's highways contracts and the delivery of an annual programme of works agreed with the Director for Growth, Planning and Housing.
21. To maintain and manage an inventory of the Council's highways and public realm assets.

## **DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR GROWTH, PLANNING AND HOUSING**

1. To arrange for the effective operation of the Council's responsibilities for housing, including the recommending of strategies for all aspects of housing related activity, relationships with other public sector organisations, social landlords and with the private sector and to commission housing work to CityWest Homes and Westminster Community Homes in accordance with the CityWest Management Agreement and the Council's Procurement Policy.
2. To approve applications for housing and allocate properties in accordance with the Council's established allocations policy.
3. To be responsible for commissioning services relating to the management and maintenance of the council's housing stock, including responsibility for the efficiency and sustainability of the Housing Revenue Account and investment strategies relating to the suitability, condition and sustainability of the City Council's housing stock.
4. To approve changes in charges for housing HRA and HGF rents, service charges, heating and hot water charges, including refunds, reductions and waivers as appropriate.
5. To agree the provision of payment arrangements and options for the recovery of lessees major works.
6. To waive or reduce lessee's contributions towards service charges or cap service contributions, and to proceed with capital funded schemes where there are irrecoverable elements as a consequence of the existence of pre 1987 leases.
7. To authorise the commencement of legal proceedings, including to recover the possession of temporary accommodation, following non-payment of rent or other breach of tenancy conditions.
8. To make arrangements to provide housing advice and support to prevent homelessness including the letting, managing, repairing etc of residential units and associated commercial property; where households are assessed as being homeless in line with current legislation, make arrangements to provide temporary accommodation until permanent housing is secured.
9. To arrange for the use of properties, on a short term lease basis, and other forms of temporary accommodation for use by homeless people.
10. To develop and commission a wide range of housing services for vulnerable adults, in particular those that prevent and alleviate rough sleeping and reduce the impact of associated street activity.
11. To approve and pay and recover monies in the making of mandatory

and discretionary housing assistance.

12. To implement and enforce all housing and all environmental health legislation in relation to residential properties, including the service of notices and authorisation of proceedings.
13. To approve the allocation of funds to individual projects to be supported through regeneration programmes.
14. To be responsible for new affordable housing supply including supporting social housing providers to develop social housing and making investment decisions from the Affordable Housing Fund.
15. To be responsible for funding to other housing related programmes e.g. advice services; handy person schemes.
16. To be responsible for Council initiatives relating to the alleviation of worklessness.
17. To approve the terms for the disposal of land and property where the principle of disposal has already been determined by the Cabinet or relevant Cabinet member, provided that:-
  - (a) in the case of freehold and leasehold transactions sold, the premium does not exceed £500,000; and
  - (b) the case of leases the rental value does not exceed £125,000 p.a.
18. To approve the terms for the freehold purchase and taking of leases and licences of land and property for the Council's own occupation where the principle of acquisition has already been determined by the Cabinet or relevant Cabinet Member provided that the premium rental does not exceed £500,000 and the rental does not exceed £125,000 p.a.
19. To select tenants for land and property (other than dwellings to be let on secure tenancies) subject to consultation with the relevant Cabinet member in any case where any change of policy or special difficulty are anticipated.
20. To deal with all questions of routine property management, including power to:-
  - (a) approve and give effect to licences, tenancies and leases of 25 years or less where the value does not exceed £125,000pa;
  - (b) serve statutory notices relevant to routine property management;
  - (c) authorise and pay discretionary contributions towards trade/loss and/or removal expenses in accordance with good estate management practice;

- (d) authorise routine acquisition settlements (to include disturbance claims, Home Loss payments, Loss Payments, discretionary payments and compensation) which arise from authorised schemes which have been approved by the Council and for which appropriate budgetary provision has already been made;
  - (e) repair, maintain and improve property and other works for which appropriate budgetary provision has been made;
  - (f) enter into deeds of variation or release in respect of all interests where any adjustment to the rental value does not exceed £125,000 p.a. or where any premium does not exceed £500,000;
  - (g) settle dilapidation claims where appropriate budgetary provision exists;
  - (h) give consent in the Council's capacity as landlord to applications by tenants under the terms of any lease;
  - (i) agree rent reviews and sign Rent Review Memoranda; and
  - (j) deal with the surrender and/or renewal or regearing of leases where any adjustment to the rental does not exceed £125,000 p.a. or where any premium does not exceed £500,000.
21. To authorise the submission of compulsory purchase compensation claims to the Lands Tribunal to determine the compensation payable.
  22. To determine the future of surplus land and property for disposal on the open market where the estimated value of the disposal does not exceed £500,000.
  23. To apply for Planning and listed building consents for the Council's corporate property portfolio and, in accordance with the provisions of the Financial Regulations and corporate accounting procedure, deal with appropriations.
  24. To be responsible for the Council's functions relating to Westminster Adult Education Service.
  25. To be responsible for the Council's function in relation to Total Facilities Management.
  26. To exercise the strategic functions of the Council relating to town and country planning, building control and arboriculture.
  27. In the case of town and country planning, the delegation includes power to determine all applications for planning permission, advertisement consent, Conservation Area Consent, Listed Building Consent, application for the Council's own development and Hazardous Substances consent except where:

- (a) In the opinion of the Executive Director the application is of a major controversial or sensitive nature or where in his/her opinion the decision would be contrary to approved planning policies.
  - (b) It is proposed to grant permission, consent or approval and in the opinion of the Executive Director, this would set a significant precedent or have a significant impact on the environment.
  - (c) It is proposed to grant permission, consent or approval for an application which is the subject of objection on planning (or hazardous substances) grounds. Referral to Planning Applications Committee will not be required where in the opinion of the Executive Director:
    - 1. The objection(s) are not specifically related to the application;  
OR
    - 2. The objection(s) can be met by the imposition of conditions;  
OR
    - 3. The proposal complies with adopted policies or standards.
  - (d) In the opinion of the Executive Director it would be inappropriate to do so having regard to representations received from one or more elected Members of the Council or to the nature and extent or representations made in response to public consultation.
  - (e) The application is for the Council's Own Development and the Executive Director is minded to refuse permission or consent, in which case the application shall be referred to the Planning Applications Committee for determination.
  - (f) The application has been submitted by or on behalf of an elected Member of the Council (or their spouse/partner) or by any officer (or their spouse/partner).
  - (g) An elected Member of the Council has requested that the application be determined by Planning Applications Committee.
28. To determine applications under the Planning Acts which, before the expiry of the period allowed for the submission of observations by public advertisement or notice, have been considered by Planning Applications Committee, or where either Committee has deferred a decision but has authorised the Executive Director to make the final decision.
29. To determine applications to discharge conditions imposed on a grant of planning permission, listed building consent, Conservation Area

Consent or on permission for the Council's own development except in the latter case where the conditions relate to a listed building or conservation area consent. These will be dealt with by a Planning Applications Committee unless the Executive Director is of the opinion that no significant issues are raised.

30. To deal with applications where it is found that permission is not required in that they do not constitute development or relate to development.
31. To issue a "screening opinion" (to determine whether a project requires an Environmental Impact Assessment) and/or a "scoping opinion" (on the impacts and issues that the EIA should address) as required by the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 except where:
  - (a) in the opinion of the Executive Director the proposed project is of a major controversial or sensitive nature
  - (b) in the opinion of the Executive Director it would be inappropriate to do so having regard to representations received from one or more elected Members of the Council or to the nature and extent of representations made in response to public consultation.
32. To arrange for the effective performance and development of the Council's duties and services and provide advice in relation to environmental matters.
33. To be responsible for the Council's functions under the Building Act 1984 and the London Building Acts.
34. To be responsible for the Council's functions with respect to arboriculture.
35. To be responsible for the Council's functions relating to economic development and regeneration.
36. To be responsible for the Council's BIDS Programme.

## **DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR CORPORATE AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES**

1. To be responsible for the Council's functions relating to Human Resources.
2. To exercise the functions of the Council relating to procurement.
3. To exercise the functions of the Council relating to information technology including the development thereof across the Tri-borough.
4. To exercise the functions, in consultation as necessary with the S151 offer, not within the authority of the relevant Cabinet Member or the Superannuation Committee in relation to Pensions.
5. To exercise the matters relating to Treasury Management in consultation with the S151 Officer in accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.
6. To exercise, in consultation with the S151 Officer, the functions relating to the administration and collection of revenues and benefits.

## **DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO THE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY, POLICY AND PERFORMANCE**

1. To be responsible for communications (both internal and external) marketing and the Council's lobbying strategy.
2. To ensure the facilitation of the Council's Local Strategies Partnership and that this meets Government requirements.
3. To be responsible for the Council's functions relating to neighbourhoods, approve the allocation of funds to individual projects to be supported through regeneration programmes such as the single regeneration budget and Neighbourhood Renewal and Neighbourhood Management Programmes.
4. To deal with all matters under the Localism Act (2011) and Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012) relating to neighbourhood planning; in particular:
  - The consideration and approval or refusal of applications for the designation a neighbourhood area;
  - The consideration and approval or refusal of applications for designation as a representative neighbourhood forum
  - The consideration of applications to develop a statutory neighbourhood plan
5. To be responsible for the Ward Budget programme including the allocation of funds and projects agreed as part of the Ward Budget programme where the expenditure is less than £10,000.
6. To be responsible for the management and administration of Westco referring strategic decisions for consideration by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate and Customer Services.
7. To act as the editor of the Westminster Reporter.
8. To act as the Council spokesperson when engaging with the media and to authorize other officers in the Communications and Strategy department.
9. To prepare the City Plan and other key corporate policies as appropriate for agreement by the Council.
10. To determine the Council's policies in respect of the use of social media.
11. To be responsible for the management and content strategy of the Council's website.
12. To be responsible for the Council's Contact Centre Contract.
13. To be responsible for, in consultation with, the relevant Cabinet Member, the Council's Area Forums.

14. To ensure that the Council's Scrutiny Officer has sufficient resources to support the Council's Policy and Scrutiny function.
15. To exercise the functions relating to the Council's Customer Services programme.
16. To be responsible for the functions of the Council's special events team and their activities.

## **DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

1. To act as Solicitor to the Council and to institute, conduct and, where appropriate, defend and settle criminal and civil legal proceedings and claims concerning the Council's responsibilities and interests except in relation to those covered by the Councils insurance policies.
2. To take any action in order to protect the interests of the Council or of any person or property to whom, or for which, the Council has responsibility or in order to give legal effect to any decision or action properly taken by the Council or a Committee or person on behalf of the Council.
3. To be the Monitoring Officer and the Proper Officer in accordance with the Local Government Acts (except where signified under other officer delegations).
4. To lodge appeals against any adverse finding against the Council in any tribunal or court.
5. To sign any document necessary to give effect to any resolution of the Council, the Cabinet, a Cabinet Member or any Committee or Sub-Committee or Corporate Leadership Team member acting within delegated power.
6. To make appointments to outside bodies in accordance with the nominations made by the Party Whips.
7. To be the proper officer in respect of matters relating to the Council's Constitution where not otherwise stated.





City of Westminster

## Committee Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	<b>General Purposes Committee</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>5 November 2014</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>General Release</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Superannuation Committee – Terms of Reference</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Policy Context:</b>	<b>Management of the Council</b>
<b>Financial Summary:</b>	<b>No Change</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Tri-Borough Director for Pensions and Treasury</b>

### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The current Terms of Reference of the Superannuation Committee were established in 2008. Since then, there has been increasing pension related matters that have been considered at Committee, as well as changes with the introduction of a Tri-Borough Pensions team within Finance. Amendments to the Terms of Reference to reflect these developments are now appropriate.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Council be recommended that the revised Terms of Reference as attached in Appendix A be agreed and that the Superannuation Committee be renamed the Pension Fund Committee.

### **3. Reasons for Decision**

- 3.1 The Terms of Reference for the Superannuation Committee need to be revised to reflect the business the Committee considers, to set out more clearly its responsibilities and to enable a more aligned Terms of Reference across the three Tri-Borough Pension Funds. The renaming of the Committee is to set out more in plain English what the Committee does as Superannuation is now a lesser used word.

#### **4. Background**

- 4.1 The current Terms of Reference we last approved in 2008, and there have been significant changes in the way the pension fund business in the Council has developed since then. The current terms of reference, together with the proposed changes in markup form are attached as appendix A to this paper.
- 4.2 These changes are proposed to reflect more accurately the matters the Committee now cover in the wider pensions' area, to enable any successor Committees or Officers to have a better understanding of their respective remits and to have a greater degree of alignment across Tri-Borough. This last point should enable a greater degree of discussion between the Tri-Borough Committee Chairs where is it appropriate and relevant – given the degree of commonality in some areas between the three Funds.
- 4.3 The name of the Committee has been Superannuation Committee for very many years. However, Superannuation is much less used now than it was, and is not really a term in common parlance. So as to make the title of the Committee understood to all, and to keep the title current, it is proposed that the Committee be renamed the Pension Fund Committee.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 These changes would have no impact on the financial implications – it is more to enable better governance.

#### **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1 The legal power to the proposal must be set out together with any future possible legal implications.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact: Jonathan Hunt: 7641 6262; email: [jhunt@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:jhunt@westminster.gov.uk)**

**BACKGROUND PAPERS: Local Government Act 1972**

**PENSION FUND COMMITTEE**

1. CONSTITUTION

6 Members of the Council.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

To have responsibility for all aspects of the investment and other management activity of the Council's Pension Fund, including, but not limited to, the following matters:

1. To agree the investment strategy and strategic asset allocation having regard to the advice of the fund managers and the Investment Consultant.
2. To monitor performance of the Pension Fund, individual fund managers, custodians, actuary and other external advisors to ensure that they remain suitable;
3. To determine the Fund management arrangements, including the appointment and termination of the appointment of the Fund Managers, Actuary, Custodians and Fund Advisers.
4. To agree the Statement of Investment Principles, the Funding Strategy Statement, the Business Plan for the Fund, the Governance Policy Statement, the Communications Policy Statement and the Governance Compliance Statement and to ensure compliance with these.
5. To approve the final accounts and balance sheet of the Pension Fund and to approve the Annual Report.
6. To receive actuarial valuations of the Pension Fund regarding the level of employers' contributions necessary to balance the Pension Fund.
7. To oversee and approve any changes to the administration arrangements, material contracts and policies and procedures of the Council for the payment of pensions, compensation payments and allowances to beneficiaries.
8. To make and review an admission policy relating to admission agreements generally with any admission body.
9. To ensure compliance with all relevant statutes, regulations and best practice with both the public and private sectors.
10. To review the arrangements and managers for the provision of Additional Voluntary Contributions for fund members.
11. To receive and consider the Auditor's report on the governance of the Pension Fund.
12. To determine the compensation policy on termination of employment and to make any decisions in accordance with that policy other than decisions in respect of the Chief Executive, Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers of the Council (which fall within the remit of the Appointments Sub-Committee).
13. To determine policy on the award of additional membership of the pension fund and to make any decisions in accordance with that policy other than decisions in

respect of the Chief Executive, Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers of the Council (which fall within the remit of the Appointments Sub-Committee).

14. To determine policy on the award of additional pension and to make any decisions in accordance with that policy other than decisions in respect of the Chief Executive, Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers of the Council (which fall within the remit of the Appointments Sub- Committee).
15. To determine policy on retirement before the age of 60 and to make any decisions in accordance with that policy other than decisions in respect of the Chief Executive, Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers of the Council (which fall within the remit of the Appointments Sub- Committee).
16. To determine a policy on flexible retirement and to make any decisions in accordance with that policy other than decisions in respect of the Chief Executive, Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers of the Council (which fall within the remit of the Appointments Sub-Committee).
17. To determine questions and disputes pursuant to the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedures.
18. To determine any other investment or pension policies that may be required from time to time so as to comply with Government regulations and to make any decisions in accordance with those policies other than decisions in respect of the Chief Executive, Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers of the Council (which fall within the remit of the Appointments Sub-Committee).



City of Westminster

## General Purposes Committee

**Date:** 5 November 2014  
**Classification:** For General Release  
**Title:** Programme of Meetings 2015/2016  
**Wards Affected:** N/A  
**Financial Summary:** There are no financial implications  
**Report of:** Head of Legal and Democratic Services

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The programme of meetings for 2015/16 has been drafted in accordance with the principles endorsed by the General Purposes Urgency Sub-Committee on 10 May 2012 which are set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Council be recommended to approve the dates of full Council Meetings, as follows: 20 May 2015 (Annual), 8 July 2015, 11 November 2015, 20 January 2016, 2 March 2016, 27 April 2016, 18 May 2016 (Annual).
- 2.2 That the Programme of other formal Meetings set out in Appendix A be approved.

### 3. Background Information

- 3.1 The General Purposes Urgency Sub-Committee (meeting held on 10 May 2012) agreed that the Programme of Meetings be prepared having regard to the following basic principles:

Mondays: Cabinet/Policy and Scrutiny meetings

Tuesdays: Planning/Policy and Scrutiny meetings (if necessary)

Wednesdays: Council Meetings/Group Meetings/other Committee meetings

Thursdays: Licensing meetings daytime.

This strategy allows for easier planning and a more consistent approach. For the most part it is intended to leave Thursday evenings free for community and similar events. These arrangements have worked well to date and accordingly, the principles set out above have been carried forward for the preparation of the 2015/16 Programme of Meetings.

- 3.2 The Programme of Meetings reflects a programme of at least 6 meetings for each of the Policy and Scrutiny Committees. Members will recall that the new arrangements for the Policy and Scrutiny Committees envisaged these committees meeting up to 8 times per annum if necessary. The purpose of only programming 6 meetings initially is to allow Policy and Scrutiny Committees the flexibility to hold additional special meetings at short notice depending on their work programme. The allocation of 6 meetings has proved to be sufficient for the Policy and Scrutiny Committees.
- 3.3 The proposed programme seeks to keep for the most part Thursday evenings free from formal Council meetings. This will then enable Members and the political parties to use Thursdays for Community meetings and other meetings. They can also be used for any special meetings which cannot be arranged on other days.
- 3.4 The programme includes provision for the Discretionary Housing Panel and the Rating Advisory Panel to meet on a programme basis. The programmes have been developed having regard to the expected weight of business in each case.

#### **4. Legal Implications**

- 4.1 The Programme of Meetings in respect of Council meetings is a matter for the full Council to agree. The programme includes provision for Council meetings to be held when it is known full Council decisions will be required - particularly the setting of Council tax prior to 11 March each year and the holding of an Annual Meeting in either March, April or May in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 No financial implications.

#### **6. Consultation**

- 6.1 The Programme of Meetings has been circulated to the Party Whips and adjustments made where requested. No outstanding issues remain as a result of this consultation.
- 6.2 The Chairmen of the Policy and Scrutiny Committees and other committees have also been consulted and again no issues are outstanding.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the  
Background Papers please contact Naomi Stauber: 7641 2341**

**Email: [nstauber@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:nstauber@westminster.gov.uk)**

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- None

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**PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS FOR THE 2015-2016 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

**COUNCIL MEETINGS**

20 May 2015 (Annual), 8 July 2015, 11 November 2015, 20 January 2016,  
2 March 2016, 27 April 2016, 18 May 2016 (Annual)

**CABINET MEETINGS**

1 June 2015, 13 July 2015, 12 October 2015, 14 December 2015, 22 February 2016,  
25 April 2016

**WESTMINSTER SCRUTINY COMMISSION MEETINGS**

15 July 2015, 30 November 2015, 15 March 2016

**POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

**ENVIRONMENT**

22 June 2015, 8 September 2015, 9 November 2015, 18 January 2016,  
29 February 2016, 12 April 2016

**CHILDREN, SPORTS AND LEISURE**

8 June 2015, 13 October 2015, 7 December 2015, 1 February 2016,  
14 March 2016,  
9 May 2016

**HOUSING, FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES**

10 June 2015, 16 September 2015, 18 November 2015, 6 January 2016,  
9 March 2016, 13 April 2016

**ADULTS SERVICES, HEALTH AND PUBLIC PROTECTION**

24 June 2015, 24 September 2015, 25 November 2015, 27 January 2016,  
21 March 2016, 18 April 2016

**OTHER COMMITTEES**

**AUDIT & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE**

21 May 2015, 29 June 2015, 17 September 2015, 2 December 2015,  
3 February 2016, 19 April 2016

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

20 July 2015, 2 December 2015

**GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

1 July 2015, 4 November 2015, 25 February 2016

**SUPERANNUATION COMMITTEE**

8 September 2015, 16 November 2015, 22 March 2016

**LICENSING COMMITTEE**

15 July 2015, 18 November 2015, 9 March 2016

**LICENSING SUB – COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Meetings are held every Thursday at 10.00am except Maundy Thursday, Christmas and New Year

**DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS REVIEW PANEL**

15 June 2015, 14 July 2015, 22 September 2015, 3 November 2015,  
12 January 2016, 15 March 2016, 26 April 2016

**RATING ADVISORY PANEL**

9 June 2015, 21 July 2015, 13 October 2015, 8 December 2015,  
9 February 2016, 12 April 2016

**HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**

21 May 2015, 9 July 2015, 17 September 2015, 19 November 2015,  
21 January 2016, 17 March 2016

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS MEETINGS**

Meetings generally held every Tuesday commencing at 6.30pm.  
No meeting during Christmas and New Year periods