



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Boundary Review Committee

Thursday 20 July 2023

6.00 pm

The Telford Room, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way,
Telford, TF3 4NT

Democratic Services: Sam Yarnall 01952 382193

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Committee Members: Councillors H Morgan (Chair), G C W Latham-Reynolds (Vice-Chair), K T Blundell, E M Callear, L D Carter, R A Overton and G Thomas

Agenda

Page

5.0 Community Governance Review for the Borough of Telford & Wrekin 3 - 18

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Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
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Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Boundary Review Committee

Thursday 20 July 2023

Community Governance Review for Borough of Telford & Wrekin

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Nathan England - Cabinet Member: Finance, Customer Services & Governance
Lead Director:	Anthea Lowe - Director: Policy & Governance
Service Area:	Policy & Governance
Report Author:	Richard Phillips - Service Delivery Manager, Legal & Democracy
Officer Contact Details:	Tel: 01952 383241 Email: richard.phillips@telford.gov.uk
Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Not Key Decision
Forward Plan:	Not Applicable
Report considered by:	Boundary Review Committee – 20 July 2023

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Boundary Review Committee: -

- 1.1 Agrees to commence a Community Governance Review, subject to final terms of reference and consultation documents; and
- 1.2 Delegates authority to the Director: Policy & Governance to prepare final terms of reference and consultation documents for consideration at a future meeting of Boundary Review Committee.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information to members of the Committee in relation to Community Governance Reviews ('CGR') and to consider the

arrangements that are needed to provide efficient and effective electoral arrangements across Town and Parish Councils within the Borough.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Following the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's ('LGBCE') review of electoral arrangements within the Borough of Telford and Wrekin in 2022, changes were made to the Borough's boundaries. In places, this has meant that Borough ward boundaries are no longer coterminous with the ward boundaries of Town and Parish Councils across the Borough.
- 3.2 There has been no Borough-wide Community Governance Review since the late 1980s, with smaller reviews taking place in relation to discrete, defined areas. This review would therefore be the first time since then, that considerations have been given to reviewing the arrangements for Town and Parish Councils across the entire Borough.
- 3.3 Since that time, there has been significant population growth in many areas of the Borough. Whilst there have been many reviews of the Borough's electoral arrangements in the intervening period, the arrangement of Town and Parish Councils has not been scrutinised. Undertaking a CGR will provide an opportunity to ensure that our Town and Parish Councils are organised and constituted in such a way as to ensure they reflect our communities across the Borough.
- 3.4 Finally, the current ward arrangements for some Town and Parish Councils are such that they do not provide for effective and efficient electoral administration and a CGR would give the opportunity to address this if deemed appropriate. One example of this, are single member wards of various Town and Parish Councils which, on the face of them, do not necessarily make sense from an administrative or representative point of view.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

- 4.1 The Boundary Review Committee has delegated authority from Full Council, as per the Constitution, to deal with all matters relating to Community Governance Reviews.
- 4.2 The Council has the power to undertake a CGR.
- 4.3 The Council has a duty to keep parish arrangements under review. There are a number of factors which point towards it being sensible to undertake a CGR, namely:

Community Governance Review for Borough of Telford & Wrekin

- Changes made following a review of the Borough Council's boundaries which came into force in late 2022;
- The growth seen in certain parishes; and
- The need to ensure that there is a clear rationale for the organisation and grouping of the Borough's parishes.

4.4 During a CGR, a principal authority has the power, under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, to consider whether it is appropriate to:

- create, merge, alter or dissolve parish councils;
- change or update the naming of parishes and the style of any new parish councils;
- consider the electoral arrangements for parish councils (the ordinary year of election, council size and parish warding);
- group together different parishes under a common parish council or to de-group parishes.

4.4 A CGR must consider the identities and interests of communities and should take account of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.

4.5 As part of the review, it will be necessary for consultees and Officers to ensure that the overall, bigger-picture is considered, so that when the proposals are taken in the round for progression, small changes in one area do not overly impact others. By looking more widely at all of the circumstances, it is hoped that the review will, as far as possible, ensure any proposals brought forward are not simply focussed on small specific issues, but ensure that in the round, the proposals ensure effective representation at Town and Parish levels across the entire Borough.

4.6 Once a decision to undertake a CGR has been made, the Council must publish a Terms of Reference for the review. A draft copy of the proposed Terms of Reference is included for consideration by Members at **Appendix A**.

4.7 An indicative timeline has been set out and included as **Appendix B** to this report. It sets out the proposed dates for the CGR, ensuring sufficient time for wide consultation and time for Officers to prepare recommendations for consideration by Boundary Review Committee. The timetable is also included within the Terms of Reference.

4.8 Relevant parties will be invited to make initial submissions for consideration by the Boundary Review Committee. This is currently scheduled for a period of 3 months to allow sufficient time for any organisation which wishes to make representations to consider the Terms of Reference and make submissions accordingly.

4.9 Officers will then summarise submissions and create working proposals for considerations by Committee. The Committee will be asked to formalise a set of

draft recommendations in relation to any proposed changes to the parishes and the way in which they are organised. These will be published on 1 April 2024.

- 4.10 Following publication of draft recommendations a final round of public consultations will be undertaken, ensuring as wide a participation as possible of the Borough's Town and Parish Councillors, MPs, Borough Councillors and members of the public. Officers will consider how best to ensure that the views of underrepresented groups are captured as part of this process, allowing Boundary Review Committee to have the best possible feedback before making final recommendations in June 2024.
- 4.11 The final recommendations will then be published in July 2024 with a consequential order being made at some point between August 2024 and September 2024. The CGR itself must be carried out within a period of 12 months from inception.
- 4.12 Once the consequential order is made, copies will be provided to:
- the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities;
 - the Local Government Boundary Commission for England;
 - the Office of National Statistics;
 - the Director General of the Ordnance Survey; and
 - Shropshire Association of Local Councils.
- 4.13 Elections to the revised parishes will then take place in May 2027 in line with the normal cycle of elections. This is the approach which has previously been taken in respect of the smaller CGRs which have taken place across the Borough and is in accordance with the Statutory Guidance.

5.0 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The Council has the power to undertake a Community Governance Review, as set out in section 82 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 5.2 Whilst the Council could choose to not undertake a CGR, for the reasons set out in the report, it would appear sensible to do so, so that the Council can demonstrate that it is fulfilling its legal duty to ensure proper governance arrangements of its parishes.

6.0 Key Risks

- 6.1 There are a number of risks which should be considered as part of the decision whether to undertake a CGR. If the Council does not undertake a CGR, it likely that there would be a risk that our election arrangements in respect of Town and Parish Councils are inefficient. In addition, it is important that the makeup and organisation of Town and Parish Councils reflect the communities they serve. By failing to undertake a CGR, there is a risk that they will not do so.

6.2 The law requires a CGR to be undertaken and completed in a period not exceeding 12 months so sufficient resource will have to be devoted to ensure that the process completes within the timeframe permitted by law. In addition, there is a risk that any possible consultation is not wide ranging and the response rate is poor and consequently decisions taken as part of the CGR will only be as effective as the consultation responses the Council receives as part of the consultation. Officers will look to mitigate these risks by ensuring as wide ranging and reaching consultation as possible, using technology where appropriate and by conducting in person data collection events across the Borough. Engagement sessions will also be scheduled to take place with Town and Parish Councils across the Borough.

7.0 Council Priorities

7.1 The recommendations in this report, align with the following Council priorities:

- All neighbourhoods are a great place to live; and
- A community-focussed, innovative council, providing efficient, effective and quality services.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 The cost of undertaking the CGR will be met from existing resources.

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

9.1 The relevant legislation which sets out the Council's powers in relation to CGRs is the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Together, this legislation enables the Council to undertake a Community Governance Review, including considering the most appropriate boundaries for Town and Parish Councils and the way in which Town and Parish Councils are organised across the Borough, for example by considering the way in which parishes are grouped together.

9.2 The legislation sets out the process for conducting and giving effect to recommendations made in a CGR, noting that the process includes provisions for stakeholder and public consultation.

9.3 It is important to note that any CGR must be undertaken within a period of 12 months from the date upon which it commences.

10.0 Ward Implications

10.1 It is possible that the Parish areas and / or wards within some Borough wards may change as a result of a CGR. Where any proposals lead to this, this will be set out in formal reports to the Boundary Review Committee.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

11.1 There are no direct health, social and economic implications arising from this report.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 12.1 As part of the CGR, stakeholders and the public will have the opportunity to participate in consultation exercises. Officers will carefully consider how best to ensure the participation of underrepresented groups across the Borough and seek to ensure that any consultation is as wide-reaching as possible, by considering the methods in which consultation is undertaken.
- 12.2 To ensure that the Council engages with under-represented groups, we will undertake the following activities:
- Targeted social media to under-represented groups;
 - Correspondence to our 3000+ community groups seeking feedback;
 - Engaging with Telford College and the Universities within the Borough; and
 - Engagement with our lived-experience groups including the Making it Real board.

13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 13.1 There are no direct Climate Change and Environmental Implications directly arising from this report. It may be, that as the consultation process gets underway, environmental factors are provided as part of consultation responses. The Council will consider these as they arise and report any such incidences to Committee for consideration.

14.0 Background Papers

- 1 Guidance on Community Governance Reviews: [Guidance on community governance reviews \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/guidance/governance-reviews)
- 2 Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Part 4, Chapter 3: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/28/part/4/chapter/3>

15.0 Appendices

- A Draft Terms of Reference
- B Timeline of Community Governance Review

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Legal	12/07/2023	13/07/2023	RP



Borough of Telford & Wrekin

Community Governance Review 2023

Draft Terms of Reference

A Review of the Parishes of Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Background

1. The Borough of Telford and Wrekin has resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review (CGR) of its parishes across the Borough.
2. In undertaking the review, the Council will be guided by Part 4 of Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (referred to as ‘the 2007 Act’), the relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972, the Guidance on CGR’s issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010. Also, the following Regulations which guide, in particular, consequential matters arising from the review: Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 (SI2008/625); Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008 (SI2008/626).
3. The Council has a duty to keep parish arrangements under review, this is important taking account of: -
 - changes made by a full Borough Electoral Boundary Review in 2022 which resulted in disalignment between the Borough and Town and Parish Wards;
 - the growth in certain town and parishes and ensuring our communities are governed appropriately; and
 - ensuring that there is a clear rationale between the organisation and grouping of parishes.
4. Consequently, it is considered timely to conduct a CGR across the Borough to consider these issues and ensure effective local governance arrangements that promote community cohesion are maintained or improved.

5. Section 81 of the 2007 Act requires the Council to publish its Terms of Reference for the Review which clearly set out the focus of the review. This document, when published, will fulfil this requirement.

What is a Community Governance Review?

6. A CGR is a legal process whereby principal authorities can consider the following:
 - creating, merging, altering or dissolution of parish councils;
 - the naming of parishes and the style of any new parish councils,
 - the electoral arrangements for parish councils, i.e., the ordinary year of election, council size (the number of parish Councillors) and parish warding; and,
 - grouping of parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping of parishes.
7. A principal authority is the Council which carries out the statutory duties of the local authority within the local government area. For the local government area of Telford & Wrekin, Telford & Wrekin Council is the principal authority.
8. A CGR must reflect the identities and interests of communities and should take account the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.
9. The review will consider the bigger-picture across the entire Borough to ensure that small changes in one area, do not impact others disproportionately. By taking a wider view of the bigger picture, it is hoped that any proposals ensure effective representation at Town and Parish levels across the entire Borough.

Who will undertake the review?

10. As the principal authority, Telford and Wrekin Council is responsible for undertaking CGRs within its area. Full Council delegated authority for all matters relating to Community Governance Reviews to its Boundary Review Committee. The Officers below will be the primary contacts for the review and Boundary Review Committee will have oversight of the CGR.
11. The primary contacts for the review are:
 - David Sidaway, Chief Executive and Electoral Registration Officer;
 - Anthea Lowe, Director: Policy & Governance, Monitoring Officer and Deputy Electoral Registration Officer;
 - Richard Phillips, Service Delivery Manager: Legal & Democracy and Deputy Electoral Registration Officer; and
 - Phil Griffiths, Elections Team Leader and Deputy Electoral Registration Officer.

Consultation

12. Before making any recommendations or publishing final proposals the Council will take full account of the views made by, and suggestions of, local people and

organisations and will comply with the statutory consultation requirements by:

- consulting local government electors and other persons or bodies who appear to the Council to have an interest in the review;
- taking into account any representations received in connection with the review;
- notifying consultees of the outcome of the review; and,
- publishing all decisions taken and the reasons for such decisions.

13. In particular, the Council will consult:

- Local government electors/residents in its Parishes;
- The Town and Parish Councils across the Borough;
- Borough Councillors;
- Town and Parish Councillors;
- The Members of Parliament for the Telford and Wrekin constituencies; and
- Shropshire Association of Local Councils

14. Information about each stage of the review will be published on the Council’s website and available for inspection at the Council’s Offices at Darby House, Lawn Central, Telford, TF3 4JA. Press releases and other publicity will be issued where appropriate.

Timeline and Key Stages

Report to BRC proposing a CGR	20 July 2023
BRC meets to agree Terms of Reference and Consultation	1 st Week of September 2023
Publication of Terms of Reference and Review Commences	1 st week of September 2023
Initial Consultation - Invite initial submissions	From September meeting of BRC to 20 November 2023
BRC considers initial submissions and drafts recommendations	April 2024
Draft recommendations published	22 May 2024
Final round of public consultations	22 May 2024 to 24 July 2024
Final recommendations by BRC	August 2024
Publish final recommendations	August 2024
Consequential Order made	Autumn 2024
Elections to Town and Parish Councils	May 2027

Electoral Forecasts

15. When considering the electoral arrangements of the parishes in the area the Council must consider any likely future change in the number or distribution of electors

within five years from the day the review commences.

16. The review will use the latest electorate figures available at a parish level together with the estimated delivery of new dwellings within the five-year period taken from the Council's most recent Land Supply Statement.

Scope of the Review

17. The Review includes all aspects of community governance arrangements of existing parishes, including:
- To consider the names of any existing parishes/parish councils;
 - To consider the boundaries of any existing parish and whether any existing parishes should be split or amalgamated to constitute any new parish or if any new parish councils should be created along with the number of parish Councillors to be elected for any parish council, whether new or existing.;
 - To consider whether any new or existing parish council should be divided into wards (or continue to be divided into wards,) including the number and boundaries of any such wards, the number of Councillors to be elected for any such ward, and the name of any such ward;
 - If considered desirable to effect any changes, whether or not any alterations should be made to the ordinary year of election for any new or existing parish/town council; and
 - To consider whether or not any recommendations should be made to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England for any subsequent alterations to the wards of the Borough Council.

Considerations

18. Legislation requires that the Council must ensure that community governance within the area:
- reflects the identities and interests of the communities in the area,
 - is effective and convenient and takes into account any other arrangements for the purpose of community representation or engagement in the area.
19. In considering proposals for change, the Council will take the following into account the current status of the Parish (whether it has a Council or meeting) and the existing and the forecast growth of the electorate.
20. The review aims to ensure that parishes reflect community identity and interest and that they are viable administrative and democratic units. None of these take precedence over the other but must be considered as part of the process.
21. Parishes with 150 or fewer local government electors cannot have a council and can

only be a parish meeting (unless the parish already has a council). For those with between 151 and 999 local government electors, the review can recommend that the parish should have a council (optional) and where the parish has 1000 or more local government electors the review must recommend that the parish has a council.

Parish boundaries

22. The Council will consider the effect of new and forecast development activity on existing parish boundaries. Parish boundaries should be easily identifiable and reflect the separation of settlements recognised locally as having their own identity. These boundaries should generally reflect the areas between communities with low populations or physical barriers such as water courses or man-made features such as railways or motorways.

Council size (number of Councillors)

23. The minimum number of parish Councillors that a council can have is five. A quorum for a parish council is three or a third, whichever is the greater number.

24. National research guidance suggests the following levels of representation for parish councils:

Electorate	Councillor Allocation
Less than 500	5 – 8
501 – 2,500	6 - 12
2,501 – 10,000	9 - 16
10,001 – 20,000	13 - 27
Greater than 20,000	13 - 31

25. Government guidance is that each area should be considered on its own merits having regard to population, geography and the pattern of communities. The Council will pay particular attention to existing levels of representation and existing council sizes which have stood the test of time.

26. In considering requests to change the number of Councillors on any individual parish council, the Council will review the electoral history for the parish including the number of contested elections that have been held, the number of vacant seats following normal parish elections (every 4 years) and the history of co-options (i.e., has the council been able to fill vacancies).

Parish Warding

27. The Council is required to consider the following points when deliberating whether a parish should be divided into wards for the purposes of elections:

- whether the number or distribution of the local government electors for the parish would make a single election of Councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
- whether it is desirable that any area, or areas, of the parish should be separately represented on the relevant council.

28. The Government's guidance is that warding of parishes may not be justified for largely rural areas based predominantly on a single centrally located village. Conversely, warding may be appropriate where a parish encompasses a number of villages with separate identities or where there has been urban overspill at the edge of a town into a parish.
29. In considering parish wards the Council will ensure that electoral equality is retained (the principle that each person's vote should be of equal weight so far as is possible). This will be achieved by keeping the councillor/elector ration similar across any warded areas.

Parish names and alternative styles for parishes

30. The Council will endeavour to reflect existing or historic place names and will consider any ward names proposed any local interested parties. The Council will be mindful of Section 75 of the Local Government Act 1972 with regards to changing the name of a parish and subsequent notification and to Sections 87 and 88 of the 2007 Act and related guidance.
31. Alternative styles for parishes were introduced by the 2007 Act which could replace the 'parish' style – community, neighbourhood or village. Town status continues to be available to a parish (S247 of the Local Government Act 1972) but for as long as a parish has an alternative style it will not be able to have the status of a town and vice versa.
32. At the request of a parish, the principal authority can change the name of a parish to reflect the style adopted.
33. If an existing parish is under review, the Council will make recommendations as to whether the geographical name of the parish should change, but it will be for the parish council or meeting to resolve whether the parish should have one of the alternative styles or retain the 'parish' style.

Grouping of parishes

34. Under Section 91 of the 2007 Act a CGR can recommend the grouping or de-grouping of parishes. In some instances, it may be appropriate to group parishes to allow a common parish council to be formed. De-grouping may also offer the reverse possibility where local communities have expanded.
35. Any grouping or de-grouping needs to be compatible with the retention of community interests and it would be inappropriate to use it to build artificially large units under single parish councils. However, it could offer a possibility for parishes with less than 150 electors to be grouped with other parishes under an elected parish council despite being unable to form a parish council in their own right.

Ordinary year of election

36. As Telford & Wrekin Council is elected every four years on an 'all out' basis, it is currently proposed to keep the ordinary year of election for parish councils on the same date but the Council welcomes representations on this point.

Reorganisation of Community Governance Orders and Commencement

37. The review will be completed when the Council resolves to accept the final recommendations and authorises completion of the Reorganisation of Community Governance Order.
38. Copies of the Order, supporting maps and documents setting out the reasons for the decisions taken will be placed on deposit at the Council's Offices at Darby House, Lawn Central, Telford, TF3 4JA, on the Council's website and otherwise publicised in accordance with the requirements of the 2017 Act. All parishes will be notified of the outcomes of the review.
39. Copies of the Order will be sent to:
- the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
 - the Local Government Boundary Commission for England
 - the Office of National Statistics
 - the Director General of the Ordnance Survey
 - Shropshire Association of Local Councils

Consequential matters

40. In the interests of maintaining coterminous boundaries of principal authority electoral areas and the boundaries of parishes, recommendations may be made to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to make related changes to district and/or county electoral area boundaries.
41. Setting up new parish councils or grouping/de-grouping councils may require additional consequential provisions including:
- the transfer and management or custody of property
 - the setting of precepts
 - provisions with respect to the transfer of any functions, property, rights and liabilities
 - provisions for the transfer of staff
42. In these matters the Council will be guided by the relevant legislation.

Date of Publication

43. These terms of reference will be published on 1 August 2023.

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Appendix B - Timeline and Key Stages

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