



Submission to The Boundary Review Committee regarding the Community Governance Review Phase 3.

At the full council meeting on Monday 15th September, Hollinswood & Randlay Parish Council resolved to OPPOSE the expected proposal (and subsequently confirmed by the publication of the Phase 3 documents on the 29th September) of Telford & Wrekin's recommendation which is to create two new Parish Councils – one being Brookside and the second being Hollinswood & Randlay with a significant part of Stirchley coming together (as Hollinswood, Randlay and Stirchley)

(Note: - see comment below about the timescales – the 3-week consultation period meant that no pre-arranged full council meeting fell in the period.)

There was a debate about the proposal which Councillors believe will create a new parish council which is still too large with no clear reasoning as to the benefits for our residents, and the residents of Stirchley and most importantly will still result in communities losing their identities. There was further comment regarding the reduction in number of Parish Councillors of which brings into question adequate and appropriate local representation and democracy.

There is still concern over the overall process and how this does not meet the criteria of a Community Governance Review as outlined and explained in detail within our Phase 2 comments.

What was also noted, is the reduced timescales allowed for this consultation of Phase 3, bearing in mind the significant change from the original proposals being so different, it is extremely short and unnecessarily rushed which could result in not being able to provide a reasonable similar level of response from residents.

The Parish Council, within the timescales provided did arrange for 2 drop-in sessions to take place, on the 10th October at Randlay & 17th October at Hollinswood, the number of responses is lower than phase 2. This is not to do with apathy from the part of the residents, as any engagement has shown significant interest, but to do with the lack of promotion and publicity borough wide. It has been noted that TWC has not undertaken any drop in / information sessions on the new proposal.

Of those who did attend the results are as follows: -

Support – 1.2%
Oppose – 98.8%

Total number of forms – 90

All forms will be provided to TWC to verify. A number of the forms have comments on.

This does provide clear evidence that residents do not wish this proposal to go ahead and mirrors the previous levels of people opposing any change.



Conclusion

Hollinswood and Randlay Parish Council has opposed the previous recommendations for any creation of a new parish area from its first mention and continues to do so. This now includes the creation of a new Parish Council, which, will in effect, absorb all of the current Hollinswood and Randlay Parish with parts of Stirchley into a new Parish.

This stance was formed following a well-considered and discussed objective view of the options provided, based on community involvement, experience and knowledge of our local area. The Council has not just decided that this would be rejected out-of-hand. The proposal was and has been evaluated based on what is best for the residents, who are represented by the Councillors, taking time to discuss with them and then considerable effort to review all evidence. They also considered the suggested reasons for the creation of a new Parish area and concluded: -

- This phase 3 proposal would still not make the two new Parishes co-terminous with The Nedge Ward boundary nor the Brookside Ward boundary.
- There has been minimal movement in the boundaries – the Ward boundaries have had movement but not the parish boundaries. The existing Parishes still reflect the local communities they represent and there is clear demarcation between the areas. These are both hard and soft geographically.
- The reasoning provided regarding the Councillor resignations at Stirchley and Brookside Parish Council is not a valid or suitable reason to affect residents from a different area – if this is the case then should that Parish Council not be split as suggested as one of the options in phase 2.

The Parish Council has and will continue to offer its assistance to Telford and Wrekin in support of any minor changes to the boundaries to remove the few anomalies that do currently exist and would welcome the opportunity to discuss these ideas with the Boundary Review Committee to assist in regard to these (Arundel Close, The Hem and Station Quarter).

Finally, Hollinswood and Randlay Parish Council wishes to make clear, again, that its working relationship with Telford and Wrekin has, in its view, always been a positive and supportive partnership, with residents' best interests at its core. It is of course hoped that this will continue for many years to come.

However, in this specific instance, it is unable to and cannot support this proposal and continues to oppose the recommendation on behalf of the residents.