

ELECTORAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE ELECTORAL REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2018 AT WEST WILTSHIRE ROOM - WILTSHIRE COUNCIL OFFICES, COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.

Present:

Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cllr Richard Clewer (Chairman), Cllr Gavin Grant, Cllr Ian McLennan, Cllr Christopher Newbury, Cllr Ashley O'Neill, Cllr Jonathon Seed (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Stuart Wheeler and Cllr Graham Wright

Also Present:

Cllr Jacqui Lay

37 **Apologies**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Clare Cape.

38 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2018 were presented and after consideration 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**

The Chairman thank the Committee and the supporting officers for their work on the submissions to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, who had on 28 August 2018 announced their 'minded to' decision that the Council retain a council size of 98.

41 **Public Participation**

There were no questions or statements submitted.

42 **Electoral Review Update - Stage One Consultation**

The Chairman of the Electoral Review Committee, Councillor Richard Clewer, formally advised the Committee of the 'minded to' decision of the Local

Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) that Wiltshire Council retain 98 councillors, and that the consultation for people to propose a pattern of divisions would run until 5 November 2018. The Council would therefore need to prepare a submission for that date.

The Committee was informed that information gathering sessions had been arranged for all Wiltshire Councillors in area board groupings to discuss potential issues and solutions to creating divisions with a maximum 10% variance from the target electorate of 4291. The Committee agreed that as the community areas had been a central argument in the Council's submissions to the LGBCE, which had been accepted by the Commissioners, new divisions inasmuch as possible should be contained within existing community area boundaries, however it was recognised that in some areas parishes might need to be split between divisions or parishes moved between community areas due to electorate numbers.

Parish councils had been provided data relating to the electoral review and of the LGBCE consultation, but it was emphasised that the review was not concerned with changing parish boundaries, only the creation of electoral divisions to Wiltshire Council in accordance with the relevant criteria of electoral equality, community identity and convenient and effective local government. It was confirmed the LGBCE had strongly advised that any community governance reviews should not take place until the electoral review was concluded.

Officers confirmed that a large-scale county map and more detailed divisional maps showing polling districts with electorate forecasts were available to view in the Richardson Suite on the ground floor on a drop-in basis other than when the scheduled sessions with area board councillors were being held. Maggie Mulhall, the consultant electoral services expert would generally be available in the suite to support councillor enquiries. Reminders and specific information would be sent to councillors ahead of their respective area board session. Officers also confirmed the information already sent to councillors and parish councils both from the LGBCE and Council with links to all the necessary webpages containing guidance and data. This would be re-sent on request.

The Committee discussed the next stage of the review at length, and how it would seek to prepare a submission, including a workshop on 27 September and whether it would be necessary to move the scheduled council meeting date of 16 October to approve a submission, or have an extraordinary meeting, and and if an extension of the consultation period could be requested of the LGBCE without an overall delay in the process.

Resolved:

To note the comments raised during the meeting and continue to update the Committee as the Electoral Review progresses.

43 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 9.35 - 10.35 am)

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

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115