

Council Meeting	
Meeting Date	21 February 2024
Report Title	Review of Polling Place – Teynham and Lynsted Ward (TLY polling district) Lynsted and Norton School
EMT Lead	Larissa Reed, Chief Executive and Returning Officer
Head of Service	
Lead Officer	Jo Millard, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. The proposed change to the polling place in the Teynham and Lynsted polling place be approved

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 Council is asked to consider proposals to change arrangements for voting in the Teynham and Lynsted (TLY) polling district at the request of Lynsted and Norton primary school, and after logistical and financial reasons in stationing a mobile unit at the school.

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. In practice, however, this is monitored more regularly and where necessary, arrangements have been made for alternative polling places/stations, with the agreement of the Council and the Returning Officer. A full review will be carried out this year but a review of the polling place in Teynham and Lynsted has been carried out now in order that this polling place may be considered for the Kent Police and Crime Commissioners election in May 2024.
- 2.2 To clarify, 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 Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed that Lynsted and Norton primary school is no longer used as a polling station, and that a room at Black Lion Public House, The Street, is used instead.

- 3.2 Whilst Lynsted and Norton Primary School has been used for many years, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the school to accommodate us, and in more recent years as a room has not been available, it has been necessary to hire a portacabin to use instead at considerable cost. The cost of hiring a portacabin and transporter to deliver and station at the school, as well as sundries such as chemical toilet facility, disabled ramp, generator and diesel totalled in excess of £4500 in 2023. Availability of portacabins is also more scarce as more authorities seek to find alternative venues other than schools.
- 3.3 As an alternative venue is available nearby and is suitable in terms of size, disabled access, car parking and costs, it is recommended that the polling place be extended to the Black Lion Public House so that the Returning Officer may use this venue at future elections whilst retaining the option to use Lynsted and Norton primary school.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 Council may make suggestions for alternative venues, however consideration does need to be given to practical aspects in terms of the venues available within the wards

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Ward Members have been asked for their views regarding the proposed changes. Cllrs Lloyd Bowen and Julien Speed have both given their full support.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Ensuring voters are able to vote at the most convenient and commodious venue within the polling place contributes to the objective to strengthen democracy within the emerging corporate plan.
Financial, Resource and Property	We are seeking to retain the current number of polling stations(which must be located within the polling place); the quote from the Black Lion Public House is significantly lower than the costs of hiring a portacabin and associated costs.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The Council is required to take a full review in accordance with the Electoral Administration Act 2006, but in practice keeps polling stations under regular review.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this time.

Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None identified at this time.
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this time.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this time.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	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 and election staff have assessed the venue. Polling Station staff are encouraged to give feedback on venues and each station is visited by a Polling Station Inspector on election day.
Equality and Diversity	One purpose of the review is to ensure that all electors in the Borough have reasonable facilities for voting, and that as far as is reasonable and practicable, facilities for voting are accessible for disabled people.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this time

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Map of Teynham and Lynsted polling places showing locations of Lynsted and Norton Primary School and Black Lion Public House.

8 Background Papers

None