

General Purposes Committee Report

Meeting or Decision Maker:	General Purposes Committee
Date:	7th September 2021
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Polling District and Polling Places Review – Westminster
Report of:	Annelie Drabu and Sophie Shore, Director of Strategy and Intelligence (jobshare)

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report updates progress with respect to the Polling District and Polling Places review within the Westminster City Council boundary.

1.2 This paper provides information on:

- The recommendations made in response to all submissions received during consultation
- The next phase of the process after any recommendations have been approved.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the committee:

- note the proposals
- approve the Polling Districts and Polling Places recommendations made in this report
- 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, including Policy Context

- 3.1 The City of Westminster (Electoral Changes) Order 2020 implemented final recommendations made by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) for new electoral arrangements in Westminster Council. This Order was made on 5 November 2020. New ward arrangements for Westminster Council successfully completed a 40-day period of Parliamentary scrutiny and will come into force at the City Council local elections on 5 May 2022.
- 3.2 As a result of the above ward changes, under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council is required to divide its new wards into polling districts and review all polling places. Therefore, the review process of redrawing new polling district boundaries within wards and re-designating new polling places commenced shortly after the GLA elections held on 6th May 2021.
- 3.3 The principles underlying the approach to establishing polling districts and polling places in the review were:
- To optimise (i.e. reduce) the amount of time that it requires as many residents as possible to walk to vote (initially to be based around a concept of 8 minutes), using a reasonable number of polling places.
 - To look to shape new polling districts to fit polling places (whether existing or new polling places) and to seek new places where necessary to allow for this.
 - To ensure, that any new polling places are accessible to people with disabilities.
 - To aim to have three polling places per ward except where only doing so would compromise the above.
 - To try and minimise disruption to schools.
- 3.4 The Council conducted a 30-day public consultation, between 5th July and 3rd August, where any person or organisation could make representations on the Acting Returning Officers initial proposals for new polling districts and new polling places.
- 3.5 The new polling places and districts will come into effect for the first time for voting purposes at the City Council local elections on 5 May 2022.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 The Notice of Review was published on the Westminster City Council website and in the residents newsletter. All Westminster councillors were provided with a copy of the Acting Returning Officer's initial proposals shortly before the review was commenced. Other political parties, from beyond the majority party and the minority party on Westminster City Council, were also notified that a review would be commenced.
- 4.2 The following parties submitted counter proposals which differed in some respects to parts of the Acting Returning Officer's initial proposals:

a. Political Groups and Councillors:

- An all-wards representation from the Labour group on Westminster City Council.
- Queen's Park ward representation from the Queen's Park ward councillors.

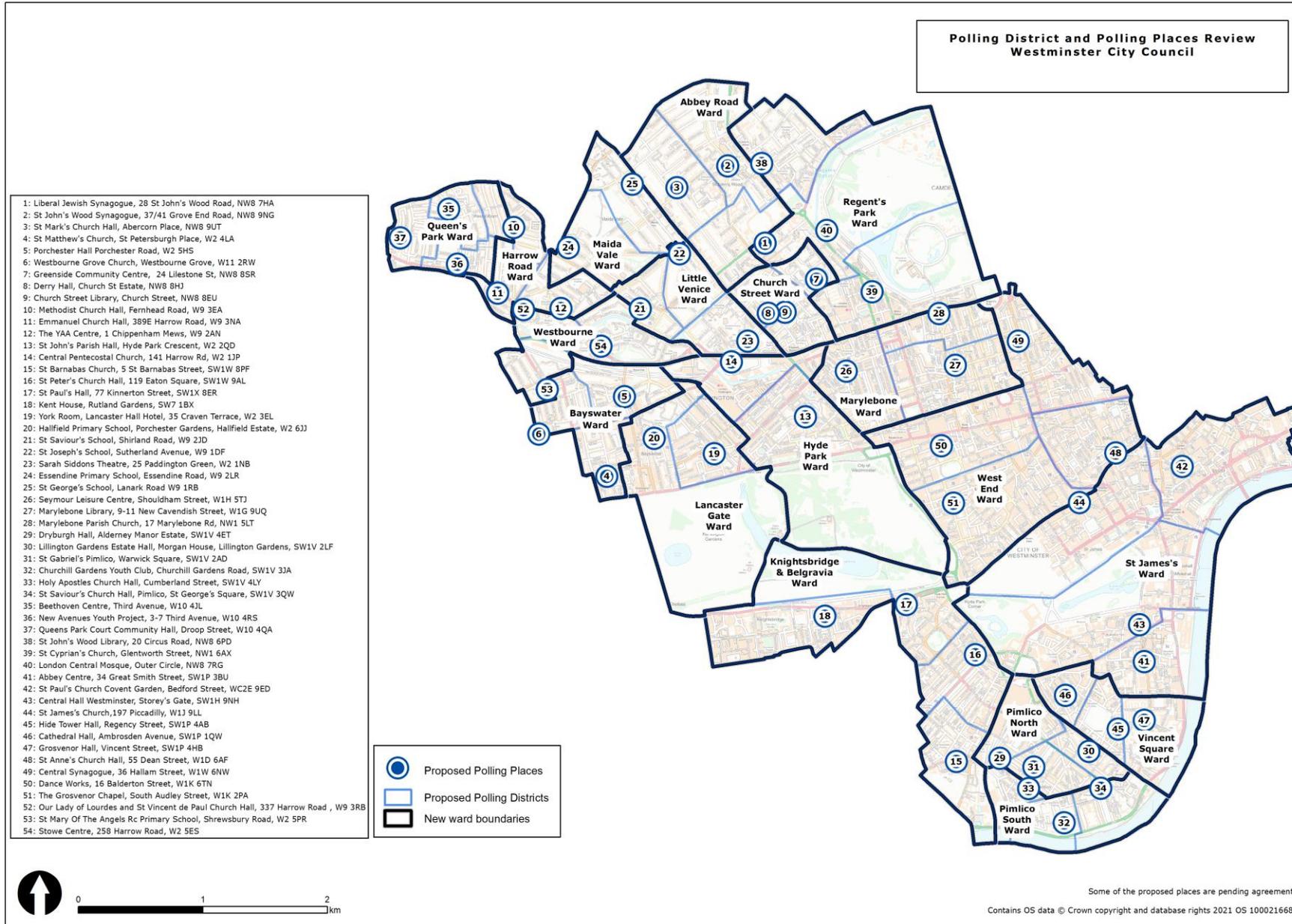
b. Acting Returning Officer Initial Proposals:

- The Acting Returning Officer published their initial proposals on the new polling districts and new polling places on the 5th July.
- A total of 54 polling places are proposed, with most wards having 3 places. Due to their size and shape, Hyde Park, Lancaster Gate and Maida Vale have 2 polling places each, and West End, St James's and Knightsbridge & Belgravia have 4 polling places each.
- The polling district boundaries in Queen's Park have remained unchanged, which ensures that the current electoral arrangements of the parish council are maintained (the 4 polling district areas of Queen's Park ward represent the 4 ward areas of the parish council). However, it is proposed that the ward has three polling places, co-locating two districts in the north east of the ward to one polling place.
- The difference between the WCC's proposals before and after the public consultation are laid out in the table and map overleaf.

Table 1 – Summary of changes between the WCC proposals before and after the public consultation

Ward	Status post consultation	Details of change	Polling district naming
Abbey Road	Unchanged		ARA ARB ARC
Bayswater	Changed	The boundary of the polling districts has changed, to follow Westbourne Park Road and then the back of the houses between Kildare Terrace/Kildare Gardens and Alexander Street.	BWA BWB BWC
Church Street	Changed	The boundary of the polling districts has changed, in order to join Swanbourne House and Jordans House with the rest of Lisson Grove estate.	CSA CSB CSC
Harrow Road	Unchanged		HRA HRB HRC
Hyde Park	Unchanged		HPA HPB
Knightsbridge and Belgravia	Unchanged		KBA KBB KBC KBD
Lancaster Gate	Unchanged		LGA LGB
Little Venice	Unchanged		LVA LVB LVC
Maida Vale	Unchanged		MVA MVB
Marylebone	Unchanged		MBA MBB MBC
Pimlico North	Unchanged		PNA PNB PNC
Pimlico South	Changed	Churchill Youth Club is decided to be more appropriate, instead of Churchill Gardens Residents Hall, as it has a better wheelchair access.	PSA PSB PSC
Queen's Park	Unchanged		QPA QPB QPC QPD
Regent's Park	Unchanged		RPA RPB RPC
St. James's	Unchanged		SJA SJB SJC SJD
Vincent Square	Unchanged		VSA VSB VSC
West End	Unchanged		WEA WEB WEC WED
Westbourne	Unchanged		WBA WBB WBC

Figure 1 - Map of final polling districts and polling places post consultation



5. Next Steps

- 6.1 The proposals will be adopted, subject to approval by the Committee. When the revised electoral register is published on 1 December 2021 a version of that register will need to show the new polling district boundaries.
- 6.2 The new wards, polling districts and polling places arrangements will be implemented for the first time, for voting purposes, at the 5 May 2022 all-out City Council elections.

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

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