

**Wiltshire Council**

**Full Council**

**26 March 2019**

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**Electoral Review of Wiltshire Council: Division Names**

**Executive Summary**

The Electoral Review Committee (“The Committee”) was established by Full Council at its meeting on 17 October 2017 to progress the Council’s responses to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England’s Electoral Review of Wiltshire Council.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (“The Commission”), having determined that the council size should remain at 98 councillors, and following submissions from the council and others, has published draft recommendations setting out a proposed pattern of electoral divisions and their names.

In the previous item the Committee’s recommendations on a pattern of divisions was presented. In this item the Committee sets out its proposed names, for its own recommended pattern of divisions.

**Proposal**

That Council approves the proposed names of the divisions as recommended in Appendix A.

**Reason for Proposals**

To ensure the Council provides a submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to its consultation.

**Ian Gibbons, Director of Legal and Democratic Services (and Monitoring Officer)**

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## **Electoral Review of Wiltshire Council: Division Names**

### **Purpose**

1. For the Council to approve draft divisions names for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (“The Commission”).

### **Background**

2. On 15 September 2017 Wiltshire Council (“The Council”) was notified by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (‘the Commission’) of its intention to carry out an electoral review of the Council in its 2018/19 work programme. This was because 25 of the 98 electoral divisions in Wiltshire had a variance from the average number of electors per councillor greater than 10% and 2 had a variance of more than 30%.
3. On 17 October 2017 Council established the Electoral Review Committee (‘the Committee’) to progress the Council’s response to the review, and to formulate recommendations on any submissions to be made to the Commission during the review process.
4. Following two submissions from the Council, on 28 August 2018 the Commission announced that it was minded to agree a council size of 98 councillors, noting its decision was taken ‘*in the context of the Area Boards and their importance to the Council’s decision-making process*’. A consultation on a pattern of divisions was therefore launched to run from 28 August - 5 November 2018.
5. The Council, following consideration of evidence by the Committee, approved a submission on a proposed pattern of divisions at its meeting on 16 October 2018. The proposals were based upon the statutory criteria of effective and convenient local government, community identity and acceptable levels of electoral variance.
6. On 5 February 2019 the Commission published [draft recommendations](#) for both a pattern of divisions and the names of those divisions. A consultation was launched which will run until 15 April 2019.
7. The Committee met for a workshop to discuss the draft recommendations on 7 February 2019 and in public session on 28 February 2019 and 11 March 2019.

### **Main Considerations**

8. Technical guidance from the Commission notes that: ‘*The Commission rarely has strong views on [division names] and will usually use names which have been put to us by local people. Where there is no consensus, we will make our decision based on*

*which name best reflects the communities contained within the [division]. We will also seek to ensure that ward names are distinct from others in the area to avoid confusion for voters'.*

9. At its meeting on 16 October 2018 the Council delegated preparation of nominal division identifiers to the Director of Legal and Democratic Services after consultation with the Committee, noting that the Council would recommend finalised names following the publication of draft recommendations by the Commission.
10. Therefore, at its meeting on 11 March 2019 the Committee considered all division names which had been proposed as part of the draft recommendations. They made suggestions and then delegated final approval of the names to the Director of Legal and Democratic Services after consultation with the Chairman of the Committee. The final recommendations are set out in **Appendix A**.
11. The proposed names broadly applied, as much as was reasonable, the following principles:
  - Where a division is entirely or predominantly (by population) urban to have the town name first and then the community within the town or area of the town second eg Chippenham Hardenhuish, Devizes South
  - Where a division is more evenly part urban and part rural (as opposed to say, Chippenham Hardenhuish which is part town and part parish, but entirely urban in nature), generally the style will be urban area first and then acknowledgement of the rural aspect. Where this is multiple parishes, this has generally been styled 'and rural' eg Ludgershall North and Rural, Warminster North and Rural. A similar approach is applied where a large parish, or part of a large parish, has been joined with a number of smaller parishes.
  - Where a division is entirely comprised of rural parishes, if there is a single parish which dominates in numbers or for historical reasons, the name shall simply be the name of one parish eg Ramsbury, Lyneham.
  - If there are parishes of roughly equal size, and no historical basis for one over the other, a name might contain the two larger parishes eg Holt and Staverton, Alderbury and Winterslow. This is because it is simply not possible to include the names of all parishes which comprise a rural division, and they do not form part of a nearby urban area.
  - Where there are many parishes, but there is a generally suitable geographic name which can be applied, this will be used eg Bourne Valley, Avon Valley
12. The proposed names are for the divisions as proposed by the Council in response to the current consultation. Members should be aware that in areas such as Melksham, Westbury, Salisbury and Laverstock and Malmesbury, these are significantly different to the Commission proposals.

### **Safeguarding Implications**

13. There are no safeguarding implications.

### **Public Health Implications**

14. There are no public health implications.

#### **Procurement Implications**

15. There are no procurement implications.

#### **Equalities Implications**

16. There are no equalities implications.

#### **Environmental Implications**

17. There are no environmental implications.

#### **Financial Implications**

18. Work to date has been carried out within existing resources. Financial considerations are not relevant for the purpose of determining council size.

#### **Legal Implications**

19. The electoral review is a statutory process carried out by the Commission in accordance with its obligations and powers as set out in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

#### **Risks**

20. If the Council fails to respond to the review the Commission would determine matters based on the submission of other interested parties.

#### **Options Considered**

21. The Committee considered alternative division name proposals.

#### **Next Steps**

22. Following consideration of all representations the Commission will publish its final recommendations detailing a pattern of divisions and division names on 2 July 2019. At that stage the proposals can no longer be amended, but will be laid before Parliament where they can be either accepted or rejected. This would be scheduled to take place from September 2019 onwards, and come into effect for the unitary elections in May 2021.

#### **Proposal**

23. That Council approves the proposed names of the divisions as recommended in **Appendix A**.

#### **Ian Gibbons, Director of Legal and Democratic Services**

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## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Draft division names

### **Background Papers**

[Wiltshire Council's Pattern of Divisions Submission](#)

[Draft Recommendations of the LGBCE](#)

[Technical Guidance of the LGBCE](#)