

REPORT TO	DATE OF MEETING
COUNCIL	19 NOVEMBER 2014

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SUBJECT	PORTFOLIO	AUTHOR	ITEM
REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES	LEADER	JAMES WALLWORK	13

SUMMARY AND LINK TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This report refers to the review of polling districts and details the proposals for the polling places which will be used for all future elections from the Parliamentary, Borough and Parish/Town Council elections on 7 May 2014. A consultation exercise will be undertaken with the public, borough councillors, political parties and neighbouring councils affected by the proposals.

The report supports the democratic process which underpins the delivery of all corporate priorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the polling districts and polling places as indicated in the schedule attached to this report be confirmed.
2. That if any relevant comments are received as part of the consultation exercise which may require an amendment to the schedule, a report be presented to Council on 21 January 2015.
3. That the Chief Executive be authorised to determine any unforeseen changes to polling places which become necessary for future elections.

DETAILS AND REASONING

Every four years local authorities are required to undertake a review of all polling districts and polling places and the next review has to be completed by 31 January 2015. The review seeks to ensure that all electors have reasonable facilities for voting in elections and every polling place is accessible to electors who are disabled. Members of the public, borough councillors, political parties, parish/town councils and neighbouring councils affected by the proposals will be consulted regarding the proposals. If any comments are received from these consultees which suggests an amendment to the proposed polling districts or polling places, then a report would be presented to Council on 21 January 2015 detailing these comments.

The polling districts and polling places will come into effect for all future elections from the Parliamentary, Borough and Parish/Town Council elections on 7 May 2015.

When undertaking the review of polling districts and polling places, consideration had to be given to the existing European, Parliamentary, County and Parish/Town Council boundaries. In addition, all polling places must be designated so that they are within easy reach of all electors from across the polling district. The electorate figures used were the current electoral figures available.

All councillors were consulted regarding the proposed polling places within their current wards. If the new wards overlap any part of their existing ward they have also been consulted regarding these polling places.

Below is a list of the new wards and a brief explanation as to which polling places have been chosen.

Bamber Bridge East

Due to the ward boundary changes there are three existing polling places within the new ward of Bamber Bridge East and they are all good venues. Walton-le-Dale Young People's Centre is the most suitable venue for the residents of Brindle Road within a new polling district within the Coupe Green and Gregson Lane ward. This leaves Bamber Bridge Methodist Church and St Aidan's Church Hall as the two proposed polling places for Bamber Bridge East.

Bamber Bridge West

Bamber Bridge Methodist Church is currently used for the southern part of Bamber Bridge West. As this is an excellent venue, the existing ward councillor agrees that this polling place should not be changed. However, it is proposed that the polling place to the north of the ward be changed from St Mary's and St Benedict's Primary School to Bamber Bridge Catholic Club. The main reason for this change is that the parking at the club is a significant improvement from that available at the school as the school sometimes remains open on the day of the election. The other facilities available at Bamber Bridge Catholic Club are also excellent. The ward councillor agrees that this is a more suitable venue.

Broad Oak

The current polling place for this ward is Cop Lane Primary School, and the head teacher for the school has asked the council to look at the possibility of finding an alternative venue due to the disruption caused as the school does not usually close on election days. St Mary's Church Hall is an excellent venue to the north of the new ward and this is currently used for a polling district within the existing Whitefield ward. It is still proposed that this polling place will be used for a polling district within the new Howick and Priory ward. There are two halls available at the church hall and the larger of the two would be available to be used for the Broad Oak ward. Although the church hall is not as central to the ward, all facilities would be a significant improvement to those available at the school. Parking would be a particular improvement as the school will not allow the car park to be used during school hours. It is therefore thought that St Mary's Church Hall is the better option. However, for those residents to the south of the A582 (Golden Way) it is suggested that Woodcroft Close Community Centre would be a more accessible polling place than St Mary's Church Hall. This polling place is a good venue and although it is currently used for part of the Kingsfold ward, the number of electors, if used for both the new Broad Oak and Middleforth wards, would still be less than most single station polling places. Therefore, it is proposed that St Mary's Church Hall and Woodcroft Close Community Centre be used as the two polling places for the new Broad Oak ward. Both existing ward councillors agree with the polling places.

Broadfield

The new Broadfield ward covers the majority of the area of the existing Golden Hill ward and will be split in half by a County Council Division boundary creating two polling districts. One of the polling places for the existing Golden Hill Ward is Northbrook Primary School and with this being an excellent venue which is central to the polling district, no changes are proposed to this polling place. The polling district to the west of the new Broadfield ward does not currently have any existing polling places within its area. Several possibilities were investigated with local councillors agreeing that the most suitable option would be The Priory Club. This has very good facilities for both the staff and electors and all local councillors agree with the proposal.

Buckshaw and Worden

There are two distinct areas within this new ward and therefore two polling districts are proposed with the two polling places currently used still being the most suitable option for the residents. It is

therefore proposed to continue using Buckshaw Village Community Centre and Wellington Park as the two polling places.

Charnock

The two polling places currently used for this ward are the only options available. It is therefore proposed to continue using Penwortham Community Centre and Moor Hey School as the two polling places.

Coupe Green and Gregson Lane

Following the Boundary Review there are now three distinct areas within this ward which are Coupe Green, Gregson Lane and the Brindle Road area. The two polling places currently used for the Coupe Green and Gregson Lane areas are thought to be the most suitable options for the residents. However, the new area around Brindle Road is thought to be too far away from Gregson Lane Community Centre, as some residents would have to travel up to two miles. This decision is given even more weight as Walton-le-Dale Young People's Centre, which is an existing polling place, is only a short distance from these residents. As this polling place is no longer going to be used for the Bamber Bridge East ward it is thought to be perfect for these residents. It is therefore proposed that Coupe Green Primary School, Gregson Lane Community Centre and Walton-le-Dale Young People's Centre be the three polling places for this ward.

Earnshaw Bridge

There are two distinct areas within the new ward of Earnshaw Bridge. To the north is the area known as Earnshaw Bridge which has two current polling places within it. Golden Hill School and Leyland Baptist Church are both reasonably central to the area. However, as the access to Golden Hill School is predominantly from Earnshaw Drive, which would mean residents would have to travel outside the ward to access the venue and because of the disruption caused by having to close the school on election days it is proposed that Leyland Baptist Church be used as the polling place. All councillors consulted regarding this are in agreement.

Farington East

Three polling districts are required within Farington East due to the Parliamentary, County and Parish Boundaries. As one of the polling districts is in the South Ribble Parliamentary Constituency rather than Ribble Valley like the rest of the ward, it is proposed that this polling district should attend a polling place within the South Ribble constituency to remove any risk of cross voting. Prior to the boundary changes these electors attended St Ambrose Church Hall and it is therefore proposed that these electors continue to attend this polling place. It is therefore proposed that the electors within the two polling districts within Ribble Valley Parliamentary Constituency attend Farington Primary School as it is still the most suitable polling place available.

Farington West

St Pauls Church Hall is currently used for this ward and it is the most suitable option. It is therefore proposed to continue using this venue.

Hoole

This ward is split into two polling districts so that the boundaries are coterminous with Much Hoole and Little Hoole Parish Boundaries. It is proposed to continue using the existing polling places within this ward, as both Much Hoole Village Hall and Walmer Bridge Village Hall are the most suitable venues.

Howick and Priory

The three existing polling places for the Howick and Priory and Whitefield wards are still thought to be the most appropriate polling places. Therefore, Penwortham Community Primary School, Whitefield Community Primary School and St Mary's Church Hall are the proposed polling places for this ward.

Leyland Central

The current venue for Leyland Central is Leyland Methodist Church Hall. However, this polling place is no longer within the ward and is proposed to be used for the Chapel Brow area of the St Ambrose ward. Following the changes to the ward boundaries Greenwood Court Community Centre will now be within the new Leyland Central ward. This is a good venue and was originally provided to make the polling place more accessible to those residents of Greenwood Court. It is therefore suggested that this venue should continue to be used for the northern part of the ward. Many options were considered for the remainder of the ward with the most suitable option being Leyland Pentecostal Church which has excellent facilities. This was agreed by all local councillors but a concern was raised regarding the distance electors would have to travel from the eastern side of the ward. It is therefore suggested that the ward be split into three polling districts with Greenwood Court in the north, Leyland Pentecostal Church to the west and Prospect House in the east. Prospect House is well located in the eastern polling district, and has very good facilities. The three polling places have been agreed by all local councillors.

Longton and Hutton West

The three existing polling places of Longton Methodist Church, St Andrew's Church Hall and Hutton Village Hall are all good polling places and therefore it is proposed to continue using them as the polling places for Longton and Hutton West.

Lostock Hall

Our Lady & St Gerard's Parochial Centre, St James' Church Hall and Lostock Court Community Centre are all good polling places and therefore it is proposed to continue using them as the polling places for the new Lostock Hall ward.

Middleforth

St Mary Magdalen's Church Hall, St Leonard's Church Hall, Woodcroft Close Community Centre and Penwortham Community Centre are all existing polling places within the current Kingsfold and Middleforth wards. All four are now within the new Middleforth Ward and are all good polling places and it is therefore proposed to continue using them. The polling districts have been revised to try and reflect communities, which properties are closest to which polling place and to ensure each polling place is only has a single polling station within it.

Moss Side

Moss Side Community Centre is a good polling place and therefore it is not proposed to change this venue. Consideration may need to be given in the future to whether a further polling place is required for this ward as and when building commences on the Moss Side Test Track site. In preparation for this a second polling district is proposed which will include the new development and the Midge Hall part of this ward. However, as the electorate for this area is quite small at present, it doesn't warrant an additional polling place at this stage, so these electors will continue attending Moss Side Community Centre.

New Longton and Hutton East

Both Hutton Village Hall and New Longton Village Hall are very good polling places and therefore it is proposed to continue using them. A polling district needs to be created for the new part of the ward gained from Farington West which is still within Farington Parish Council. However, as there are no venues available in this area and the electorate is quite small it is proposed to send them to New Longton Village Hall along with the rest of the residents of New Longton and Whitestake.

Samlesbury and Walton

The boundary for this ward has not changed and as Higher Walton Community Centre and Samlesbury War Memorial Hall are good polling places it is proposed to retain these venues. St Patrick's RC Primary School is currently the third polling place for this ward. However, because of the disruption caused to the school on election days, particularly when the school remains open causing the parking to be limited, the possibility of an alternative venue was investigated. It was suggested that the newly built Walton-le-Dale Community Centre, which is fairly close to the school, would be an ideal polling place. The facilities and parking at this venue are excellent and

would be an improvement to St Patrick's RC Primary School. Both ward councillors have been consulted regarding the proposals for the ward and agree with the use of Higher Walton Community Centre and Samesbury War Memorial Hall. However, only one of the ward councillors agrees with Walton-le-Dale Community Centre as the other preferred the school due to its close proximity to bus stops. It is accepted that the bus stops are closer to the school but as the furthest bus stop from the community centre is only 320 metres away this is not thought to be excessive. Therefore, as it would remove the disruption to the school and provide better facilities for both the staff and electors it is proposed that Walton-le-Dale Community Centre be the polling place for this polling district.

St Ambrose

St Ambrose Church Hall and Wrights Fold Community Centre are currently the two polling places for this ward. Both these venues are good polling places and therefore it is proposed not to change them. As the boundaries for this ward have changed and the electorate has increased a further polling place is required for the residents to the west of the North West Coast Mainline. Leyland Methodist Church is currently used for this part of the existing Leyland Central Ward. As, it is now within St Ambrose and it is the only suitable option in the area, it is proposed that this be the third polling place for this ward. All local councillors agree with this proposal.

Seven Stars

Lowerhouse Community Centre and Wade Hall Family Centre are both good polling places and are currently used for the existing Lowerhouse ward. It is therefore proposed to continue using these venues.

Walton-le-Dale East

There is only Walton-le-Dale Primary School which is currently used as a polling place within this new ward. It is suggested that this continue to be used for the Duddle Lane estate. However, this is too far away from the remainder of the ward and therefore a second polling place is required. Various options have been considered and the only suitable venue available is Bamber Bridge Pentecostal Church. The local councillors have been consulted and agree with both polling places.

Walton-le-Dale West

The Welcome Tavern is a fairly new polling place and was much needed for the residents of Walton Park. The feedback the council has received since the venue started being used as a polling place has been extremely positive. It is therefore proposed that we continue using this venue for the west side of the ward. Following the boundary changes, The Cawsey and Bellis Way areas are now part of this ward. However, they are split from the rest of the ward by the existing county boundary and therefore need to be in a separate polling district. Once the new cross borough link has been completed the residents of the The Cawsey area will not have far to travel to The Welcome Tavern. It is hoped that the link road will be completed before the 2016 elections, but until then these residents would have to travel just over two miles to their polling place. This is only a small area both geographically and electorally with only 140 voters, of which 34 are existing postal voters. With a 75% turn out for the forthcoming elections this would mean that it would only impact on approximately 80 electors. The only other alternative for these residents is to locate a port-a-cabin near The Cawsey. Because the facilities for both the electors and staff would not be as good as The Welcome Tavern, the cost of providing a port-a-cabin would be quite high and because it would only affect approximately 80 electors, it is therefore proposed to send these residents to The Welcome Tavern. These electors will be contacted and be offered the opportunity to apply for a postal vote for this election. In respect of the Bellis Way area this is quite close to The Welcome Tavern and it is therefore proposed that this be their polling place. For the final polling district to the east of the ward, it is proposed to continue using the current venue of St Leonard's CE School.

As part of the review the following four new polling places are proposed.

Leyland Pentecostal Church, Broad Street, Leyland
 Prospect House, Sandy Lane, Leyland
 The Priory Club, Broadfield Walk, Leyland
 Bamber Bridge Catholic Club, Aspden Street, Bamber Bridge

The following five polling places would no longer be required.

Golden Hill School, Earnshaw Drive, Leyland
 Leyland Moss Side Primary School, Paradise Lane, Leyland
 St Mary's & St Benedict's Catholic Primary School, Browndedge Lane, Bamber Bridge
 Cop Lane CE Primary School, Cop Lane, Penwortham
 St Patrick's RC Primary School, Higher Walton Road, Walton-le-Dale

It is requested that the Chief Executive be authorised to determine any further unforeseen changes to polling places which become necessary for future elections.

WIDER IMPLICATIONS

In the preparation of this report, consideration has been given to the impact of its proposals in all the areas listed below, and the table shows any implications in respect of each of these. The risk assessment which has been carried out forms part of the background papers to the report.

FINANCIAL	None.
LEGAL	There is a statutory requirement contained in the Representation of the People Act 1983 to formally designate polling places.
RISK	The full risk assessment forms part of the background papers to this report. The main point for consideration is that the Council would be failing to meet its statutory obligations if appropriate polling places are not designated. This report addresses that risk.
OTHER (see below)	<u>Fair Access</u> The proposed polling places have been inspected to ensure that they provide fair access for all.

<i>Asset Management</i>	<i>Corporate Plans and Policies</i>	<i>Crime and Disorder</i>	<i>Efficiency Savings/Value for Money</i>
<i>Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion</i>	<i>Freedom of Information/ Data Protection</i>	<i>Health and Safety</i>	<i>Health Inequalities</i>
<i>Human Rights Act 1998</i>	<i>Implementing Electronic Government</i>	<i>Staffing, Training and Development</i>	<i>Sustainability</i>

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places