


Decision Report Cover Sheet: Council 22 January 2025	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: (Cover report of Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services) Main Report of Stephen Halsey, Chief Executive	Classification: Unrestricted
Polling Districts and Polling Places Review 2024	

Wards affected	All Wards
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 At its meeting on 2 December 2024 the General Purposes Committee considered a report on the Polling Districts and Polling Places Review 2024. The report set out details of the consultation, responses received and proposed actions.
- 1.2 The draft minutes of the discussion are presented further down this cover sheet. The Committee agreed to forward the report to Council for consideration.
- 1.3 Council are now asked to consider the report and the proposed actions.

Recommendations:

The Council is recommended to:

1. Agree the review report and to agree the actions set out in the Appendix.

Draft Minutes of the discussion at General Purposes Committee on 2 December 2024

Robert Curtis, (Head of Electoral Services) introduced the report that updated members on the review of polling districts and places used for parliamentary elections. Robert reminded the Committee it had been advised of a pause in the review process earlier in the year to accommodate the GLA and General Elections. The report detailed the current review process, responses received and officer recommendations. Robert explained that 4 responses were received in the first phase of the review and 37 had been received in the second phase.

Robert summarised the proposals and drew the Committee's attention to some of the key findings of the review including:

- The provision of polling places in Canary Wharf has historically been subject to constant review and, following representation received, will be looked at in more detail in 2025.
- A small number of representations had been received regarding use of schools as polling places, but given the legal position detailing a legal duty on schools to provide polling facilities if requested to do so, the financial implications of private commercial premises used, the familiarisation of locations used and the low number of concerns raised, the recommendation is to continue to use schools as polling places.
- Replacement venues to be sought for those premises no longer available following the General Election in 2024 e.g., Exmouth Hall and Shapla Primary School.
- Some ancillary issues that had been raised such as improved maps on polling cards and accessibility issues.
- Whilst the review reflects polling places used at Parliamentary polls, the aim is to have all outstanding issues addressed in 2025 and in time for the local elections in May 2026.

Robert offered an invite to any members who wished to discuss the detail of the proposals individually outside of the meeting.

Further to Robert's presentation, members asked officers to review the polling place at Fish Island as places used in recent elections, including the portacabin at the last election, were not considered adequate. Rob explained that efforts were ongoing to find a more permanent polling place for Fish Island.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

1. Note the responses received.