

Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee

Date: Tuesday, 16 September 2025

Venue: The Liz Cantell Room, Perceval House, 14-16 Uxbridge Road, Ealing, W5 2HL - Perceval House

Attendees (in person): Councillors

T Mahmood (Chair), K Bains (Vice-Chair), Y Gordon, A Young, H Kaur Dheer, G Shaw and K Douglas

Apologies:

I Kingston and I Nijhar

Also present:

R Jackson (Head of Elections), M Howlett (Electoral Services Officer), E Hill (Strategic Director Resources)(Online), S O'Brien (Democratic Services Officer)

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Ian Kingston and Councillor Ilayda Nijhar.

2 Urgent Matters

There were none.

3 Matters to be Considered in Private

There were none.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

5 Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting, held on 9 July 2025 were approved as a correct record.

6 Polling District and Polling Place Review 2025 – Preliminary review proposals undertaken by The Returning Officer

Ross Jackson, Head of Elections, introduced the report and explained to the committee that the council was required to undertake a full review of all polling districts and polling places at least once every five years, with the last full review having taken place in 2022. Mr Jackson further explained that the report requested that the committee consider the proposals of the Returning Officer and agree to the public consultation concerning the nine outlined changes in the report. After the public consultation is completed, officers would return to the committee with a full report of their findings.

Mr Jackson explained to the committee that the Ealing Council sought to reduce the number of temporary (portacabins) polling stations (TPS) used by Ealing during elections, intending to replace them with fixed polling station (FPS) alternatives where available. He outlined the following reasons for the transition:

- The Elections Act 2022 stipulated a wider requirement that TPSs could not fulfil. The Act required polling stations to have more space to facilitate the checking of voter ID, administration of returned postal votes, removal of headdresses, seating, and access for those with mobility or accessibility issues.
- TPSs traditionally receive power from being attached to lampposts or pay-and-display machines; however, on several TPS sites, these no longer existed, or are no longer suitable
- Some of the sites are in a location that required maintenance between uses, such as newly planted trees, or existing trees becoming overgrown and requiring pruning.
- The TPS were more vulnerable to vandalism, severe weather conditions, have poor accessibility for elderly and disabled individuals, as well as those with mobility issues.
- While cost was not a motivating factor for Ealing's decision to move away from TPS, it is considerably more cost-efficient using FPS.
- The TPS were unfit for purpose and Corporate Health and Safety recommended that the council should transition to FPS where possible.
- After the 2024 Parliamentary elections the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) challenged Ealing over accessibility issues for the blind and partially sighted, Ealing's Blind and partially sighted residents cannot vote with confidence in TPS locations.

Mr Jackson then proceeded to go through Appendix B with the committee outlining the following changes ward by ward:

North Acton: BQ

- Replacing the TPS with the centrally located Nash House.
- Nash House was a prominent building in the area and has good

facilities.

- The building has a bus stop directly outside it.
- There was concern that the number of planned regeneration and development works surrounding the premises, such as HS2 would interfere with access to the building. However, through communication with the development teams the site will be accessible for elections on 7th May.

Ealing Common: ES

- Replacing the TPS with the Assyrian Society.
- The site is not in the polling district but just on the border.
- The proposed polling place has capacity and excellent polling facilities.
- The Assyrian Temple was used in 2021 as the polling place for ES due to Covid pandemic. There was no negative impact on turnout and no elector complaints.

North Greenford: IR

- Replacing the TPS with Sudbury Golf Club.
- While it is not located centrally within polling district it was a prominent location with good polling and parking facilities.
- Planning permission had been granted to erect a radio base at the current TPS location, together with recent extensive tree planting on the site, meaning the relocation is necessary.

Perivale: JQ & JR

- Merging JR into JQ and replace the TPS with Perivale Primary School.
- Officers had looked at using St Nicholas Church; however, Perivale Primary School possessed better facilities, and is more central to the proposed revised polling district

Central Greenford: MT

- Replacing the TPS with Greenford Scouts Hut.
- Amending the MT polling district boundary line so that the Scout Hut is in MT
- MT was already a small district and the amendment to the boundary line would balance out MT and MR electors.

Greenford Broadway: NQ

- Replacing the TPS with Greenford Tennis Club.
- Amending the NQ polling district boundary line so that the Tennis Club is in NQ.
- Proposed polling place has excellent polling facilities and nearby unrestricted on-street parking.

Greenford Broadway: NS & NT

- Following the previous recommended change to the NQ, merge NT into NS.
- NT would no longer exist.
- NS would have its polling station at Greenford Library. The library has

excellent polling facilities and nearby parking.

Northolt Mandeville: QS

- Replacing the TPS with St Barnabas Church Hall.
- St Barnabas Church Hall, while not in the QS polling district, is on the border and is a pre-existing polling place for district MP.
- The site has the capacity to accommodate two polling stations and has good facilities.

Northfield: VR

- Replacing the TPS with the Assyrian Society.
- The Assyrian Society is already the polling station for VS (and ES if approved) and possesses the capacity to accommodate multiple stations and has excellent polling facilities.
- This proposal is intended to be temporary only for all elections up to and including 7 May 2026.

In response to questions from members, Mr Jackson and Mark Howlett, Electoral Services Officer, clarified and expanded on the following points:

- In the event that Perivale Primary School became the polling station for JQ, the cameras used to enforce the School Streets would be deactivated and covered with hoods.
- The elections team would work with Ealing Comms team to inform JQ residents of the camera deactivation. The team would also liaise with Comms to address language issues.
- The Elections team felt including any more information on the polling cards other than New Polling location and instructions could overcomplicate the card. The card is also prescribed which limits the wording that can be used.
- The Elections Team felt that posting letters to residents informing them of the deactivation of the cameras would both establish an Ealing-wide precedent that would drastically increase council expenditure.
- The Elections Team confirmed that notices would be placed at former polling stations on polling day to inform electors of their new polling stations and their locations.
- The Elections Team understood the concern about selecting the relatively unknown Greenford Tennis Club for NQ; however, they felt it had good enough access and would erect more signage at elections to guide residents. The Elections Team were also going to propose to the committee the employment of a security guard who could direct people to the polling station and help them feel more secure.
- The former polling station used by NT was Ealing Education Centre, which contained confidential records and so needed to be secured before use as a polling station. By merging NT with NS and hosting the polling station at Greenford Library, they removed this requirement and lowered costs by having one less site.

The following additional two proposals were made and agreed by the committee:

1. That the Ealing Elections Team should investigate with Highways Authority whether polling information could be placed onto hood coverings of road cameras in School Streets Zones.
2. That an additional proposal should be included in the public consultation, investigating public opinion surrounding the merger of North Acton Polling Districts BQ and BP, with their polling station being located at Nash House.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That General Purposes Committee:

1. Approved the arrangements for polling districts and polling places, as recommended by the Returning Officer in Appendix B, go out for public consultation for one month.
2. Noted that the results of the public consultation will be presented to General Purposes Committee for consideration and decision.

7 Next meeting Date

Thursday 16 October 2025

Meeting commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting finished: 8.07 pm

Signed:

Dated: Thursday, 16 October 2025

T Mahmood (Chair)