

Electoral Review Committee

MINUTES OF THE ELECTORAL REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 31 MAY 2022 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:

Councillor Ian Blair-Pilling (Chairman), Councillor Gavin Grant (Vice-Chairman), Councillor Allison Bucknell, Councillor Ernie Clark, Councillor Jacqui Lay, Councillor Ian McLennan, Councillor Ashley O'Neill and Councillor Ian Thorn

10 **Election of Chairman**

Nominations for a Chairman for 2022/23 were sought.

Councillor Gavin Grant nominated Councillor Ian Blair-Pilling and was seconded by Councillor Ashley O'Neill.

As there were no other nominations, it was;

Resolved:

That Councillor Ian Blair-Pilling was elected as Chairman of the Electoral Review Committee for 2022/23.

Councillor Ian Blair-Pilling in the chair.

11 **Election of Vice-Chairman**

Nominations for a Vice-Chairman for 2022/23 were sought.

Councillor Ian Blair-Pilling nominated Councillor Gavin Grant and was seconded by Councillor Ashley O'Neill.

As there were no other nominations, it was;

Resolved:

That Councillor Gavin Grant was elected as Vice-Chairman of the Electoral Review Committee for 2022/23.

12 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Paul Oatway and Stuart Wheeler.

13 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 February 2022 were presented, it was,

Resolved:

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

14 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Gavin Grant noted that as he was also a member of Malmesbury Town Council, he would not take part in the discussion or vote during consideration of St Paul Malmesbury Without area proposals, in his capacity as a Committee Member, but instead would speak and if appropriate answer any factual questions in his role as a Malmesbury Town Councillor.

Councillor Ian Thorn noted that as he was also a member of Calne Town Council he would not take part in the discussion or vote during consideration of the proposals relating to Calne Town, in his capacity as a Committee Member, but instead would speak and if appropriate answer any factual questions as a Local Member for Calne Town, and not as the Calne Town Council representative.

15 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no announcements.

16 **Public Participation**

No questions or statements had been received within the timeframe set out in the agenda.

The Chairman noted that public speakers would be invited to address the Sub-Committee at the start of each agenda item.

17 **Electoral Division Variance Report**

A report was received on the councils' electoral divisions, and their variance from the average electorate per division. In establishing the divisions for the 2021 elections the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) sought to establish divisions which would be within 10% of the average electorate per division. This was based on projected electorates for 2024.

It was reported that 21 divisions currently had a variance greater than 10%, below the intervention criteria of the LGBCE, although there were currently a number of divisions with a variance of over 30%, which was also an intervention criteria. The LGBCE had confirmed that a review would not be carried out before the 2025 elections, and if the criteria were met would discuss further with

the council, as it might be that the variances would reduce within a reasonable time at that stage.

The Committee discussed the methodology for calculating electorate and projected electorate, noting this had difficulties for instance around military sites, but that the council was required to calculate by electorate and not population.

Legislation allowed for a partial review of the council's electoral divisions to be carried out in place of a full review of all 98 divisions. However, the LGBCE had advised that it would require a strong case to consider this approach

The Committee requested an annual update report highlighting areas approaching the threshold for a review, in order to consider possible solutions to avoid a full review.

Resolved

The Electoral Review Committee noted the Report.

18 **Community Governance Review 2021/22**

Public Participation

Mr Ioan Rees, the organiser of a petition, spoke in support of recommendation 7 (Calne without/Derry Hill & Studley)

Mr Keith Robbins as a petitioner spoke in support of recommendation 7 (Calne without/Derry Hill & Studley)

Mr John Bartholomew, representative of Brokenborough PC spoke in respect of Recommendation 8 (Malmesbury)

Mr Roger Bugden, representing St Paul Malmesbury without PC spoke in respect of recommendation 8 (Malmesbury)

Mr David Briggs representing St Paul Malmesbury without PC spoke in respect of recommendation 8 (Malmesbury)

The Committee considered the responses to the Draft Recommendations consultation which ran from 18 March 2022 – 5 May 2022.

Charlton St Peter

The Committee discussed Draft Recommendation 1 (Charlton St Peter). No further responses had been received, and the Committee considered the reasoning and evidence for the proposal remained appropriate and confirmed its recommendation.

The Committee determined to confirm Draft recommendation 1

Calne & Surrounding Areas

The Committee considered Draft Recommendations 2 – 7, which related to Calne, Bremhill, Hillmarton, Compton Bassett, Cherhill, Heddington and Calne without (Derry Hill & Studley). Members of the public spoke as detailed above.

Recommendation 2 - Calne Town

Councillor Ian Thorn spoke as local member and not in his capacity as Committee member.

Consultation responses relating to the Calne Town proposals were considered as attached to the report. Responses were predominantly in support, however there were requests to consider the views of residents in the proposed area A, Cherhill View estate. The Committee continued to consider the area was an urban extension of the town and should be transferred within it. A request from Calne Town Council to reconsider its proposal to transfer the Beversbrook sports facility was also discussed. The Committee noted there were no residential properties involved and did not consider evidence had been provided that governance or community reasons justified such a change.

The Committee determined to confirm Draft recommendation 2

Recommendation 3 – Bremhill

The Committee noted the consultation responses relating to the Bremhill proposals, with an objection from Langley Burrell PC to the transfer of area E, although support had been received from residents within that area, currently a part Langley Burrell Without. The Committee continued to support the proposals to transfer the area to Bremhill as more reflective of the community identity and interests. There had been a mixed response from residents around Stanley Abbey Farm, and on balance the Committee upheld its initial recommendation as the most appropriate option.

The Committee considered and supported a request for an amendment to the boundary line to the south, to include within the parish of Calne Without (Derry Hill & Studley) a group of properties around Black Dog Holt, which were currently split across two parishes by the recommendation

The Committee noted that a further short consultation would be required and that a final recommendation for Bremhill would be considered at the next meeting once the consultation responses had been considered.

Recommendation 4 – Hilmarton & Compton Bassett

The Committee noted the consultation responses, which indicated support by both parishes involved.

The Committee was in favour of confirming Draft Recommendation 4 (Hilmarton and Compton Bassett).

Recommendation 5 – Cherhill

The Committee noted the consultation responses relating to the Cherhill proposals which were mostly supportive, subject to an amendment to the currently split Blackland area, to bring it wholly within a single parish, with most

responses proposing it be within the parish of Cherhill. Other suggestions had been to increase the number of wards and councillors for the expanded Cherhill

The Committee noted that a further short consultation would be required and that a final recommendation for Cherhill would be considered at the next meeting once the consultation responses had been considered.

Recommendation 6 – Heddington

The Committee noted the consultation responses relating to the Heddington proposals which were mostly supportive but had raised a request for an amendment around the Bowood Estate area, to bring it as a whole into one parish, rather than to split across two as was currently the proposal.

The Committee was advised that a map had been requested of the Bowood Estate to clarify the exact boundary of the estate.

Heddington parish council also supported the proposals subject to adjusting the name of the proposed new ward for Stockley.

The Committee supported the amendment requests and noted that a further short consultation would be required and that a final recommendation for Heddington would be considered at the next meeting once the consultation responses had been considered.

Recommendation 7 – Calne Without (Derry Hill & Studley)

The Committee noted the consultation responses relating to the Calne without (Derry Hill & Studley) proposals.

The proposals were in line with the original request of the petition to have Derry Hill & Studley un-warded, however, Calne Without Parish Council had submitted an amendment to the proposals, to ward the remaining area of Calne without, which would be renamed Derry Hill & Studley.

The Committee discussed the proposal and the responses, noting the parishes in the area were a mix of warded and unwarded. Taking note of the support of the parish council the committee supported the amendment request to ward the remainder of Calne without (Derry Hill & Studley). It proposed boundaries for those wards to include Sandy Lane and the Bowood Estate noted that a further short consultation would be required and that a final recommendation for Calne without (Derry Hill & Studley) would be considered at the next meeting once the consultation responses had been considered.

Malmesbury & Surrounding Areas

The Committee then considered Draft Recommendation 8 which related to Malmesbury & Surrounding areas.

Ward members Councillor Gavin Grant spoke as local member and not in his capacity as Committee member, and asked the Committee to support a deferral to the consideration of a final recommendation for Malmesbury and surrounding areas, to allow time for representatives of both councils to come together to discuss options, taking note of the responses which had been received including from surrounding parishes such as Charlton.

The St Paul Malmesbury Without Parish Council representatives in attendance were in support of the suggestion.

The Committee also noted the request for an amendment from Brokenborough Parish Council to the boundary line around Hyam Farm and associated buildings.

The Committee discussed the consultation responses which had indicated a high level of objection to the proposed transfers from residents of St Paul Malmesbury Without, and noted the revised suggestion from the parish council to transfer a smaller area to the town. It supported the request for a deferral to allow for further discussion between the two councils in a bid to achieve a revised proposal which was more acceptable.

It was;

Resolved

- 1) To confirm that Council be proposed to approve Draft Recommendations 1, 2 and 4**
- 2) To amend Recommendations 3,5,6 and 7 as detailed in the additional draft recommendations document.**
- 3) To delegate the preparation of an additional draft recommendations document to the Director, Legal and Governance, after consultation with the Chairman of the Committee.**
- 4) For an additional consultation to take place on recommendations 3,5,6 and 7, with the dates to be agreed by the Director, Legal and Governance, after consultation with the Chairman of the Committee.**
- 5) To defer making a Final Recommendation for Malmesbury until the next meeting, to allow time for discussions between Malmesbury Town Council and St Paul Malmesbury Without Parish Council.**

19 Future Community Governance Reviews

The Committee considered the list of remaining schemes for review, in order to prioritise and agree areas to be included in the Draft Terms of Reference, as detailed at Appendix A, for the Community Governance Review (CGR) to take place sometime in 2022/23.

After a short discussion, it was;

Resolved

- 1) To delegate to the Director Legal and Governance, finalisation and approval of the Terms of Reference for a Community Governance Review 2022/23, as attached at Appendix A, to include the timetable for the review after consultation with the Chairman of the Committee. The Director after consultation with the Chairman will have the authority to amend the terms of reference at any time if appropriate.

- 2) That the following areas be included in the review for 2022/23:
 - Netheravon
 - Figcheldean
 - Warminster
 - Fovant
 - Donhead St Mary
 - Monkton Farleigh/Grimstead
 - Biddestone
 - Yatton Keynell and Grittleton
 - Nettleton
 - Castle Coombe
 - Tidworth
 - Ludgershall
 - Westbury
 - Bratton
 - Heywood
 - Dilton Marsh

- 3) That the parish of Sedgehill and Semley would be elected to a single parish council of 9 members, unwarded at the next election.

20 **Date of the Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 5 July 2022.

21 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 9.30 am - 12.26 pm)

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