



**POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING
PLACES REVIEW COMMITTEE:
14 November 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 – FINAL PROPOSALS

Wards affected: ORMSKIRK WEST, RURAL WEST, SKELMERSDALE SOUTH

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To conclude the 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 consultation responses for each proposal, as set out in Appendix 1, be noted.

2.2 That the Committee determine the proposals for each affected Ward (Ormskirk West - Appendix 2, Rural West – Appendix 3, and Skelmersdale South – Appendix 4).

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 Polling Stations for each election rests with the Returning Officer for that election.
- 3.5 Delegations within the Constitution allow for the Returning Officer to reassign Polling Places in consultation with the Leader, Shadow Leader, and Ward Councillors, should a Polling Place become unavailable close to an election when there is insufficient time to conduct an interim review.

4.0 INTERIM POLLING REVIEW 2023 – CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Interim Review formally began on 12 October 2023 with the publication of the Notice of Review and the start of the Public Consultation on the Initial Proposals. The Public Consultation ran until Thursday 26 October 2023.
- 4.2 58 responses were received, of which 12 were invalid as the response was blank. Of the 46 valid responses, some have commented on all three proposals, whereas others have only commented on one or two proposals. The 46 valid responses are included within Appendix 1 for consideration by the Committee.
- 4.3 The Committee must now decide upon appropriate Polling Districts and Polling Places for the affected Wards after considering the consultation submissions received.
- 4.4 If the Committee decides to reject any of the proposals, the status quo would be retained in that area, with the exception of Rural West where a new location must be allocated due to the unavailability of the existing location. Should this be the Committee's decision, an alternative location will be sought through delegated powers for the May 2024 elections, with the area reviewed again as part of the statutory review in 2024.

FUTURE TIMESCALES

- 6.1 Once the Committee has determined the final proposals, the relevant documentation will be made available to the public in accordance with legislation. Any changes will be introduced with the publication of the Electoral Register on 1 December 2023.
- 6.2 West Lancashire will undergo a full Statutory Review in 2024 in line with legislative timescales.
- 6.3 Legislation requires that all Polling Stations be kept under consideration and evaluation. If changes are identified as being desirable, then the interim review process should be initiated.

7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

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

8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Interim Review is undertaken within existing budgets.

8.2 Should all proposals be agreed, the cost of election delivery is estimated to increase by £4000 per election.

8.3 Proposals for Ormskirk West (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.

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

8.5 Proposals for Skelmersdale South (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.

9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

9.1 The review process has enabled the Council to carry out the Interim Review, although no detailed prescribed review process is identified in legislation. However, the process undertaken has been robust and provided for input from interested parties. A mechanism for an appeal exists through the Electoral Commission.

10.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

10.1 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. Interim Polling Review 2023 – Consultation Responses
2. Proposals for Ormskirk West Ward
3. Proposals for Rural West Ward
4. Proposals for Skelmersdale South Ward
5. Equality Impact Assessment

APPENDIX 1 - Interim Polling Review 2023 – Consultation Responses

Ormskirk West – Consultation Responses		
Resident Address In	Agree or Disagree	Comments
Aughton & Holborn	Disagree	Agree with the new District, do not agree with the mobile unit hire. Shared space with another polling district should be considered firstly or co-ordination with a local school or church or community building.
Aughton & Holborn	Agree	-
Burscough Bridge & Rufford	Agree	-
Burscough Bridge & Rufford	Agree	-
Burscough Bridge & Rufford	Disagree	I feel that people living in the more rural areas have been forgotten completely. I cannot walk to polling station and negotiate Fish Lane as a pedestrian due to the increased traffic and amount of coaches using Martin Mere, it's far too dangerous and yet here the council are spending money just so people are not too cramped in a polling station. Find an alternative venue for both districts. We have to utilise postal voting due to the dangers of the road and feel that our postal vote is often late either being delivered or returned due to an inadequate Postal Service. You are asking people to use cars less so come up with an electronic live voting system. Think outside of the box.
Burscough Town	Agree	-
Burscough Town	Agree	-
Burscough Town	Disagree	Another polling booth is not required, the guide hut is perfectly adequate and within easy walking distance.
Old Skelmersdale	Agree	-
Old Skelmersdale	Agree	-
Old Skelmersdale	Agree	-
Old Skelmersdale	Agree	-
Ormskirk East	Agree	-
Ormskirk East	Agree	-
Ormskirk East	Disagree	-
Ormskirk East	Agree	-

Ormskirk East	Agree	-
Ormskirk East	Disagree	The number of people who actually vote doesn't warrant another polling station. To pay this amount of money for something the area doesn't need is a disgrace. I'm not sure who comes up with the stupid suggestions, but I think they need to concentrate on what really is required within our town and spend the money on these locations.
Ormskirk West	Disagree	If the unit is to be placed at the small play area on Pine Avenue, our house is very close by, and we would not like all the additional footfall and traffic that would occur.
Ormskirk West	Disagree	Waste of public money as most people travel to poll station by car anyway.
Ormskirk West	Disagree	Can use postal vote if unable to get to polling station.
Ormskirk West	Disagree	I don't feel the extra cost is justified as postal votes are available and most people in the new houses are car drivers or can walk.
Ormskirk West	Agree	-
Ormskirk West	Disagree	To spend £3k for a one-off purpose each year is not cash efficient especially when the money could be spent on defibrillators or bus shelters or a myriad of other uses. You no doubt understand that the cost this time will be £3k but the cost will escalate each year. Also, with the possibility of a general election next year this will result in a further charge of £3k. I disagree on this proposal on the following points: 1) number of users which you can verify from your stats and shows that the guide hut is underutilised 2) increase in postal voters. I'm sure you are aware of government constantly cutting budgets to local councils especially in the budget due on 22nd November and in future budgets whether it be by a labour or conservative government. This is a foolish idea put forward especially when people are under great pressure to feed, clothed and keep themselves warm. This is a proposal put forward by selfish self-indulgent councillors who are out of touch with the real world which people are surviving in. Think again councillors think of people's needs. Be more responsible be more understanding be more imaginative, use some common sense and if you cannot come up with better ideas you should step down. The mobile polling station proposed is not needed so I have not put forward alternative sites, full stop. End.
Ormskirk West	Disagree	Too much money to be spent on mobile unit which could be used elsewhere in the borough. There must be another option that does not cost as much. Why don't the council try hiring a hall or asking a business owner for use of their premises and reimbursing them. I doubt that would come to £3000 for one day.
Ormskirk West	Disagree	Waste of money - if it works why replace it!
Ormskirk West	Disagree	The cash could be better spent, just rent a room.

Ormskirk West	Disagree	We don't need another polling station, Green Lane not very busy. So why take some of the electors away to a possible new polling Station, waste of money. Of the 450 electors, how many would go out and vote, there are postal votes available. Waste of money and not needed.
Ormskirk West	Disagree	The polling station on Green Lane has adequate space and capacity. I have used this polling station for over 20 years and have never seen more than 4 people in there. More tables to register and more booths, which the room can easily accommodate, is a cost neutral solution.
Ormskirk West	Agree	Is there additional capacity at West End School or Greetby Hill?
Rural North East	Disagree	The existing polling station at Green Lane is not unduly busy or catering for a number of polling day voters greater than the published guidelines. The distance to the polling station is acceptable and along roads with pavements and street lighting. Postal voting is freely available to those who have difficulty getting to the polling station. The cost of £3000 is not value for money and any new expenditure requires careful scrutiny in the light of the £1.1 million deficit the council posted in the last financial year. Therefore, I am opposed to this proposal and favour the status quo.
Rural North East	Disagree	I think it is a lot of money for one day. Sadly, not all voters will bother to vote so I see it as unnecessary
Rural North East	Agree	-
Rural South	Disagree	Total waste of money - absolutely unnecessary.
Rural South	Disagree	Too expensive and not needed!
Rural South	Disagree	Money can be spent elsewhere.
Rural West	Disagree	I think it's terrible that another £4k (per election!!) is being incurred potentially by WLBC. Shouldn't they be looking for cost savings, e.g., reducing the number of polling stations.
Rural West	Agree	-
Rural West	Agree	-
Skelmersdale South	Disagree	In my opinion if all the areas are kept on the one site it would make ours busier, making the day quicker. It would be more cost effective too as you wouldn't have to employ more Clerks, porta-cabins etc.
Up Holland	Agree	-

All Responses	Agree	Disagree	Total
	19	22	41

Ormskirk West Residents Only	Agree	Disagree	Total
	2	10	12

Rural West – Consultation Responses

Resident Address In	Agree or Disagree	Comments
Aughton & Holborn	Agree	-
Aughton & Holborn	Agree	-
Burscough Bridge & Rufford	Agree	-
Burscough Bridge & Rufford	Agree	-
Burscough Bridge & Rufford	Agree	-
Burscough Bridge & Rufford	Agree	-
Burscough Town	Agree	-
Burscough Town	Disagree	Have you tried St. Cuthberts CofE school or St. Mary's Catholic school (last one might be outside the polling district).
Burscough Town	Agree	-
Old Skelmersdale	Agree	-
Old Skelmersdale	Agree	-
Old Skelmersdale	Agree	-
Old Skelmersdale	Agree	-
Old Skelmersdale	Agree	-
Ormskirk East	Agree	-
Ormskirk East	Agree	-
Ormskirk East	Agree	-
Ormskirk East	Agree	-
Ormskirk East	Agree	-
Ormskirk East	Disagree	Sufficient polling stations. Waste of resources. Concentrate on sending postal vote letters out earlier and perhaps the number of votes missed last time won't happen again.
Ormskirk West	Disagree	Waste of Money.
Ormskirk West	Agree	-
Ormskirk West	Agree	-

Ormskirk West	Agree	-
Rural North East	Agree	-
Rural North East	Agree	-
Rural South	Agree	-
Rural West	Agree	-
Rural West	Agree	-
Rural West	Agree	-
Up Holland	Agree	-

All Responses	Agree	Disagree	Total
	28	3	31

Rural West Residents Only	Agree	Disagree	Total
	3	0	3

Skelmersdale South – Consultation Responses

Address In	Agree or Disagree	Comments
Aughton & Holborn	Agree	-
Aughton & Holborn	Agree	-
Burscough Bridge & Rufford	Agree	-
Burscough Bridge & Rufford	Agree	-
Burscough Bridge & Rufford	Agree	-
Burscough Town	Agree	-
Burscough Town	Disagree	Not required, if a voter really wants to vote they will make the effort to go regardless of location.
Old Skelmersdale	Disagree	(Place should have) accessibility so all can use the station.
Old Skelmersdale	Agree	-
Old Skelmersdale	Agree	-
Old Skelmersdale	Agree	-
Old Skelmersdale	Agree	-
Ormskirk East	Agree	-
Ormskirk East	Agree	-
Ormskirk East	Agree	-
Ormskirk East	Agree	-
Ormskirk East	Disagree	-
Ormskirk West	Agree	-
Ormskirk West	Agree	-
Ormskirk West	Agree	-
Rural North East	Disagree	Concerned about cost and accessibility.
Rural North East	Agree	-

Rural South	Disagree	Money can be better spent elsewhere. Skelmersdale Cricket Club is always extremely quiet and should get better utilised.
Rural West	Disagree	I think it's terrible that another £4k (per election !!) is being incurred potentially by WLBC. Shouldn't they be looking for cost savings, e.g., reducing the number of polling stations.
Rural West	Agree	-
Skelmersdale South	Agree	-
Skelmersdale South	Agree	-
Skelmersdale South	Disagree	Daniels Lane has always been horrendous for parking, and I can't see how you can change anything as since the new houses have been built there it's worse. It's hard to get into the road because it's a tight corner, I would reconsider if I was the council. You need to consult the residents.
Up Holland	Agree	-

All Responses	Agree	Disagree	Total
	22	7	29

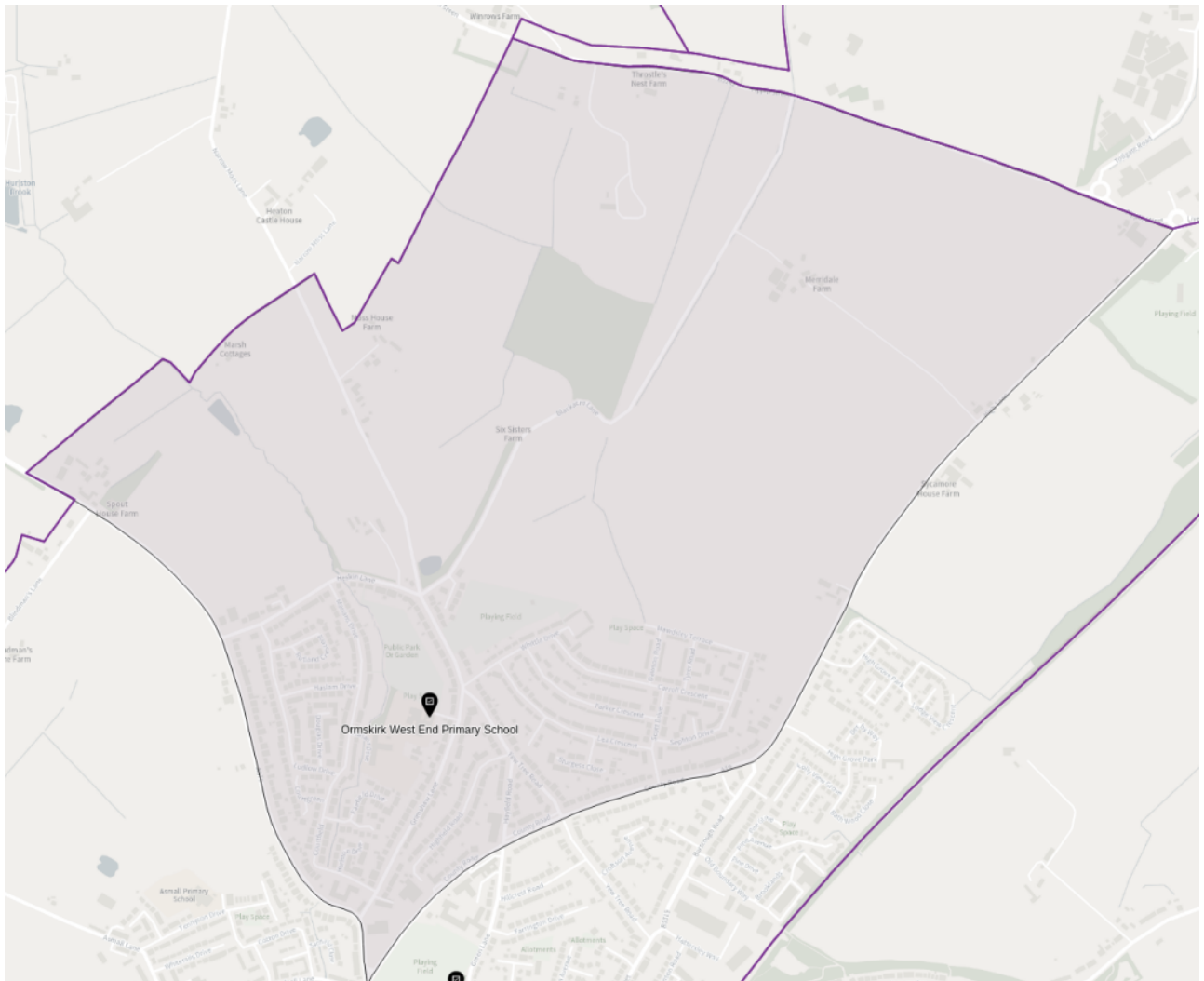
Skelmersdale South Residents Only	Agree	Disagree	Total
	2	1	3

**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

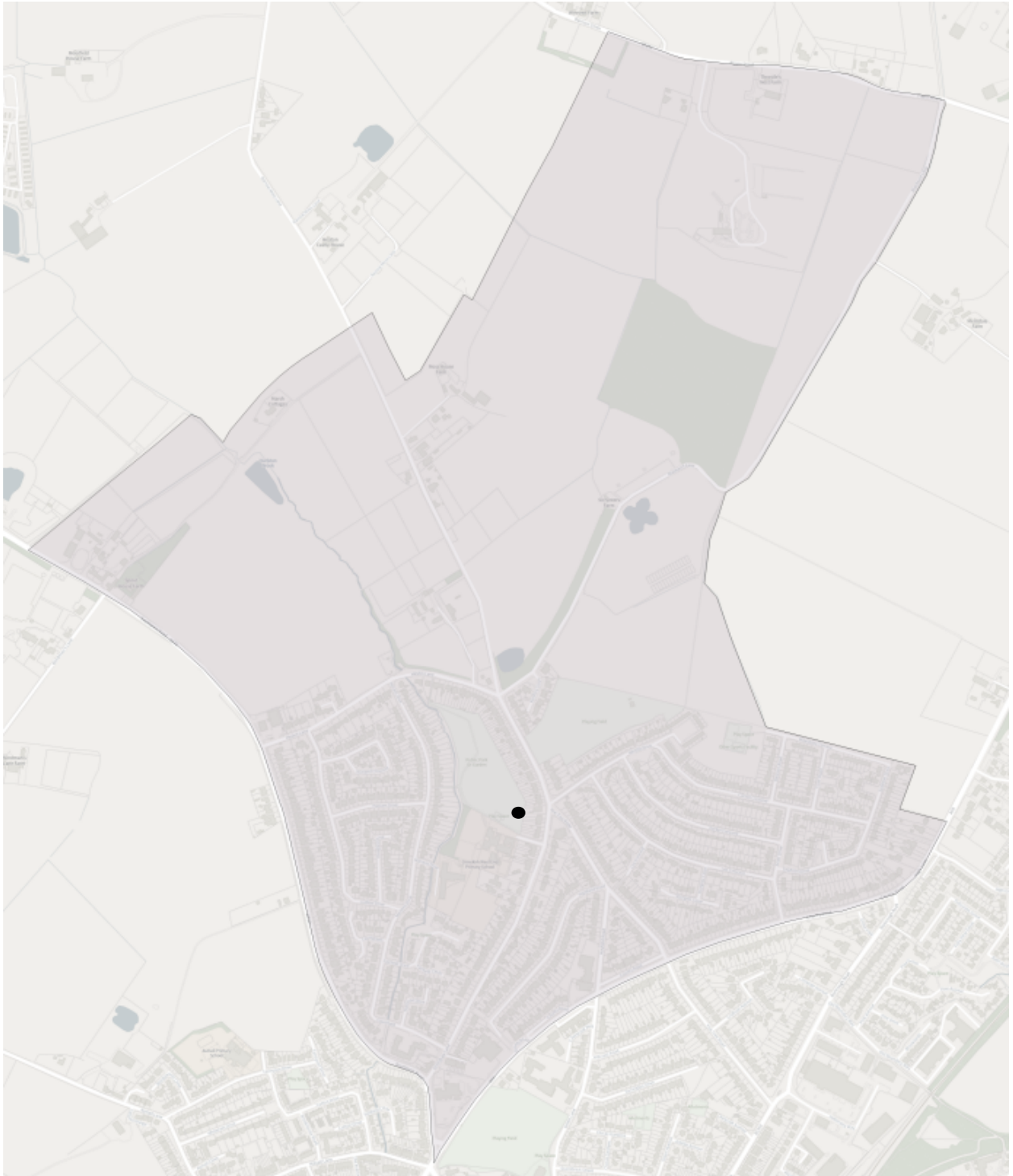
Map of Existing OWA Polling District



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

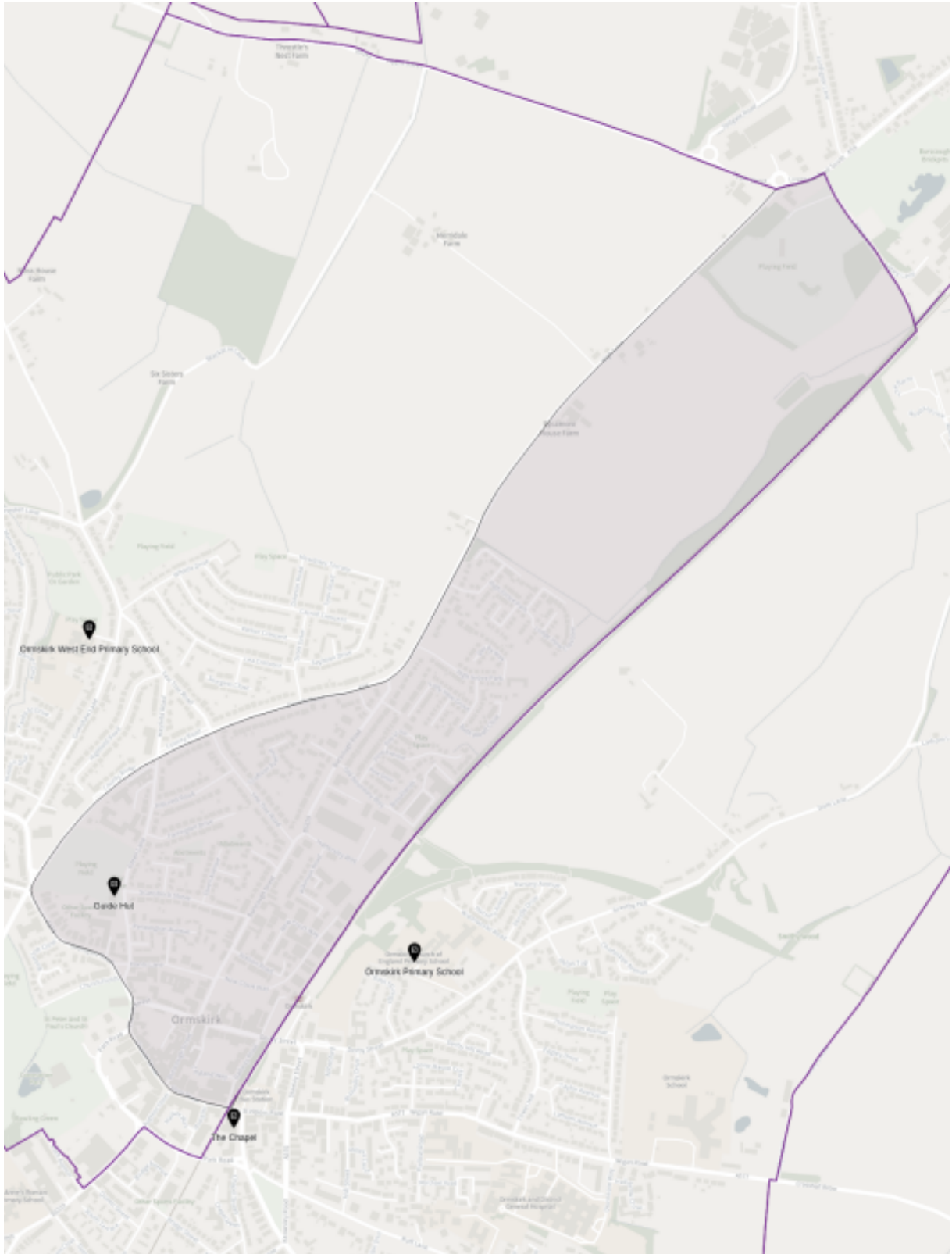
APPENDIX 2 – Proposals for Ormskirk West

Map of Proposed OWA Polling District



APPENDIX 2 – Proposals for Ormskirk West

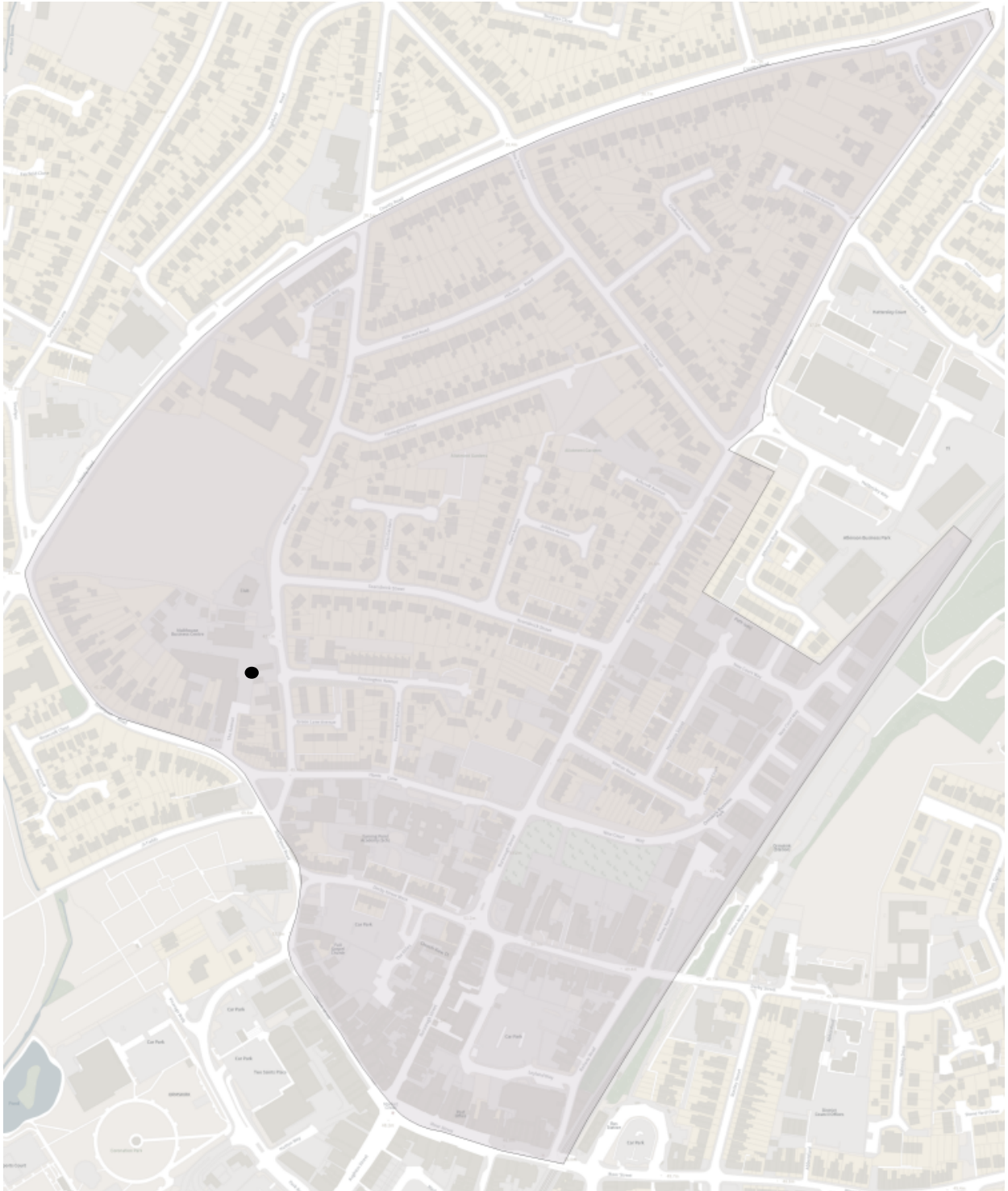
Map of Existing OWB Polling District



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

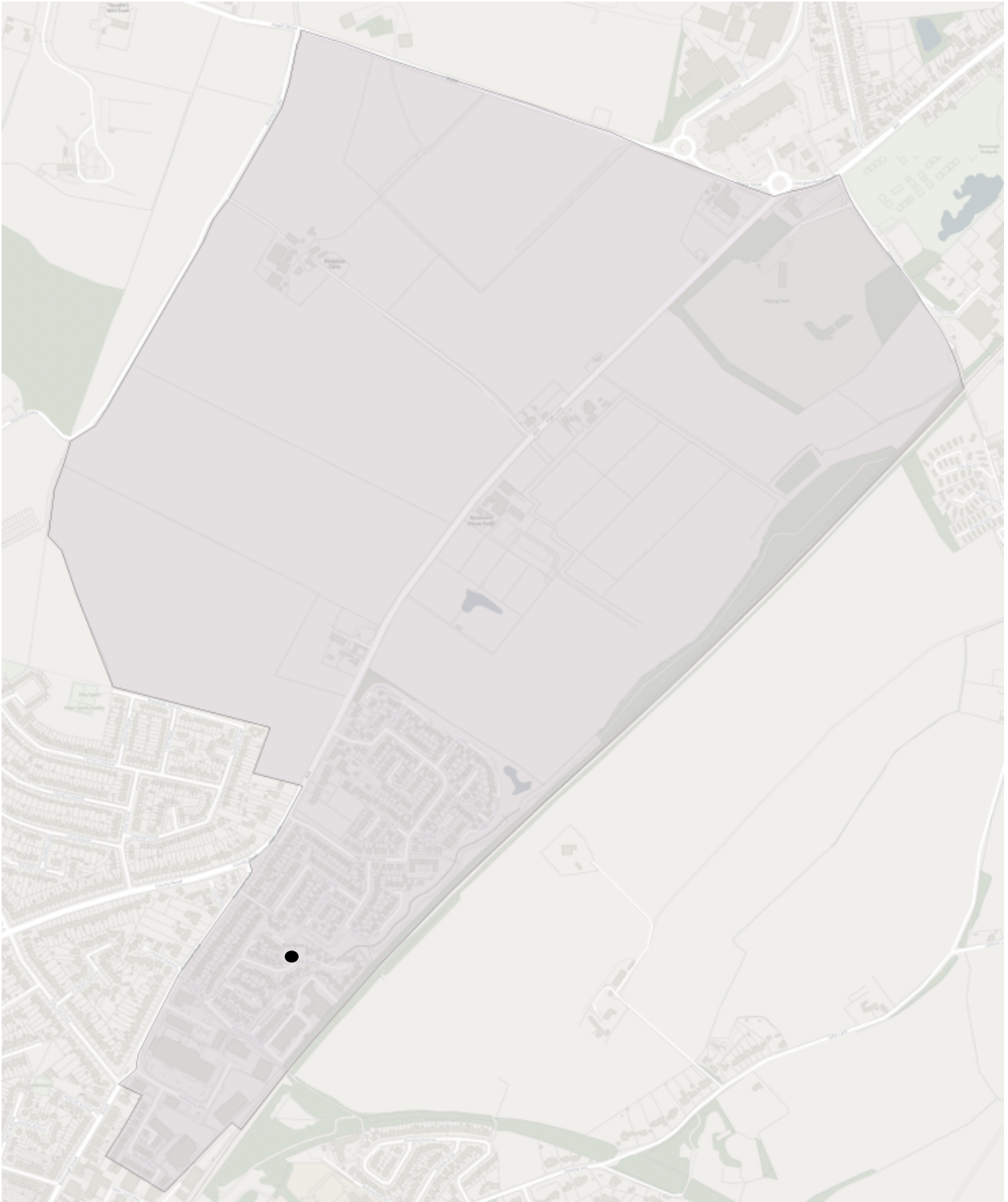
APPENDIX 2 – Proposals for Ormskirk West

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**

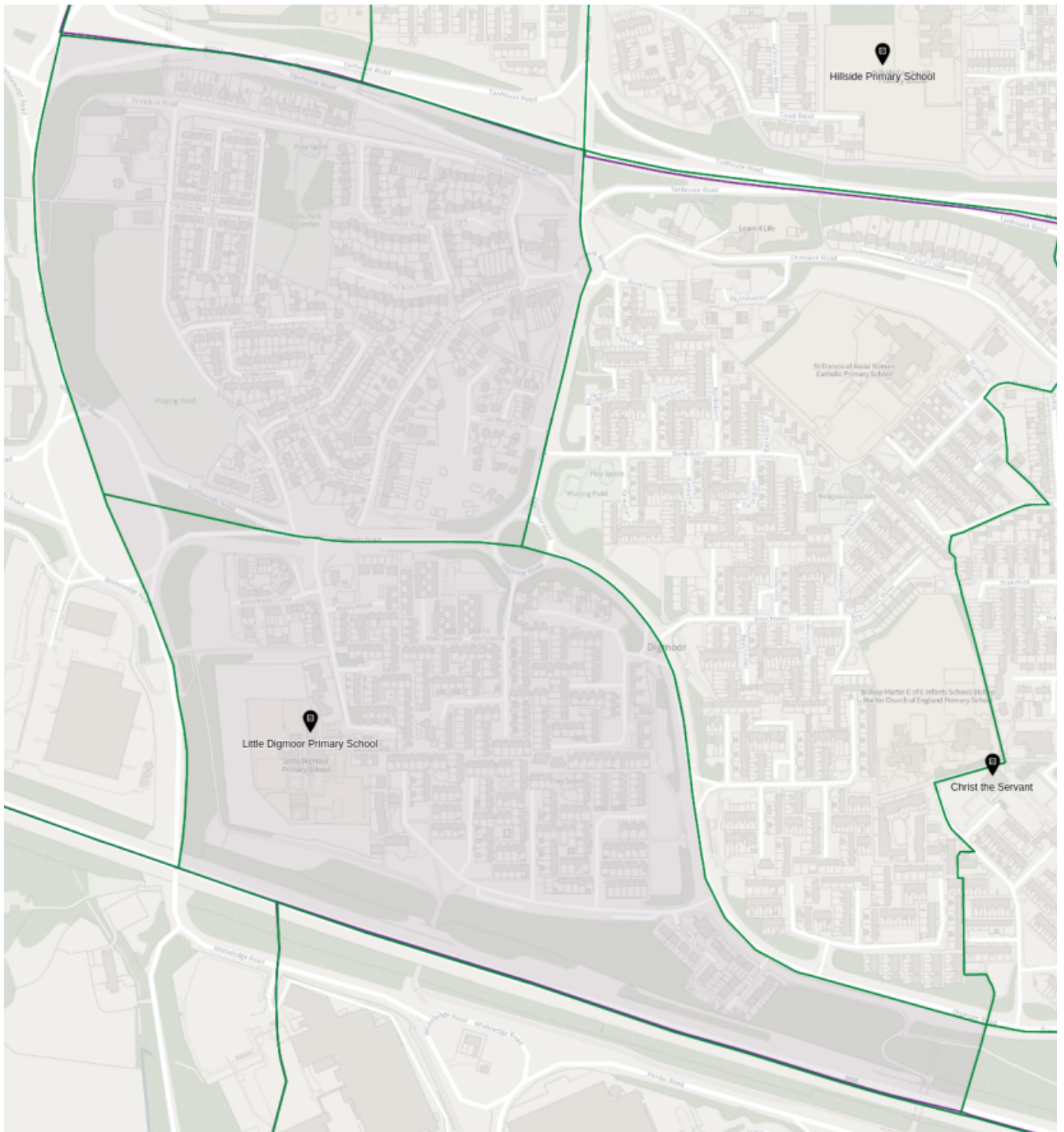
Polling District	Electors	Location of Proposed Polling Place	ARO Comments & Initial Proposals
RURAL WEST			
RWK	563	Pumpkin Patch Farm Shop	Due to the unavailability of the existing location, it is proposed to designate the Polling Place for RWK as the Pumkin Patch Farm Shop

**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

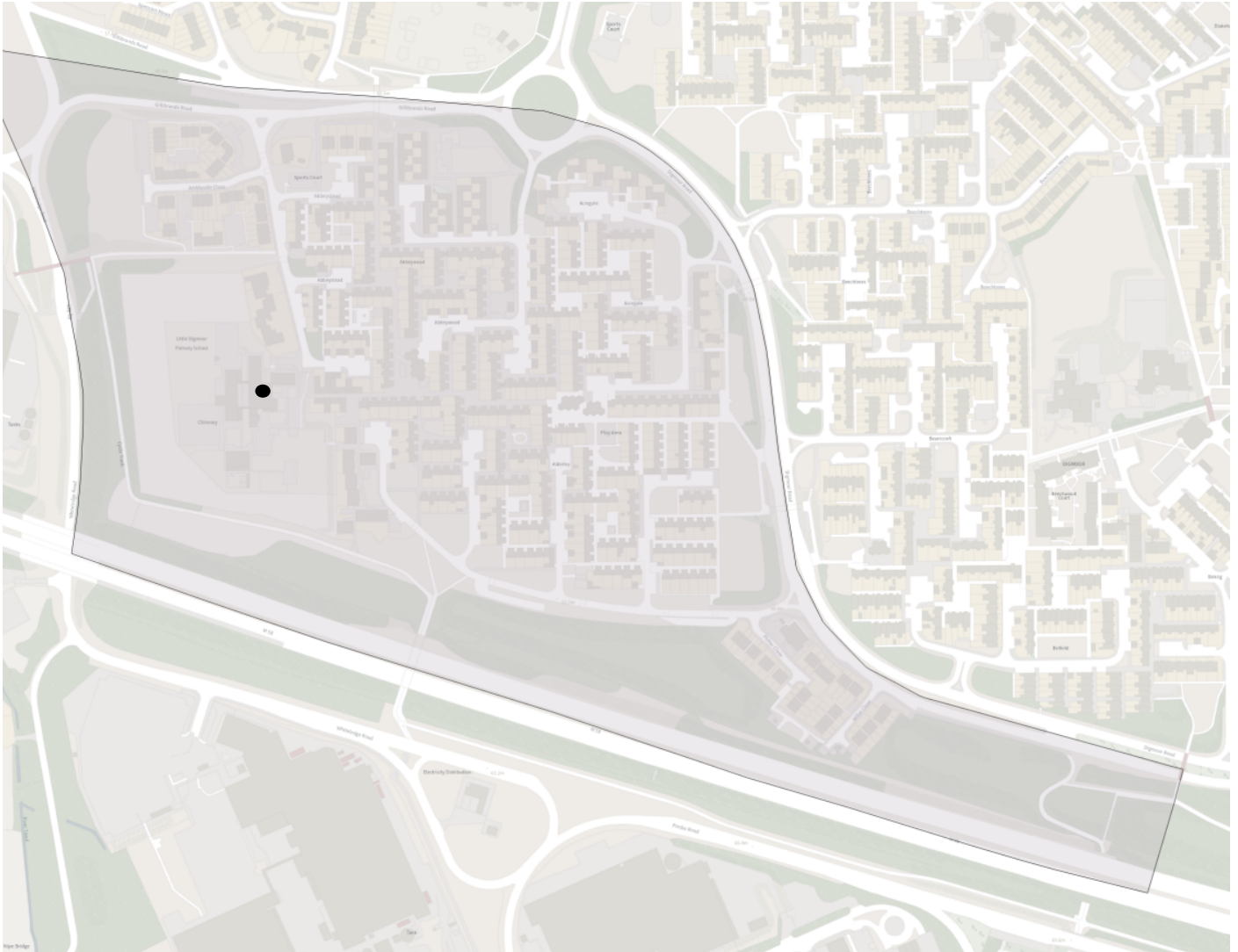
Map of Existing SSB Polling District



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

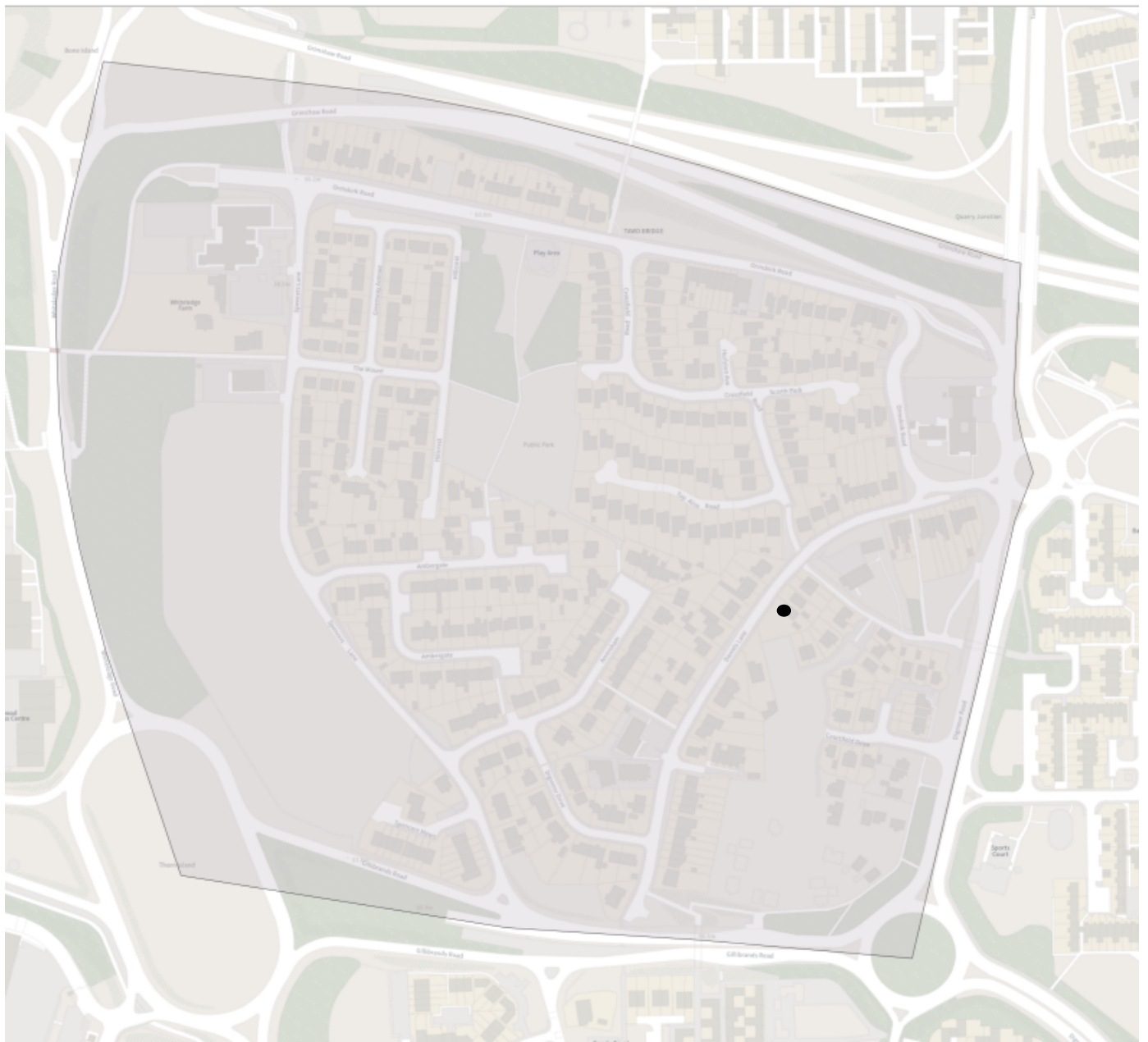
APPENDIX 4 – Proposals for Skelmersdale South

Map of Proposed SSB Polling District



APPENDIX 4 – Proposals for Skelmersdale South

Map of Proposed SSG Polling District





Equality Impact Assessment Form

Directorate: Transformation & Resources	Service: Legal and Democratic Services
Completed by: Thomas Lynan	Date: 03/11/23
Subject Title: INTERIM POLLING REVIEW 2023 – FINAL 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 – Final Proposals
<p><i>If you answered Yes to any of the above go straight to Section 3</i></p> <p><i>If you answered No to all the above please complete Section 2</i></p>	
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 had 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 had 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 had 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.
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.

	<i>If no actions are planned state no actions</i>
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.