

| Report of  | Meeting | Date              |
|--|---------|-------------------|
| Chief Executive as Returning Officer<br>(Introduced by the Executive Leader) | Council | 27 September 2011 |

## REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND PLACES

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To report on the four yearly formal review of polling districts and places and to seek approval from Members for proposed changes to Polling Stations.

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

- That a decision is made on each of the proposals set out in paragraphs 8 to 13 regarding changes to polling stations

### ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- Options considered were to either remain with the original station location or adopt the recommended alternative. Where there have been additional alternatives these have been outlined with the proposals below.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

|   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| Strong Family Support   |   | Education and Jobs                                   |   |
| Being Healthy   |   | Pride in Quality Homes and Clean Neighbourhoods      |   |
| Safe Respectful Communities   | ✓ | Quality Community Services and Spaces                | ✓ |
| Vibrant Local Economy   |   | Thriving Town Centre, Local Attractions and Villages |   |
| A Council that is a consistently Top Performing Organisation and Delivers Excellent Value for Money |   |  | ✓ |

### BACKGROUND

- The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a number of amendments to the Representation of the Peoples Act 1983 including the formalising of the way in which reviews of polling districts, polling places and polling stations are undertaken. One aspect of this being that Local Authorities should undertake a review of all polling districts and polling places every four years starting in December 2007 and as such this is Chorley's 4 yearly review.

This review included consultation with interested parties such as Elected Members of the Council, the MPs representing Chorley, Parish Councils, County Councillors and the



County Council Returning Officer and the Chorley Equality Forum. In addition consultation documents were posted on the Council's website and available on deposit to provide for wider public comments and consultation.

6. In Chorley we review our polling stations every year following feedback from that year's elections and as such reviews by exception have taken place every year since 2007, this however is the four yearly formal review carried out in line with the Act.
7. For clarification,
  - a. A polling district is a geographical sub-division of an electoral area, i.e. a division of a Parliamentary Constituency, a division of a European Parliamentary Constituency or for local government elections a division of a borough ward or county district.
  - b. A polling place can be either an area or a building and some authorities designate entire polling districts as polling places so that it is easier for polling stations to be changed in the event of a building becoming unavailable. This is the situation in Chorley.
  - c. A polling station is the actual area where the process of voting takes place and unless it is unavoidable the polling station should be located within the polling place designated for the polling district in question. In some circumstances, where a suitable polling station cannot be found then it is permissible to locate the polling station in the next most suitable location, even if this is within a different polling district or even a different borough ward.

The proposals below represent the consultation responses received and in each case make suggestions towards a solution.

## **PROPOSALS**

### **8. EUXTON NORTH WARD**

A request was received from the Head Teacher of Primrose Hill Primary School (the current polling station) to consider an alternative location so as to avoid disruption to the school at future elections.

A number of alternatives were considered and the only suitable alternative is Euxton Community Centre on Wigan Road. This would be suitable for use and meets the necessary criteria but it would result in some existing votes having to travel further than at present. Members views are requested.

### **9. CLAYTON-LE-WOODS AND WHITTLE-LE-WOODS WARD**

The Returning Officer received word that the Community Centre on Manor Road was being closed by Lancashire County Council and that as such an alternative venue might be needed as a polling station.

We have spoken to the school next door to the centre and are informed that the school is actually taking over the centre as part of the school and that they are happy for us to carry on using the former centre buildings as a polling station. This will be confirmed in writing when we write to all stations in September/October reserving them for the May 2012 elections.

#### 10. LOSTOCK WARD

A request was received from Bretherton Endowed Primary School (a current station) to consider an alternative location so as to avoid disruption to the school at future elections.

As a part of our consultation a suggested alternative was the Congregational Church School rooms not far away from the existing location. We have visited this and we recommend it as a suitable alternative polling station.

#### 11. HEATH CHARNOCK AND RIVINGTON WARD

A suggestion was received from Rivington Parish Council that we consider closing the current polling station of Rivington Parish Church Hall and amalgamating it with a neighbouring station.

We have considered this and recommend that for the convenience of voters the station should remain in use. In 2007 we moved the station from the nearby school to the hall in order to avoid disruption to the school and feel that the hall is best suited to meet the needs of the local community as a polling station.

#### 12. HEATH CHARNOCK AND RIVINGTON WARD

As a part of the review and following comments from one disabled elector at the 2011 elections we decided to investigate possible alternatives to the use of a Mobile Station on the White Horse Public House car park.

Consideration was given to the use of the actual Pub itself as a poll station but due to the layout of the building this would have meant the closure of the pub itself on polling day which after discussions with the landlord was deemed to be impractical.

As there are no other alternatives in the area the recommendation is that we remain with a mobile station on the car park but that the provision of a more suitable mobile building will be investigated.

#### 13. ADLINGTON AND ANDERTON WARD

A request has been received previously from Anderton Parish Council regarding the provision of a polling station for the residents of Owsten Court which is a part of recent development on the eastern edge of the Borough situated off Crown Lane in Horwich and only accessible by road from Horwich. The bulk of the properties on this development are situated in Horwich and therefore within the Metropolitan Borough of Bolton, however the geography of the area is such that to the western edge of the site is the Bolton/Chorley boundary with Owsten Court whose properties lie within Chorley.

This development which is now complete includes 50 residential properties with 90 electors. The properties are included in Polling District 01E for voting and are allocated a polling station within Anderton Primary School situated on Babylon Lane Anderton. This is approximately 3 miles away by road. Of the 90 electors there are currently 36 who have a postal vote. The numbers of postal voters increased following a letter sent to all residents in January 2011 explaining that there isn't a more suitable alternative location, and inviting any electors to take up the offer of a postal vote.

This situation remains unchanged and as such we have no alternative to the present arrangements.

## IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

14. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

|                 |  |  |   |
|-----------------|--|--|---|
| Finance         |  | Customer Services                        |   |
| Human Resources |  | Equality and Diversity                   | ✓ |
| Legal           |  | No significant implications in this area |   |

## COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION / HEAD OF GOVERNANCE

15. It is the reasonable practice of this Authority to review the provision of Polling Stations after each election. In addition, this year also requires a formal review in accordance with the Electoral Administration Act 2006. The recommendations within this report are made after the consideration of proper assessment criteria. An Integrated Impact Assessment of polling stations has been undertaken.

**GARY HALL**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE/RETURNING OFFICER**

There are no background papers to this report.

| Report Author | Ext  | Date              | Doc ID |
|---------------|------|-------------------|--------|
| Phil Davies   | 5131 | 12 September 2011 | ***    |

| Background Papers   |                  |      |                     |
|---|------------------|------|---------------------|
| Document  | Date             | File | Place of Inspection |
| Consultation document and responses for Polling Places Review | 7 September 2011 | ***  | Elections Office.   |

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