

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Governance) (Introduced by Executive Member (Resources))	Council	Tuesday, 27 September 2022

Polling Station Review 2022

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	Not applicable
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Purpose of the Report

- To inform members on the outcome of the recent Polling Station Review 2022 survey for information.

Recommendations to Council

- That there will be no change to polling station locations, except for St Chad's parish hall which will be used instead of a portacabin, which returns to the original approved recommendation at the council meeting held on 16 November 2021.

Reasons for recommendations

- Repairs have been made to the parish hall, which is now fit for purpose.

Other options considered and rejected

- To continue the use a portacabin as a polling station located on St Chad's parish hall car park at future elections. It was considered the use of the parish hall would be preferable due to accessibility and cost.

Corporate priorities

- The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	A strong local economy
Clean, safe and healthy communities	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area

Background to the report

6. Each year it is customary for the Returning Officer to review the success of the polling stations used at that year's election.
7. To gain a greater understanding on the suitability of polling stations used, members of the council were invited to complete a short survey between 1 July and 29 July 2022. The survey consisted of questions about the suitability of premises for the use as a polling station and the ability of the polling station staff employed. In total eleven members responded to the survey.

Result of polling station survey

8. A summary of responses are detailed in the table below -

Polling Station	Comments	Response
Temporary Mobile, St Chad's parish Hall (Chorley North East Ward)	<p>The use of a temporary mobile polling station instead of the parish hall was not considered appropriate.</p> <p>Although the parish hall is preferable to the use of a portacabin on this site, there is a steep slope to the entrance which could have implications for those voters with mobility issues.</p>	<p>At the council meeting on 16 November 2021, members approved the recommendation to use the parish hall as a polling station. However, shortly after the meeting, it was brought to the RO's attention that due to the parish hall not being used during the covid-19 pandemic, internal problem with the building were undetected. As a result, there was a delay in the treatment works which caused extensive damage, leaving the building unsafe to use. As a temporary measure, it was decided that a portacabin should be situated on the parish hall car park.</p> <p>At the time of writing this report it is understood that the parish hall is once again available for hire. As such the polling station will be located in the building for future elections.</p> <p>Next to the parish hall there is a flat piece of land that is large enough to have cars parked on, as well as space for vehicles to turnround. Restrictions to cars parking in this area will be limited to those with mobility/disability issues. While able bodied voters will be encouraged to park on the main car park.</p> <p>There is also a ramp leading into the parish hall to allow easy access.</p>

	<p>It was also reported that the parish priest at St Chad's parish hall was unaware that the car park was being used to site a portacabin to be used as a polling station at the election on 5 May 2022.</p>	<p>During the covid-19 pandemic, Liverpool Dioceses completed a review of their buildings. Councils were informed that during this time, booking of their premises needed to be made with the head-office instead of locally.</p> <p>The RO's staff did try to contact the parish priest out of courtesy to inform him about the arrangements without success. Since the election on 5 May contact has been made with the parish priest and a dialogue has already commenced for the hire of the parish hall for future elections.</p>
<p>St George's CE Primary School (Chorley South East & Heath Charnock Ward)</p>	<p>The signage for this polling station was considered lacking at its entrance.</p> <p>It was suggested that additional, larger, more weather-proof signage should be displayed on Carr Lane.</p>	<p>The RO has updated his records to include additional, appropriate polling station signage to be displayed on Carr Lane for future elections.</p>
<p>St George's Church (Chorley North West)</p>	<p>Move voters from this venue to St Mary's Social Club.</p>	<p>Following the 2019 local government boundary review, voters who attended the polling stations of Chorley Methodist church, St George's church and St Mary's social club fell within the same borough ward and county divisional boundaries. As such the requirement to have three polling stations to serve this area was no longer required. Particularly as the number of electors attending St Mary's social club and St George's church was small due to the high number of voters opting to vote by post.</p> <p>At the council meeting on 16 November 2021, members approved recommendations that voters allocated to St Mary's social club would instead attend Chorley Methodist church, which remove the requirement to use St Mary's social club. There were no changes to voter arrangements at St George's church.</p> <p>As St George's church has been</p>

		successfully used as a polling station for some time without any concerns being raised, the RO felt that there were insufficient reasons put forward to move voters from St George's church to St Mary's social club at this time.
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9. Other polling stations highlighted in the survey all received positive feedback to their suitability for polling station use. These included Whittle-le-Woods village hall (Buckshaw and Whittle ward); Astley Village community centre, St Joseph's parish centre and St Peter's CE primary school (Chorley North and Astley ward); Clayton Brook village hall (Clayton East, Brindle and Hoghton ward); The Fields community centre (Eccleston, Heskin and Charnock Richard ward); Buttermere community centre (Chorley South West ward) and Duke Street primary school (Chorley South East and Heath Charnock ward).

Climate change and air quality

10. The work noted in this report has an overall positive impact on the Councils Carbon emissions and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Council.

Equality and diversity

11. There are no implications in this report to the polling stations, except for St Chad's parish hall. Following a site visit to St Chad's parish hall, the RO is confident that the venue is sufficiently accessible to those voters with limited mobility and disabilities.

Risk

12. Changes to polling station arrangements are kept to a minimum to avoid voter confusion, which may cause reputational damage to the council. To assist voters the name and address of the polling station they should report to is included on their poll card. Polling station information, including maps can also be found on the council's website.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

13. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

14. There are no comments.

Background documents

Polling Station Review [Polling Station Review Report Template Aug 2021.pdf](#)

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