

BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Boundary Review Committee held on Monday, 27 January 2020 at 6.00 pm in Meeting Rooms G3/G4, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT

Present: Councillors K T Blundell, N A Dugmore, E J Greenaway, V J Holt (Vice-Chair), A D McClements, R A Overton and B J Thompson

In Attendance:

J Eatough, Assistant Director: Governance, Procurement & Commissioning,
J Galkowski, Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer

Apologies: Councillors C Cassar

BRC8 Declarations of Interest

None.

BRC9 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2019 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

BRC10 Request to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to Undertake a Review of Electoral Arrangements

The Director for Governance presented a report to the Boundary Review Committee which requested permission for Officers at the Council to write to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to undertake a review of the electoral arrangements of Telford and Wrekin borough. Likewise Members were asked to consider whether such a request should include a review of the parish arrangements alongside the review of the borough arrangements.

Since the last review of the electoral arrangements in 2014, the population of the borough had significantly increased especially in the areas of Lawley and Newport, by 24.8% and 10.4% respectively. Many areas were also expected to receive further housing development through the Local Plan and private investment. It was considered that this could produce disproportionate representation and reduced access to democracy in some areas. The Council did not meet some of the criteria for a review to be undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, however a review could still be requested provided a strong enough case was made. Officers believed a reasonable argument for a review could be made on the premise that community cohesion could be enhanced, particularly noticeable in the example of Lawley where extensive development had created a recognisable and identifiable community.

Members welcomed the report and expressed their support for what they had heard. However, they were keen to emphasize that any review of the electoral arrangements within Telford and Wrekin should require parish and town council involvement in the process, as well as the Boundary Review Committee. This was to ensure that local level voices were heard, as previous experience had led Members to feel that the Commission did not apply sufficient weight to local issues such as identity.

Members queried what financial assets the Council held to support a review if it took place, to which the Director of Governance responded that it was anticipated a Project Officer would be necessary to oversee the process and that funding was available for this. The Committee also believed that if the request was declined by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, then the Council should undertake a borough-wide community governance review of the electoral arrangements in Telford and Wrekin.

RESOLVED – that authority be delegated to the Director of Governance, in consultation with the Chair of the Boundary Review Committee, to write to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England asking it to commence a review of electoral arrangements for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin, including a request for a review of the parish electoral arrangements.

The meeting ended at 6.26 pm

Chairman:

Date: 18 February 2021