

ELECTORAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE ELECTORAL REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2 OCTOBER 2018 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - WILTSHIRE COUNCIL OFFICES, COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.

Present:

Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cllr Richard Clewer (Chairman), Cllr Gavin Grant, Cllr Ian McLennan, Cllr Ashley O'Neill, Cllr Graham Wright and Cllr Ruth Hopkinson (Substitute)

Also Present:

Cllr Peter Fuller and Cllr Fred Westmoreland

1 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Christopher Newbury, Jonathon Seed and Stuart Wheeler.

Apologies were also received from Councillors Ashley O'Neil and Graham Wright, that they would arrive late to the meeting.

2 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2018 were presented for consideration and it was,

Resolved:

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

3 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations.

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no announcements.

5 **Public Participation**

A comment was received at the meeting from a representative of Chute Parish Council, supporting the proposed division in that area. In response to a question

on the names of divisions it was confirmed the ones detailed in the agenda documents were placeholders only.

6 **Electoral Review Update - Stage One Submission**

Councillor Richard Clewer, Chairman of the Electoral Review Committee, presented the draft council wide pattern of divisions proposal as contained within agenda supplements 1 and 2. It was emphasised that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) was running a consultation from 28 August to 5 November, and Wiltshire Council was only a consultee in that process. It was noted that all parishes had been contacted on multiple occasions to draw their attention to the review, and information gathering sessions held for each existing area board. All comments received had been circulated to all councillors.

In preparing a council wide submission it was explained as also detailed in agenda supplement 3 that key principles had been applied when preparing new divisions. These included: the abiding principle that every effort be made to ensure divisions were within a variance of 10% from the target number of electors of 4263; that area boards, being critical to the decision of the LGBCE to retain a council size of 98, should be maintained wherever possible in a similar form as their existing one; that where previous Community Governance Reviews had made a decision on existing built up urban areas that those decisions be followed when drawing up proposed divisions; to preserve parishes in their entirety wherever possible except where community interest determined otherwise; that wherever possible divisions should be entirely urban or entirely rural; and that where known new development was to take place on the edge of an urban area that the default position should be that the areas should be contained within the same division. This would be without prejudice to any possible future governance reviews.

The Committee endorsed the use of those principles in developing proposals, and then discussed the draft submission documentation in detail. It was recognised that any alterations to the proposal at committee or council would need to have no effect or mitigated effect on the rest of the proposal, to ensure coherence. It was also strongly highlighted that in all urban areas many lines remained indicative and would be subject to some change up to and beyond the council meeting on 16 October. This was because calculating electors by individual street would be required, and therefore some of the lines might contain too few or too many electors, which was the critical factor.

In discussing the proposals, the Committee discussed a number of key areas. In relation to the proposed division of Amesbury West and Bulford it was stated that further discussions had been had with local councillors, and an alternative was suggested to include sections of the current Amesbury East division with the parish of Bulford, and that this represented a community focused proposal. The Committee accepted the suggestion for incorporation within the overall draft proposal.

In relation to proposed divisions with the Trowbridge community area the Committee discussed at length the proposed inclusion of new urban areas, geographic barriers within the area, and the nature of any communities within the town and how to divide divisions, and confirmed that significant housing was predicted to be delivered in time for new elections to make a new division including that development to be viable. Further suggestions had been sought from local councillors and would be considered ahead of the meeting on 8 October.

It was also noted that a meeting had been arranged to discuss further minor changes in the Corsham area.

The Committee also discussed the proposals for the Southern Area Board. The draft proposal included a division at 11% variance, and during workshop sessions it had been requested to explore further alternatives. It was reported that a great many alternatives had been considered but that when considering the statutory criteria other options required the division of multiple parishes in arbitrary fashion which did not have any community basis, and therefore the proposed draft was the most acceptable option, even with its variance slightly too high. Given the nature of development in the area, however, it was suggested that the proposed division would find itself within acceptable variance within a few years.

The Committee were also strongly of the view that all of Laverstock and Ford Parish should be contained within a single Area Board, and that this should be the Southern Area Board.

In discussing the proposals regarding Salisbury the Committee discussed potential areas for slight amendments to boundaries including with the Bemerton areas and St Pauls among others, and noted that an east west dividing line in the Harnham area was most suitable due to the increase in electorate in that area making a north south line unviable with the inclusion of new development.

In relation to the Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade proposals the Committee discussed suggestions that in addition to the latest new development at the far south east of Purton parish which it was proposed be moved to another division due to Purton being too large, that the existing housing in that same area be moved as it was once cohesive community. This would as a result require the moving of Broad Town parish into the proposed Lyneham division, which it was felt would be more appropriate considering the inclusion of Broad Hinton as well. Additionally, as Winterbourne Bassett was a joint parish council with Broad Hinton, this should also be included, while keeping all divisions within acceptable electoral variance.

The Committee also discussed various options for the Melksham area at length, including the inclusion of additional parishes from other areas, joining the north of the town with the northern part of Melksham Without parish, the inclusion of Broughton Gifford with the southern parishes and more. The Committee accepted that the division of Bowerhill into multiple divisions was not an ideal

solution, although it noted that the parish to which Bowerhill belonged, Melksham Without, would under any solution require multiple divisions. The Committee agreed that the external boundary of the new area board should be as proposed in the draft submission, and noted that further discussion would be taking place with local councillors to discuss how to fit divisions within that boundary.

The Committee also expressed thanks to the Chairman, project team, and the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Ashley O'Neil, for their dedicated, cross party work to develop a satisfactory and coherent council wide solution.

At the conclusion of discussion and on the motion of Councillor Richard Clewer, seconded by Councillor Gavin Grant, it was,

Resolved:

To approve the draft submission for recommendation to Full Council, subject to:

- 1) further discussions on proposed divisions for Melksham Area Board, within the external boundaries as shown by the existing proposals;**
- 2) further amendments to minor movements inside the defined urban areas to be delegated to the Director of Legal and Democratic Services after consultation with the Chairman of the Committee;**
- 3) Final confirmation at the meeting to be held on 8 October 2018.**

7 Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 4.30 - 11.20 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

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