

General Purposes Committee		Agenda Item:
Meeting Date	30 October 2019	
Report Title	Review of Polling Districts and Places – Teynham and Lynsted ward	
Portfolio Holder	Leader	
SMT Lead	David Clifford	
Head of Service	David Clifford	
Lead Officer	Katherine Bescoby	
Key Decision	No	
Classification	Open	
Forward Plan	N/A	
Recommendations	1. That the proposed addition of a polling district and place in the Teynham and Lynsted ward be approved.	

1. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council is asked consider a proposal to create a new polling district and place in the Teynham and Lynsted Ward, for the convenience of voters who live in the Great Easthall estate. This will enable the Returning Officer to select a polling station for electors that is near to their home for certain elections.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a requirement for Councils to undertake a review of polling districts and places in 2007, and every four years thereafter.
- 2.2 In practice, however, we monitor this more regularly and have, when necessary, made arrangements for alternative polling places/ stations with the agreement of the Council/(Acting) Returning Officer.
- 2.3 The last full review was carried out in 2017, prior to the all-out Borough and Parish elections held in May 2019.
- 2.4 It may be useful to clarify that the Council is responsible for setting the polling district (a geographical area of a ward) and polling places (a geographical area within a polling district that the polling station must be located within). The Returning Officer is responsible for locating the polling station, which must be within the polling place.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 It is proposed that a new polling district is created for voters who live in the part of the Great Easthall estate that falls within the Teynham and Lynsted ward. The polling place for this polling district would include the polling place

for the MUC polling district (which is Lakeview Village Hall) and TLT (Tonge Parish).

- 3.2 The reason for this proposal is that the Great Easthall estate falls partly within Murston (which is an unparished area) and partly within the Teynham and Lynsted ward (which falls within the boundary of Tonge Parish Council). This means that electors who live in the Murston ward vote at Lakeview Village Hall, whilst others will vote at Bapchild Village Hall. The proposal would mean that voters who are currently asked to travel to Bapchild Village Hall will be able to vote at their nearest polling station for elections such as Police and Crime Commissioner and Parliamentary elections (i.e. where the ballot paper is the same). For local elections, the voting arrangements are more complex due to ward and parish boundaries but it would be possible to continue with this arrangement by having a joint station at Lakeview, if considered appropriate.
- 3.3 In the longer term, the Council could decide to undertake a Community Governance Review with a view to realigning the parish boundary for Tonge Parish Council. Following such a review, if the Council agreed to amend the parish boundary, then the Local Government Boundary Commission could be asked to undertake alter the ward boundary for Teynham and Lynsted/Murston so that the parish and ward boundary is coterminous.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The polling districts could be kept as they are, however, for the convenience of voters, it is recommended that a new polling district is created.

5. Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.3 Ward Members have been consulted and are supportive of the proposal. Tonge Parish Council are also aware of this anomaly.

6. Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Running elections effectively meets the Council's priority of being "a Council to be proud of".
Financial, Resource and Property	We are seeking to retain the current number of polling stations (which must be located within the polling place) and remain within existing budgets.
Legal and Statutory	The Council is required to undertake a full review in accordance with the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (which was undertaken in 2017). However, the Electoral Services Team keeps all polling stations under regular review.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this time.
Sustainability	None identified at this stage.
Health &	None identified at this stage.

Wellbeing	
Risk Management and Health and Safety	<p>The purpose of the review is to ensure that all voters have reasonable facilities for voting. It is important that venues meet health and safety requirements so as not to put voters at risk.</p> <p>Each polling station is visited by a Polling Station Inspector on election day, and all polling station staff are encouraged to give feedback on venues following elections.</p>
Equality and Diversity	<p>The purpose of the review is to ensure that all electors in the Borough have reasonable facilities for voting, and that, in so far as is reasonable and practicable, facilities for voting are accessible for disabled people.</p>

7. Appendices

7.1 None.

8. Background Papers

8.1 None.