

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Governance Committee

Tuesday, 28 November 2023 at 7.00 pm

Councillors Present:

P K Lamb (Chair)

C M Burke, D Crow, M G Jones, R A Lanzer, T Lunnon, K McCarthy, S Pritchard, T Rana and S Sivarajah

Officers Present:

Ian Duke	Chief Executive
Mez Matthews	Democratic Services Officer
Chris Pedlow	Democracy & Data Manager
Jill Rozier	Lead Electoral Services Officer

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor J Bounds

Absent:

Councillor G S Jhans

1. Disclosures of Interest

No disclosures of interests were made.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Governance Committee held on 11 September 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Public Question Time

No questions were asked by the public.

4. Findings of the Reviews of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations (2023)

The Committee considered report [CEX/066](#) of the Chief Executive / Returning Officer which requested that the Committee contemplate the Returning Officer's proposal for the polling arrangements for Crawley following the statutory required review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations.

In presenting the report the Democracy and Data Manager highlighted that the only change in polling places proposed was for Ifield Ward where it was recommended that The Mill Primary Academy no longer be used as a polling station. The rationale for that proposal was as a consequence of the comments received by the school and that accessibility onto the school grounds was not adequate for voters with disabilities. There was no parking on the road outside the polling station, limited access to the premises carpark and the distance from the entrance from the road to the entrance of the polling station all made voting difficult for the electorate. The Committee was reminded that the Elections Act 2022 stated that "Returning Officers have a general responsibility to take all reasonable steps to support voters with disabilities". The Committee appreciated the rationale for no longer using The Mill Primary Academy as a polling place and supported the change as set out in the report.

The Committee acknowledged that the necessary renovations to the former Creasys Drive Adventure Playground building should be completed in readiness for the building's use as a polling station for the scheduled May 2024 election. The Committee was pleased that a sustainable solution had been found for polling places in Broadfield Ward.

RESOLVED

1. The Committee endorsed the proposed Polling Places and Polling Stations location and Scheme as detailed in Appendix A to these minutes, which propose the continuation of all current locations, with the exception of Ifield Ward, where it is proposed to not use the Mill school as a polling Station.
2. To recommend to the Full Council that it adopt the new polling arrangements, with the Electoral Register amended to reflect new scheme commencing on 1 February 2024.

5. Elections Act 2022: Tranche Two Update

A presentation was given to the Committee on Tranche 2 of the Elections Act 2022.

In response to queries raised by the Committee clarification was provided on elements of online application processes, the rules relating to handing in postal votes at a polling station, and various scenarios when an elector might need assistance in casting their vote.

Additionally, the Committee:

- Noted that, whilst a business grant had been received to assist with the initial set up relating to the requirements of the Act, the Council did not expect to receive any further ongoing financial assistance.

- Was advised that the length of time a postal vote would be in effect before it needed to be renewed had been reduced to 3 years to help prevent fraud and crime.
- Acknowledged that detailed information relating to some processes, including the type/level of polling station data electoral candidates and agents would be entitled to was yet to be provided.
- Was assured that alternative options were available for voters without internet access and/or those without a National Insurance Number or other valid identification. The Lead Electoral Services Officer emphasised that they would provide additional support and information to those such individuals to ensure that everyone eligible to register to vote was able to.
- Was provided with more information on the provisions available within the polling station to assist those with a visual impairment. The Committee was encouraged to seek the assistance of a Presiding Officer on the day of poll if necessary as they would be able to assist any elector who might need additional assistance.

The Committee was informed that a copy of the presentation would be published in the Councillors' Information Bulletin.

RESOLVED

That the information provided in the presentation be noted.

6. Changes to the Constitution

The Committee considered report [LDS/209](#) of the Head of Governance, People & Performance which proposed various changes to the Constitution.

Further clarification was sought and provided on the rationale for the proposed changes. The Committee subsequently expressed its support for the proposals.

RESOLVED

The Full Council be requested to agree the amendments to the Constitution set out in Appendix B to these minutes.

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Governance Committee concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.46 pm

P K Lamb (Chair)

Appendix A

Bewbush & North Broadfield Ward

Polling District LAA

No Change Proposed

Polling Place: Bewbush Centre Dorsten Square.

Electors: 6132

Postal Voters: 1098

Polling District LAB

No Change Proposed

Polling Place: Broadfield Scout Hut, Seymour Road.

Electors: 921

Postal Voters: 206

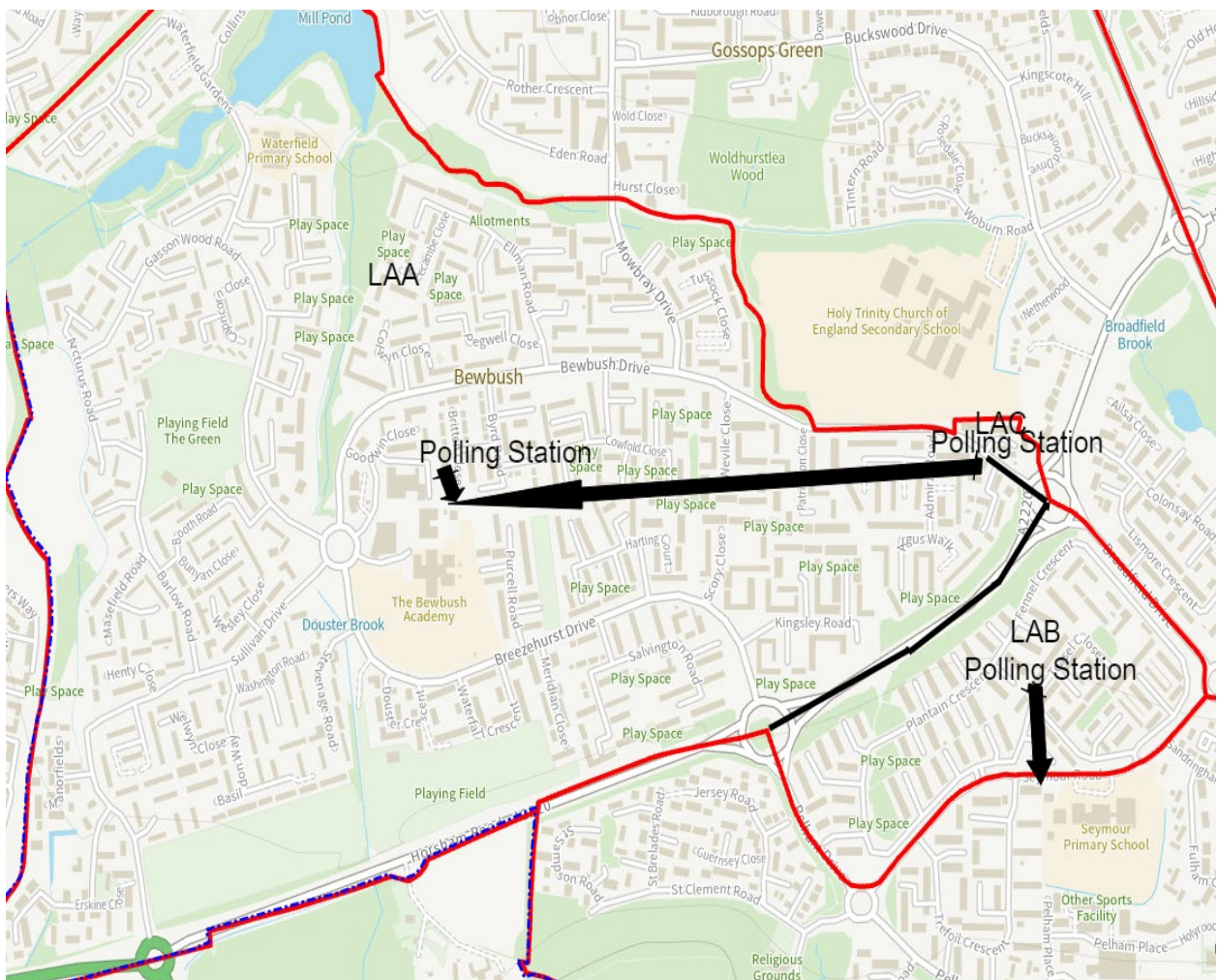
Polling District LAC

No Change Proposed

Polling Place: Bewbush Centre, Dorsten Square.

Electors: 37

Postal Voters: 5



Broadfield Ward

Polling District LBA

No Change Proposed

Polling Place: Broadfield Youth and Community Centre Broadfield Barton.

Electors: 4585

Postal Voters: 905

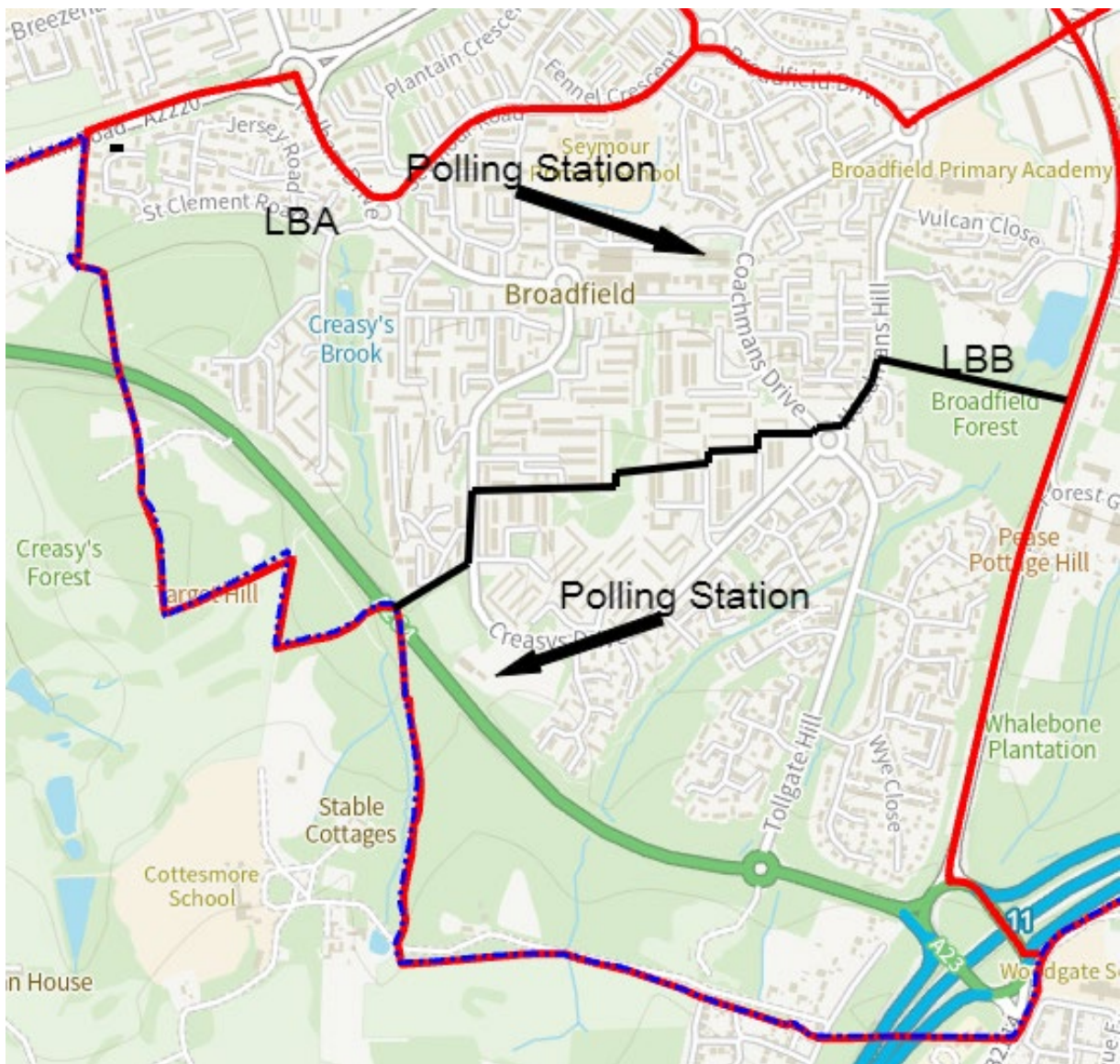
Polling District LBB

No Change Proposed

Polling Place: Creasy's Drive Adventure Playground, Creasy's Drive

Electors: 2684

Postal Voters: 684



Furnace Green Ward

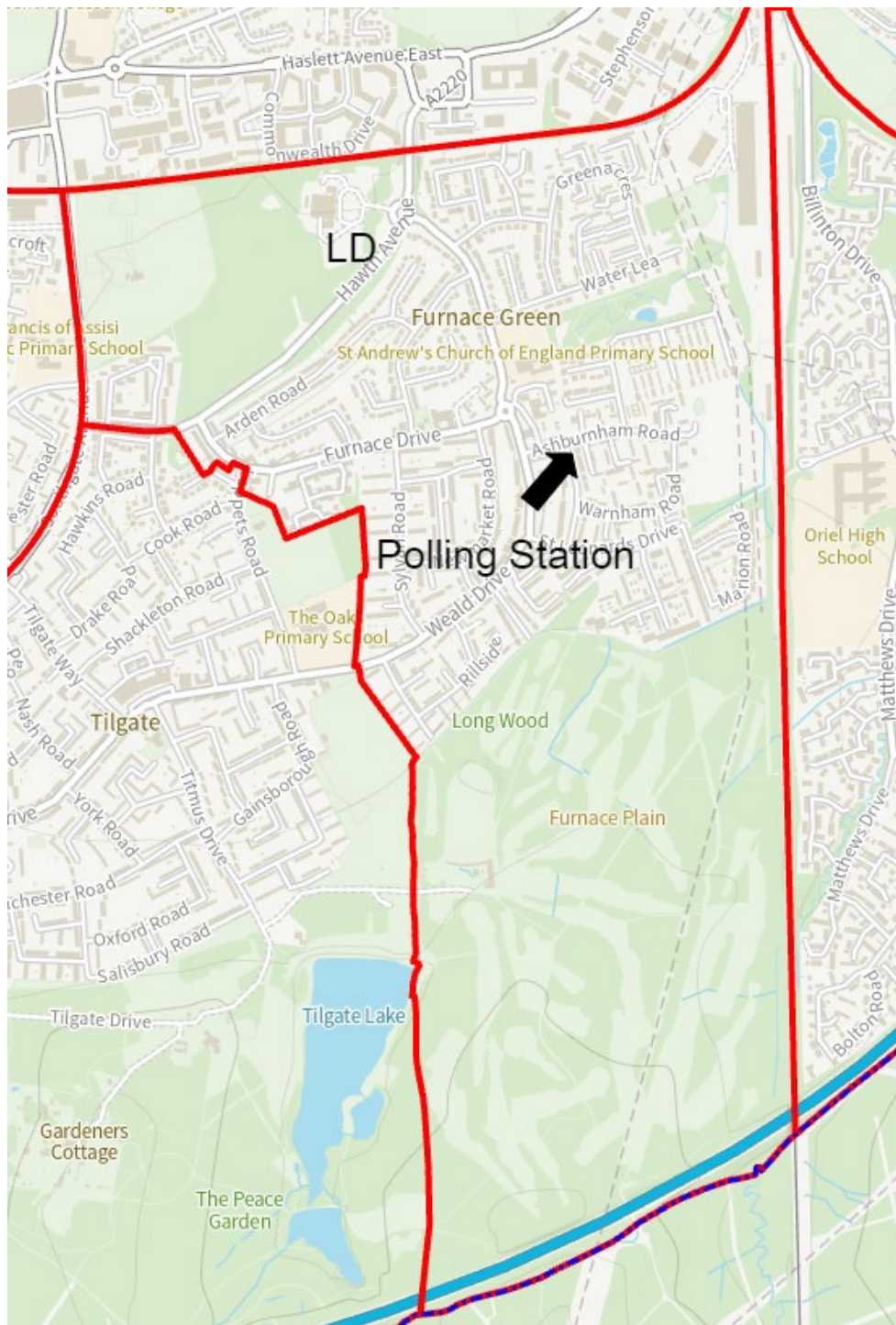
Polling District LD

No Change Proposed

Polling Place: Furnace Green Community Centre,
Ashburnham Road.

Electors: 4444

Postal Voters: 1141



Gossops Green & Northeast Broadfield Ward

Polling District LEA

No Change Proposed

Polling Place: Gossops Green Community Centre,
Capel Lane.

Electors: 3863

Postal Voters: 899

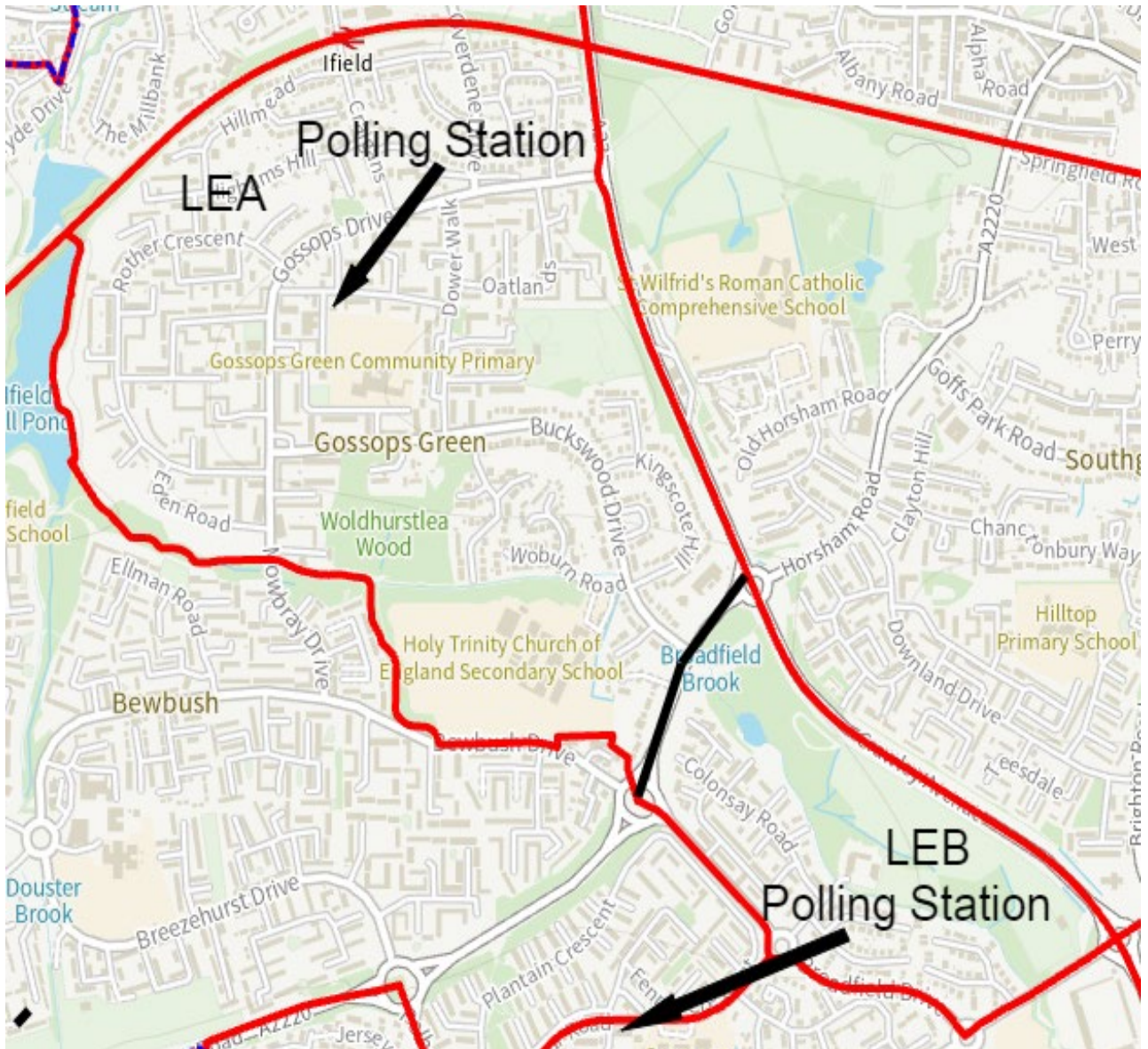
Polling District LEB

No Change Proposed

Polling Place: Broadfield Scout Hut, Seymour Road.

Electors: 794

Postal Voters: 280



Ifield Ward

Polling District LFA

Change Proposed

Polling Place: Ifield Community Centre, Ifield Drive.

Electors: 4308

Postal Voters: 1040

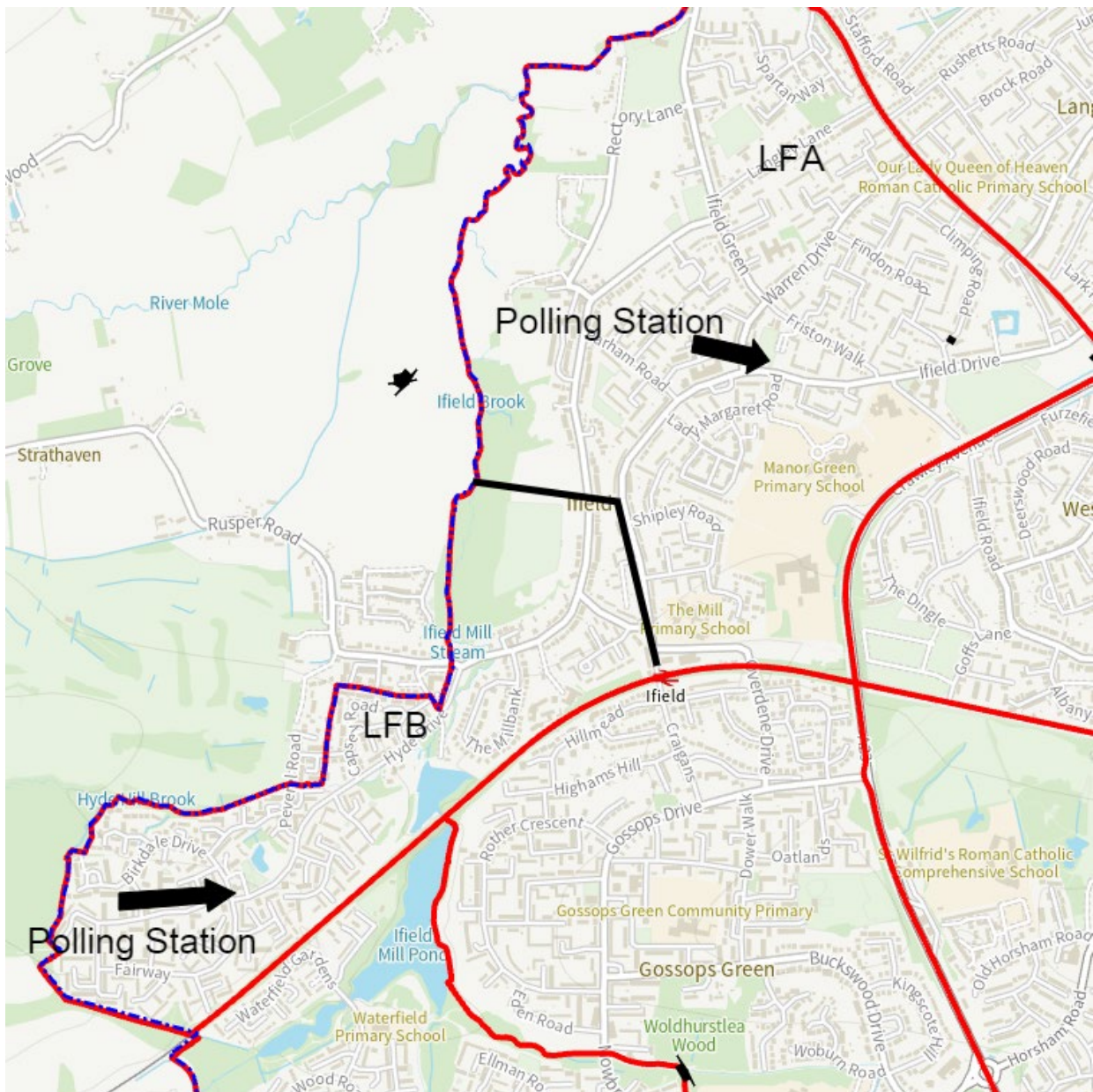
Polling District LFB

Change Proposed

Polling Place: Wybourne Community Centre, Hyde Drive.

Electors: 2820

Postal Voters: 580



Langley Green & Tushmore Ward

Polling District LGA

No Change Proposed

Polling Place: The Langley Centre, Stagelands.

Electors: 5529

Postal Voters: 987

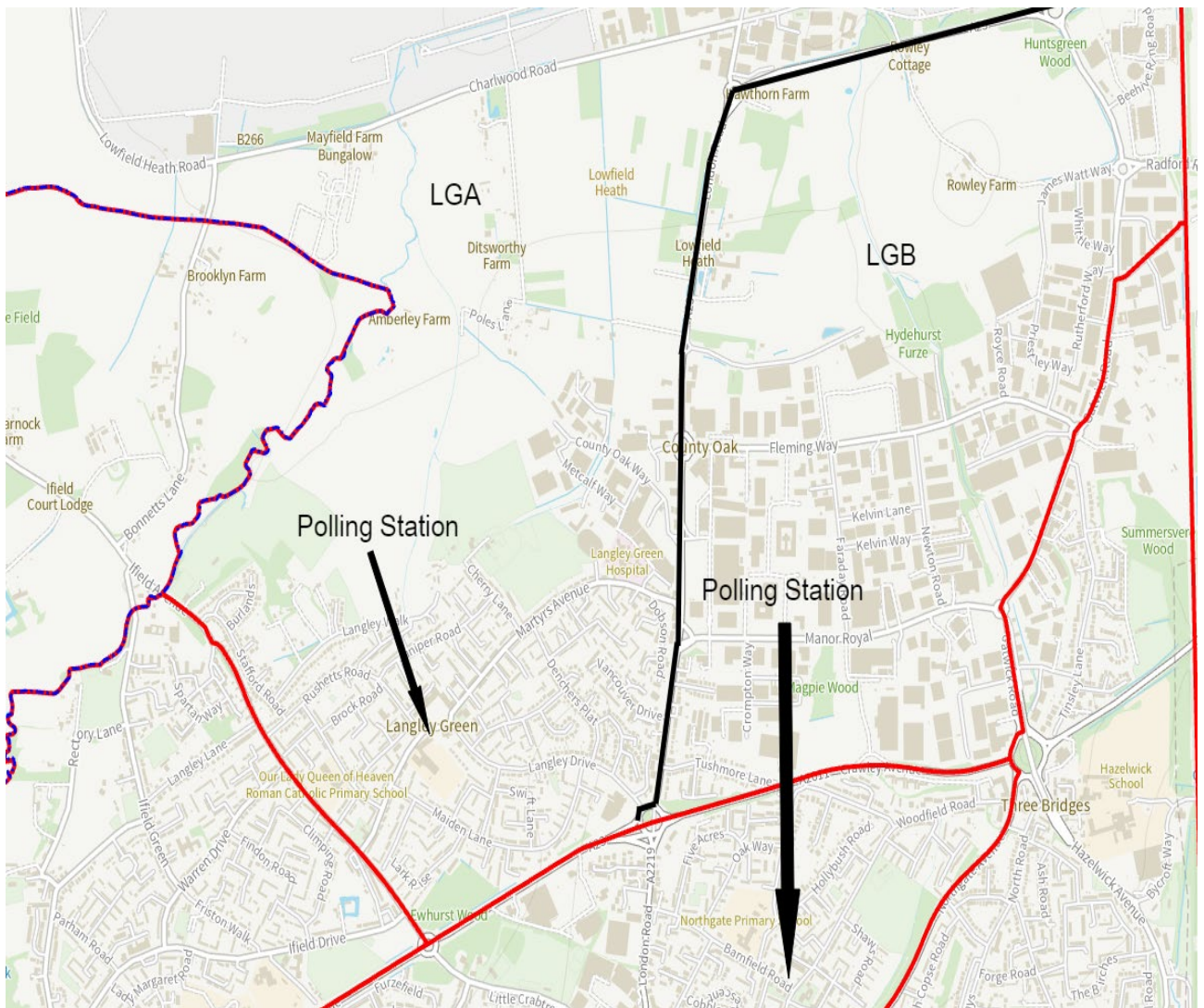
Polling District LGB

No Change Proposed

Polling Place: Northgate Community Centre, Barnfield Road.

Electors: 508

Postal Voters: 110



Maidenbower Ward

Polling District LHA *No Change Proposed*

Polling Place: Maidenbower Community Centre,
Harvest Road.

Electors: 2829

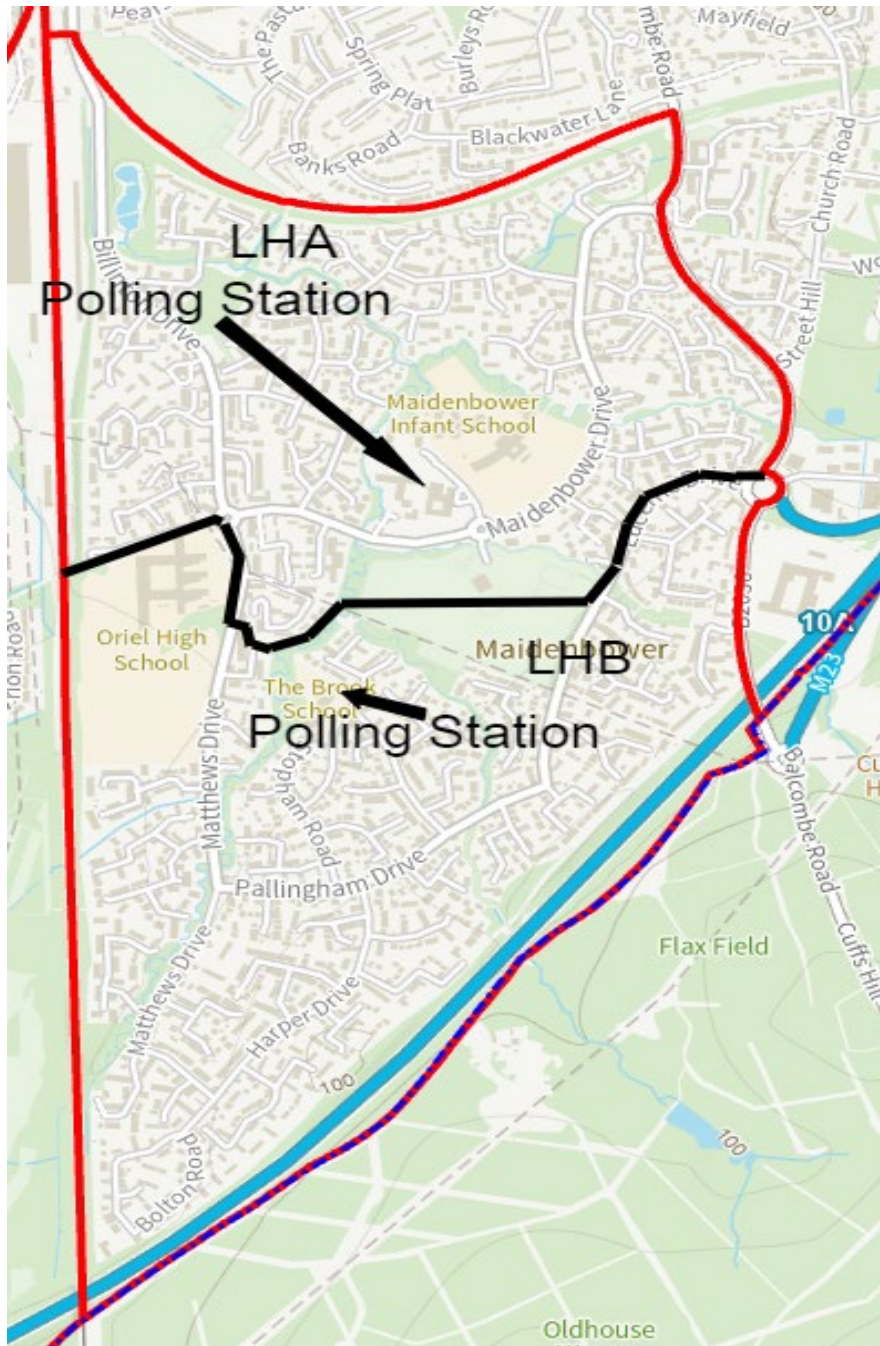
Postal Voters: 659

Polling District LHB *No Change Proposed*

Polling Place: The Brook School, Salterns Road.

Electors: 3904

Postal Voters: 1105



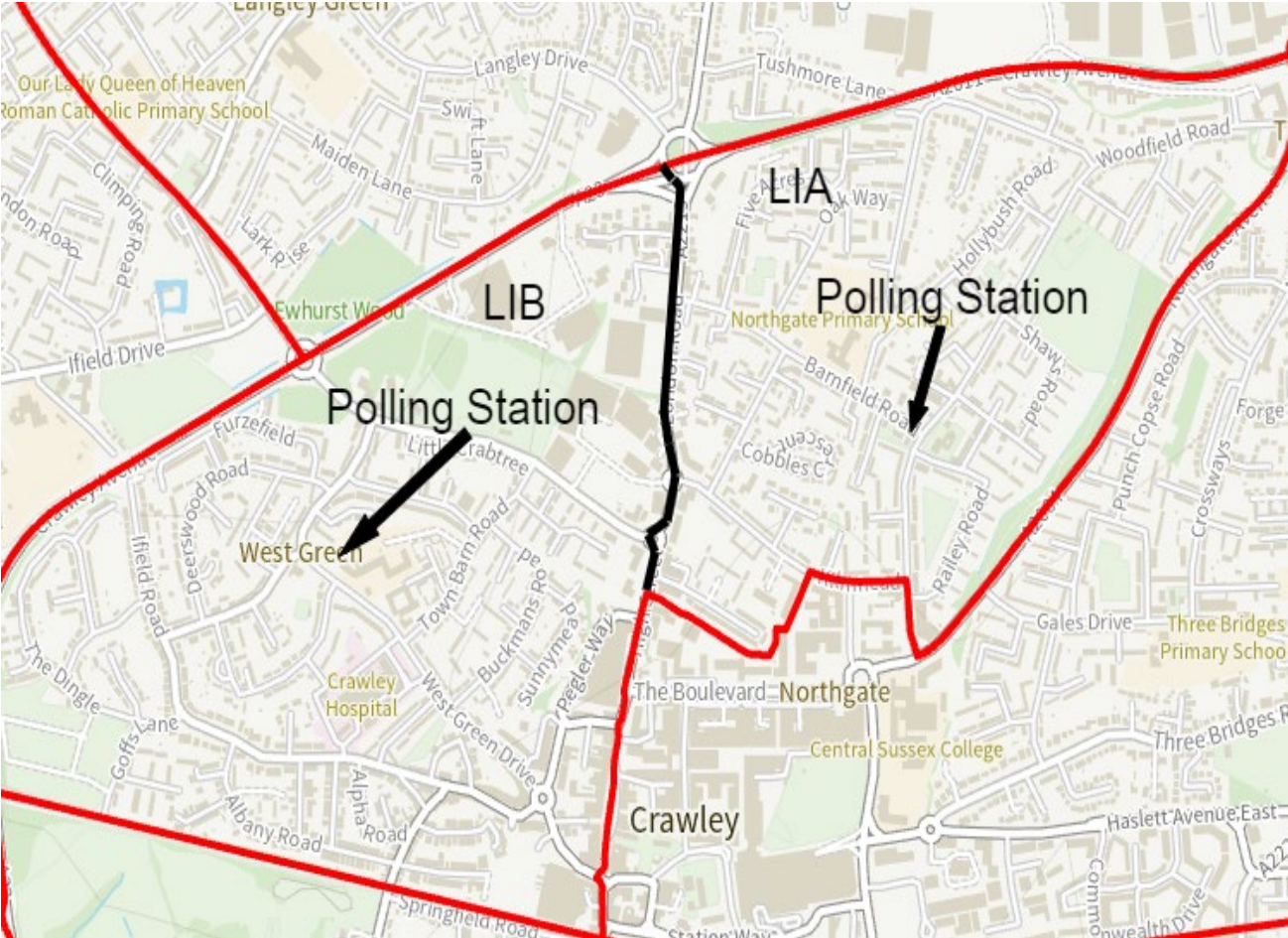
Northgate & West Green Ward

Polling District LIA *No Change Proposed*

Polling Place: Northgate Community Centre, Barnfield Road.
Electors: 3475
Postal Voters: 674

Polling District LIB *No Change Proposed*

Polling Place: The Charis Centre, West Green
Electors: 4136
Postal Voters: 877



Pound Hill North & Forge Wood Ward

Polling District LJA

No Change Proposed

Polling Place: Grattons Indoor Bowls Club, Grattons Drive.

Electors: 2912

Postal Voters: 712

Polling District LJB

No Change Proposed

Polling Place: Wakehams Green Community Centre,
Wakehams Green Drive.

Electors: 1685

Postal Voters: 305

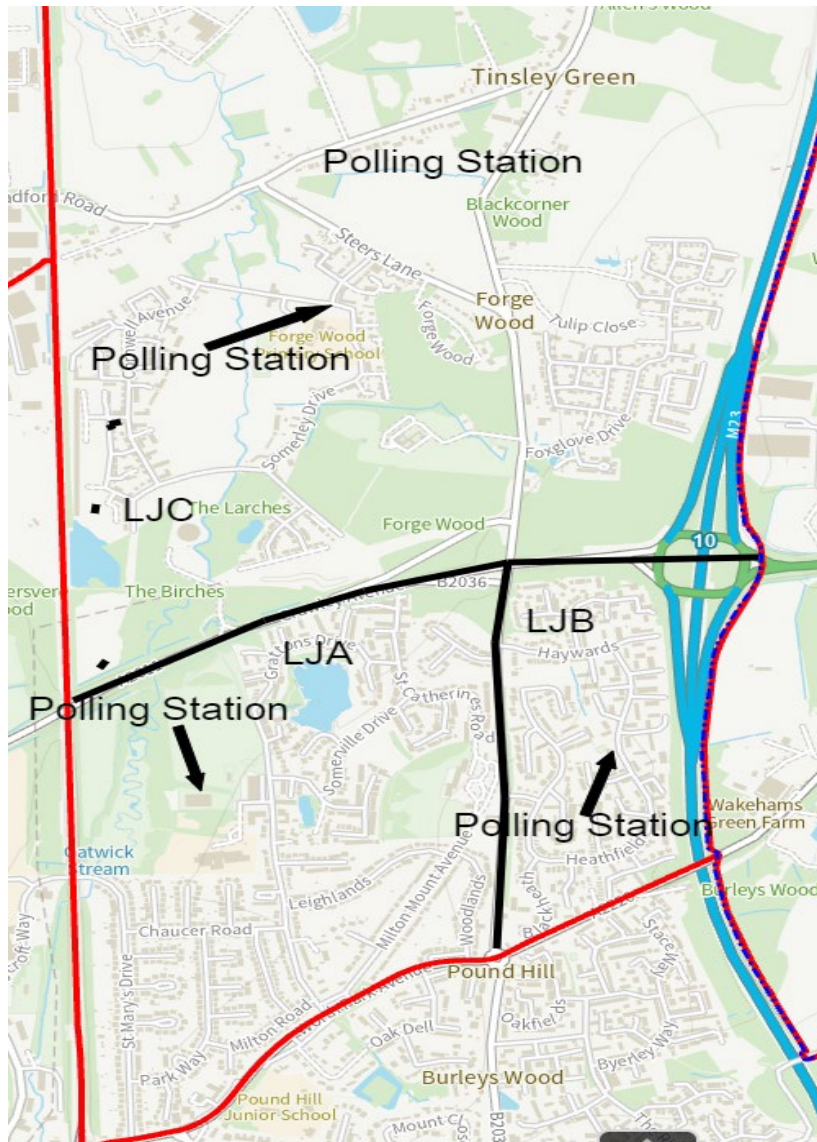
Polling District LJC

No Change Proposed

Polling Place: Forge Wood Community Centre, Somerley Drive

Electors: 2477

Postal Voters: 577



Pound Hill South & Worth Ward

Polling District LKA

No Change Proposed

Polling Place: Pound Hill Community Centre, Worth Road.

Electors: 2767

Postal Voters: 615

Polling District LKB

No Change Proposed

Polling Place: St. Edward the Confessor Church Hall,
Hillcrest Close.

Electors: 1131

Postal Voters: 282

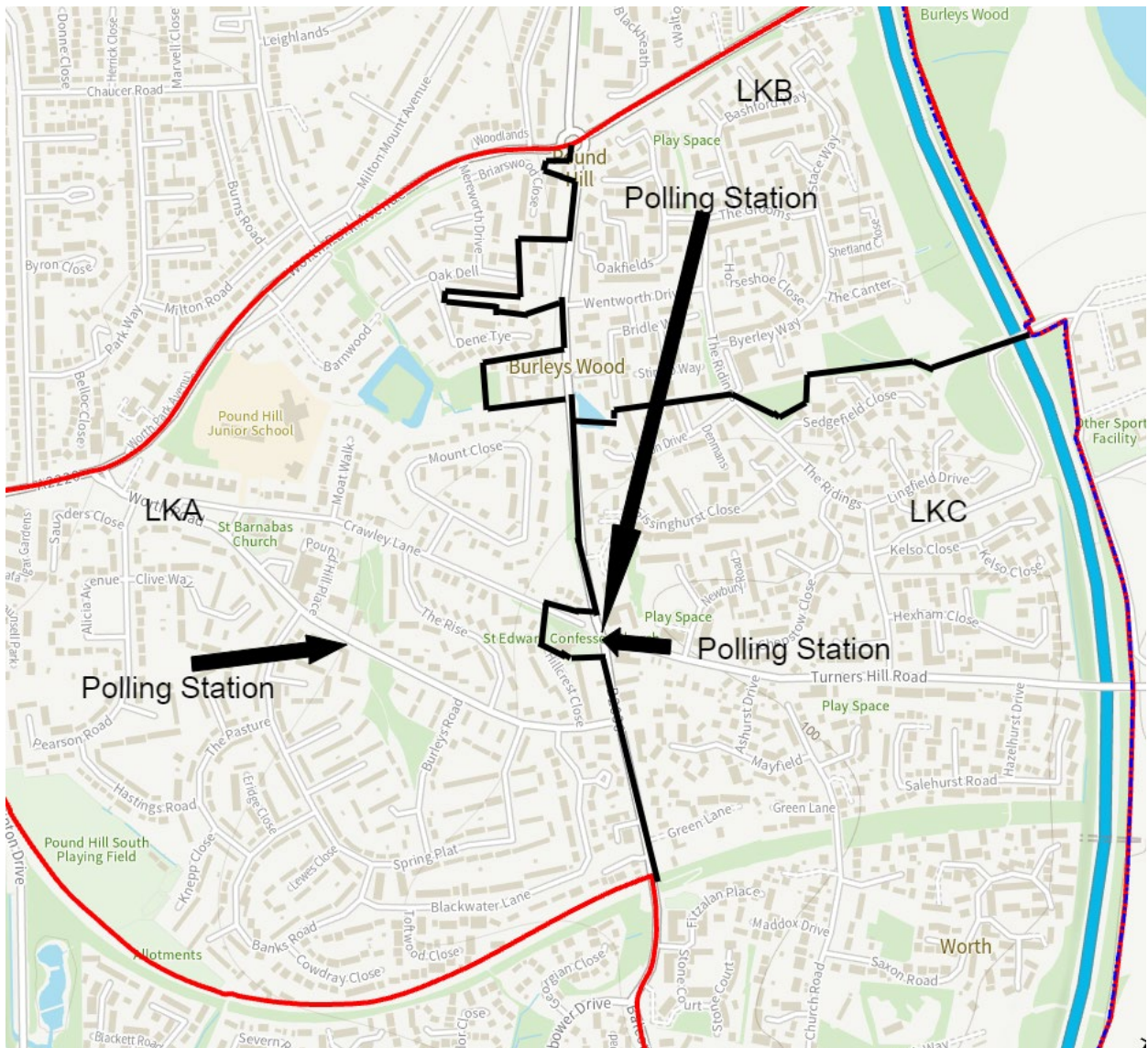
Polling District LKC

No Change Proposed

Polling Place: St. Edward the Confessor Church Hall,
Hillcrest Close.

Electors: 2308

Postal Voters: 651



Southgate Ward

Polling District LLA

No Change Proposed

Polling Place: St Marys Church Hall, Wakehurst Drive.

Electors: 3000

Postal Voters: 734

Polling District LLB

No Change Proposed

Polling Place: Southgate Community Centre, Ditchling Hill.

Electors: 2909

Postal Voters: 850

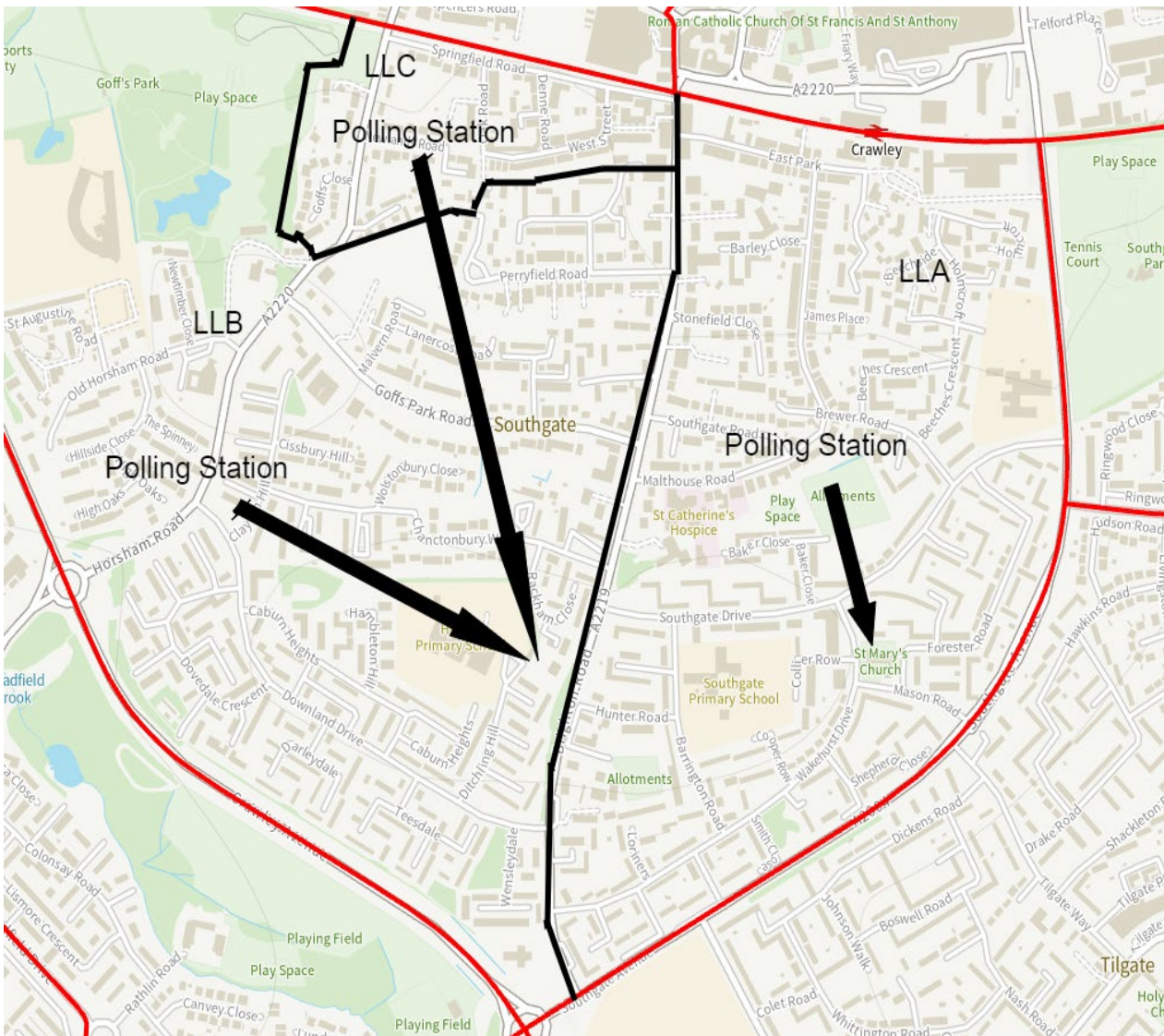
Polling District LLC

No Change Proposed

Polling Place: Southgate Community Centre, Ditchling Hill.

Electors: 648

Postal Voters: 195



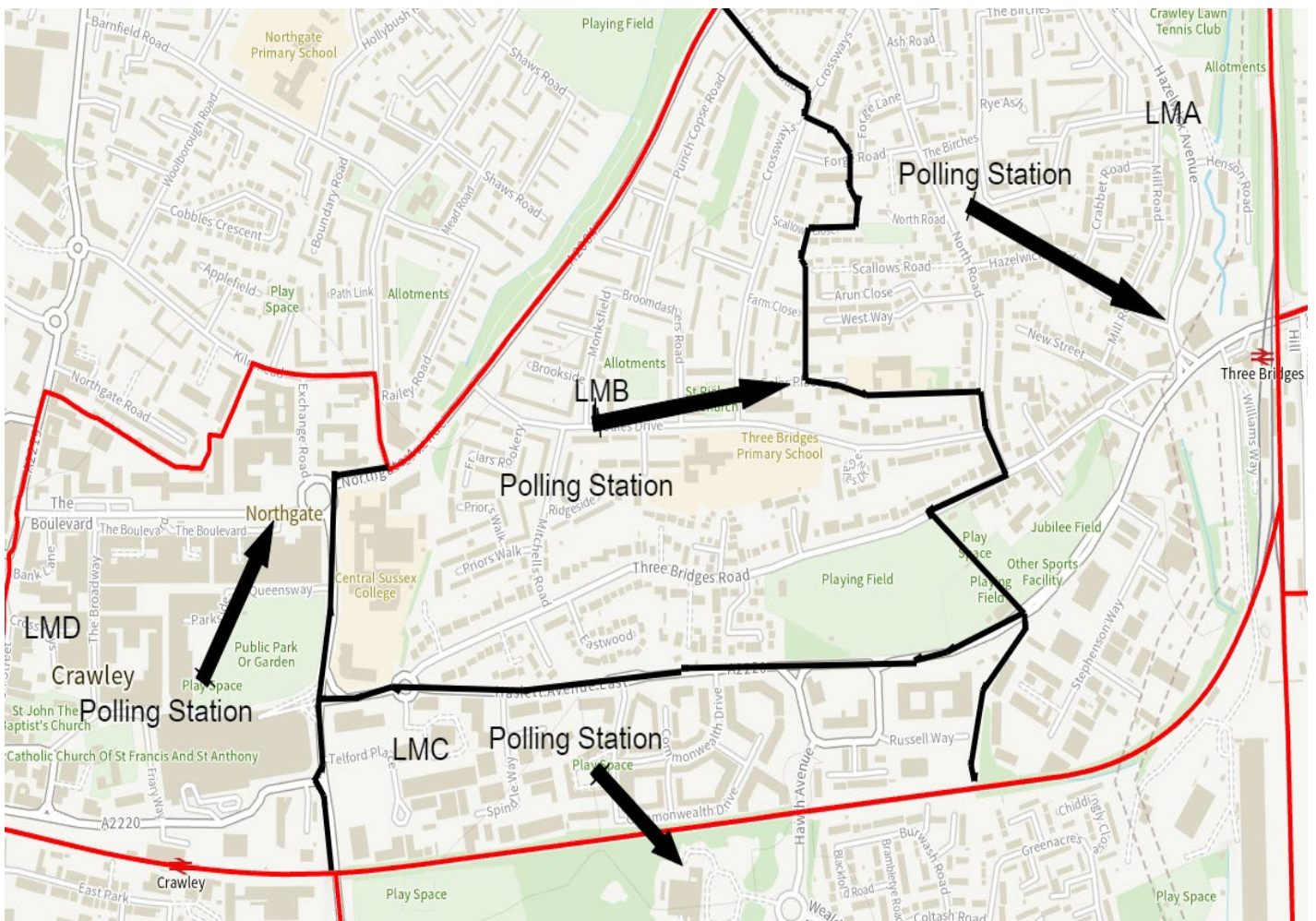
Three Bridges Ward

Polling District LMA *No Change Proposed*
Polling Place: Montefiore Institute, Hazelwick Road.
Electors: 2759
Postal Voters: 703

Polling District LMB *No Change Proposed*
Polling Place: Three Bridges Community Centre, Gales Place.
Electors: 1875
Postal Voters: 504

Polling District LMC *No Change Proposed*
Polling Place: The Hawth, Hawth Avenue.
Electors: 1323
Postal Voters: 267

Polling District LMD *No Change Proposed*
Polling Place: Town Hall, The Boulevard
Electors: 590
Postal Voters: 104



Tilgate Ward

Polling District LNA

No Change Proposed

Polling Place: Tilgate Community Centre, Shackleton Road.

Electors: 2358

Postal Voters: 507

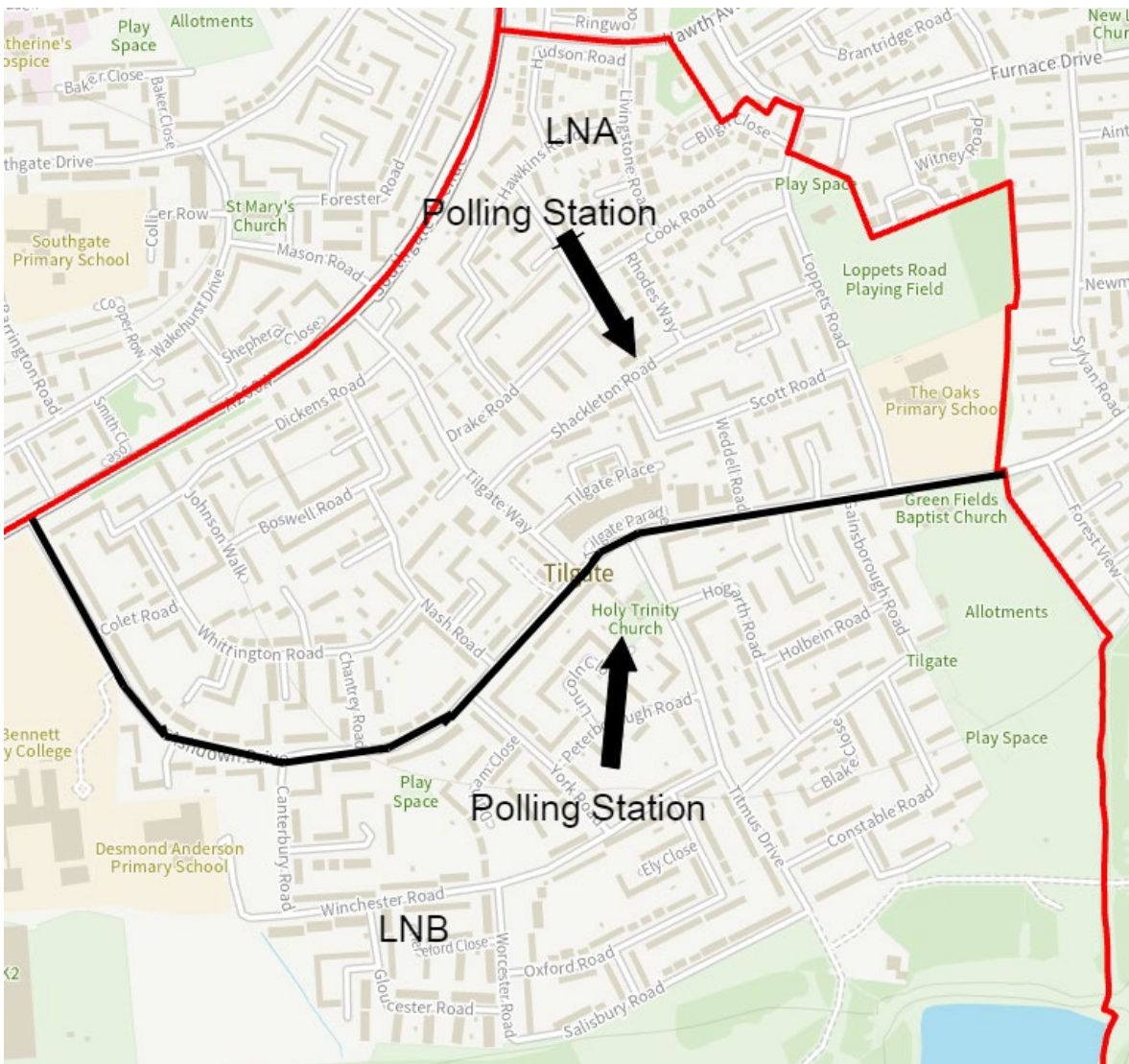
Polling District LNB

No Change Proposed

Polling Place: Holy Trinity Church Hall, Titmus Drive.

Electors: 2049

Postal Voters: 379



Appendix B

CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

Function	Amendment	Reason for Amendment
<p>Council Officer Responsibilities and Decision Making (page 70)</p> <p>(DC/GB)</p>	<p>Amend Generic Delegation 5 as follows:</p> <p>“Matters in respect of consultations:</p> <p>a) Approval of documents for public/stakeholder consultation, the carrying out of consultation, responding to consultation in line with this Council’s Protocol, adoption of documents following consultation and the submission of documents to the appropriate authority.</p> <p>b) Responding to consultation documents where the views of local authorities are sought generally. (NB. All responses from the Council as Local Planning Authority to plans and proposals (including proposed Traffic Regulation Orders) submitted by other Local Authorities are reserved to the Head of Economy and Planning.) A copy of the response to consultations submitted shall be published in the Councillors’ Information Bulletin.</p> <p>c) Prior to submission, any officer must consult the Head of Community Services on any proposed Traffic Regulation Orders.”</p>	<p>To ensure that officers with the appropriate expertise are consulted before applications for Traffic Regulation Orders are submitted to West Sussex County Council.</p> <p>Head of Economy and Planning has confirmed they do not feel it is relevant to their role now and would be better aligned with the Head of Community Services.</p> <p><i>NB each Chief Officer’s Sub-Delegation Scheme will need to be amended to reflect any amended wording.</i></p>
<p>Full Council Procedure Rules (page 83)</p> <p>(MM/CP)</p>	<p>Amend Rule 7.2 as follows:</p> <p>“Quorum: The quorum of a Full Council meeting shall be more than one third of the Councillors of the Council (13). If a meeting remains inquorate 15 minutes after its scheduled start time, an officer (usually a member of the Democratic Services team) will announce that the meeting is inquorate and those present will be requested to informally</p>	<p>Whilst the Constitution states the quorum for each meeting it does not provide guidance on the process should a meeting be inquorate. This amendment will provide that guidance.</p>

Function	Amendment	Reason for Amendment
	<p>agree to either reconvene at a later date or defer items on the agenda to a future scheduled meeting.”</p>	
<p>General Committee Procedure Rules (page 92) (MM/CP)</p>	<p>Amend Rule 8.2 as follows:</p> <p>“Quorum: The quorum of a Committee meeting shall be one quarter of the whole number of Councillors rounded up where necessary to the next number and no less than three Councillors. Specific quorum requirements relating to the Employment Panel are set out in its functions (Section 1 of this Constitution). The attendance of the Independent Member to the Audit Committee shall not be taken into account when calculating the quorum at Audit Committee meetings.</p> <p>“If a meeting remains inquorate 15 minutes after its scheduled start time, an officer (usually a member of the Democratic Services team) will announce that the meeting is inquorate and those present will be requested to informally agree to either reconvene at a later date or defer items on the agenda to a future scheduled meeting.”</p>	<p>Whilst the Constitution states the quorum for each meeting it does not provide guidance on the process should a meeting be inquorate. This amendment will provide that guidance.</p>
<p>Scrutiny Procedure Rules (page 128) (MM/CP)</p>	<p>Amend Rule 10.2 as follows:</p> <p>“Quorum: The quorum of a Commission or Scrutiny Panel meeting shall be one quarter of the whole number of Councillors rounded up where necessary to the next number and no less than three Councillors. If a meeting remains inquorate 15 minutes after its scheduled start time, an officer (usually a member of the Democratic Services team) will announce that the meeting is inquorate and those present will be requested to informally agree to either reconvene at a later date or defer items on the agenda to a future scheduled meeting.”</p>	<p>Whilst the Constitution states the quorum for each meeting it does not provide guidance on the process should a meeting be inquorate. This amendment will provide that guidance.</p>

Function	Amendment	Reason for Amendment
<p>Cabinet Procedure Rules (page 139)</p> <p>(MM/CP)</p>	<p>Amend Rule 3.2 as follows:</p> <p>“Membership, the Chair and Quorum: The Cabinet will consist of the Leader and their Cabinet Members with the Leader chairing the meeting, in their absence the Deputy Leader shall act as Chair. The quorum of the Cabinet is three. If a meeting remains inquorate 15 minutes after its scheduled start time, an officer (usually a member of the Democratic Services team) will announce that the meeting is inquorate and those present will be requested to informally agree to either reconvene at a later date or defer items on the agenda to a future scheduled meeting.”</p>	<p>Whilst the Constitution states the quorum for each meeting it does not provide guidance on the process should a meeting be inquorate. This amendment will provide that guidance.</p>
<p>Financial and Budget Procedure Rules (page 166)</p> <p>(CM)</p>	<p>Amend Section J (Financial Approval Levels and Procurement Thresholds) section of the Rules as set out in the Appendix 1).</p>	<p>The virement limits have remained at £50k for a significant number of years. This can result in significant delay in operational virements to be actioned. The proposed increase in limit will improve the effectiveness of the process. Virements will continue to be summarised in the quarterly budget monitoring reports for transparency. It should be noted that any virement which require more scrutiny will continue to be cascaded to Cabinet or Full Council where appropriate regardless of value.</p>

Function	Amendment	Reason for Amendment
Petitions Scheme (page 230) (CP)	Add the following wording under Paragraph 3 (What will Happen with Petitions): “3.3 The Petitions Officer may delay the progress of a relevant petition to a formal Council meeting if its consideration would fall during the Pre-Election Period (period of heightened sensitivity) and could be deemed politically sensitive.”	This will allow the Monitoring Officer to delay progress if they believe the issue should not be considered during Purdah.

Appendix 1

J. FINANCIAL APPROVAL LEVELS AND PROCUREMENT THRESHOLDS

Financial Approval Levels

	Budget Transfers (Virements)		Redundancies/early retirement	Supplementary Estimate		Purchase land/property	Asset Disposal	Write-offs	Sale of land
	Revenue	Capital		Revenue	Capital				
Heads of Service	£50,000 within service area, no future commitment	£50,000 within service area					£10,000		
Head of Corporate Finance	£50,000 £100,000 across the Council, no future commitment	£50,000 across the Council	£500,000			<i>For investment:</i> Within the limits of the Investment Acquisition Reserve	£10,000 - £50,000	Up to £2,500	Up to £25,000
Head of Crawley Homes in agreement with the Head of Corporate Finance *						<i>For housing delivery **:</i> Within the limits of the Housing Revenue Account Budget			

	Budget Transfers (Virements)		Redundancies/early retirement	Supplementary Estimate		Purchase land/property	Asset Disposal	Write-offs	Sale of land
	Revenue	Capital		Revenue	Capital				
Head of Strategic Housing in agreement with the Head of Corporate Finance *						<i>For temporary accommodation **: Within the limits of the Temporary Accommodation Acquisitions Budget</i>			
Leader								£2,500 - £50,000	£25,000 - £200,000
Cabinet	Over £100,000, £50,000 or and up to £100,000 future commitment	Over £50,000		Up to £100,000 per request, up to maximum of £500,000 per annum	Up to £500,000 per scheme		Over £50,000	Over £50,000	Over £200,000
Full Council	Future commitment above £100,000			Over £100,000	Over £500,000				

* In consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member and the Leader.

** Each acquisition must be assessed on its individual merits and may include, but is not limited to, the following options:

- a) Council-owned land to be delivered in-house.
- b) Land acquisitions to be progressed in-house.
- c) Joint Venture developments with investors, developers or housing associations.
- d) Off-plan and off-market acquisitions to be delivered on 'turnkey' basis.
- e) S106 affordable housing within market-led schemes.
- f) Securing additional affordable housing within market-led schemes.
- g) Securing 'off-the-shelf' schemes that are nearing completion.
- h) 'Flipping' tenures on existing S106 schemes.
- i) Land or schemes under auction on the market.
- j) Step-in arrangements to complete schemes that are at risk.
- k) Institutionally funded schemes on a lease-back basis.