

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE – 25 APRIL 2022

BOROUGH BOUNDARY REVIEW – BOROUGH WARDING SUBMISSION

REPORT OF DIRECTOR: POLICY & GOVERNANCE

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Council’s final submission in response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England’s (LGBCE) draft warding proposals for the Borough. The submission provides a number of alternative warding arrangements to those proposed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. The consultation on draft proposals closes on 9 May and final recommendations for the Borough are expected to be published in August. An Order will be laid in Parliament in Autumn 2022, with revised wards and polling districts being in place for the 4 May 2023 local elections.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Boundary Review Committee:-

- 2.1 Delegates authority to the Director: Policy & Governance, in consultation with the Chair of the Boundary Review Committee, to finalise the contents of the Council’s response to the LGBCE’s draft warding arrangements on the basis of this report and the maps circulated at the meeting

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	<i>The proposals will contribute to the following priority – a community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.</i>
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	

TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	<i>Comments are due to be made to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England by 9 May 2022.</i>	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	No	<i>There are no direct financial impacts arising out of this report. Any work associated with the review will be met from within existing resources.</i>
LEGAL ISSUES	No	<i>There are no direct legal impacts arising out of this report. Any advice needed on specific matters following conclusion of the review will be provided as necessary. AL 21/04/2022</i>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	<i>All wards are impacted by the proposals put forward by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.</i>

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

- 4.1 Members of the Committee are well-versed in the background to the Borough boundary review so there is no need for it to be repeated in detail within this report. However, the key milestones are set out below with those that have already been completed shown shaded grey:-

April 2021	Council submission on councillor numbers submitted
August 2021	Council submission on initial warding patterns made
December 2021	LGBCE published their proposals on warding arrangements
Ongoing until May 2022	LGBCE seeking views on initial warding arrangements. Deadline of 9 May 2022 for submission of comments.
August 2022	LGBCE will publish final recommendations.
Autumn 2022	Order laid in Parliament
May 2023	New electoral arrangements based upon final recommendations will be implemented.

4.2 The Committee has considered the initial proposals of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) and felt that, on the whole, the majority of those proposals were reasonable and represented community identities well. However, there were a small number of wards where it was felt that further work was needed in order to truly recognise how our communities identify with each other and to ensure efficient and effective local government. Those wards were:-

- Apley Castle;
- Hadley & Leegomery;
- Oakengates and Ketley Bank;
- Brookside;
- Madeley and Sutton Hill; and
- Lawley

4.2 It was felt that the proposals made by the LGBCE would result in fragmented communities with some being placed together within one ward in a manner that did not recognise the day to day routines of residents living within the ward nor recognising the facilities and centres that residents within those areas used. The Committee asked officers to consider the comments made and present alternative arrangements for consideration.

4.3 The Council has taken steps to increase community awareness of the proposed boundary changes and to encourage engagement with the consultation process. This has, largely, concerned social media activity and has been particularly aimed at the community sector. In addition, two community engagement events were held on Saturday 9 April between 11am and 2pm. Taking place in Oakengates and Madeley, as two of the six areas officers were asked to focus on, these events sought views on the Borough-wide proposals. These events included:-

- A full set of maps for the current and proposed warding arrangements;
- An opportunity to complete a questionnaire (either electronically or on paper) regarding the proposals, setting out facilities that residents use;
- A QR code to scan using a smartphone to take users directly to the LGBCE's website to submit a response;
- Officers in attendance to explain the proposals and maps

The questionnaire was created by the community engagement and business intelligence teams so as to ensure neutrality and to obtain as much information from residents with minimum time-commitment on their behalf. Given the location of these events, the majority of responses related to the areas in which they took place although some comments were received about the wider Borough proposals.

Taking each ward in turn, the rationale for the Council's response is set out in brief below.

Apley Castle

Apley Castle and Leegomery are distinct communities with different identities. It is proposed that the current Apley Castle boundaries are used as the blueprint for this Ward with a small area moving in to the current Hadley & Leegomery Ward in order to provide electoral equality and to preserve the strong community identity currently experienced amongst residents within the ward. The small area proposed to join Hadley & Leegomery is the area around Berberis Drive which is on the opposite side of Leegate Avenue to the majority of the Apley Castle.

The following rationale shall form the basis of the response to the LGBCE:-

- Apley and Hadley & Leegomery are formed from different demographics;
- Apley has its own identity, evidenced by an active Friends of Apley Woods Group, looking after the local conservation area and the fact that there is a representative of Apley Preservation Association on the Parish Council;
- It is understood that the Parish Council is opposed to the proposal to be subsumed by Leegomery;
- The majority of residents within Apley send their children to Apley Wood Primary School in Apley whilst the majority of residents in Leegomery send their children to school at Millbrook Primary School in Leegomery;
- Leegomery has more common linkages with Hadley and, together, former a long-established and identifiable community with its own shopping centre and community buildings such as the Leegate Centre;
- Conversely, Apley residents look to Shawbirch and Dothill as their shopping and community hub;
- As the name suggests, Leegate Avenue forms the main road through the original Leegomery estate;
- The boundary leading off the A442 roundabout provides a more logical boundary with Apley Castle on the West and Leegomery/Hadley on the East;
- Properties around Okehampton Road are accessed from Hadley Park Road which, as the name suggests, is definitively Hadley and not Apley;
- Apley's identity is formed around the hospital, Apley Woods and the Apley Woods School whilst Leegomery's identity is formed around the original Telford Development Corporation estate development and the Millbrook School area;
- Joining these areas creates a community imbalance and a consequential effect on the Parish Council arrangements. Notwithstanding that the Parish opposes the proposed changes, the

resultant parish warding arrangements create a large 'Apley Castle' parish ward which includes parts of Leegomery and Hadley and significantly reduces representation for the Hadley parish ward areas. This would not appear to be conducive to effective and convenient local government – joining together two such different communities to enable electoral parity; and

- It is understood that there is significant opposition from local residents to the proposal to merge with Leegomery and we understand that these representations have been made to LGBCE, demonstrating the wishes of the Apley community to retain their individual identity.

Hadley & Leegomery

As a result of the proposal to retain a single member Apley Castle ward, the current Hadley & Leegomery ward should retain its existing footprint, whilst taking on the Berberis Drive area from Apley Castle, resulting in acceptable electoral equality for a 3 member ward.

The LGBCE had proposed joining Leegomery to Apley Castle and creating a separate Hadley and Trench Lock Ward. It is proposed that this recommendation is reversed and the two areas are recombined with the addition of the areas mentioned above under the Apley Castle heading. It is felt that this better reflects community identities and preserves the existing relationships between these areas, with residents within both Hadley and Leegomery using the same facilities and community assets. The rationale for this approach is largely set out above but, also includes:-

- The name of the Parish Council reflects the close and long lasting association between Hadley and Leegomery;
- Apley's community was as a result of later development than Hadley and Leegomery;
- Leegomery and Hadley residents use Hadley and Leegomery centres;
- Apley residents have a more direct road access to Wellington or Shawbirch than Leegomery or Hadley;
- The Council's proposed changes to provide a single member Apley Castle ward moves properties into the adjoining Hadley & Leegomery ward from the Berberis/Cactus Drive area, providing acceptable electoral equality and retaining the strongly developed community identities.

Oakengates and Ketley Bank

The proposals from the LGBCE had joined Ketley and Ketley Bank into a 2 member Ketley ward. The committee was clear that this erroneously assumed some connection between these two distinct areas within the

Borough, with little to no synergy between these communities. It is clear that Ketley Bank is aligned to Oakengates, with Oakengates town providing the main retail centre for Ketley Bank, pedestrian footways leading from Ketley Bank away from Ketley and towards Oakengates and residents within Oakengates and Ketley Bank sharing outdoor green spaces. The only thing in common between Ketley and Ketley Bank is the common name.

The Council's alternative proposals result in Oakengates and Ketley Bank being joined, once again, into one ward with part of the WOB polling district around Ketley Park Road being moved into Ketley in order to maintain electoral equality. This is part of the relatively modern Millenium community development which differs in nature and demographic from the rest of the current Ketley ward. It is also proposed that Hollyhurst area of Wrockwardine Wood be retained within Oakengates and Ketley Bank given that the communities within Wrockwardine Wood look to Oakengates as its main centre.

The rationale for these alternative proposals is summarised as follows:-

- The engagement event showed clear support for the proposals to retain an Oakengates and Ketley Bank ward from those living within the current ward with 60% of respondents either in favour or strongly in favour and 13% against or strongly against (the remaining 26% provided a neutral response);
- Some of these responses indicated that the areas had been together for so long and that family members all live in either Oakengates or Ketley Bank, there being no compelling reason to change, wanting to have more than one councillor to speak with and one respondent said "the bank always leads to Oakengates";
- 65% of respondents from the Oakengates & Ketley Bank ward used Oakengates for their day to day shopping or Oakengates and another area (Telford Town Centre being common and the Wrekin Retail Park also being common);
- Of those who use a Post Office, 65% use the one located in Oakengates whilst 46% of respondents use the pharmacist in Oakengates (with almost 20% stating they used a supermarket pharmacy);
- 71% spend their leisure time (pubs, restaurants, cafes, community centres) in Oakengates (or a combination of Oakengates and Telford Town Centre)
- The Chair of Committee, through his previous role as MP for Telford for a number of years recognises the strong link between Oakengates and Ketley Bank and considers that Ketley is a distinct community in its own right;
- Residents within the Hollyhurst area, look towards Oakengates - it has already been identified by elected Members that the parish boundary,

which divides that area, causes elector confusion due to the community split. Drawing the Borough boundary in the same location will simply compound this issue;

- Feedback from Oakengates Town Council indicates that they would like to retain 3 members for the Oakengates area to include Wrockwardine Wood.

Brookside

The LGBCE proposed that the properties around Lake End Drive be taken out of Brookside and placed into The Nedge with Brookside then following the boundary of the ring road. The counter-proposal to this is maintain Lake End Drive within Brookside. Whilst it is recognised that it sits outside the ring road, it is also significantly geographically detached from all other residential areas within The Nedge and elected Members report that those living in that area are more likely to look to the facilities in Brookside (shops and community centre) than elsewhere, particularly given the infrastructure network around that area and the distances to be driven or walked to reach any facilities contained within The Nedge.

Residents from Lake End Drive are engaged with the Brookside Community Centre which is located within a well-served parade of shops, close to the local primary school and the toddler's group which operates from the Community Centre. These residents form part of the Brookside community and should be retained within the Borough ward. It is acknowledged that this places the ward slightly above the expected variance but would emphasise that joining these electors with The Nedge ward would not be in the interests of community identity or effective and convenient local government. It is also pertinent to note that representation for Brookside has been reduced from 2 seats to 1 under current proposals.

Madeley and Sutton Hill

The LGBCE proposals split these two communities from each other which the Committee felt, strongly, was not appropriate. There are a number of synergies between these areas, with both represented by one parish council. These areas have high levels of deprivation and benefit from the multiplicity of representation both at Borough and parish level, having more than one voice advocating for these communities. There is a strong historic connection between these two areas with many residents having family living across both communities. The proposal for Committee consideration is that these two communities are reconnected into one ward. This has no practical impact upon electoral equality or effective and efficient local government but has a vastly positive impact upon community identity.

The engagement event indicated that:-

- 100% of respondents living in the Madeley & Sutton Hill areas were in favour of retaining a joint ward arrangement with the following being some of the reasons given:-
 - Better access to more councillors
 - Madeley is the natural local centre for Sutton Hill
 - Three councillors means stronger community ties, better opportunities for bringing money in, it makes more sense
 - Why break up the community area? They work well together at the moment and that benefits the residents
 - I think it is wrong to try and change a perfectly good system where three councillors fight for the residents and now it is proposed to change that. That seems daft.
- All of the respondents that used a Post Office used either the one in Madeley (75%) or the one in Sutton Hill (25%) whilst 80% used a pharmacist in Madeley or Sutton Hill with the remaining 20% using Woodside Pharmacy
- With regards to social/leisure time, the majority of respondents used Telford Town Centre (58%)

Further rationale is as follows:-

- The Town Council for Madeley encourages collaborative working between the communities of Sutton Hill and Madeley. This was exemplified during the height of the pandemic where the community hubs in Madeley, Sutton Hill and Woodside worked to assist residents of both areas. Sutton Hill faces some significant challenges in terms of deprivation and infrastructure, a single member ward could isolate the area when it can benefit from the wider support of a larger 3 member ward providing more effective and convenient local government for residents. The two areas work effectively together, helping to attract significant investment for Sutton Hill such as the investment by the Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Safer, Stronger Communities across Madeley & Sutton Hill.
- Sutton Hill residents use wider services in Madeley with which it has strong vehicular connectivity both by private motor vehicle and by public transport routes.
- Further, the variance in electoral equality is noted, with Sutton Hill currently being at +9% on the LGBCE's proposals. Whilst not strictly a LGBCE criteria, it is widely known that the area of Sutton Hill is one with under-registration and this remains the case despite concerted efforts to improve this. If the LGBCE were to look at **resident numbers**, the effect of this under-registration would mean that the variance would be outside of the usual 10% tolerance allowed and this

should be taken into account particularly when the proposal is to reduce membership to represent the area of South Telford.

Lawley

The LGBCE created a Lawley Ward which included some areas that would, ordinarily, be recognised as Dawley Bank. The counter proposals remedy this and ensure that the ward includes areas locally considered as Lawley whilst recognising that some other areas should properly fall into Horsehay. The difficulties with the Lawley area are that the number of electors projected by the LGBCE are significantly higher than those projected by the Council based upon census and planned development data. This skews the figures with one part of the Lawley area being projected, by the LGBCE, to carry the vast majority of proposed development despite the fact that this is already mainly built out and leaves little room for additional development. The rationale to suppose the Council's proposal is set out below:-

- The area around the Horsehay Steam Trust is quite distinct and most definitely not associated with Dawley - this area identifies as Horsehay and looks more towards Lawley which is particularly demonstrated by the fact that the railway runs from Horsehay to Lawley, **not** Dawley.
- Horsehay and Lawley have very different identities to Dawley in so much as the majority of housing within Horsehay and Lawley is new-build modern development whereas the Dawley area is predominantly made up of older housing.
- In terms of community identity it is considered that the area around the Horsehay Steam Trust would be best served within a Lawley ward because of its clear identity, even if this provides a ward with an electoral imbalance (notwithstanding what has been said about projections). Placing it in Dawley & Aqueduct would not provide appropriate community identity, nor would it provide effective and convenient local government as residents have no obvious connection with Dawley
- Furthermore, as can be seen from a map, Horsehay Golf Club is almost symbiotic with Lawley Common which further demonstrates the crossover between the Horsehay and Lawley and, perhaps more pertinently, demonstrates the complete lack of linkages with Dawley and Aqueduct.
- Families within the Spring Village area look to schools in Lawley rather than Dawley for meeting educational needs.
- Whilst it is recognised that the Lawley and Horsehay areas present challenges due to the significant growth in the area, the proposals put forward by the LGBCE do nothing but split another community in an attempt to remedy electoral equality – that does not seem to be a

justifiable position to take given the strength of community identity within the Horsehay and Lawley areas.

On another note, the Council's original submission proposed changing the name of the Malinslee & Dawley Bank ward to reflect the name of the Town Council (Great Dawley). This was on the basis that the Council's submission was for this to be a three-member ward with the boundaries drawn to better reflect the Town Council boundaries. Given that this has not been adopted by the LGBCE, the Council would ask that the ward name remain Malinslee & Dawley Bank as this more properly reflects the communities that the ward members would serve.

Other areas

With regards to all other areas, the response to the proposals will simply include a couple of lines confirming that the Council is happy with those proposals.

The outcome of the community engagement event for other areas of the Borough provided less persuasive information given the number of responses submitted. However, some commentary was provided in respect of the following areas:-

Newport South and East – areas within Newport are different and each should have their own councillor

Dothill – Dothill should form part of the Wellington area because it **is** part of Wellington

Admaston & Bratton – it is a nice, defined area which makes sense in terms of how roads are laid out.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

None.

6. PREVIOUS MINUTES

[Boundary Review Committee – 24 March 2022](#)

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

LGBCE proposals available at [Telford and Wrekin | LGBCE Site](#)

Report prepared by Anthea Lowe, Director: Policy & Governance, anthea.lowe@telford.gov.uk and Phil Griffiths, Elections Team Leader, phil.griffiths@telford.gov.uk