

POLLING DISTRICT REVIEW – 2021

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 While the Council is required to carry out a statutory and formal polling district review every four to five years, the Council also carries out an informal review every year based on comments received from electors, members, and other stakeholders during the May elections.

1.2 The comments below have been agreed by Corporate Resources PDG held on 2nd November 2021 with a view to any changes being in place for publication of the new Electoral register on 1st December 2021 and being implemented in the May elections for 2022.

2. HULTON WARD (ST BEDE'S SCHOOL – district 2HA1)

2.1 The school has suggested St Bede's Church as an alternative to using the school.

2.2 The Church is only a few hundred yards from the school and is a suitable alternative which would be well known to residents.

2.3 The church will charge in the region of £150 for the hire.

- Recommended that the polling station is changed from St Bede's School to St Bede's Church

3. FARNWORTH WARD (DOE HEY PAVILION – district 2JA1)

3.1 A candidate for the ward in last May's election and neighbouring ward members have commented that they received complaints from electors in the area of Farnworth Ward to the north of the railway line (Rowena Street, Ivanhoe Street, Starcliffe Street area) about the distance they had to travel to get to the polling station at Doe Hey Park Pavilion on Cawdor Avenue.

3.2 The number of electors affected by this is approximately 500 electors.

3.3 One suggestion from the candidate and members was to re-draw polling district boundaries so these electors voted at Birchfield's (old Masonic Hall) on Francis Street. This would move the electors into district 2JB1 and would mean other electors in this area would also vote here rather than at Farnworth Baptist Church on Trafford Street. This solution would mean that the number of polling stations in the ward remains the same.

3.4 However, further investigations have revealed that Birchfield's is currently being sold and there is no guarantee that the new owner would be agreeable to the building being used as a polling station. The sale is likely to only be completed after

publication of the new register on 1st of December when, ideally, new polling district boundaries should be in place.

3.5 Another solution that has been suggested is to create a new polling district for properties north of the railway line and use All Saints Primary School as a polling station.

3.6 This will require the school to close but offers an ideal location for the electors in this area.

- Recommended that a new polling district is created, and All Saints School is used.

4. KEARSLEY WARD (ST SAVIOUR'S SCHOOL – district 2LD1)

4.1 Prior to the elections in May this year, several parents with children at St Saviours School suggested the use of Emmanuel Mission as a polling station so as to avoid the school closing.

4.2 The mission building is next door to the school and is a suitable location.

4.3 The mission will charge a hire charge in the region of £150.

- Recommended that the polling station is changed from St Saviours School to Emmanuel Mission.

5. HEATON & LOSTOCK WARD (LOSTOCK PRIMARY SCHOOL – district 3OB1)

5.1 Lostock Primary School has requested that an alternative location is used as a polling station so as to avoid school closure and disruption.

5.2 Lostock Parish Centre has been suggested but this is currently already used by two other polling districts, 3OE1 and 3RF1. Moreover, the building is beyond the boundary of district 3OB1 which will mean electors have further to travel.

5.3 Ward members have suggested two alternatives within the polling district - Lostock Tennis Club and Regent Park Golf Club. Both locations are within the polling district.

5.4 The tennis club wishes to remain open and this would create disruption to the polling station if the ground floor room was used. There are upstairs rooms at the tennis club but these are only accessible by a flight of stairs, creating significant issues for disabled access.

5.5 Regent Park Golf Club has an additional club house that is suitable for use as a polling station. It has good access, and the polling station staff will have sole use of it during the day.

5.6 The golf club has agreed not to charge for use of the building.

- Recommended the polling station is changed to Regent Park Golf Club

6. WESTHOUGHTON NORTH & CHEW MOOR WARD (THE GATES SCHOOL 3RH1 & 3RI1)

6.1 The Gates School has requested that an alternative location is used as a polling station so as to avoid school closure or disruption.

6.2 The only suitable location in the area is St John's Wingates Church on Chorley Road.

6.3 St John's Church does not have a car park which could be a minor issue. However, the building is suitable.

6.4 The church will charge a hire charge in the region of £150.

- Recommended that the polling station is changed from The Gates School to St John's Wingates Church

7. EQUALITY OF POLLING STATIONS

7.1 A ward member has commented on the unequal number of polling stations in wards and requested that this is looked at with a view to attempting to give each ward a set number of polling stations.

- Recommended that this is considered in 2022 in readiness for new ward boundaries in 2023