

NOT CONFIDENTIAL – For Public Release

Council

26 July 2022

Report of Director of Corporate and Customer Services

## **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE AND POLLING ARRANGEMENT REVIEWS**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report provides details of feedback received during the first stage of a Community Governance Review of the Parishes of Darley Dale, Matlock and South carried as a result of the new district council warding and parish arrangements proposed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

It proposes that as a result of initial feedback further consultation should take place on a proposal to amend the boundaries of the Parishes of Matlock and South Darley so that future housing developments in the Oker and Snitterton Ward of South Darley Parish Council are included in a new Cawdor Ward of Matlock Town Council.

The report also includes details of the review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations which took place to reflect the revised District Council electoral arrangements and puts forward a number of recommendations.

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

1. That the recommended changes to Polling Places and Polling Stations as set out in paragraphs 1.2.7 to 1.2.13 of the report be approved.
2. That the Director of Corporate and Customer Services be authorised to carry out further consultation on a proposal to move the shaded area identified in Appendix 3 from the Parish of South Darley to the Parish of Matlock.
3. That any changes required as a result of this review be brought back to Council before 1 October 2022 to consider any proposed changes and any representations received before the arrangements are approved by Members.

### **WARDS AFFECTED**

District-wide

## **STRATEGIC LINK**

Establishing effective arrangements for the delivery of electoral events across the district underpins confidence from the citizens of the Derbyshire Dales in the democratic legitimacy of the Council and other public institutions.

### **1. BACKGROUND**

#### **1.1 Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) Final Recommendations**

1.2 On 26 May 2022, to progress implementation of the Council delegated authority to the Director of Corporate and Customer Services to carry out a review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations to make sure they reflect the revised warding arrangements and new residential developments constructed and occupied since the last reviews.

1.3 At the same meeting the Council delegated authority to the Director of Corporate and Customer Services to carry Community Governance Reviews arising from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England proposals and the impact of new residential developments.

1.4 This report provides an update on progress made on both reviews and seeks authority to go to consult on specific proposals.

1.5 The statutory instrument confirming the LGBCE has been made and will come into force on 15 October 2022.

### **2. REPORT**

#### **2.1 Polling districts, polling places and polling stations**

2.1.1 To assist with the management of the electoral register and elections the District has been divided into 130 Polling Districts. On the whole these are based on parish boundaries or parish ward boundaries where a parish is warded.

2.1.2 Appendix 1 sets out details of where Polling Districts will need to be renamed to reflect the new ward structure. As a result of the implementation of the LGBCE recommendations it is suggested that 2 new Polling Districts are created. These will be PCK (To cover the new Matlock Cuckoostone Ward of Matlock Town Council) and QME (To cover the new Morledge Ward of Darley Dale Town Council). This would result in 132 polling districts overall.

2.1.3 As a result of changes to District Council Ward Boundaries there officers have reviewed the Polling Places and Polling Stations for electors in every Polling District. In most cases the polling places can remain the same, however if the current arrangements were to be maintained, electors in more than one Ward will vote at the following Polling Stations:

- Doveridge Village Hall
- Wyaston Village Hall
- Thorpe Village Hall
- South Darley Village Hall
- Kirk Ireton Village Hall
- Carsington Miners Arms
- The Community Room at Arc Leisure Centre

2.1.4 While there are some polling stations in the current arrangements where electors in more than one ward vote at the same Polling Station, it is best practice to try and avoid it where practicably possible. For example, there is a risk of a voter being issued the wrong ballot paper, particularly if the split between Wards is even. There are practicable steps that can be made to minimise the risk of it happening, but the risk cannot be eliminated completely. There is also a risk of ballot papers being placed in the wrong ballot box which would impact on the effective and efficient running of the Count. There are some cases where the instructions to electors would be different if, for example, electors from a three member ward vote in the same polling station as voters from a single member ward. This could increase the likelihood of electors misunderstanding the instructions and therefore increase the risk of spoilt papers or electors not using all the votes available to them.

2.1.5 In previous years mixed ward polling stations with a small electorate would have been a relatively low risk. However the likelihood of all these risks will increase in 2023 due to the introduction of voter ID, which is likely to cause more queues in Polling Stations and result in additional work for Presiding Officers in explaining the rules to voters. Therefore it will be essential in 2023 that we keep the activity in Polling Stations as simple as possible.

2.1.6 The issues for each Polling Place and options available are set out below:

It is proposed that the Parish Councils/Meetings in the relevant areas are consulted on the proposed changes. It should be noted that these arrangements would only apply for District Council Elections.

## 2.2 Doveridge Village Hall

2.2.1 Currently two polling districts are allocated to this polling station as follows:

Polling District	Parish	Ward (2023)	In person electors
EDO	Doveridge	Doveridge & Sudbury	1145
OSH	Somersal Herbert	Norbury	57

### Options considered

- 1 Retain existing arrangement where OSH in person electors vote at Doveridge Village Hall.

2. Allocate electors in OSH to Marston Montgomery Coronation Hall which is located in the Norbury Ward. As this station currently has 297 electors, 57 additional electors would not have a detrimental impact on the operation of the Polling Station.

### Recommendation

Option 2 - Allocate electors in Polling District OSH to Marston Montgomery Coronation Hall.

Reason – This change will reduce the risk of electors being issued with the wrong ballot papers. The distance between the centre of OSH and Doveridge Village Hall is 3.7 miles the distance between the centre of OSH and Marston Montgomery is also 3.7 miles.

## **2.3 Wyaston Village Hall**

- 2.3.1 Currently three polling districts are allocated to this polling station as follows:

Polling District	Parish	Ward (2023)	In person electors
ORO	Rodsley	Norbury	70
OYE	Yeaveley	Norbury	206
GEW	Edlaston & Wyaston	Ashbourne South	133

### Options considered

- 1 Retain existing arrangement where GEW in person electors vote at Wyaston Village Hall.
2. Allocate electors in ORO and OYE to Shirley Parish Church Community Hall located in the Norbury Ward.

### Recommendation

Option 2 - Allocate electors in Polling District ORO and OYE to Shirley Parish Church Community Hall in Norbury Ward.

Reason - This change will reduce the risk of electors being issued with the wrong ballot papers. It will also minimise the risks arising from electors misunderstanding the voting instructions as electors in ORO and OYE will be able to vote for one candidate but electors in GEW will be able to vote for three. The centre of ORO to Wyaston is 3.4 miles and it is 2.8 miles to Shirley. The centre of OYE to Wyaston is 2.4 miles and it is 3.7 miles to Shirley.

## **2.4 Thorpe Village Hall**

- 2.4.1 Currently three polling districts are allocated to this polling station as follows:

Polling District	Parish	Ward (2023)	In person electors
IMA	Mapleton	Ashbourne North	76
ITH	Thorpe	Dovedale, Parwich & Brassington	101

#### Options considered

- 1 Retain existing arrangement where IMA in person electors vote at Thorpe Village Hall.
2. Allocate electors in IMA to Ashbourne Town Hall

#### Recommendation

Option 2 - Allocate electors in IMA to Ashbourne Town Hall

Reason - This change will reduce the risk of electors being issued with the wrong ballot papers. It will also minimise the risks arising from electors misunderstanding the voting instructions as electors in ITH will be able to vote for one candidate but electors in IMA will be able to vote for three. The centre of IMA to Thorpe is 3.1 miles and it is 2.8 miles to Ashbourne.

## **2.5 Kirk Ireton Village Hall**

2.5.1 Currently two polling districts are allocated to this polling station as follows:

Polling District	Parish	Ward (2023)	In person electors
LCA	Callow	Wirksworth	41
LKI	Kirk Ireton	Hulland	298

#### Options considered

- 1 Retain existing arrangement where LCA in person electors vote at Kirk Ireton Village Hall.
2. Allocate electors in LCA to Carsington and Hopton Primary School or Wirksworth Town Hall

#### Recommendation

Option 2 - Allocate electors in LCA to Carsington and Hopton Primary School.

Reason - This change will reduce the risk of electors being issued with the wrong ballot papers. It will also minimise the risks arising from electors misunderstanding the voting instructions as electors in LCA will be able to vote for three candidates but electors in LKI will only be able to vote for one. The

centre of LCA to Kirk Ireton is 2.4 miles, it is 2.9 miles to Carsington and 3.3 miles to Wirksworth.

## 2.6 Carsington & Hopton Primary School

2.6.1 Currently three polling districts are allocated to this polling station as follows:

Polling District	Parish	Ward (2023)	In person electors
MCA	Carsington	Wirksworth	85
MHP	Thorpe	Wirksworth	60
MIB	Ible	Bonsall & Winster	23

### Options considered

- 1 Retain existing arrangement where MIB in person electors vote at Carsington & Hopton Primary School.
2. Allocate electors in MIB to The Burton Institute, Winster.

### Recommendation

Option 2 - Allocate electors in MIB to The Burton Institute, Winster.

Reason - It will also minimise the risks arising from electors misunderstanding the voting instructions as electors in MCA and MHP will be able to vote for three candidates but electors in MIB will be able to vote for one. The centre of MIB to Carsington is 6 miles, it is 3.9 miles to Winster.

## 2.7 South Darley Village Hall

2.7.1 Currently three polling districts are allocated to this polling station as follows:

Polling District	Parish	Ward (2023)	In person electors
WSD	South Darley	Bonsall & Winster	250
WSW	South Darley (Wensley)	Bonsall & Winster	87
WSO	South Darley (Oker & Snitterton)	Matlock West	107

### Options considered

- 1 Retain existing arrangement where WSO in person electors vote at South Darley Village Hall.
2. Allocate electors in WSO to Matlock Imperial Rooms.
- 3 Allocate electors in WSO to a new polling station at the Community Room in Arc Leisure Centre (See below)

## Recommendation

Option 3 - Allocate electors in WSO to The Community Room in Arc Leisure Centre.

Reason - The Community Governance Review has shown that within the Polling District there is a likely to be a high level of support for continuing to vote at the Polling Station in South Darley. However it is believed that for the effective and efficient operation of the District Council elections the polling station for electors in WSO should change.

2.7.2 This change will reduce the risk of electors being issued with the wrong ballot papers. With a relatively small electorate, measures could be put in place to reduce the risk of issuing incorrect ballot papers however there is a high risk that electors in the two different wards could be confused by mixed messages to other electors and signage in the Polling Station. Instructions to electors in the Matlock West Ward will advise that they can vote for up to three candidates with electors in Bonsall and Winster instructed to vote for just one.

2.7.3 The centre of WSO to South Darley is 2.1 miles, it is 2.3 miles to the Arc Leisure Centre and 2.7 miles to Matlock.

## **2.8 The Community Room, The Arc Leisure Centre**

2.8.1 Currently three polling districts are allocated to this polling station as follows:

Polling District	Parish	Ward (2023)	In person electors
SHE	Darley Dale - South	Darley Dale	527
SUH	Darley Dale - South	Darley Dale	281
QME	Darley Dale - Morledge	Matlock West	288

## Options considered

- 1 Retain existing arrangement where QME in person electors vote at The Arc Leisure Centre
2. Create a second polling station at the same polling place specifically for electors in QME

## Recommendation

Option 2 – Create a second polling station at the same polling place specifically for electors in QME

Reason - This change will reduce the risk of electors being issued with the wrong ballot papers

With 288 in person electors a new Polling Station would still be larger than many other Polling Stations in the District. With such a large electorate voting in person at this Polling District the risk of a voter being accidentally issued with a ballot paper for the wrong ward or placed in the wrong ballot box is higher particularly during busier periods. An earlier proposal also suggested that in person electors 107 in the South Darley Oker and Snitterton Ward vote at the Arc bringing the electorate at the new polling station up to 395.

In terms of resources the Arc polling station it would require the appointment of an additional Presiding Officer and Poll Clerk.

## **2.9 Parish Council Electoral Arrangements**

- 2.9.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 devolves the power to take decisions about matters such as the creation of parishes and their electoral arrangements to local government and local communities in England. These powers are exercised through carrying out a Community Governance Review as and when required.
- 2.9.2 As a result of a review a principal council may create a new parish or change the boundaries of existing parishes to reflect local circumstances. One example is the expansion of communities through new housing developments. These can lead to existing parish boundaries becoming anomalous as new houses are built across the boundaries resulting in people in different parishes from their neighbours.
- 2.9.3 While the Commission can make changes to the warding arrangements within a Parish it cannot make changes to the existing boundaries of that Parish. Therefore a Community Governance Review may be needed to respond to their recommendations.
- 2.9.4 In accordance with the delegation from Council the Director of Corporate and Customer Services prepared the terms of reference for a Community Governance Review to respond to issues in the parishes of Darley Dale, Matlock and South Darley arising from the District Council Boundary Review. A copy of the terms of reference are attached as appendix 2.
- 2.9.5 The terms of reference were framed in such a way that the District Council offered no recommendations in a genuine attempt to explore the views of the councils affected and residents within their Parish. To assist potential respondents to think about the issues involved the review document included a survey form but representations could be submitted in any format. The review was structured in such a way that once the initial consultation period ended feedback would be evaluated and if required a second round of consultation will take place on specific proposals. This report brings forward proposals for the next stage of consultation.
- 2.9.6 The consultation asked for feedback on the following questions:

- Do you think the existing warding arrangements for the parishes of Darley Dale, Matlock and South Darley should remain as they are?
- Do you think the existing warding arrangements for the parishes of Darley Dale, Matlock and South Darley should remain as they are?
- Do you think the number of Councillors elected to Darley Dale Town Council, Matlock Town Council and South Darley Parish Council should remain as they are?
- Are there any other issues relating to the governance of Darley Dale Town Council, Matlock Town Council and South Darley Parish Council that should be addressed as part of this review?

2.9.7 In terms of feedback at the time of writing the report 22 representations (all exclusively in relation to South Darley) have been received and can be summarised as follows:

## **2.10 Parish of Darley Dale.**

2.10.1 The Council has not received any representations seeking changes to the arrangements in place for Darley Dale Town Council. It is therefore proposed that no further action be taken in respect of the number of councillors or the warding arrangements for the Town Council.

## **2.11 Parish of Matlock**

2.11.1 The Council has not received any representations seeking changes to the arrangements in place for Matlock Town Council. It is therefore proposed that no further action be taken in respect of the number of councillors or the warding arrangements for the Town Council.

## **2.12 Parish of South Darley**

2.12.1 The Council has received a number of representations regarding the boundaries for this Parish. A summary of these are set out in appendix 3. All of these submissions strongly object to moving the whole of the Oker and Snitterton ward in to the Parish of Matlock and provide clear and well-argued reasons for their view. However, some have suggested that the parish boundaries between South Darley and Matlock should be redrawn so that the new developments with the Parish on the Cawdor Quarry/Permanite site are moved into the Parish of Matlock. Details of the area concerned can be seen in appendix 4.

2.12.2 The effect of this arrangement would be that the electorate of the parish of South Darley would retain the existing domestic properties and the electorate would remain at current levels. All the projected increases in the electorate for the Oker and Snitterton ward are located in the shaded area.

2.12.3 In light of this feedback it is suggested that we carry out further consultation on this proposal. It is not proposed that any changes are made to the size of South Darley Parish Council or its warding arrangements.

2.12.4 Some of the respondents have raised objections on splitting the parish between two District Council Wards however the LGBCE has now made the statutory instrument that brings these into force it is outside the scope of this review. However, if as a result of the Community Governance Review the boundaries of the parishes of Matlock and South Darley change the District Council could make representations to the LGBCE to make changes to the relevant district council wards to reflect the changes made at the Parish level. The final decision on this would however rest with the Commission who will not offer an opinion until a formal request is received.

2.13 It was initially hoped that issues in other parts of the District would be considered as part of this view but in light of the timescales set by the LGBC and the resources available this will no longer be possible.

### **3. RISK ASSESSMENT**

#### **Legal**

3.1 The issues considered in this report are within the powers and functions of the District Council. Such changes may be made by the District Council following the undertaking of a Community Governance Review (CGR). Legislation in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 sets out the process which a CGR must follow.

3.2 Where a CGR is carried out, the legislation requires that the Council has regard to the need to secure that any community governance for the area under review:-

- reflects the identities and interests of the local community in that area; and
- that it is effective and convenient.

3.3 A CGR can be carried out at any time, either as a result of the Council deciding to do so of its own volition, or as a result of a request from a parish council or local residents. The relevant powers are contained within the body of the report. The legal risk is therefore low.

#### **Financial**

3.5 There are no significant financial implications as these reviews can be carried out in house and the costs covered by existing budgets. The financial risk is assessed as low.

### **4. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

4.1 In preparation of this report, the relevance of the following factors has also been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equalities,

environmental, climate change, health, human rights, personnel and property.

- 4.2 The approved Climate Change Impact Assessment Tool has been completed for this report. There are no climate change implications associated with this report.

## **5. CONTACT INFORMATION**

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## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 6.1 None

## **7. ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix 1: Summary of changes to Polling Districts to reflect new warding arrangements.

Appendix 2: Community Governance Review – Terms of Reference.

Appendix 3 - Plan showing the area affected by the proposals to move part of the Parish of South Darley to the Parish of Matlock.

Appendix 4 – Comments made in representations received.