



# Borough of Telford and Wrekin

## Boundary Review Committee

30 July 2025

## Community Governance Review 2025

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<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>Report Considered by:</b>	Boundary Committee – 30 July 2025

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### 1.0 Recommendations for decision:

It is recommended that the Boundary Review Committee:-

- 1.1 Notes the responses received during the second phase of consultation in respect of the Community Governance Review for the Borough of Telford & Wrekin; and
- 1.2 Notes the amended timetable for concluding this review as set out in part 5 of this report.

### 2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee members on the representations received throughout the second phase of consultation on the Community Governance Review and to seek approval for an amended timetable to bring the review to a conclusion.

### **3.0 Background**

- 3.1 At its meeting of 13 February 2025, the Boundary Review Committee agreed to commence a Community Governance Review in respect of the Town and Parish Council arrangements. A Community Governance Review is undertaken in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Statutory guidance under the Act provides further information that the Committee is required to take into account when undertaking a review. Earlier reports to the Committee summarise this guidance.
- 3.2 The statutory guidance provides a lot of detail on the important role that Town and Parish Councils play within their communities, enabling them to build cohesion, address social exclusion and deprivation and cultivating respect amongst communities. It is clear, from the guidance that, whatever the arrangements, there should be strong and accountable local government and leadership with Town and Parish Councils being able to take the lead on local matters in some cases whilst, at other times, they may act as an important stakeholder or partner to key organisations such as the principal council, police, fire and the private sector.
- 3.3 There is no 'one size fits all' approach to community governance with the guidance setting out that in some communities there will be specific characteristics which help to define a parish, for example representing particular groups whilst, in others, the community may coalesce around particular interests such as lifestyle groups or leisure pursuits.
- 3.4 When considering the size and population of local communities and / or parishes, the guidance clearly sets out that it is often these matters that influence whether or not it is going to be viable. It also identifies the range of council sizes at a local level, from small hamlets in which the council represents 50 residents to large towns in which the council may represent more than 40,000 electors.

#### First phase of consultation

- 3.5 The first phase of consultation, which ran from 17 February 2025 until 14 April 2025, was aimed at inviting as many submissions as possible on what the Town and Parish arrangements should be in the future. At this stage, Telford & Wrekin Council did not provide any potential options for people to consider; rather, it was a case of there being a 'blank canvas' with an opportunity for people to share their views without any restrictions.
- 3.6 To support those wishing to make a submission in this first phase of consultation, a consultation pack was created setting out information on what a community governance review was, what it could take into account, and details around the electorate for each local area within Telford & Wrekin. A survey was also created to help people shape their submission although there was no requirement to submit a survey response for a submission to be valid.
- 3.7 The consultation pack was shared with:-
- Community groups;

- Town and Parish Councils;
- Strategic partners including the West Mercia Police, Shropshire Fire & Rescue and NHS Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin ICS;
- Borough Councillors;
- MPs;
- Telford Interfaith Council; and
- Shropshire Association of Local Councils;

3.8 As well as sharing documents with those listed above, officers held a session that Clerks and Town / Parish Councillors were able to attend during which the community governance review process was explained and attendees had an opportunity to ask questions. Additionally, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Boundary Review Committee, together with officers, met with the Chair, and colleagues, of Shropshire Association of Local Councils (“SALC”).

3.9 During the first phase of consultation, a total of 292 responses were received comprising 219 completed surveys and 73 emails. In addition, 8 emails were received requesting additional information.

#### Second phase of consultation

3.10 At its meeting on 12 May, the Committee agreed the draft proposals to put out to consultation. These proposals were put forward having taken account of the statutory guidance in relation to Community Governance Reviews, the legislation and the responses received in the first round of consultation. The second phase of consultation ran from 19 May 2025 until 14 July 2025.

3.11 Again, a consultation pack was prepared which included a set of maps setting out the draft proposed town and parish boundaries and information regarding each area. This consultation pack was shared with the same individuals and organisations as set out in paragraph 3.7 above. Comments were sought on the proposals and submissions could be made by completing an online survey, by email or by letter. For ease, the proposed draft parish and town council areas for which comments were sought are:

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| • Chetwynd & Edgmond                       | • Newport                     |
| • Chetwynd Aston, Woodcote & Church Aston  | • Priorslee                   |
| • Great Dawley                             | • St Georges & Donnington     |
| • Hadley & Leegomery                       | • The Gorge                   |
| • Horton                                   | • The Nedge                   |
| • Ketley                                   | • The Weald Moors             |
| • Lawley & Overdale                        | • Tibberton & Cherrington     |
| • Lilleshall                               | • Waters Upton & Ercall Magna |
| • Little Wenlock, Wrockwardine & Rodington | • Wellington                  |

- Madeley
- Muxton
- Wrockwardine Wood, Trench & Oakengates
- Newport

3.12 Officers also attended 7 drop-in events where people could find out more information about the proposals. These took place at:-

- Southwater 1 library;
- Madeley library;
- Wellington library;
- Newport library;
- Brookside Community Centre;
- Waters Upton Village Hall; and
- Hub on the Hill, Sutton Hill

In total, more than 70 people attended one or more of these sessions.

3.13 In addition, the radio station playing in all Council-owned leisure venues also publicised the review on an hourly basis to raise awareness of the review and to encourage residents to have their say.

#### **4.0 Current position**

4.1 Throughout the second phase of consultation, over 1,000 responses were received. These responses are attached to this report although Committee Members should note the further information set out in this report when considering the responses. For clarity, where written responses were received **after** the closing date but with a date stamp preceding 14 July, they have been accepted.

4.2 The majority of the responses received were about a single town or parish council area. These responses are set out in Appendix A as separate documents for each proposed area. Some however, commented on more than one area and these are shown at Appendix B. Members will note that some comments question the purpose of Town and Parish Councils in their entirety and so it is important to say that the government guidance on this point is clear – where an area already benefits from having a Town or Parish Council, there is a strong presumption in favour of retaining some sort of Parish / Town Council arrangement for that area.

4.3 The documents attached in the Appendices set out the responses received. It should be noted that these documents have been redacted to:-

- Avoid identification of those who made them;
- To remove any swear words;
- To remove any references that could be considered defamatory or insulting towards an individual.

4.4 In terms of the responses, Members' attention is drawn to the points made below:-

4.5 In respect of the proposed The Nedge Parish, Hollinswood & Randlay Parish Council circulated a questionnaire to residents seeking views. Rather than copy multiple copies of this same survey, a blank version of this survey is included within Appendix C. Of those received, 7 were in favour of the proposals relating to The Nedge whilst 265 were against those proposals. Some of these surveys also included comments written on the reverse; where this has occurred, these have been included within the relevant part of Appendix A

4.6 Members might recall that there were three options put forward for consultation in relation to Horton, namely:-

- To remain as part of Hadley & Leegomery Parish Council;
- To form part of a newly proposed Weald Moors Parish Council; or
- To form part of a newly proposed Wrockwardine Wood and Trench and Oakengates Parish Council

4.7 Members will see that the majority of responses in respect of the Horton area do not indicate a preference for any of these options but, rather, they indicate that they would like to become a stand-alone parish meeting. Members are reminded, however, of the information provided at paragraph 4.2 on this point.

4.8 Ercall Magna Parish Council organised a questionnaire for residents to complete seeking views on the proposal to create a single parish council from the existing Ercall Magna and Waters Upton parishes. The completed questionnaires together with comments are included within Appendix D. Of those received, 1 was in favour of the proposals relating to Ercall Parish whilst 93 were against those proposals.

4.9 Similarly, Kynnersley Parish Council made a questionnaire available to residents seeking views on the proposal to merge Kynnersley Parish with Weald Moors and Eyton on the Weald Moors parish meetings to create a new Parish to be known as The Weald Moors Parish Council. The completed questionnaires together with comments are included within Appendix E. Of those received, 3 were in favour of the proposals relating to Kynnersley whilst 26 were against those proposals.

## **5.0 Next Steps**

5.1 At this stage, the Committee is being given an opportunity to consider all of the responses received throughout the consultation. Whilst the initial timetable had anticipated that final proposals would also be considered at this meeting, it is intended that this is altered for the following reasons:-

- Some residents across the Borough have expressed concern that there was insufficient time following the closure of the consultation to prepare final proposals. Whilst there was confidence that this work could be completed, it was recognised that these concerns could lead to some thinking that the process had been undermined due to the time constraints;

- Members will see that there are a large number of responses, particularly in some key areas and, by taking this approach, they have an opportunity to read those responses in full rather than relying upon a summary from officers;
- After considering the responses, Members may wish to ask for work to be done on some alternative proposals which so, again, this approach allows for that work to be undertaken before final proposals are put to the Committee for agreement.

5.2 As a result, it is now proposed that the committee meets again in September to consider final proposals and reach a decision on the matter.

## **6.0 Financial Implications**

6.1 Depending upon the final arrangements that are agreed by the Boundary Review Committee, there may be a need to consider the impact on any Special Fund arrangements in respect of Town and Parish Councils.

6.2 Additionally, it should be noted that, where new Town or Parish Councils are created, the legislation sets out that they are able to delay the setting of their precept until October of the year in which the new Council takes effect. This is due to the fact that elections to the new Council will only take place in May 2027. Having said that, in the approach to May 2027, there will be a need for any new Town / Parish Councils to work in 'shadow form' to ensure that matters arising from the review are dealt with.

## **7.0 Legal and HR Implications**

7.1 The legal implications are as set out in this report. Legal advice will be provided on an ongoing basis as the proposals emerge.

## **8.0 Ward Implications**

8.1 The final arrangements decided upon by the Boundary Review Committee may have implications for particular Borough wards. These will be kept under review as matters progress.

## **9.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications**

9.1 Whilst the communities served by the current Town and Parish Councils have diverse needs, there are no direct health, social or economic implications arising directly from the proposals contained in this report other than already set out in the body of this report..

## **10.0 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 10.1 There are no groups that are disproportionately affected by the proposals contained in this report.

## **11.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

- 11.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

## **12.0 Background Papers**

- 1 Consultation Pack (phase 1)
- 2 Report to Boundary Review Committee 13 February 2025
- 3 Consultation Pack (phase 2)
- 4 Presentation to Boundary Review Committee 3 July 2025

## **13.0 Appendices**

- A Response to phase 2 consultation by individual proposed parish areas
- B Response to phase 2 consultation across multiple or unspecified proposed parish areas
- C Hollinswood & Randlay Parish Council blank questionnaire
- D Ercall Magna Parish Council questionnaire and parish submission
- E Kynnersley Parish Council questionnaire and parish submission

## **12.0 Report Sign Off**

<b>Signed off by</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date signed off</b>	<b>Initials</b>
Legal	22/07/2025	22/07/2025	RP
Finance	22/07/2025	22/07/2025	MLB