

General Purpose Committee Minutes



Monday 12 January 2026

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Nikos Souslous (Chair), Alex Sanderson, Max Schmid, Rory Vaughan and Jose Afonso

Officers

Zoe Wilkins (Electoral Services Manager)

Matt Willis (Deputy Electoral Services Manager)

Kayode Adewumi (Assistant Director – Democratic, Registration and Coroner's Services)

David Abbott (Head of Governance)

1. ELECTION OF THE CHAIR

Councillor Alex Sanderson proposed, and Councillor Rory Vaughan seconded, that Councillor Nikos Souslous be appointed Chair of the General Purpose Committee. There were no further nominations and it was unanimously agreed that Councillor Nikos Souslous take the role of Chair.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David Morton.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. POLLING PLACES AND DISTRICTS REVIEW

Kayode Adewumi (Assistant Director – Democratic, Registration and Coroner's Services) gave a short introduction before handing over to Zoe Wilkins (Electoral Services Manager) and Matt Willis (Deputy Electoral Services Manager).

Zoe Wilkins introduced the report noting that the Council was required to divide each parliamentary constituency in the area into polling districts, designate polling places for those polling districts, and keep them under review. The report set out the

methodology and results of the 2025 review and sought approval for the updated polling scheme. She discussed each of the proposed changes starting on page 3 of Appendix 1 of the report.

Councillor Alex Sanderson asked if all of the venues were accessible. Zoe Wilkins said the majority were and the Council would put in temporary modifications on election day such ramps or additional lighting where they were needed.

Councillor Jose Afonso said he thought the proposed changes were very sensible. He noted that at the last election a gate to the LEB polling station was closed. Zoe Wilkins said it should have been open and her team had discussed it with the venue since then. She added that if there were any issues at any upcoming elections, he could call her directly to resolve them.

Councillor Nikos Souslous (Chair) asked if there would be signs at the old venues directing people to the new venues. Zoe Wilkins said the venue changes would be on poll cards and there would also be signage at old polling station venues. She was also planning to discuss this with the Council's communications team to see if targeted messages could be sent to residents to inform them of the changes.

The Chair asked if polling stations would show turnout outside the stations. Zoe Wilkins confirmed they would.

Councillor Rory Vaughan thanked the elections team for their hard work on the report. The Chair and Councillor Max Schmid echoed his comments and thanked the team.

Councillor Schmid then asked that an experienced person put signage at the old polling station locations – and on the common routes to those locations. Zoe Wilkins cautioned that it was sometimes challenging to get signage approved but she would try.

The report and recommendations were unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

1. That General Purpose Committee approve the adoption of parliamentary polling districts and parliamentary polling places as set out in the scheme contained in Appendix 1.
2. That General Purpose Committee approve the adoption of the scheme contained in Appendix 1 in relation to all other referenda and elections held within the borough.
3. That General Purpose Committee instruct the Electoral Registration Officer to make the necessary amendments to polling districts and to revise and republish the electoral register on 1 February 2026.

Meeting started: 6.07 pm
Meeting ended: 6.21 pm

Chair

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