



**POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING
PLACES REVIEW COMMITTEE:
11 October 2023**

Report of: Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing & Resources

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Y Gagen

**Contact for further information: Mr Tom Lynan (Extn.5013)
(E-mail: tom.lynan@westlancs.gov.uk)**

SUBJECT: INTERIM POLLING REVIEW 2023 – INITIAL PROPOSALS

Wards affected: ORMSKIRK WEST, RURAL WEST, SKELMERSDALE SOUTH

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To conduct an Interim Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places in line with the Representation of the People Act 1983, as amended (the 1983 Act).

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Timetable (Appendix 1) for the Interim Review of Polling Districts and Places, be agreed.

2.2 That the Initial Proposals (Appendix 2-4) be noted.

2.2 At the conclusion of the Review, the Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing & Resources report to the Polling Districts and Polling Places Review Committee with Final Interim Review Proposals for determination.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The 1983 Act (Section 18C (5) and Section 31) allows a local authority to conduct an Interim Review of any Polling District, Polling Place or Polling Station within its area, outside of the timescales for a compulsory review.

3.2 Following the all-out elections on the new ward boundaries in May 2023, areas in Ormskirk West, Rural West, and Skelmersdale South have been highlighted for review ahead of the May 2024 elections.

3.3 To aid understanding of the report and appendices the following definitions will assist:

- **Polling District:** a geographical area created by the sub-division of a constituency, ward, or division into smaller parts.

- **Polling Place:** the building or area, as designated by the Local Authority, in which the Returning Officer will select polling stations.
- **Polling Station:** Chosen by the Returning Officer for the election, a polling station is the room or building within the polling place where the poll takes place.

3.4 The responsibility for finalising the Polling Stations for each election rests with the Returning Officer for that election.

4.0 ORMSKIRK WEST

4.1 Polling District OWB within Ormskirk West Ward is currently served by one Polling Place at the Guide Hut on Green Lane, close to the western boundary of the Polling District. OWB currently has 2282 electors, of which 457 (20%) have a postal vote in place.

4.2 This Polling District currently covers the area of Ormskirk north-west of the train line, between the A570, Southport Road, County Road, and High Lane, up to the roundabout at the boundary with Burscough at Abbey Lane.

4.3 Recent years has seen a growth of development around the Highgrove Park estate, adding over 450 electors to date.

4.4 To accommodate this growth, it is proposed to split the OWA and OWB Polling Districts, creating a new OWD Polling District that will incorporate the Highgrove Park estate, the Pine estate, Old Boundary Way, Brooklands, Atkinson Road, the eastern side of Burscough Road, High Lane, and Merridale Farm. The remainder of the area would remain as OWA and OWB.

4.5 There is limited availability of suitable venues for a Polling Place in this area. Therefore, it is proposed to site a Mobile Unit on parkland adjacent to Pine Avenue. This land is currently owned by the Council and permission for such use has been granted by the Leisure department.

4.6 Details of this proposal are at Appendix 2.

5.0 RURAL WEST

5.1 Polling District RWK within Rural West Ward is currently served by one Polling Place at Scarisbrick Village Hall on Smithy Lane. RWK currently has 563 electors, of which 134 (25%) have a postal vote in place.

5.2 The Polling District is part of Scarisbrick Parish West Ward and contains the hamlets of Pinfold, Hurlston Green, Hurlston, and Heatons Bridge.

5.3 Following the May 2023 elections, the Chair of the Trust responsible for Scarisbrick Village Hall asked that it not be used for elections in future years. As the Hall is now owned and operated by a private charitable trust, it is not classed as a 'public building' that can be freely used as a Polling Place.

- 5.4 A number of possible locations have been considered, including the Mission Church, Hurlston Hall, and Pinfold School, but these are either not available or unsuitable.
- 5.5 The Pumpkin Patch Farm Shop on Heatons Bridge Road has been identified as a potentially suitable location for a Polling Place at future elections, and permission has been agreed with the owner should it be designated as a Polling Place.
- 5.6 Details of this proposal are at Appendix 3.

6.0 SKELMERSDALE SOUTH

- 6.1 Polling District SSB within Skelmersdale South Ward is currently served by one Polling Place at Little Digmaor Primary School on Abbeystead in the southern half of the Polling District. SSB currently has 1462 electors, of which 316 (22%) have a postal vote in place.
- 6.2 The Polling District covers western Digmaor, between Whiteledge Road, Tanhouse Road, Digmaor Road, and the M58.
- 6.3 Prior to 2021, this Polling District was split in 2 along Gillibrands Road, each with its own Polling Place. However, Daniels Lane Methodist Church, the Polling Place which served the northern part of the area, closed and was sold (it currently sits derelict).
- 6.4 For elections since 2021, the northern part has joined the southern part and used Little Digmaor Primary School as a Polling Place. At the Interim Polling Review 2022 it was decided to merge these two Polling Districts into one.
- 6.5 During the course of 2023, concerns have been highlighted by Ward Councillors and others as to the access on foot from the northern half of the area to the southern half where the Polling Place is. The two areas are joined by an underpass beneath Gillibrands Road. This underpass is poorly lit and prone to flooding. Gilibrands Road itself is a dual-carriage way with no dedicated pedestrian crossing, making it difficult to cross.
- 6.6 In order to provide more adequate polling provision for residents in this area, it is proposed to split the SSB Polling District into two along Gillibrands Road as it once was, reinstating a Polling District for the northern half of this area, to be known as SSG. The southern half will remain as SSB.
- 6.7 A number of possible locations have been considered, including the Kingdom Hall, and The Whiteledge Centre, but these are either not available or unsuitable.
- 6.8 The Army Cadet Hut on Daniels Lane has been identified as a potentially suitable location for a Polling Place at future elections, and permission has been agreed with the ACF should it be designated as a Polling Place. It should be noted that accessibility of this location is limited, but if designated as a Polling Place, suitable adjustments would be put in place to facilitate voting for residents with accessibility issues.

6.9 Details of this proposal are at Appendix 4.

7.0 TIMETABLE

7.1 An outline timetable for the work to be carried out in order to undertake the Review is attached as Appendix 1. This involves giving notice of the Review, seeking comments on the existing arrangements, preparing initial proposals, publishing the initial proposals and the Returning Officer's comments on polling stations, consulting on these, the Council determining final proposals, publishing these and altering the Register.

7.2 Following consultation, should changes be agreed, they would come into effect from 1 December 2023 when the Electoral Register is next published.

8.0 FUTURE TIMESCALES

8.1 Once the Committee has determined the final proposals, if agreed, the relevant documentation will be made available to the public in accordance with legislation.

8.2 West Lancashire will undergo a full Statutory Review of all Polling Districts and Places in 2024. Legislation requires that Polling Stations be kept under consideration and evaluation at all times. If changes are identified as being desirable outside of the period for a statutory review, then an interim review process should be initiated.

9.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder.

10.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Interim Review will be undertaken within existing budgets.

10.2 Proposals for Ormskirk West (Para.4 & Appendix 2) would increase the cost of election delivery. As a new Polling Place (not replacing an existing location), the cost of the mobile unit, staffing, and other associated costs would be approx. £3000 per election based on current costs.

10.3 Proposals for Rural West (Para.5 & Appendix 3) would be cost neutral as a new location would be replacing an existing one at similar cost.

10.4 Proposals for Skelmersdale South (Para. 6 & Appendix 4) would increase the cost of election delivery. As a new Polling Place (not replacing an existing location), the cost of the new location, staffing, and other associated costs would be approx. £1000 per election based on current costs.

11.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

11.1 The review process enables the Council to carry out the Interim Review, although no detailed prescribed process is identified in legislation. However, the process

undertaken is robust and provides for input from interested parties. A mechanism for an appeal exists through the Electoral Commission.

12.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders, therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report

Appendices

1. Timetable for Interim Polling Review 2023
2. Proposals for Ormskirk West Ward
3. Proposals for Rural West Ward
4. Proposals for Skelmersdale South Ward
5. Equality Impact Assessment

APPENDIX 1 – Timetable for Interim Polling Review 2023

Timetable for Interim Polling Review 2023

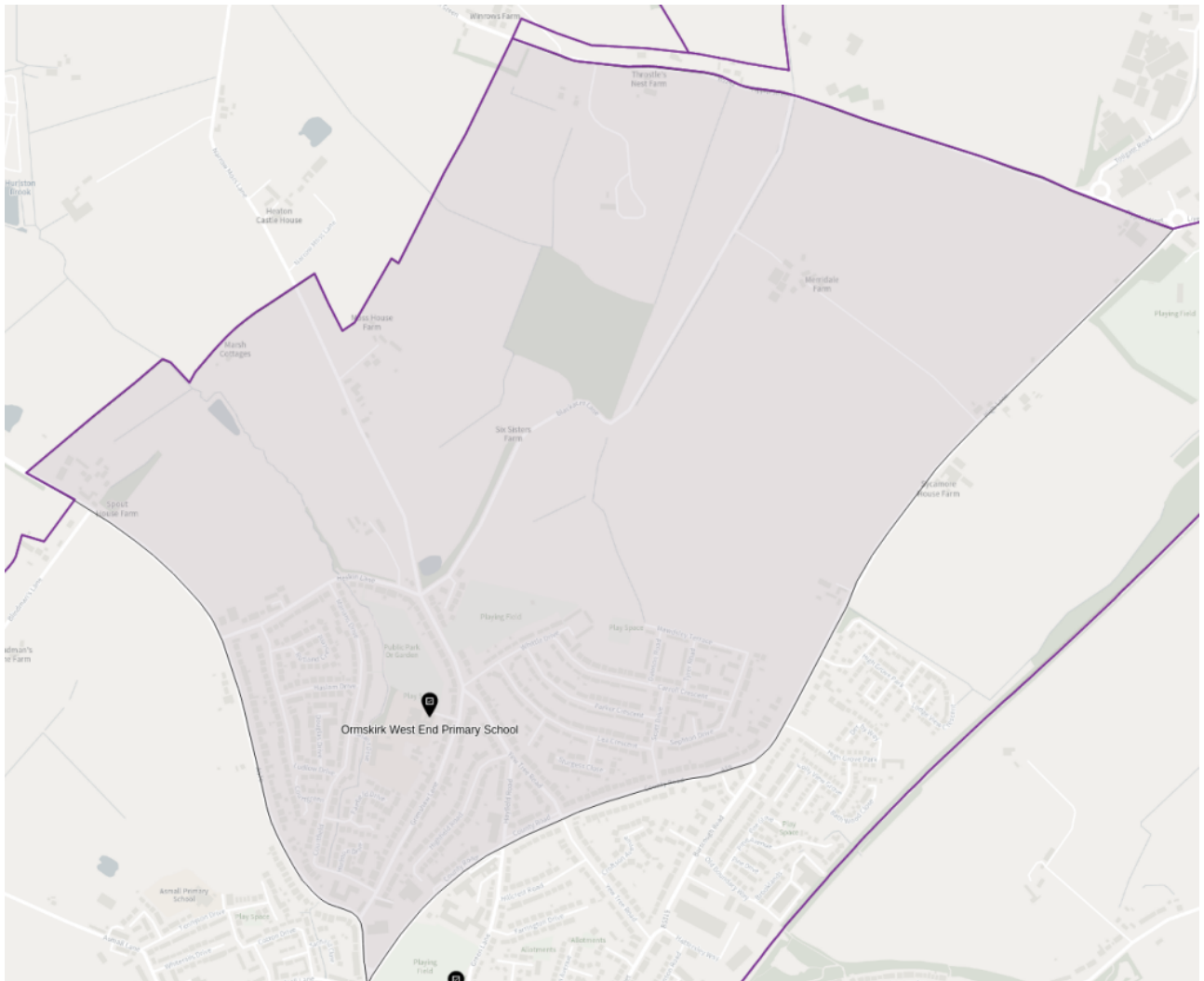
Date	Action	Description
Pre-October 2023	Preparatory work by the Elections Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigate the continued suitability of each polling place and seek out potential alternative locations.• Draft schedule of existing polling districts and polling places, also outlining potential alternative arrangements (the schedule).• Share the schedule with the (Acting) Returning Officer(s) and request their comments
12 October 2023 12 October – 26 October 2023 (Consultation)	Publish Notification of the Review and begin consultation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Publish Notice of the Review.• Publish the schedule and the comments of the (Acting) Returning Officer(s)• Send copy of proposals and copy of the notice to Political parties, Borough Councillors, County Councillors, MP's Parish Clerks, disability groups and any other interested parties/groups.• Invite comments on the existing polling districts/places and potential new arrangements.
26 October 2023	Closing date for submission of comments to the consultation	
27 October 2023 – 6 November 2023	Draft final proposals and report to Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare report to Committee re: final proposals for polling districts and places taking into account representations received.
14 November 2023	Committee Decision on Final Proposals	
15 November 2023	Publish the conclusion of the review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Publish the outcome of the review
1 December 2023	Republish the register with any changes as required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any changes implemented take effect from this date.

**West Lancashire Borough Council
Interim Polling Review 2023 – Comments & Initial Proposals – Ormskirk West**

Polling District	Electors	Location of Proposed Polling Place	ARO Comments & Initial Proposals
ORMSKIRK WEST			
OWA	2395	Ormskirk West End Primary School	Due to development and population growth in the area, existing OWA Polling District to be split into OWA and the new Polling District OWD. OWA Polling Place to be retained as Ormskirk West End Primary School.
OWB	1592	Guide Hut Green Lane	Due to development and population growth in the area, existing OWB Polling District to be split into OWB and the new Polling District OWD. OWB Polling Place to be retained as the Guide Hut, Green Lane.
OWD	735	Mobile Unit, Pine Avenue Park	Due to development and population growth in the area, existing OWB Polling District to be split into OWB and the new Polling District OWD. OWD Polling Place to be designated as a Mobile Unit on Pine Avenue Park.

APPENDIX 2 – Proposals for Ormskirk West

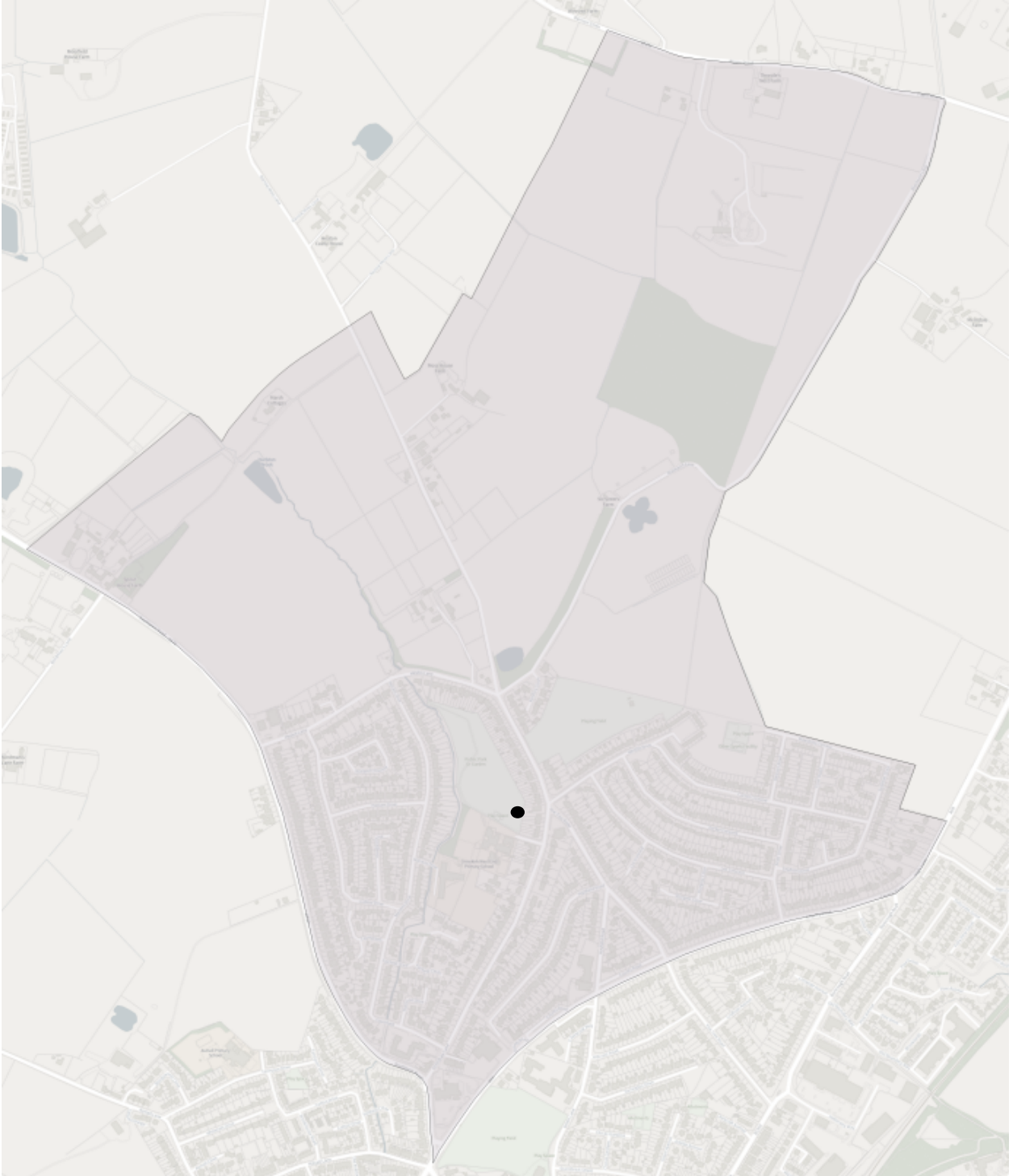
Map of Existing OWA Polling District



Map available at <https://www.westlancs.gov.uk/media/546829/owa.pdf>

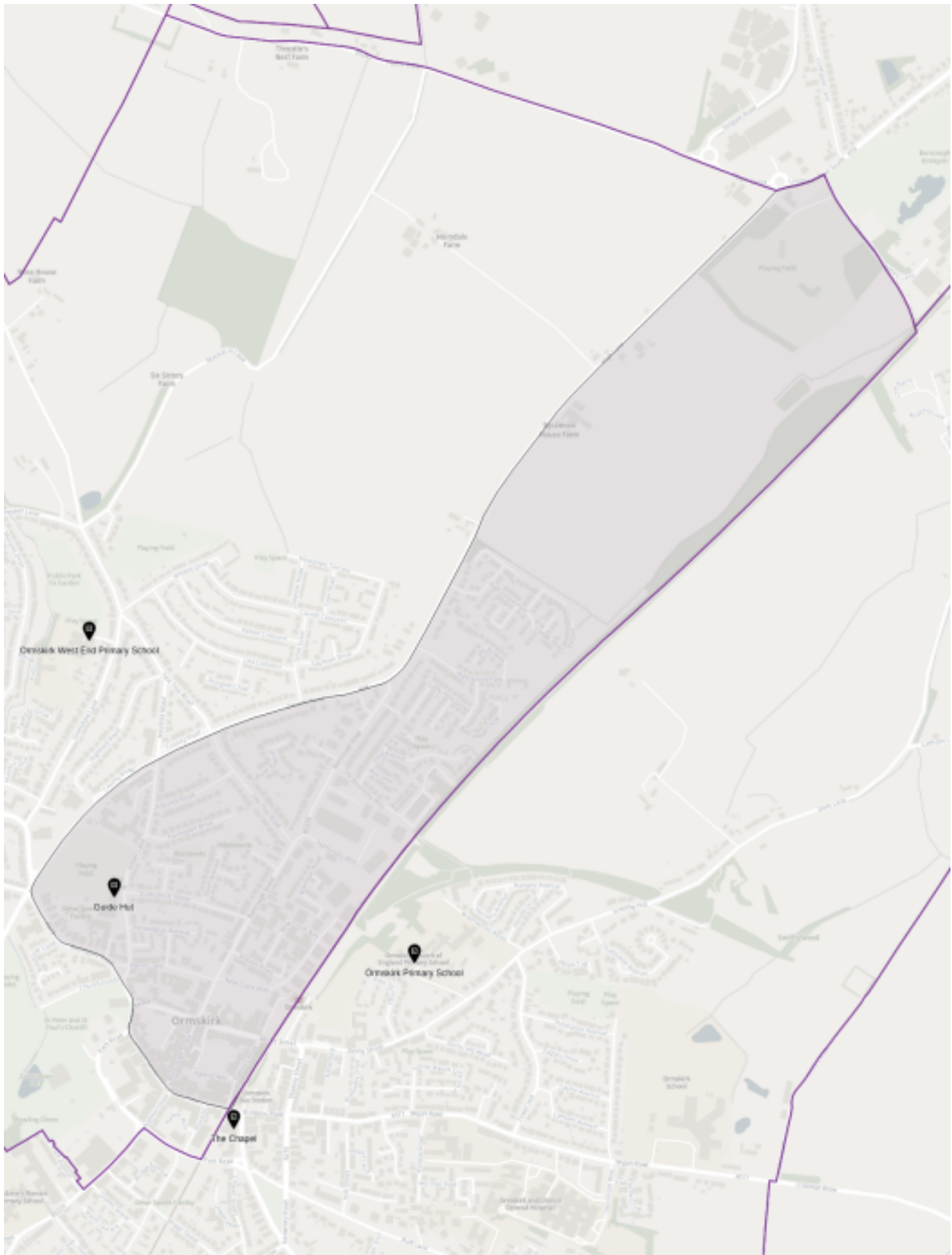
APPENDIX 2 – Proposals for Ormskirk West

Map of Proposed OWA Polling District



APPENDIX 2 – Proposals for Ormskirk West

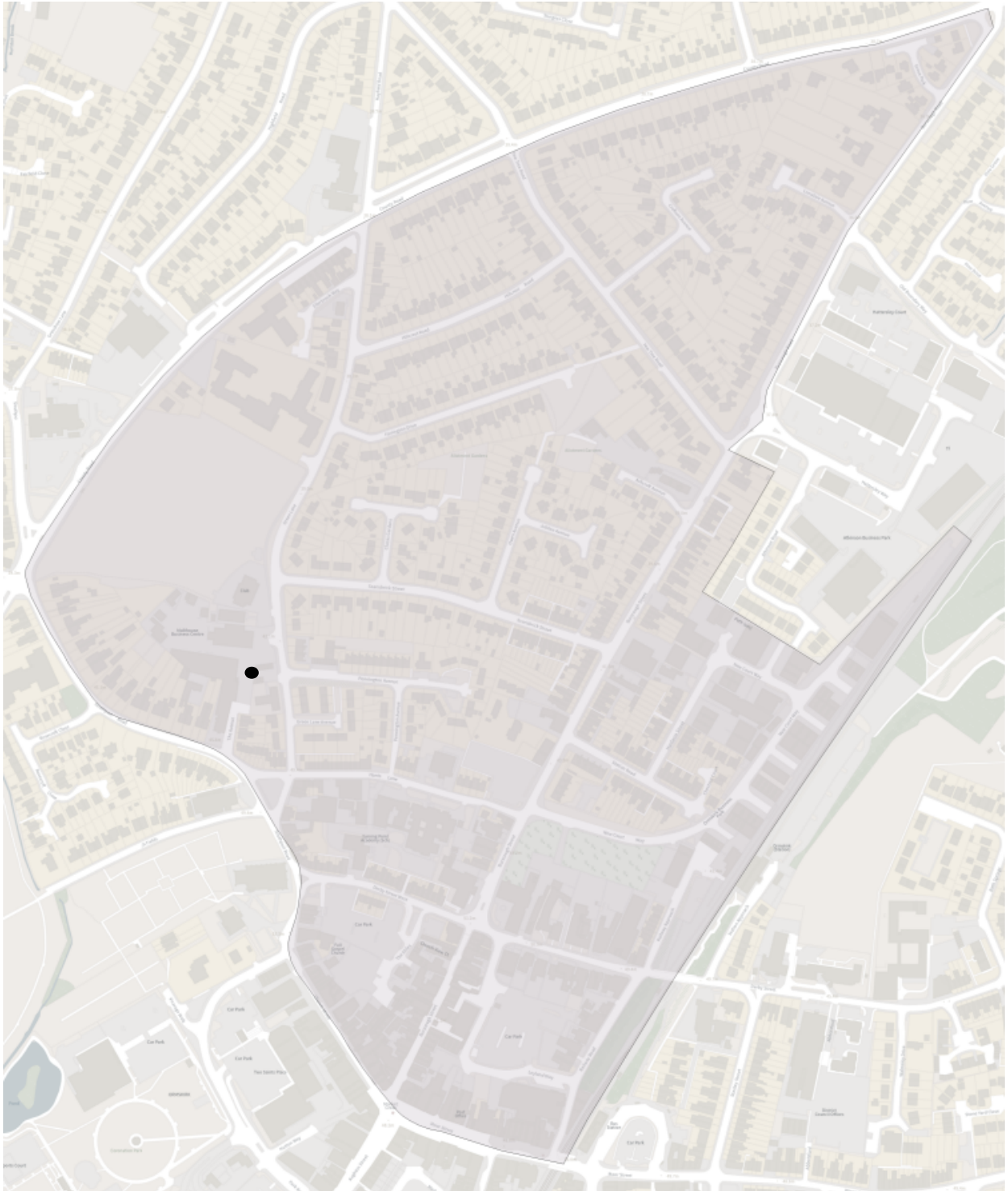
Map of Existing OWB Polling District



Map also available at - <https://www.westlincs.gov.uk/media/546830/owb.pdf>

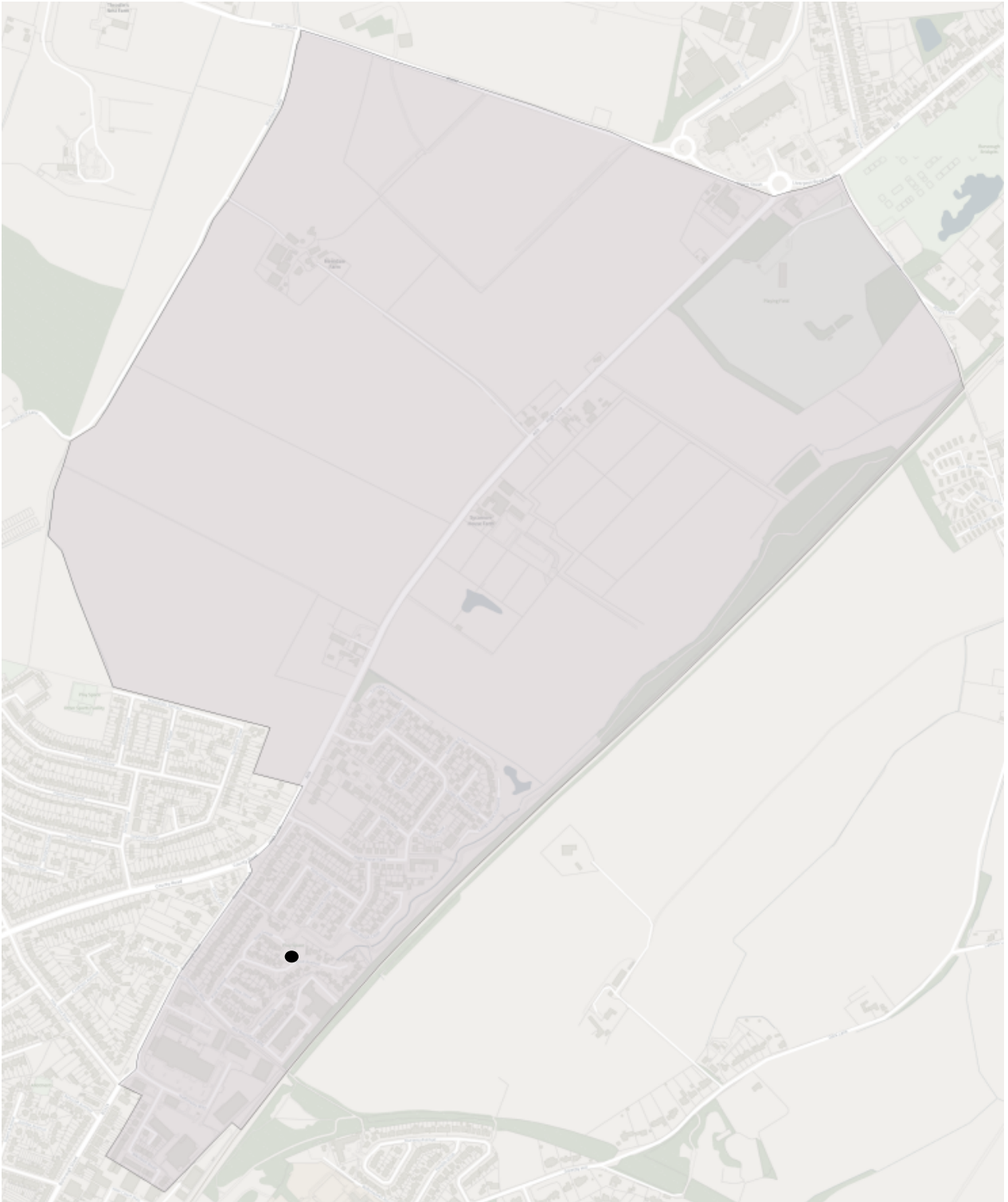
APPENDIX 2 – Proposals for Ormskirk West

Map of Proposed OWB Polling District



APPENDIX 2 – Proposals for Ormskirk West

Map of Proposed OWD Polling District



**West Lancashire Borough Council
Interim Polling Review 2023 – Comments & Initial Proposals – Rural West**

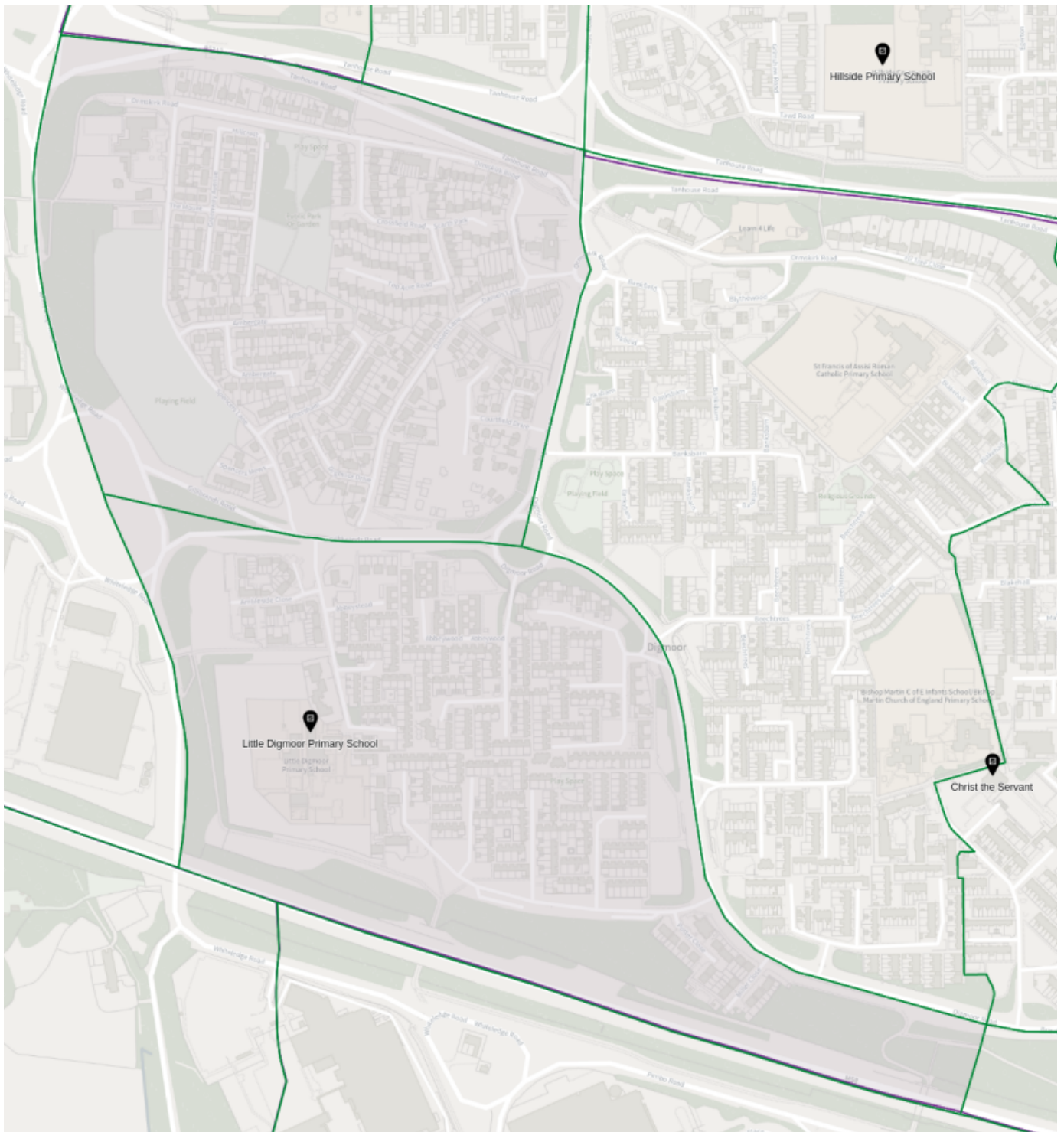
Polling District	Electors	Location of Proposed Polling Place	ARO Comments & Initial Proposals
RURAL WEST			
RWK	563	Pumpkin Patch Farm Shop	Due to the unavailability of the existing location, it is proposed to designate the Polling Place for RWK as the Pumkin Patch Farm Shop

**West Lancashire Borough Council
Interim Polling Review 2023 – Comments & Initial Proposals – Skelmersdale South**

Polling District	Electors	Location of Proposed Polling Place	ARO Comments & Initial Proposals
SKELMERSDALE SOUTH			
SSB	743	Little Digmaor Primary School	Due to the difficulty of access between the two halves of the existing SSB Polling District, it is proposed to be split into SSB and the new Polling District SSG. SSB Polling Place to be retained as Little Digmaor Primary School.
SSG	719	Army Cadet Hut, Daniels Lane	Due to the difficulty of access between the two halves of the existing SSB Polling District, it is proposed to be split into SSB and the new Polling District SSG. SSG Polling Place to be designated as the Army Cadet Hut, Daniels Lane.

APPENDIX 4 – Proposals for Skelmersdale South

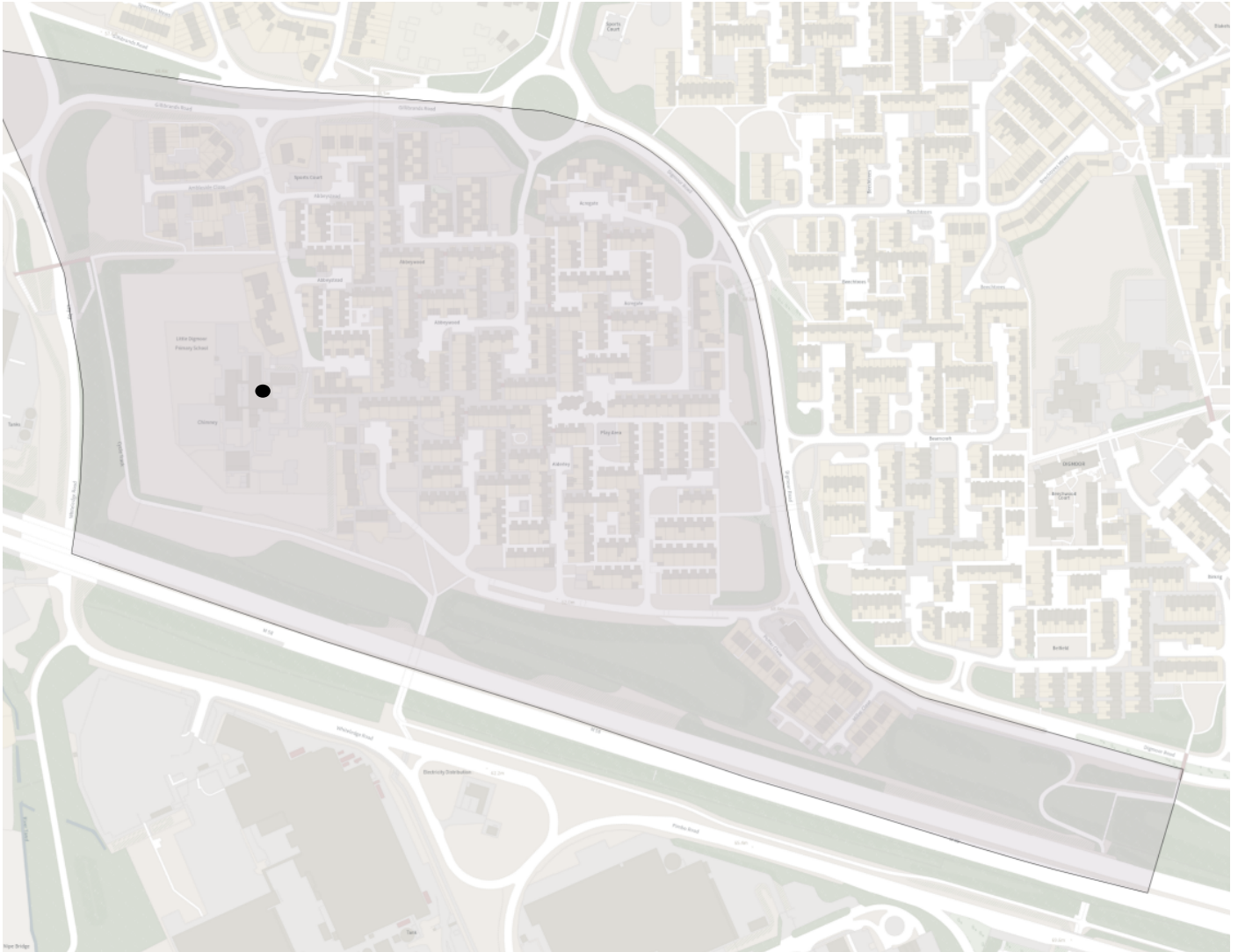
Map of Existing SSB Polling District



Map also available at - <https://www.westlancs.gov.uk/media/546864/ssb.pdf>

APPENDIX 4 – Proposals for Skelmersdale South

Map of Proposed SSB Polling District



APPENDIX 5 – Equality Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Assessment Form



Directorate: Transformation & Resources	Service: Legal and Democratic Services
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Completed by: Thomas Lynan	Date: 25/09/23
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Subject Title: INTERIM POLLING REVIEW 2023 – Initial Proposals

1. DESCRIPTION

Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised:	No
Is a service being designed, redesigned or cutback:	Yes
Is a commissioning plan or contract specification being developed:	No
Is a budget being set or funding allocated:	No
Is a programme or project being planned:	Yes
Are recommendations being presented to senior managers and/or Councillors:	Yes
Does the activity contribute to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty (Eliminating unlawful discrimination/harassment, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations):	Yes
Details of the matter under consideration:	Interim Polling Review 2023 – initial Proposals

*If you answered **Yes** to any of the above go straight to Section 3
If you answered **No** to all the above please complete Section 2*

2. RELEVANCE

Does the work being carried out impact on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders):	
If Yes , provide details of how this impacts on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders): <i>If you answered Yes go to Section 3</i>	
If you answered No to both Sections 1 and 2 provide details of why there is no impact on these three groups:	

3. EVIDENCE COLLECTION

Who does the work being carried out impact on, i.e. who is/are the stakeholder(s)?	There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and or other stakeholders.
If the work being carried out relates to a universal service, who needs or uses it most? (Is there any particular group affected more than others)?	All groups are affected.
Which of the protected characteristics are most relevant to the work being carried out?	

Age	No
Gender	No
Disability	Yes
Race and Culture	No
Sexual Orientation	No
Religion or Belief	No
Gender Reassignment	No
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No
Pregnancy and Maternity	No

4. DATA ANALYSIS

In relation to the work being carried out, and the service/function in question, who is actually or currently using the service and why?	Members of the public currently use the service because it is a universal service integral to the function of the Council.
What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders?	Changes to polling arrangements.
What are people's views about the services? Are some customers more satisfied than others, and if so what are the reasons? Can these be affected by the proposals?	All relevant stakeholders have the opportunity to express their views through consultation.
What sources of data including consultation results have you used to analyse the impact of the work being carried out on users/stakeholders with protected characteristics?	All relevant stakeholders have the opportunity to express their views through consultation.
If any further data/consultation is needed and is to be gathered, please specify:	All relevant stakeholders have the opportunity to express their views through consultation.

5. IMPACT OF DECISIONS

In what way will the changes impact on people with particular protected characteristics (either positively or negatively or in terms of disproportionate impact)?	Changes to the area in which they vote, and in some cases a change to the Polling Place where they would vote. This is expected to have a neutral or positive impact on electors.
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6. CONSIDERING THE IMPACT

If there is a negative impact what action can be taken to mitigate it? (If it is not possible or desirable to take actions to reduce the impact, explain why this is the case (e.g. legislative or financial drivers etc.).	Changes are expected to have a neutral or positive impact.
What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above?	All households affected will be written to in early 2024 to advise them of changes to Polling Districts and Places where applicable.

If no actions are planned state no actions

7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING

When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it?

This assessment will be reviewed as and when further reviews of the polling estate are required.