

BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Boundary Review Committee held on Thursday 3 July 2025 at 6.00 pm in Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

Present: Councillors G Luter (Chair), Z Hannington (Vice-Chair), M Boylan, N A Dugmore, N A M England and R A Overton

In Attendance: L Gordon (Mayor & Member Support Officer), A Lowe (Director: Policy & Governance) and R Phillips (Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy Service Delivery Manager)

Apologies: Councillors K T Blundell

BRC31 Declarations of Interest

None.

BRC32 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 12 May 2025 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

BRC33 Terms of Reference 2025/26

The Service Delivery Manager: Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy presented the 2025/2026 municipal year Terms of Reference. Members were advised that at the Annual Council meeting in May 2025, delegated authority had been granted to each Committee to review their Terms of Reference. The Committee heard that there had been no proposed changes to the Terms of Reference as set out in Appendix A of the report.

Following the update Members voted on the recommendation.

RESOLVED - that the Terms of Reference set out in Appendix A be agreed and reconfirmed for the 2025/2026 municipal year.

BRC34 Community Governance Review 2025

The Director: Policy and Governance presented an update on the Community Governance Review (CGR) 2025, outlining the purpose of the review, the consultation process undertaken to date, and the emerging themes from public engagement.

It was noted that the CGR commenced on 17 February 2025 as a borough-wide review of Town and Parish Council arrangements. The first consultation phase was extended to 14 April 2025 to allow for greater participation. A comprehensive consultation pack was published online and circulated to all

statutory consultees, including MPs, health and police partners, and over 3,000 community groups. Town and Parish Councils were contacted multiple times and asked to share the materials with their members.

Following the closure of the first phase, which received 292 responses, the Committee met on 12 May 2025 and approved the publication of draft proposals for a second round of consultation. This second phase commenced on 19 May 2025 and is scheduled to close on 14 July 2025.

The Director: Policy & Governance provided Members with an overview of the extensive engagement efforts undertaken during the consultation, including hourly radio adverts in leisure centres, social media campaigns reaching over 10,000 individuals and inclusion in the leader's weekly emails. There had also been six drop-in sessions held to date across the Borough, with one more due to take place before the closure of the consultation.

Members heard that as of the date of the meeting, 270 responses had been received in the second phase. Response rates had varied across the borough, with the highest levels of engagement from areas such as Dawley Hamlets, Great Dawley, The Gorge, Waters Upton and the Weald Moors. However, a response had been received in respect of all areas included in the proposals.

The Director: Policy & Governance informed the Committee that some of the emerging themes from responses included concerns about the loss of community identity, particularly in relation to the proposed 'The Nedge' area and the perceived dilution of representation and imbalance in merged parishes. Questions had also been raised regarding the status of neighbourhood plans and council tax implications. Members heard there had been criticism of the consultation process, including the inability to select a specific area in the survey, as well as a perception that decisions had already been made. The Director: Policy & Governance noted that there had been additional concerns about asset redistribution and accessibility of meetings in cases where larger councils were established. The Committee were advised that all feedback received was to be considered in the final proposals and that officers have worked within the criteria set for the review.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled for 30 July 2025, at which point final proposals were to be presented. This would include all responses submitted, with redactions applied where necessary. The next meeting date was subject to change dependent on the volume of submissions and the time required for officers to review them. The Director: Policy & Governance advised Members that they would then have the option to accept proposals in full, in part, or reject them entirely. Following the final decision, legal orders were to be issued to enact any changes. Any new councils were to commence forming from April 2026, with elections scheduled for May 2027. Members heard that a checklist had been prepared by the legal team to assist Town and Parish Clerks with transition planning, covering employment, precept, and asset-related matters.

During the discussion Members raised concerns about adequacy of time to consider submissions before the next meeting. The Director: Policy & Governance assured them that there was a legal requirement for publication of materials five working days before the meeting and confirmed that efforts were to be made to provide a clear summary in the cover report.

Members of the Committee thanked the Director: Policy and Governance for the update and expressed appreciation for the work undertaken by Officers and the level of public engagement achieved. The Committee noted the importance of reviewing the arrangements so they ensure fair representation and best serve communities, whilst also preserving local identity.

The meeting ended at 6.32 pm

Chairman:

Date: Wednesday 30 July 2025