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Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

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Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Boundary Review Committee

Thursday 7 September 2023

6.00 pm

Southwater Room, Meeting Point House, Southwater Square,
Telford, TF3 4HS

Democratic Services: Sam Yarnall 01952 382193

Media Enquiries: Corporate Communications 01952 382406

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

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	To receive the report on the Community Governance Review for the Borough of Telford & Wrekin. The appendices are to follow.	
5.0	Polling Station Review	Verbal Report
	To receive a verbal update on the Polling Station Review.	

6.0 Elections Act Update

Verbal Report

To receive a verbal update on the Elections Act.

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BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Boundary Review Committee held on Thursday 20 July 2023 at 6.00 pm in The Telford Room, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT

Present: 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

In Attendance: A Lowe (Director: Policy & Governance), R Phillips (Service Delivery Manager: Legal & Democracy), P Griffiths (Elections Team Leader), E Ogram (Senior Democracy Officer (Elections)) and S Yarnall (Democracy Officer (Scrutiny))

BRC1 Declarations of Interest

None.

BRC2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2023 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

BRC3 Terms of Reference 2023/2024

Members received the Terms of Reference for the Committee, there had been no changes from previous years.

RESOLVED – that the Terms of Reference, as set out in Appendix A of the report, be approved.

BRC4 Community Governance Review for the Borough of Telford & Wrekin

The Director: Policy & Governance presented the report which outlined the proposed Community Governance Review (CGR), following the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) review of electoral arrangements within the Borough in 2022. The proposed CGR would be the first Borough wide review for several years.

The report summarised the reasons for the CGR; to determine whether the current Town and Parish Councils were reflective of local electorate identities and Borough ward boundaries. The process of conducting a CGR would take approximately 12 months and included 2 rounds of public consultation, the draft recommendations from the review would then be presented to the Committee.

Members noted the importance of the review in order to recognise the local identities of communities.

RESOLVED – that:

- a) a **Community Governance Review** be undertaken subject to the **finalisation of the Terms of Reference and Consultation Documents:** and
- b) **authority be delegated to the Director: Policy & Governance to prepare the final Terms of Reference and Consultation Documents to be considered at a future meeting of Boundary Review Committee.**

BRC5 Update on Parliamentary Boundary Review

The Elections Team Leader provided an update on the Parliamentary Boundary Review from the Boundary Commission for England. The Order establishing the Parliamentary Boundaries had recently been passed through Parliament and there were changes to both the Telford and the Wrekin Parliamentary Boundaries. The ‘Wrekin’ Constituency would retain its name and would include Cheswardine and Hodnet and the Telford Constituency would include Trench Lock and Hadley going forward.

Officers were liaising with Shropshire Council to review polling stations for the Wrekin constituency, in order to accurately locate each polling station in line with the new boundaries.

Members were informed that no further changes were expected.

The meeting ended at 6.19 pm

Chairman:

Date: Thursday 7 September 2023



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Boundary Review Committee

Thursday 7 September 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 – 7 September 2023

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Boundary Review Committee:-

- 1.1 Agrees to publish the Terms of Reference and consultation documents to commence the Community Governance Review; and
- 1.2 Notes the activities which will be undertaken during the Community Governance Review to ensure the participation and engagement of traditionally underrepresented groups.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to seek final approval to publish the Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Review, along with the associated consultation documents and to provide information about the methods which will

be deployed by Council Officers to encourage participation by underrepresented demographics across the Borough.

3.0 Background

3.1 At the Committee's meeting of 20 July 2023, Members agreed the rationale for a Community Governance Review to be undertaken. Officers were asked to prepare the consultation pack which is set out at Appendix A. It sets out the timeframes for the Community Governance Review, details of how responses can be provided to the consultation and how those responses will be treated and proposals formed. It also sets out the electorate projections and includes maps of the current Town and Parish Council boundaries.

4.0 Engagement with the Community Governance Review

4.1 In order to ensure that as many people as possible are able to participate in the Community Governance Review, a number of methods of communication will be undertaken to ensure wide participation.

4.2 The main method of collection responses will be a dedicated online Council survey site using Snap Survey, which will collect responses through the use of prompt questions and a fully interactive map.

4.3 In addition, a QR code will be produced and attached to postcard size leaflets which will be distributed to Town and Parish Council offices, libraries and other suitable locations across the Borough allowing for as many people as possible to engage with the process.

4.4 Officers will also consider utilising events planned across the Borough and ensuring Council Officers at those events are able to signpost people, with enough information, to complete the survey should they wish.

4.5 As part of the consultation process, Officers will consider whether it is necessary to undertake in person surveys at suitable locations across the Borough in order to ensure that as wide a range of responses is collected as possible.

4.6 Finally, it is also planned to circulate details of the Community Governance Review and links to the survey and information to the Council's partner organisations, further seeking to distribute the details of how to respond as widely as possible.

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 to Committee in July 2023, 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 is 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 organisation, and governance, 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 of 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

Community Governance Review for Borough of Telford & Wrekin

- 1 Guidance on Community Governance Reviews: [Guidance on community governance reviews \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/guidance-on-community-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>
- 3 Report to Boundary Committee of 20 July 2023

15.0 Appendices

- A Draft Information Pack (to follow)

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Legal	30/08/2023	30/08/2023	AL

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