

BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Boundary Review Committee held on Thursday, 18 March 2021 at 6.00 pm in Remote Meeting

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

In Attendance:

Apologies: Councillors

BRC17 Declarations of Interest

None.

BRC18 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Chair subject to Councillor K Blundell being included in the apologies for the meeting, as she had confirmed she would be unable to attend at the meeting on 29 January 2021.

BRC19 Borough Electoral Review

The Project Officer gave a presentation to Members on the review of the electoral arrangements for the Borough. The LGBCE would look to balance the interests of local community, seek easily identifiable boundaries and the need to secure effective and convenient local government both now and in the future. There had been a slight change in the review timetable and the Council could make a soft submission for feedback by the 16 April 2021, with the final submission by 23 April 2021. The decision would be made by the Commission on 18 May 2021. It was a requirement that different size options were explored and to look at what would be the requirements if this was a newly established council. Leadership, decision making, accountability and community leadership and examples of best practice would be examined and tested. The LGCBE required projections for 2027 and with future growth the electorate was estimated to rise to 141,954 with an average of 2,629 electors to each of the 54 councillors. This may mean a change to the number of wards which was currently 30. A 6.6% increase was forecast for the borough with significant housing growth in areas such as Horsehay & Lightmoor and Ketley & Overdale with further growth expected in central Telford, Priorslee and Wrockwardine. Options to consider would be a slight increase, reduction or retention of the current Council size and consider the range of councillors between 53 and 56. Statistical information and feedback on the amount of ward work councillors undertook would be included in the submission. It was recommended to Members that the proposal to the LGBCE be a council size in the range of 54-56 councillors. Consultation would take place and a

councillor questionnaire be completed to capture information on workloads and time spent on activities.

During the discussion Members felt that the proposal of 53 councillors could be ruled out due to the remarkable amount of growth in the Borough, the increase in the numbers of electorate per councillor and the would impact on the amount of work they would undertake. The questionnaire needed to be meaningful and circulated as soon as possible due to the submission timetable. Some Members were concerned regarding the accuracy of the projections on growth and whether officers had used the same system as the LGBCE to calculate the projected number of residents other areas growth figures came from.

The Project Officer confirmed that with regard to growth, the LGBCE would test any data put before them and question the information provided. They had undertaken direction from the Boundary Commission with regards to calculating statistics and also used ONS population estimations.

The Associate Director: Policy & Governance explained that there were no guarantees with projections when undertaking reviews, but that officers had been on the conservative side with regards to the figures and officers were confident that those numbers would be delivered. She also confirmed that ONS statistics had been used to project growth. A robust rationale and methodology had been used including housing growth, whether housing numbers had been met, planning permissions granted, areas of allocated housing within the Local Plan, planned developments and these figures would be tested.

Upon being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED – that there be no reduction in numbers but officers are instructed to provide information on the council size in the range of between 54-56 and that the submission be brought back to one of the next committee meetings.

The meeting ended at 6.52 pm

Chairman:

Date: Thursday, 8 April 2021