

Wilmslow area (Chorley, Handforth, Styal and Wilmslow)

Wilmslow, Chorley and Handforth

At the boundary between the existing parishes of Handforth and Styal, there will be a housing development of 185 properties between Clay Lane and Sagars Road (Local Plan Strategy Site LPS 34) which will have an estimated 330 electors by 2025. This development would increase the electorate of the parish of Handforth to an estimated 5,814 by 2025. The new development is adjacent to the existing Handforth settlement area and so will form part of the wider community of Wilmslow - Handforth. As this development is not adjacent to Styal village, it is not considered that this will form part of the Styal community. It is therefore proposed that this area should be transferred from the parish of Styal to the proposed enlarged parish of Wilmslow, which the Borough Council also proposes to include the existing parish of Handforth (see below).

Map 14 (“Handforth”) and Map 36 (“Styal”) in Appendix 5 show the extent of the area that would be transferred (the orange shaded “potential expansion area” within the parish of Styal).

The electors of the parish of Styal vote at Styal Sports and Social Club. The electors of Handforth Parish Council’s West ward vote at two locations: Meriton Road Pavilion and Handforth Grange Primary School.

It should be noted that the electorate forecasts and the proposals set out in this Review have not taken account of any Handforth Garden Village development occurring by 2025. (The Garden Village site lies predominantly in the parish’s East ward, with the remainder located in the South ward.) This is due to the fact that, at the time the Community Governance Review electorate forecasts were produced (early 2019), the Borough Council did not expect any houses to be built on the Garden Village site by the end of 2025 (that is, within the period for which the Borough Council is required by legislation to give consideration to changes in electoral numbers). As such, the electorate forecasts were based on the latest evidence available to the Borough Council at that time.

The Borough Council’s latest (2019/20) Housing Monitoring Update (HMU), which was published in March 2021, forecasts a total of 150 completed homes on the Garden Village site by the end of March 2025. Taking the average number of electors per property for Handforth borough ward (forecast to be 1.591 by 2025) and applying that to the 150 figure, the Borough Council estimates that there would be around 250 electors living on the Garden Village site by the end of March 2025. However, given the Draft Recommendations timetable, it was not feasible for the Community Governance Review electorate forecasts for Handforth to be updated to take account the 2019/20 HMU forecast; nor was it feasible for the Review’s proposals to take account of this latest

evidence. The HMU forecast, in any case, does not cover the final nine months (April-December) of the Review's electorate forecasting period.

Apart from the HMU-derived estimate of 250 Garden Village electors by March 2025, the electorate forecasts and the proposals presented in this Review do not, therefore, factor in the evidence from the 2019/20 HMU. However, the HMU-based estimate of an additional 250 electors by March 2025 is provided here as additional evidence to help inform consultation responses to this Review.

Cheshire East Council considers that there will be merit in merging the existing parish of Handforth with the parish of Wilmslow as, to all intents and purposes, they form a single community. It will be appropriate to consider whether there should be separate representation of the electors of Handforth on the merged parish council. Handforth's existing parish wards are small (each with less than 2,500 electors even by 2025) compared to Wilmslow's (each more than 3,500). However, as a whole Handforth Parish, with a projected 5,814 electors by 2025, is similar in size to the average Wilmslow ward. There is therefore a good case for making Handforth (including the area proposed to be transferred from Styal) a single parish ward within the merged parishes.

The Council also considers that there will be merit in merging the existing parish of Chorley with the parish of Wilmslow. The existing parish has an electorate of 386 (rising to a projected 394 by 2025) and a precept of £5,000. Questions have arisen with regard to the viability of the parish of Chorley, and only five nominations were received for the Parish Council's seven seats at the ordinary elections in 2019. It is therefore proposed that this area should also be transferred to the proposed enlarged parish of Wilmslow.

The electors of the parish of Chorley vote at Chorley Village Hall. The electors of Wilmslow Town Council's West Ward vote at several locations (depending on which polling district they are in): Lindow Cricket Club; Wilmslow United Reform Church; St Anne's Church Hall; Wilmslow Rugby Club; Wilmslow Guild; and Morley Green Club.

The Council notes that the parish of Chorley already lies in the Wilmslow West and Chorley borough ward, and it is considered that the same warding arrangement should apply for the purposes of elections to the merged parish council and that the same parish ward name should be used.

To all intents and purposes, this will be a new parish, comprising the merged parishes of Wilmslow, Handforth and Chorley. The Borough Council proposes that the name of the new parish should be Wilmslow, but it welcomes proposals on this point.

The Borough Council notes that the council of the parish of Wilmslow has historically used the style of ‘town’ in accordance with the Local Government Acts. It will lie at the discretion of the council of the new parish as to whether it would wish to adopt the style of ‘town’ in accordance with Section 245 of the Local Government Act 1972. The Borough Council is confident that this will be the case, but notes that any such recommendation lies outside the remit of this review.

Under its present electoral arrangements, the parish of Wilmslow has a comparatively low number of seats on its parish council for a parish with its electorate and precept. Therefore this review is proposing an increase in the council size from 15 to 20, which will address not only this anomaly but also the merger of Wilmslow with two other parishes (Handforth and Chorley) together with the area being transferred from Styal to form the new parish.

The present governance arrangements are as follows:

| Wilmslow parish/ ward | Councillor no. | Electors (2018) | Ratio of electors per councillor (2018) |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|---|
| Dean Row | 4 | 5,485 | 1,371.3 |
| East | 4 | 3,242 | 810.5 |
| Lacey Green | 2 | 3,564 | 1,782 |
| West | 5 | 7,607 | 1,521.4 |
| Wilmslow total | 15 | 19,898 | 1,326.5 |

| Handforth parish/ ward | Councillor no. | Electors (2018) | Ratio of electors per councillor (2018) |
|------------------------|----------------|-----------------|---|
| East | 2 | 1,661 | 830.5 |
| South | 2 | 1,346 | 673 |
| West | 3 | 2,155 | 718.3 |
| Handforth total | 7 | 5,162 | 737.4 |

| Parish | Councillor no. | Electors (2018) | Ratio of electors per councillor (2018) |
|---------|----------------|-----------------|---|
| Chorley | 7 | 386 | 55.1 |

The proposed governance arrangements are therefore as follows:

| Ward | Councillor no. | Electors (2025) | Ratio of electors per councillor (2025) |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| Dean Row | 4 | 5,774 | 1,443.5 |
| East | 3 | 3,532 | 1,177.3 |
| Lacey Green | 3 | 3,852 | 1,284 |
| West and Chorley | 6 | 7,728 +394 = 8,122 | 1,353.7 |
| Handforth | 4 | 5,484 +330 = 5,814 | 1,453.5 |
| Total | 20 | 27,094 | 1,354.7 |

Map 40 (“Wilmslow/ Handforth/ Chorley merger”) in Appendix 5 shows the proposed new parish and parish ward boundaries.

Styal

This section considers the residual parish of Styal, which will continue following the proposed boundary alteration with the parish of Wilmslow.

The review recognises that the parish of Styal will remain viable following the boundary change that is proposed.

Compared to the national and Cheshire East averages (shown in Table 3.2 of Section 3.2), Styal has a relatively low number of seats for a council of its size. The Borough Council recommends an increase to eight seats which would be consistent with the Borough average for a council with this number of electors.

The current governance arrangements are as follows:

| Councillor no. | Electors (2018) | Ratio of electors per councillor (2018) |
|----------------|-----------------|---|
| 7 | 564 | 80.6 |

The proposed governance arrangements are as follows:

| Councillor no. | Electors (2025) | Ratio of electors per councillor (2025) |
|----------------|-----------------|---|
| 8 | 566 | 70.8 |