

Wiltshire Council

Electoral Review Committee

13 August 2020

Forward Work Plan – Community Governance Reviews

Purpose

1. To prioritise the list of requested Community Governance Reviews to establish a forward work programme for the Committee.

Background

2. In July 2019 the Committee sought expressions of interest from parishes in the Wiltshire Council area for any changes to governance arrangements in their area. Given the number of requests received, including a petition from members of the public which was required to be considered, not all areas could be reviewed in advance of the May 2021 elections given the level of resourcing required.
3. On 31 October 2019 the Committee agreed terms of reference for a Review commencing 1 November 2019, detailing which areas were to be reviewed. Any other areas would be reviewed at a later date, with any changes resolved to take effect from the 2025 elections.

Main Considerations

4. If the Committee, and Full Council, agree to conclude a review of Calne Without with a view to undertaking an additional review of the parish also taking in Calne Town, and other surrounding parishes, then it is unlikely given all the remaining requests that all could be dealt with in a single review within the 12 months required.
5. Therefore, it is suggested to prioritise the list of remaining scheme requests to be reviewed into two or more groups, so that for example a review could take place in 2021-22, and 2022-2023. This would additionally allow the Committee to check after the May 2021 elections whether a request for a review from a parish council is still supported by that parish council.
6. 41 scheme requests have not been reviewed or withdrawn by their proposer, as shown in **Appendix 1**. Of those 41:
 - 12 involve changing councillor numbers or internal warding arrangements only;
 - 23 involve transferring land from one parish to another, and associated warding changes;
 - 6 involve the creation/merger/grouping or abolition of a parish.
7. Of the 23 requests which involve transfer of land, these range from small parcels of land

with no electors, and others involve significant areas of land with large numbers of electors.

8. Of the 6 requests including merger/grouping/creation or abolition of a parish, 4 are related requests around Marlborough, and 1 is the previously reviewed Calne Without. The other is the case of a parish where there had been no candidates for the last elections and no detail of whom to contact about the situation, or auditing matters. Should that situation continue, there may be a case for the parish to be merged with a neighbour or abolished as an unviable entity.
9. Any provisional grouping of schemes to be reviewed could be amended when the Committee came to approve the terms of reference for any review.

Proposal

10. The Committee is asked to consider prioritising scheme requests into groups for consideration in future Community Governance Reviews.

Ian Gibbons, Director of Legal and Governance

Report Author: Kieran Elliott, Senior Democratic Services Officer,
kieran.elliott@wiltshire.gov.uk, 01225 718504