

Community Governance Review Team

Electoral Services
Darby House
Telford & Wrekin Council
Lawn Central
Telford
TF3 4JA

BY EMAIL

17th October 2025

Dear Community Governance Review Team,

Consultation Response from the Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC) on Telford & Wrekin Council's Community Governance Review – Third Stage consultation 2025

The Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the current phase of the Community Governance Review (CGR) being undertaken by Telford & Wrekin Council. We appreciate the Council's commitment to engaging with local communities and stakeholders, including parish and town councils, in shaping governance arrangements that reflect the needs and identities of the areas concerned.

SALC has consistently supported the principle that community governance should be rooted in the identities, interests, and aspirations of local communities. We therefore strongly endorse the CGR's stated aim to ensure that governance arrangements are:

- **Reflective of community identity and interests**, and
- **Effective and convenient** for those they serve.

We would also refer to the comments we submitted in July as part of the second phase consultation process.

In reviewing the proposals set out in this consultation, SALC wishes to highlight the following key points:

1. Respect for Community Identity

The Association notes the emphasis placed on community identity in several areas, including Horsehay, Lightmoor, Little Dawley & Aqueduct, The Gorge, and Wrockwardine & Rodington. We support the recognition that natural boundaries, historical ties, and shared community interests should guide decisions about parish

arrangements. Where strong local sentiment exists, such as opposition to mergers or boundary changes, these views must be given significant weight.

2. Local Representation and Engagement

SALC welcomes the Council's efforts to consult widely and transparently, including with affected parish councils and local residents. We encourage continued meaningful engagement throughout the final stages of the review, ensuring that all voices—particularly those of smaller or rural communities—are heard and respected.

3. Support for Local Councils

Parish and town councils play a vital role in representing local interests and delivering services. Any changes to governance arrangements should be accompanied by appropriate support and guidance to ensure smooth transitions and continued effectiveness.

4. Concerns Regarding Forced Mergers or Reorganisations

SALC remains cautious about proposals that may dilute local identity or impose arrangements that lack community support. The Association urges the Boundary Review Committee to carefully consider the feedback from phase two consultations, particularly where there was significant opposition to proposed mergers or boundary changes.

5. Electoral Equality and Practicality

While electoral equality is an important consideration, it should not override the fundamental principle of community cohesion. We acknowledge the challenges in achieving balanced representation but believe that practical compromises must be made in favour of preserving community identity.

In terms of the specific proposals in the current phase of consultation, whilst we appreciate the willingness of the BRC is seeking views on alternative proposals, we are concerned as to whether or not a three week consultation period was sufficient to adequately engage with those communities affected and to encourage as full a response as possible given the impact the proposals will have both on local governance and service delivery.

We would urge the Committee to reflect on this in the event it is minded to approve any of the specific proposals outlined in this current consultation. Due to the relatively short period of consultation, we would encourage the BRC to where appropriate, take into account the responses to the second stage consultation which relate to the areas subject to the current round of consultation.

We would offer the following comments / responses on the following proposals, which we believe will enhance community identity, cohesion, and the effectiveness of local governance across the borough:

1. Retention of Hollinswood & Randlay Parish Council

SALC supports the continued existence of Hollinswood & Randlay Parish Council on its existing boundaries. This parish has a well-established identity and provides a vital platform for local representation and service delivery. Its retention ensures continuity and stability for

residents in the area. This has widespread community support (as demonstrated by the strong response to the latest consultation) and will enable the Parish Council to continue providing convenient and effective governance for the local community. The current proposal will not achieve this aim, neither will it serve the best interests of the local community. SALC supports the view that the proposed new parish council is too large with no clear reasoning as to the benefits for the residents of both Hollinswood & Randlay, and residents of Stirchley and most importantly will still result in communities losing their identities. We also share the concern regarding the reduction in number of Parish Councillors which brings into question both adequate and appropriate local representation and democracy for these local communities.

2. Stirchley & Brookside Parish Council

SALC supports the following views expressed by the Parish Council:

- **Shared Facilities & Services:** Stirchley and Brookside have long operated as a unified community, sharing schools, libraries, shops, sports fields, youth programmes, and community centres—most of which are located in Stirchley but serve both areas.
- **Youth Provision:** Programmes like *Funzone* exemplify the integrated nature of the community, bringing together families from both areas. A split would fragment funding and governance, disadvantaging Brookside youth.
- **Geographical Boundaries:** Randlay Avenue is a well-established boundary separating Stirchley from Randlay, reflecting distinct community identities. Stirchley residents do not identify with Hollinswood or Randlay, which have separate facilities and no meaningful social or practical links to Stirchley.
- **Stirchley Village Identity:** Residents of Stirchley Village identify with Stirchley, not Brookside. Reassigning them to Brookside would erase their distinct identity and misrepresent their community affiliation.
- **Clarity & Efficiency:** The current parish structure is well understood and efficient, ensuring accessible services and logical boundaries. A split would create confusion over service provision and responsibilities.
- **Administrative Duplication:** Dividing the parish could lead to duplicated governance structures, increased costs, and disrupted maintenance responsibilities.
- **Polling Districts:** The proposal contradicts recent decisions by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE), which moved polling district TTT from Brookside to The Nedge ward.

SALC supports the view that the proposals for Stirchley & Brookside PC:

- Undermine community identity.
- Reduce the effectiveness and clarity of local governance.
- Increase financial burdens.
- Lack local support.

We ask the BRC to support retention of existing Stirchley & Brookside PC based on the current parish boundaries.

3. Retention of Wrockwardine and Rodington Parish Councils as Separate Entities

SALC strongly supports the decision to retain **Wrockwardine Parish Council** and **Rodington Parish Council** as separate bodies. The previous proposal to merge these with Little Wenlock was met with significant opposition due to the lack of shared identity and the geographical barrier of The Wrekin. There is no connectivity between the two parishes and a lack of community identity. Maintaining their independence respects the distinct rural character and governance needs of each parish. The river Tern provides a natural boundary between these two existing parishes.

4. Creation of a New Parish Council for Admaston, Shawburch & Bratton

We welcome the suggestion by the local Borough Councillor for Admaston to establish a new parish council covering **Admaston, Shawburch & Bratton**. These communities share a cohesive identity and are currently underserved in terms of direct local representation. A dedicated parish council will empower residents and enhance democratic engagement.

5. Retention of Horsehay, Lightmoor, Little Dawley & Aqueduct as Dawley Hamlets Parish Council

SALC supports the retention of these areas within the **Dawley Hamlets Parish Council**. The revised proposal reflects strong community sentiment and identity, particularly the inclusion of Lightmoor and exclusion of Small Hill, which aligns with natural boundaries and local affiliations. This arrangement promotes effective governance and electoral equality. During the second phase of consultation there was strong support from the local community for the retention of Dawley Hamlets Parish Council.

Conclusion

SALC believes these proposals are well-founded and consistent with the principles of community governance as outlined in national guidance. They reflect:

- **Community identity and cohesion:** Each proposal respects the unique character and needs of the communities involved.
- **Local support:** The changes respond directly to feedback from residents and stakeholders.
- **Convenient and effective local government:** The arrangements will improve representation, accountability, and service delivery.

We commend Telford & Wrekin Council for its thorough and responsive approach to this review and look forward to the outcome of these proposals.

SALC appreciates the opportunity to contribute to this important process and reiterates its commitment to supporting governance arrangements that are locally driven, inclusive, and respectful of the unique character of Shropshire's communities.

We look forward to continuing to work constructively with Telford & Wrekin Council and all stakeholders as the CGR progresses and the final decisions implemented ready to take effect from April 2027.

Yours Sincerely



Councillor Ray Wickson
Chairman – SALC



IN COLLABORATION WITH SLCC, NALC, OVW, COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS

SHROPSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

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