



# Borough of Telford and Wrekin

## Boundary Review Committee

Thursday 13 February 2025

## Community Governance Review 2025

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<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Zona Hannington - Cabinet Member: Finance, Governance & Customer Service
<b>Lead Director:</b>	Anthea Lowe - Director: Policy & Governance
<b>Service Area:</b>	Policy & Governance
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<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Not Key Decision
<b>Forward Plan:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Report considered by:</b>	

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### 1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

Boundary Review Committee is asked to:

- 1.1 Approve the terms of reference for the 2025 Community Governance Review for publication;
- 1.2 Approve the information pack to be provided as part of the consultation;
- 1.3 Approve the timetable to bring the 2025 Community Governance Review to a conclusion; and
- 1.4 Note the steps set out at paragraph 4.3 of this report regarding engagement activity.

### 2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to seek agreement to publish the Terms of Reference for the 2025 Community Governance Review as attached at **Appendix A** and to approve the Information Pack attached at **Appendix B** to this report. Both

documents set out the proposed timetable for bringing the review to a conclusion prior to the summer of this year.

- 2.2 Members will note that there are two periods of consultation to be undertaken in respect of a Community Governance Review; the first is to seek views and comments on:-
- What governance arrangements should be in place across the Borough in respect of town and parish councils and parish meetings;
  - The number of councillors that should sit on each council;
  - Any warding arrangements that should be in place across the town and parish councils;
  - When elections to Town and Parish Councils should take place.
- 2.3 The second phase of consultation follows the publication of draft proposals in respect of how town and parish councils will be organised from May 2027. The draft proposals will be created after the Council has received comments and views during the first consultation period. This second phase of consultation will invite comments and representations on any changes proposed by the Committee.
- 2.4 It is often the case that people will make comments during consultations when they feel changes should be made. Whilst such comments are very valuable and will help the Council to shape its draft proposals, it is also important that those who do not believe any changes should be made put forward their views in both the first and second consultation phases.
- 2.5 Based upon feedback received during the 2023 Community Governance Review, it is considered that the 12 month time period for completing the review was unhelpful as awareness of the review was sporadic and the information provided at the outset of the process had, in some instances, been overlooked. This meant that the full extent of potential changes that could follow the review were not consistently recognised.

### **3.0 Background**

- 3.1 Boundary Review Committee agreed, at its meeting that took place on 5 September 2024, to undertake a further Community Governance Review during 2025 to further examine whether the organisation of the Town and Parish Councils (and Parish Meetings) best reflects the needs of the Borough.

### **4.0 Engagement activity during the Community Governance Review**

- 4.1 During the 2023 Community Governance Review, the Council received around 100 responses, in total, across the two phases of consultation. It is important that the Council receives representations from as many organisations and individuals

as possible during the Community Governance Review. To this end, the Council will undertake a variety of engagement activity to raise awareness of the consultation.

- 4.2 The timetable in respect of this current review is proposed to extend over a (almost) 5 month period. It is felt that this will assist in maintaining a clear focus on all of the information provided throughout the review. Within the statutory provisions, the review **must** be completed within twelve months of its commencement but there is no minimum period set out. The proposed timetable has been suggested being mindful of the usual commitments of Town and Parish Councils and to ensure that there is a period of time in which they can provide a response and avoiding any recess periods.
- 4.3 As part of the engagement activity during the review process, the Council will take the following steps:-
- Circulate the information pack to community groups, Town and Parish Councils, partners, Borough Councillors, MPs, the Interfaith Council and Shropshire Association of Local Councils;
  - Circulate an online survey link to the same groups and individuals (see the draft survey attached at **Appendix C**);
  - Hold some engagement sessions specifically aimed at Town and Parish Councils, with at least one session held in the north of the Borough and at least one session held in the south of the Borough;
  - Seek a slot at the Town / Parish Forum to raise awareness of the consultation and the information available as part of the consultation and again during the second phase of consultation;
  - Liaise with Shropshire Association of Local Councils at each key stage of the timetable;
  - Engage with our lived experience groups such as the Making it Real Board;
  - Liaise with Telford College and the Universities within our Borough; and
  - Where possible, targeted social media for under-represented groups.

## 5.0 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The Boundary Review Committee could choose not to commence the Community Governance Review. This is not recommended, however, given that the Committee committed to commencing a further review in 2025 and there have been no changes made to town / parish arrangements for more than 15 years.

## 6.0 Key Risks

- 6.1 If the Council chooses not to commence the Community Governance Review, there would be a risk that our governance arrangements in respect of Town and Parish Councils are inefficient. In addition, should the review not proceed, there is a risk that the organisation, and governance, of Town and Parish Councils will not reflect the communities they serve.

## **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 Community Governance Review are being met from within existing budgets.

## **9.0 Legal and HR Implications**

9.1 The relevant legislation which sets out the Council's powers in relation to Community Governance Reviews 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 Community Governance Review noting that the process includes provisions for stakeholder and public consultation.

9.3 It is important to note that any review 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 the community governance review.

## **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 Community Governance Review, 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](#)
- 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 Draft Information Pack
- C Draft survey questionnaire

### 16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Legal	04/02/2025	04/02/2025	RP
Finance	04/02/2025	05/02/2025	MLB