

Electoral Review Committee

MINUTES OF THE ELECTORAL REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Ashley O'Neill (Chairman), Cllr Allison Bucknell and Cllr Ernie Clark

Also Present:

Cllr Jacqui Lay (Virtual), Cllr Ian McLennan (Virtual)

37 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from:

- Cllr Gavin Grant
- Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling
- Cllr Paul Oatway
- Cllr Ian Thorn
- Cllr Ian McLennan (attending online non-voting)
- Cllr Jacqui Lay (attending online non-voting)

38 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 August 2023 were presented for consideration, and it was,

Resolved:

To approve and sign the minutes as a true and correct record.

39 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations.

40 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no announcements.

41 **Public Participation**

No questions or statements were submitted.

42 **Polling District and Polling Place Review**

Caroline Rudland, Electoral Services Specialist Manager provided information on the upcoming Polling District and Polling Place Review, which would commence on 2 October 2023 if the Committee was in agreement.

The aim of the review was to ensure the electoral arrangements for Wiltshire meet the needs of the electorate. The majority of polling district changes proposed in the review were rectifying some very small polling districts that were created as a result of Community Governance Reviews and the Unitary boundary changes in 2021.

It was explained that all responses to the consultation on the review would be collated and assessed, would be reported to the Committee at its next meeting, and if changes were then approved the revised electoral register would be published on 1 December 2023. The consultation would seek the views of the public, key stakeholders, partners, and elected members. Any new community buildings which could be used in future elections would be a useful outcome.

Details were provided on the consultation including paper copies available from council hubs, that representations were required to be published, and that people could phone and make a verbal representation. The consultation would run from 2 October to 31 October 2023, as set out in appendices A, B and C to the report included within the agenda.

The importance of where people vote was discussed, and clarity was sought on whether the review encompassed changes from recent community governance reviews. It was explained where these were complete, they could be taken into account, however the most recent would take effect from May 2025, and in some cases had not received final consent for division changes, so minor adjustments would be made through a rolling programme of changes. There were also questions relating to updating all elected members and engaging with parish councils.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

- 1) To authorise the Director, Legal and Governance, in consultation with the Chairman of the Electoral Review Committee, to carry out the consultation in accordance with the arrangements outlined in the report.**
- 2) To consider for approval at a future meeting, the final recommendations following the conclusion of the consultation.**

43 **Community Governance Review 2023/24**

The Democracy Manager and the Senior Democratic Services Officer provided verbal updates on the progress of the 2023/24 Community Governance Review.

It was confirmed the terms of reference for the 2023/24 review was published on 11 September 2023. This listed the areas for review, the limited nature of the review in respect of North Bradley and Lacock, and the capability to include additional areas to correct minor anomalous boundaries which may be identified. A briefing note would be circulated shortly, and sessions arranged for potentially impacted parishes for the more significant proposals, and with unitary members.

The Committee discussed the update, seeking clarity on local members being able to flag up any anomalous boundaries in their area, and confirmation that in many areas this might require subsequent electoral division changes, which was the responsibility of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. The Committee also reviewed the information sheets for each area, including details of currently received proposals and electorate information.

Resolved:

To note the update.

44 **Date of the Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 22 November 2023.

45 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 1.30 - 2.15 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Kieran Elliott of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718504, e-mail kieran.elliott@wiltshire.gov.uk

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