

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Electoral Review Committee**

**26 June 2023**

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#### **Forthcoming Community Governance Review 2023/24**

##### **Purpose**

1. To consider the list of remaining schemes for review, for the Community Governance Review (CGR) to take place sometime in 2023/24.

##### **Background**

2. A CGR is a process wherein a principal authority can adjust the governance arrangements of parishes within its council area. This can include amending the number of councillors or wards, the external boundaries, or even the creation/merger/abolition/grouping of entire parishes.
3. The Council may undertake reviews at any time where it considers it appropriate to do so, for example where there have been changes in populations as a result of new developments, and in response to reasonable requests received from individuals, groups or parish councils themselves. A large number of requests were received in 2019 following the Electoral Review of Wiltshire Council, with a number of additional requests received since that time.
4. A review began in August 2022 and is presently ongoing. It is expected to conclude in July 2023.
5. There are currently **16** remaining requests yet to be reviewed, these are detailed in **Appendix A**. There are also a number of anomalous boundaries which the Committee may wish to consider reviewing, which were not requested by a parish council.

##### **Main Considerations**

6. Although a CGR is ongoing for a number of areas, it is towards the end of the process. As the first stages of a review involve the gathering and compilation of information without direct involvement of the Committee members, it is considered that an additional review could formally begin before the existing CGR has concluded. This would enable the determination of all pending requests in advance of the 2025 local elections.
7. The Committee is therefore asked to approve the areas for review, including any further areas they feel should be included. It is then proposed the finalisation of terms of reference be delegated to the Director, Legal and Governance, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee.
8. Many of the remaining requests were first submitted prior to the elections in 2021, and some for relatively minor changes. Given the length of time since submission, and whilst there have been previous communications from some, it is proposed to confirm with the requesting party if they still wish to pursue a review in their area. In the event the request is withdrawn, these would be removed from the draft terms of reference prior to publication.

9. The Committee could undertake a full review of each area, or limit the scope of the review to look only at specific arrangements, such as internal warding and councillor numbers, rather than also consider external boundaries.
10. In accordance with previous reviews, once the Committee has indicated which areas should be included there will be communications to any potentially impacted parishes and the public and other interested persons or bodies, if appropriate, for any additional comments, as well as engagement with local Unitary Members, as part of an initial phase of pre-consultation. The Committee may, if appropriate, organise surveying or public meetings for review areas.
11. The Committee will then consider all the information it receives and develop draft recommendations. Consultation will be required on any changes recommended by the Committee, which may involve a solution not suggested by a specific request up to that point.
12. After analysing any responses, the Committee may amend its recommendations and/or seek additional consultation as appropriate, before submitting final recommendations to Full Council, at an appropriate time in 2024.

#### **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. Community Governance Reviews will require periods of appropriate public consultation which will incur additional resources, in particular in relation to the cost of using an external company to physically mail to out those affected in certain areas if appropriate during the draft recommendations stage.

#### **Legal Implications**

19. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 gives the Council the power to undertake CGRs and sets out the criteria for such reviews. There is also statutory guidance on the conduct of such reviews that the Council would have to comply with.

## **Risks**

20. There is no obligation on the Council to carry out CGRs at a particular time. other than in response to a petition or application from an appropriate party. However, failure to do so may lead to the arrangements in some areas being outdated and unable to provide effective local governance.

## **Options Considered**

21. The Committee can include additional or fewer pending requests within the proposed Terms of Reference. This would have potential resource implications, or potentially have an impact upon the completion of any review within the intended timetables.

## **Proposal**

22. That the Committee determine which areas should be include for review for 2022/23 within those terms of reference.
23. To delegate to the Director Legal and Governance, finalisation and approval of the Terms of Reference for a Community Governance Review 2023/24 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.

## **Perry Holmes – Director, Legal and Governance**

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## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Pending Requests

## **Background Papers**

[Guidance on Community Governance Reviews](#)

[Terms of Reference of the Electoral Review Committee](#)

Appendix A

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Suggested for Review by</b>	<b>Parish affected</b>	<b>Type of change</b>	<b>Confirmed post 2021</b>
<b>1</b>	10/09/19	Box Parish Council	Box	Ward name	No
<b>2</b>	30/09/19	Winterbourne Parish Council	Laverstock & Ford	Transfer between parishes	No
<b>3</b>	30/09/19	Winterbourne Parish Council	Firsdow	Transfer between parishes	No
<b>4</b>	30/09/19	Winterbourne Parish Council	Idmiston	Transfer between parishes	No
<b>5</b>	30/09/19	Winterbourne Parish Council	Durnford	Transfer between parishes	No
<b>6</b>	30/09/19	Marlborough Town Council	Preshute	Merger of Parish	Yes
<b>7</b>	30/09/19	Marlborough Town Council	Savernake	Merger of Parish	Yes
<b>8</b>	30/09/19	Marlborough Town Council	Marlborough	Warding	Yes
<b>9</b>	30/09/19	Marlborough Town Council	Unknown	Transfer between parishes	Yes
<b>10</b>	10/10/19	Mere Town Council	Zeal	Transfer between parishes	Yes
<b>11</b>	18/10/19	Preshute Parish Council	Fyfield	Merger/Grouping	No
<b>12</b>	18/10/19	Fyfield and West Overton Joint Parish Council	Preshute	Merger/Grouping	No
<b>13</b>	28/10/19	Idmiston Parish Council	Idmiston	Cllr Numbers	No
<b>14</b>	28/10/19	Idmiston Parish Council	Idmiston	Warding	No
<b>15</b>	24/04/21	Wiltshire Council	Salisbury	Anomaly correction	No
<b>16</b>	12/11/22	North Bradley PC	Trowbridge	Boundary	Yes