

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Policy & Resources Committee	Dated: 11 December 2025
Subject: Ward Boundary Review – Scoping Report	Public report: For Decision
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes• Meets statutory duties	Diverse engaged communities Providing excellent services
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	Yes – if members choose to carry out a review
If so, how much?	£122,190 excluding officer time
What is the source of Funding?	City's Fund
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	No – additional funding is dependent on the final decision
Report of:	Michael Cogher – Comptroller & City Solicitor
Report author:	Saira McKechnie – Head of Electoral Services

Summary

Following a report to this committee on 18 March 2024 members agreed to commission a ward boundary review after the 2025 all-out Common Council Elections.

At the September 2025 Court of Common Council, a question was asked to implore that a ward boundary review be undertaken. At the October 2025 Court of Common Council, a motion was put to all members to pursue rolling registration for the Ward Lists of the City of London Corporation.

The ensuing debate from both Courts of Common Council resulted in members questioning the logic of supporting a ward boundary review prior to a review of the City's franchise.

This paper provides an overview of the previous ward boundary review processes and decisions, relevant statistics from previous and current ward lists and, data that is held by planning. It includes resource implications as well as a range of recommendations for members to consider.

Recommendations

Members are advised, based on national best practice, to commission a ward boundary review. A range of options for the focus of a ward boundary review are provided in the report.

Main Report

Background

1. In 1999, as part of the debate around the City of London (Ward Elections) Bill, the Corporation gave an undertaking to Parliament to conduct a review of boundaries once the new electoral arrangements were in place. The review was completed in 2003.
2. The City of London Corporation also undertook that “the review will be repeated within a period of not less than six years and thereafter any further review will be undertaken from time to time when there is any material change in the distribution of voters or if it appears that the residential wards are likely to lose their residential character.” The last ward boundary review, completed in 2010, concluded that future reviews be looked at in eight years’ time. If there was no material change in ward character or voter distribution, then again in four years’ time.
3. The initial ward boundary review was comprehensive and stated that one of its guiding principles was to “establish a degree of permanence” in relation to the internal boundaries. The subsequent review was considered a “stock take” review of the arrangements at the time. Any future reviews will again be a stock take of the current position and consider population spread, projected population and employment statistics, and any input from Members, residents or businesses.
4. In conjunction with the 2002 franchise review the City of London Corporation agreed to reduce the total number of Common Councillors 100 and a minimum of two members per ward to have a minimum level of representation.
5. Both ward boundary reviews sought to maintain the protections afforded to the four residential wards given in the undertakings, that they retain 20% of Common Councillors (20/100).
6. In the 2003 ward boundary review member allocation was based on projected electorate figures of 100% voter registration, which was 35,260. The 2010 review was based upon lesser projected figures, given the benefit of six years of Ward List registrations, which was 24,383.
7. Appendices 1 and 2 show the ward boundaries as they were in 2002, and the boundaries proposed in 2009 to be implemented in 2010 (as they are now). It is evident from these maps that the internal boundaries have been stretched as much as possible to make the smallest, internal wards larger and to maintain the residential character of the four residential wards. For example, the move of Milton Court from Coleman Street to Cripplegate.
8. Appendix 3 shows table 1, the proposed member allocations and projected electorates in 2003 and 2010. It also shows the current electorate and the difference between now and 2010’s projected electorate. The 2010 review reallocated one member in the residential wards and five member positions were reallocated in the remaining 21 wards.
9. Table 1 in Appendix 3 shows the projected electorates for 2003 and 2010, rather than the actual ward list figures, because that is what the proposed boundaries were being planned on, and they are set out here as they were presented in the review recommendations. The actual Ward List figures for 2010-11 were fewer by 3,238, at 21,145. We can assert with some accuracy that the member allocation was broadly correct based on the projected ward figures.
10. The rationale for the member allocation amendments from 2003 to 2010 was based on three factors – 1. The residential wards maintaining 20 Common Councillors; 2. Above average reduction in voters in some wards, between 2003-2010; 3. The increase in size of electorates because of increasing the smallest wards.

Current Position

11. The City of London Corporation's current position is set out across the following factors – the ward boundary positions, the ward list figures since 2010 (the last ward boundary review) and commercial development.
12. The permanence of internal boundaries that the 2003 and 2010 Ward Boundary Reviews sought to give the City as seen in appendices 1 and 2. These show the difference between the pre-2003 boundaries and the post-2010 boundaries. The smaller, internal wards were expanded outwards, and this can be seen most keenly on the Farringdon Without boundary.
13. Appendix 4 and table 2 shows the total Ward List electorates from 2010/11 to 2025/26. The Ward List electorate is very similar now to where it was once the new boundaries of 2010 were put in place.
14. The peak of Ward Lists to the circa. 22K figures between 2012-2015 can be attributed to a legislative position known as “two-year non-responders.” This meant that anyone on the Ward List was effectively ‘carried over’ to the following years Ward List, without having to respond, for two cycles. This created an artificially inflated Ward List in those years. This position was changed nationally, and households and electors must now confirm their registration each year.
15. The 2021-22 Ward List is an outlier year for a low Ward List figure. The voter registration was conducted during the autumn of 2020, the peak of the Covid pandemic.
16. The Ward Lists from 2022-2026 can be attributed to a return to the office post-Covid, two sets of all-out elections and the introduction of a dedicated Election Engagement team in the Communications Department.
17. According to Business Register and Employment Survey data (BRES - owned by the Office of National Statistics), employment in the City in 2010 stood at 339,011 and in 2024 it was estimated to be 675,000. This is a significant increase in City workers given the almost static Ward List electorate figure.
18. Appendix 5 shows the change in office stock per ward from 2103 to 2025. Whilst the general opinion is that there is an increase in commercial development across the City of London, it is in fact concentrated in a small number of wards.
19. Consideration needs to be given about completion versus occupation of developments and, companies moving within wards, when considering the impact of new development. There is a lag between a building's construction being completed and that building being occupied. For example, 22 Bishopsgate was completed in 2021 and almost fully occupied in early 2025. Furthermore, consideration should be given to the fact that new buildings do not automatically mean new businesses. Again, 22 Bishopsgate has many companies that were located elsewhere in Lime Street Ward whose previous premises have not been reoccupied or have been (or are scheduled to be) demolished.
20. Members will recall that the Court of Common Council discussed the question of a ward boundary and separately a franchise review. Subsequently, a motion was passed specifically referencing rolling registration. The Court resolved: - “To instruct officers to bring forward a report to the Policy & Resources Committee setting out the necessary steps to achieve legislative change at the earliest opportunity to introduce rolling electoral registration in the City of London Corporation.”
21. As previously advised in the report on March 2024 rolling registration can only be implemented through parliamentary legislation and therefore would form part of the franchise review. The electoral (franchise) review of 2002 took nine years from commencement to implementation. It is anticipated that a similar time frame would be required for a comprehensive franchise review. Therefore, were one to prioritise a

franchise review now and defer a ward boundary a period of approx. 25 years would have elapsed between ward boundary reviews. This is not considered to be a defensible position in terms of the national position.

Options

22. **Option A** - Conduct a stock take ward boundary review – this would take into consideration internal ward boundaries, total number of Common Councillors member ward allocation.

23. If the Panel were to conduct review, as set out above it, would need to follow the procedure as implemented by the Local Boundary Commission (LBC). Whilst the LBC has no locus at the City of London, they have been consulted during the previous ward boundary reviews, and we would seek to consult them again.

24. The time scales of previous reviews have followed broadly the following structure, as advised by the Local Boundary Commission:

Stage 1 – Internal process – approx. 6 months (e.g. May-Sept) – in depth research and data mining to inform the initial stage of review and inform the panel, initial meetings with the relevant departments, introduction of a WBR project team.

Stage 2- External Consultation – Review is advertised and sent to all electors – 2 months (e.g. Oct-Dec)

Stage 3 – Panel meets to discuss representations and sicut options – 1 month (e.g. Jan)

Stage 4 – Draft proposals are published, and consultations are sent to all electors – 4 months (e.g. End of Feb-July)

Stage 5 – Panel publishes its final recommendations – 7 months (e.g. Feb following year)

Stage 6 – Internal process – Final recommendations published and passed to P&R – 1 Month (e.g. March)

New arrangements need to be in place for that year's Annual Canvass for them to apply to the following years ward lists. The final recommendations to be approved no later than July, for example. For this to be in place for the March 2029 elections the ward boundary review recommendations would ideally have to be fully implemented at a Court of Common Council by no later than June 2028.

25. **Option B** - Conduct a ward boundary review with a focus on reducing the total number of Common Councillors whilst not looking at internal boundaries. Appendices 6a-c show examples of total numbers of Common Councillors based upon a variety of options. These are for example only and would not be committed to the Panel.

26. **Option C** - Conduct a ward boundary review with a view to remove the two-member minimum. This isn't recommended because of the impact on membership to ward committees, however ward committee membership is out of scope of this report and service area.

27. **Option D** - Conduct a ward boundary review to re-allocate the current 80 members that are not allocated to the four residential wards. An example of what this could look like is in appendix 6c.

28. It should be noted that the above options would require the full boundary review process, as detailed in paragraph 22, to be carried out. During this process elected members, the electorate and members of the public can make submissions which the panel will have to

consider. This means that regardless of the focus of the ward boundary review, all submissions are considered and treated equally.

29. **Option E** - Given the statistics provided and that there has been no material change in the voter distribution across the wards, and the character of the residential wards is not under any threat, then members could deem themselves satisfied with the current position and as stated in the 2010 ward boundary review, look again at these conditions in four years.

Proposals

30. The Local Boundary Commission will approach local authorities based on the following conditions –1) population changes resulting in electoral inequality, 2) if a council has not been reviewed for a long time (normally around 14 years), 3) Councils ask for a review e.g. there may be changes to the way the council is run that require a different number of councillors and, 4) the structure of councils change in an area e.g. unitary councils are created etc.
31. In carrying out a ward boundary review we would be satisfying condition 2 above. Conducting a ward boundary review both adheres to the undertakings to parliament and to the best practice and usual process that the Local Boundary Commission follows.
32. A ward boundary review, in any guise, should not be conducted solely by the Electoral Services team. Given that all other local boundary reviews are conducted by the independent local boundary commission, it would not be consistent with accepted best practice in the country as a whole. Previous ward boundary reviews at the City of London Corporation have been carried out by officers in the Department of the Town Clerk. This is because the Town Clerk sits on the Ward Boundary Review Panel (alongside the Recorder and the Common Serjeant).
33. Consideration should continue to be given to the undertakings to parliament regarding “material change in voter distribution” and the “threat to the character of the residential wards.” The 2010 review states that if there is no change to those then reviews should not be carried out, but that we continue to review and monitor quadrennially.
34. Care should be taken to ensure that members do not fully conflate or entangle the ward boundary review and the proposed franchise review. It is not a case of choosing one over the other. They are distinct, but somewhat overlapping pieces of work. The same officers would be involved in both projects and therefore there is not the resource for these pieces of work to be carried out simultaneously.
35. Whilst it is understood that some members do not wish to carry out a ward boundary review in advance of a franchise review, given that a ward boundary review has not been conducted for 15 years (which sets us over the limit set by the Local Boundary Commission), and we cannot guarantee that a franchise review will be swiftly incoming, it is not imprudent to consider a ward boundary review.
36. In view of the above and the length of time that has lapsed since the last boundary review, it is recommended that a review should be undertaken.

Key Data

37. Office stock has seen a gross increase between 2013 and 2025. However, only **7 wards have seen a ≥10% increase in gross sqm.**
38. **13 wards have seen a decrease in gross sqm.**
39. Employees in the City of London have increased from **339,011 in 2010 to approx. 675,000 in 2024.**

40. Housing has seen a stock **increase of 2,000 units between 2013 and 2025**. With a significant proportion of these sold for investment or short term let.
41. Projected population statistics have not been reported due to the Office for National Statistics data being criticised for its questionable accuracy. This can be reviewed once it has been updated.
42. The Ward List has remained stable between circa. **18,000 – 22,000 electors** since 2010.
43. A full costing of a ward boundary review is complex. Based on figures it would cost a minimum of £122,190; officer costing hasn't been estimated at this time. However, based on the previous ward boundary review, it required a minimum of two officers from the Town Clerks department to work on the review full time supported by relevant officers across the organisation. Therefore, there would be a resource impact to this effect.
44. IT costs for a dedicated website are approximately **£6,000** for the six months of the consultation period (based on figures from external hosting company, this would be more cost effective if run in house.)
45. Print costs for three mailouts for the public consultation processes have been sought from our contracted printer. This comes out at **£47,190 exc. VAT**.
46. Each boundary review conducted by the Local Boundary Commission costs them **£69,000, on average**. As we would conduct the review ourselves, we would be liable for this cost. It covers the data analysing, the collating and reviewing of submissions and, initial and final proposals.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

47. Financial implications – Members need to consider the public spend value for money aspect of carrying out this piece work. Historic reviews have taken into scope the time and resource of senior officers and their relevant departments, as well as external consultation.
48. Resource implications – a ward boundary review deprioritises any work on value for money or efficiency improvements e.g. tablet canvassing or improvements to the City Occupiers Database survey, which are long term projects to provide a much-needed update to our ageing systems.
49. It will deprioritise work in other departments as this is a time sensitive and time limited project.
50. The panel, as prescribed in the Parliamentary Undertakings, will take an active role and their work and diaries need to be managed as such. The panel consists of the Town Clerk, Common Serjeant and the Recorder.
51. Work to prepare a new Act of Common Council, if a decision is made to change the current boundaries or member allocation

Conclusion

52. Members are reminded to note the undertakings made to parliament alongside the best practice guidance provided by the Local Boundary Commission to undertake a review if one has not taken place in 14 years.
53. The City of London Corporation is committed to its previously agreed undertakings and notes that this piece of work does not ensure that a franchise review arrives to parliament any sooner.

Background Papers

City of London Corporation's electoral System – 18 March 2024

<https://democracy.cityoflondon.gov.uk/documents/s199760/Elections%20matters%20PR%20FINAL%20v2.pdf>

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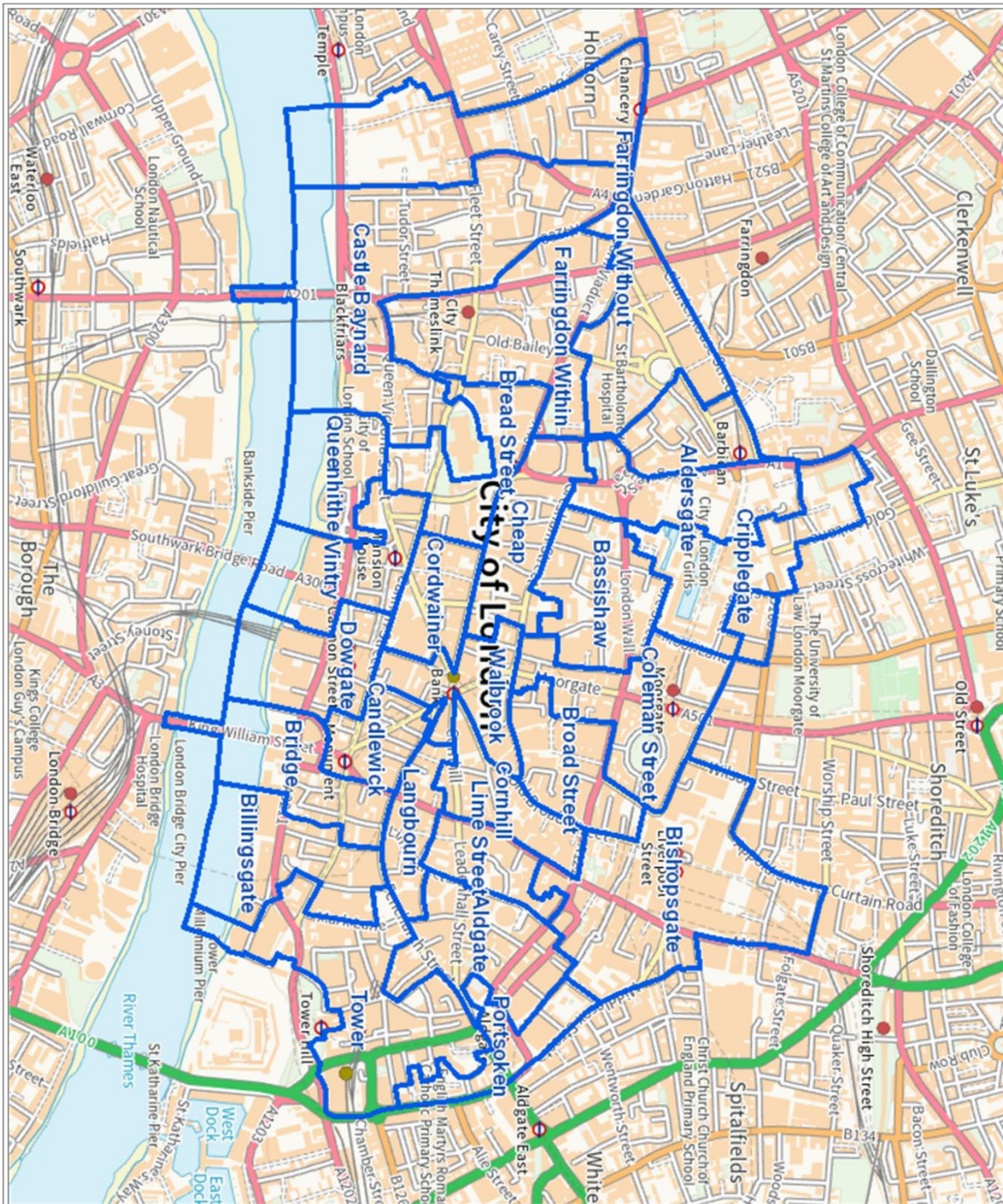
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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Ward Boundary Map 2002



Appendix 2 – Ward Boundary Map 2010



Appendix 3 – Electorates and Member Allocations

Table 1	2003 estimated electorate	2003 member allocation	2010 projected electorate	2010 member allocation	2025 electorate	Electorate change 2010 and 2025
<u>Residential Wards</u>						
Aldersgate	1672	5	1513	6 (+1)	1588	+75
Cripplegate	2734	9	2863	8 (-1)	2159	-704
Portsoken	1024	4	874	3 (+1)	701	-173
Queenhithe	369	2	392	2 (0)	193	-199
<u>Totals</u>	<u>5,799</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>5,642</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>4,641</u>	<u>-1,001</u>
<u>Remaining Wards</u>						
Aldgate	1,604	5	991	5 (0)	825	-166
Bassishaw	1,089	3	404	2 (-1)	754	+350
Billingsgate	612	2	388	2 (0)	496	+108
Bishopsgate	2,767	8	1299	6 (-2)	1,511	+212
Bread Street	532	2	424	2 (0)	397	-27
Bridge	748	2	466	2 (0)	454	-12
Broad Street	913	3	638	3 (0)	394	-244
Candlewick	504	2	301	2 (0)	312	+11
Castle Baynard	2,406	7	1805	8 (+1)	1,748	-57
Cheap	746	2	535	3 (+1)	496	-39
Coleman Street	1,742	5	1178	4 (-1)	644	-534
Cordwainer	831	3	514	3 (0)	250	-264
Cornhill	747	2	519	3 (+1)	311	-208
Dowgate	534	2	446	2 (0)	614	-168
Farringdon Within	3,005	8	1,608	8 (0)	1,304	-304
Farringdon Without	6,228	10	4,241	10 (0)	3,665	-576
Langbourn	639	2	632	3 (+1)	472	-160
Lime Street	1,096	3	774	4 (+1)	508	-266
Tower	1,678	5	949	4 (-1)	839	-110
Vintry	442	2	265	2 (0)	306	-41
Walbrook	596	2	364	2 (0)	460	-96
<u>Totals</u>	<u>29,461</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>18,741</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>16,370</u>	<u>-2,371</u>
<u>Grand Totals</u>	<u>35,260</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>24,383</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>21,011</u>	<u>-3,372</u>

Appendix 4 – Total Ward List Electorates 2010-2026

<u>Ward List Year</u>	<u>Total Electorate</u>
2010-2011	21,145
2011-2012	21,510
2012-2013	22,286
2013-2014	22,213
2014-2015	22,295
2015-2016	21,004
2016-2017	19,172
2017-2018	18,983
2018-2019	18,631
2019-2020	18,829
2020-2021	19,200
2021-2022	13,748
2022-2023	19,595
2023-2024	20,223
2024-2025	19,725
2025-2026	21,011

Appendix 5 – Office stock 2013-2025

Ward	Office Stock 2013 (gross sqm GIA)	Office Stock 2025 (gross sqm GIA)	Change in Stock	Percentage Change	Additional details
Queenhithe	55,417	24,188	-31,229	-56%	Removal of Millenium Bridge House, 62 Upper Thames, Queensbridge House, 10-12 Little Trinity Lane
Cheap	395,832	326,357	-69,475	-18%	81 Newgate in 2022
Bread Street	261,717	227,482	-34,235	-13%	
Portsoken	85,195	74,672	-10,523	-12%	
Tower	440,810	393,371	-47,439	-11%	
Billingsgate	330,481	295,054	-35,427	-11%	
Castle Baynard	871,782	782,802	-88,980	-10%	
Candlewick	257,897	234,039	-23,858	-9%	
Broad Street	343,869	318,080	-25,789	-7%	
Walbrook	413,034	390,335	-22,699	-5%	
Vintry	227,794	215,361	-12,433	-5%	
Dowgate	281,068	275,403	-5,665	-2%	
Farringdon Without	428,702	422,206	-6,496	-2%	
Aldersgate	101,619	100,798	-821	-1%	
Cripplegate	15,671	15,620	-51	0%	
Cornhill	274,824	274,012	-812	0%	
Bassishaw	501,882	524,803	22,921	5%	
Coleman Street	596,286	650,928	54,642	9%	
Farringdon Within	716,595	807,118	90,523	13%	
Bishopsgate	894,758	1,012,539	117,781	13%	
Langbourn	216,880	246,736	29,856	14%	
Aldgate	601,480	741,401	139,921	23%	52 Lime Street in 2020, 40 Leadenhall in 2025
Bridge And Bridge Without	191,210	309,151	117,941	62%	20 Fenchurch in 2015, 33 King William in 2019
Cordwainer	133,224	233,226	100,002	75%	3 Queen Victoria Street in 2018, 25 Queen Victoria Street in 2018
Lime Street	212,438	436,815	224,377	106%	The Leadenhall Buildings in 2015, 22 Bishopsgate in 2021, 8 Bishopsgate in 2023

Appendix 6a – Examples of member allocation

Member allocation based on 200 approx. electors per member (or part thereof). Residential Member allocation remains unchanged.

TOTAL ELECTORATE 13/14		TOTAL ELECTORATE 25/26	ELECTORATE DIFFERENCE	PROPOSED MEMBER ALLOCATION	MEMBER CHANGE
Aldersgate	1,728	1558	-170	6	0
Cripplegate	2,298	2159	-139	8	0
Portsoken	865	701	-164	4	0
Queenhithe	367	193	-174	2	0
TOTAL	5,258	4611	-647	20	0
					MEMBER CHANGE
Aldgate	851	825	-26	5	0
Bassishaw	417	754	337	3	1
Billingsgate	336	496	160	2	0
Bishopsgate	1,173	1151	-22	5	-1
Bread Street	405	397	-8	2	0
Bridge	370	454	84	2	0
Broad Street	609	394	-215	2	-1
Candlewick	394	312	-82	2	0
Castle Baynard	1,742	1748	6	7	-1
Cheap	550	496	-54	2	-1
Coleman Street	794	644	-150	3	-1
Cordwainer	320	250	-70	2	-1
Cornhill	346	311	-35	2	-1
Dowgate	438	614	176	3	1
Farringdon W/in	1,447	1304	-143	6	-2
Farringdon W/out	4313	3665	-648	12	2
Langbourn	522	472	-50	2	-1
Lime Street	331	508	177	2	-2
Tower	932	839	-93	4	0
Vintry	275	306	31	2	0
Walbrook	390	460	70	2	0
TOTAL	16955	16400	-555	72	-8
22,213		21011	-1202	92	-8

Appendix 6b – Examples of member allocation

Member allocation based on 200 approx. electors per member (or part thereof). Residential Member allocation is amended.

TOTAL ELECTORATE 13/14		TOTAL ELECTORATE 25/26	ELECTORATE DIFFERENCE	PROPOSED MEMBER ALLOCATION	MEMBER CHANGE
Aldersgate	1,728	1558	-170	7	1
Cripplegate	2,298	2159	-139	10	2
Portsoken	865	701	-164	3	-1
Queenhithe	367	193	-174	2	0
TOTAL	5,258	4611	-647	22	2
			ELECTORATE DIFFERENCE	PROPOSED MEMBER ALLOCATION	MEMBER CHANGE
Aldgate	851	825	-26	5	0
Bassishaw	417	754	337	3	1
Billingsgate	336	496	160	2	0
Bishopsgate	1,173	1151	-22	5	-1
Bread Street	405	397	-8	2	0
Bridge	370	454	84	2	0
Broad Street	609	394	-215	2	-1
Candlewick	394	312	-82	2	0
Castle Baynard	1,742	1748	6	7	-1
Cheap	550	496	-54	2	-1
Coleman Street	794	644	-150	3	-1
Cordwainer	320	250	-70	2	-1
Cornhill	346	311	-35	2	-1
Dowgate	438	614	176	3	1
Farringdon W/in	1,447	1304	-143	6	-2
Farringdon W/out	4313	3665	-648	12	2
Langbourn	522	472	-50	2	-1
Lime Street	331	508	177	2	-2
Tower	932	839	-93	4	0

Vintry	275	306	31	2	0
Walbrook	390	460	70	2	0
TOTAL	16955	16400	-555	72	-8
22,213		21011	-1202	94	-6

Appendix 6c – Examples of member allocation

Member allocation based on retaining 100 Common Councillors. Residential member allocation remains unchanged.

TOTAL ELECTORATE 13/14		TOTAL ELECTORATE 25/26	ELECTORATE DIFFERENCE	PROPOSED MEMBER ALLOCATION	MEMBER CHANGE
Aldersgate	1,728	1558	-170	6	0
Cripplegate	2,298	2159	-139	8	0
Portsoken	865	701	-164	4	0
Queenhithe	367	193	-174	2	0
TOTAL	5,258	4611	-647	20	0
			ELECTORATE DIFFERENCE	PROPOSED MEMBER ALLOCATION	MEMBER CHANGE
Aldgate	851	825	-26	5	0
Bassishaw	417	754	337	3	1
Billingsgate	336	496	160	3	1
Bishopsgate	1,173	1151	-22	6	0
Bread Street	405	397	-8	2	0
Bridge	370	454	84	3	1
Broad Street	609	394	-215	3	0
Candlewick	394	312	-82	2	0
Castle Baynard	1,742	1748	6	9	1
Cheap	550	496	-54	2	-1
Coleman Street	794	644	-150	3	-1
Cordwainer	320	250	-70	2	-1
Cornhill	346	311	-35	2	-1
Dowgate	438	614	176	3	1
Farringdon W/in	1,447	1304	-143	8	0

Farringdon W/out	4313	3665	-648	10	0
Langbourn	522	472	-50	2	-1
Lime Street	331	508	177	4	0
Tower	932	839	-93	4	0
Vintry	275	306	31	2	0
Walbrook	390	460	70	2	0
TOTAL	16955	16400	-555	80	0
22,213		21011	-1202	100	0