


11<sup>th</sup> July 2025

  
Democratic Services  
Telford & Wrekin Council

Dear 

### **Proposed merger of Edgmond Parish Council with Chetwynd Parish Council**

In consideration of the creation of new parish councils Section 94 of the 2007 Act applies in relation to those recommendations. Where upon it places principal councils under a duty to recommend that a parish should have a council in parishes which have 1000 electors or more.

Edgmond is well over this initial threshold for the second part of section 94 and as demonstrated below as a parish council it fulfils the aims of achieving the more direct participatory form of governance through the 1,079 electors (Jan 2025).

The parish of Edgmond has organically developed since its creation as an ecclesiastical parish in the diocese of Lichfield (1600's) and is considered of sufficient size to justify adequately by the number of councillors in post to represent local people's views and aspiration for a safe and reasonable quality of life.

Edgmond has its own sense of identity which are both historical adaptive to changes as the properties in the village cover a significant range of architectural styles as it has developed over time. This development has been marshalled through the sense of protection of its identity enhanced through the creation of the Edgmond Conservation Area in March 1981.

The most recent significant development of a neighbourhood plan undertaken by the Parish in February 2018, Telford & Wrekin Council's Cabinet agreed to proceed to a referendum on the draft Edgmond Neighbourhood Plan.

The significance of the referendum for the making of this neighbourhood plan, which was made on 31st May 2018, was the number of electors that participated in this ballot.

A significant percentage of Edgmond's population voted in the referendum with a turnout of 45.2% with 94.2% of the votes cast in favour of the Neighbourhood plan. (Electorate: 1151 Ballot Papers Issued: 520).

The significance around Neighbourhood Plan turnout, follows an analysis of the first 206 Neighbourhood Plan referendum poll results (2013 - 2016) which was conducted by 'Planning' where they found that there were more than 336,000 votes cast in neighbourhood plan referendums. Of these, 87.1 per cent have been in favour. The average turnout was 32.4 per cent - just slightly lower than the 34 per cent achieved in the very first poll made in Upper Eden valley area in Cumbria on 8th March 2013.

As this shows our turnout of 45.2% is a high participation rate and it is also worthy of note that the referendum for the Edgmond Neighbourhood Plan was not conducted in conjunction with any local election ballot and yet again demonstrates our residents' engagement in local matters with a clear indication of what should be catered for in matters pertaining to the parish and clearly demonstrates the level of community cohesion that exists.

The three complimentary factors above, demonstrate a cohesive community with a strong sense of identity which the proposed merger with Chetwynd would effectively deplete rather than enhance.

Amongst the three recommendations in the second phase of the TWC CGR documentation in relation to Chetwynd and Edgmond, is the consolidation of the two parishes being merged into one. This process would create a series of anomalous outcomes.

These would be brought about as follows, where by one section of proposed new parish would have a made neighbourhood plan, whereas the other would not. This anomalous arrangement would continue to exist at least until 2028.

In support of the Edgmond neighbourhood plan review, we commissioned a housing needs survey in February 2025 which was undertaken by "Community Resource" utilising an independent housing officer supplied by the charity; Action With Communities In Rural England (ACRE).

The survey and subsequent reports provisions was designed to address the housing needs for Edgmond and not those of Chetwynd and this would also serve to add to the differentiation in any potential merger and decision-making processes in response to applications. The imbalance in these approaches to planning decisions would create an inconsistent response to the local planning authority from the newly created parish and the lack of consistency consultation responses due to the anomalies could potentially disadvantage the parish through the proposed changes by the merger.

The participation in the housing needs survey highlighted again the readiness of our community to participate in the survey, demonstrating the community cohesiveness, resulting in a 23.4% response, whereas this type of survey would provide a normative return of 10-11% participation in such surveys.

Apart from the historical and geo-political factors that have forged Edgmond as a parish council since its creation in 1894, the parish has access to all Parish Council minutes dating back to 1898.

As a community there are very few common elements that we share with Chetwynd, other than the current boundaries that exist along long established arterial routes for transportation, these are the A41 and the B5062 and the Deer Park Show ground and the unclassified road that serves Chetwynd church from off the B5062 at the northern boundary of the village of Edgmond.

Section 93 of the The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 Act requires principal councils to ensure that community governance within the area under review will be:

- reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area and
- effective and convenient in the form of community cohesion

In the guidelines provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government

Local Government Boundary Commission for England in their Guidance on community governance reviews” published March 2010, continues in sections 53 and 54;

**when considering the criteria identified in the 2007 Act, principal councils should take into account a number of influential factors, including:**

- **the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and**
- **the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish**

**54. In considering this guidance, the impact on community cohesion is linked specifically to the identities and interests of local communities. Size, population and boundaries are linked to both but perhaps more specifically to community governance being effective and convenient.**

If the community governance review concludes that the existence of the parish council reflects community identities and provides effective and convenient local governance, the need to merge these two parishes does not appear to apply, nor is there any apparent material gain for the community or efficiency savings in the proposed merger.

The current fiscal arrangements for precept would not impact population nor the local authority as these processes are well established and a change would result in additional administrative burdens on the local authority.

The proposals do not appear to consider the common features, or lack of them, in the suggested changes to merge the parish boundaries.

The current Chetwynd parish has more in common with Tibberton & Cherrington, due to the fact the children in Chetwynd Parish share the same primary education facility in Tibberton. Edgmond St Peter's CofE school is oversubscribed and there would be limited social cohesion brought into effect with the proposed merger of Chetwynd and Edgmond around this aspect of normal social interaction in a community.

Our original submission to the CGR was to adopt 4 houses at Summerhill and this was reflected in one of the proposed suggestions.

**We continue to welcome that particular part of the proposal for change under the recommendations under phase 2 of the CGR. This has been discussed with the affected residents who are in full support of this proposal.**

Communication is already stretched when delivering newsletters to all the houses in Edgmond Parish. In order to work with the community in Chetwynd Parish, communication would be a further important point to consider. The main B5062 road cuts through the proposed merged parish and would make the distribution of newsletters very difficult due to the size of the proposed new Parish.

We were pleased to hear that the members of the Boundary Review Committee confirmed that their decision would be based on the views of the people in the parishes. It is clear when speaking to Edgmond residents that they are not in support of the merger with Chetwynd Parish, although there is no opposition to the inclusion of Summerhill properties within the Edgmond boundary for community cohesion and interest.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

Edgmond Parish Council

c.c [REDACTED] Boundary Review Committee  
Shropshire Association of Local Councils