

Wiltshire Council

Electoral Review Committee

4 April 2024

Community Governance Review 2023/24 – Consultation on Draft Recommendations

Purpose

1. To consider responses to the consultation on the Draft Recommendations of the Committee as agreed at the meeting on 9 January 2023.

Background

2. A Community Governance Review is a process whereby 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 Electoral Review Committee (“the Committee”) has delegated authority from Full Council to oversee any review process in accordance with paragraphs 2.10.7-2.10.9 of Part 3B of the Wiltshire Council Constitution. This would include setting the scope for any review, its methodology and timescales, as well as preparing recommendations for consideration by Full Council.
4. At its meeting on 26 June 2023, the Committee approved areas for a review to take and delegated approval of terms of reference. This was published in September 2023.
5. Following withdrawal of some requests for review, the parishes specifically included within the Review were: Winterbourne, Laverstock & Ford, Firsdown, Idmiston, Durnford, Mere, Zeals, North Bradley, Trowbridge, Chippenham, Salisbury, Lacock, or any parishes surrounding those listed, and any issues involving those parishes.
6. There was also provision to consider minor alterations to other parishes not listed if considered appropriate. These were not subject to detailed pre-consultation surveying, owing to their minor nature. Where the committee determined there may be grounds for correction of a potential boundary anomaly, it contacted those parishes when a draft recommendation was made.
7. During the first phase of the review additional proposals for the areas set out in Paragraph 5 were received from parishes or other parties. Where these were received before the pre-consultation phase began, they were included within the pre-consultation information gathering. The information gathering also included:
 - Sessions between representatives of the Committee and affected unitary members and parishes;
 - An online survey of received proposals, with over 125 responses received;
 - Details of emailed representations.

8. In preparing any recommendations and making any decision the Committee and Full Council must take account of the statutory criteria for reviews and the need to ensure that community governance within the areas under review:
 - Reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area, and
 - Is effective and convenient.

9. Council tax precept levels would not be a valid criterion to approve or disapprove of a proposal.

Main Considerations

10. During Stage One of the Review additional proposals for the areas set out in Paragraph 5 were sought. During Stage Two the Committee undertook pre-consultation information gathering as detailed in paragraph 6.

11. The Committee considered all information at its meeting which concluded on 9 January 2023, and prepared draft recommendations for consultation. Recommendations were made for the following areas:

Mere, Zeals, North Bradley, Trowbridge, Salisbury, Brinkworth, Royal Wootton Bassett, Clyffe Pypard, Broad Town, Chippenham, Calne, Calne Without, West Overton, Wilcot, Huish and Oare, Bradford-on-Avon, Melksham, Westbury.

12. A consultation was therefore held initially from 12 February 2024 – 18 March 2024. Where the Committee proposed to transfer electors from one parish to another, a letter was sent to those potentially affected. A briefing note was also circulated.

13. A public meeting was held on 18 March in Mere for the changes in that area. Due to the date of the meeting the consultation survey was therefore extended until 28 March 2024 once the public meeting was scheduled. Any additional responses received ahead of the committee date will be reported to the meeting.

14. **20** responses were received on the online consultation portal during the consultation period. These responses are included at **Appendix A**.

15. **6** written or emailed comments were also received to the consultation. These have been attached as **Appendix B**.

16. The Committee should consider all the responses within the context of the statutory criteria and the guidance.

17. The Committee should also consider if there are any other minor boundary issues that may have come to light and whether these should be subject to draft recommendation and consultation.

Safeguarding Implications

18. There are no safeguarding implications.

Public Health Implications

19. There are no public health implications.

Procurement Implications

20. There are no procurement implications.

Equalities Implications

21. There are no equalities implications.

Environmental and Climate Change Implications

22. There are no environmental implications.

Workforce Implications

23. There are no workforce implications.

Financial Implications

24. Additional consultation could incur additional resources, in particular in relation to the cost of using an external provider to physically mail out to those affected in certain areas if appropriate.

Legal Implications

25. 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

26. A failure to consult appropriately on proposals from the Committee or provide appropriate reasoning for any decision to change governance arrangements would be potentially vulnerable to challenge.

Options

27. The Committee may confirm its draft recommendations for consideration by Full Council, it may remove some recommendations and refer the remainder to Full Council for consideration, or it may amend its recommendations. If amending its recommendations, the Committee would need to undertake additional consultations before Full Council could consider approving those recommendations.

Proposal

28. That the Committee consider the responses to the Draft Recommendations consultation.

29. To delegate to the Director, Legal and Governance, in consultation with the Chairman, the preparation of a detailed Final Recommendations document for consideration by Full Council, and/or preparation of any Additional Draft Recommendations for consultation and the details of that consultation.

Perry Holmes - Director, Legal and Governance

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22 March 2024

Appendices

Appendix A – Responses to online survey

Appendix B – Other responses to the consultation

Background Papers

[Draft Recommendations](#)

[Guidance on Community Governance Reviews](#)

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

[2023/24 Review terms of reference](#)

Appendix A

Comment	Recommendation	Status of Respondent	Agree/Disagree/Amend	Reasons
1	Recommendation 1 - Mere/Zeals	A resident of Mere	Agree	The area marked A lies along a Castle Street, a main thoroughfare of the town of Mere and is adjacent to the built up area of Mere.. People living and working there would, naturally, be using the facilities in Mere - a surgery, dentists, pharmacy as well as a range of shops. Hillbrush, have kept their long established relationship with Mere and I would expect any other developments in the area A would also find a close relationship with Mere town to be beneficial as well as convenient.
2	Recommendation 1 - Mere/Zeals	A resident of Mere	Agree	The site is much closer to Mere town with residents able to walk to Hillbrush restaurant and to the proposed care home etc. No need to use cars 🖐
3	Recommendation 1 - Mere/Zeals	A resident of Mere	Agree	The area in question is a natural part of Mere
4	Recommendation 1 - Mere/Zeals	A resident of Mere	Agree	Makes excellent sense
5	Recommendation 1 - Mere/Zeals	A resident of Mere	Agree	Agree that the land in question becomes part of Mere
6	Recommendation 1 - Mere/Zeals	A resident of Mere	Agree	The businesses (existing and planned) on the site are closely associated with Mere. Staff at the existing business walk to work from Mere. Any improvements for new businesses would be to Mere.
7	Recommendation 1 - Mere/Zeals	A resident of Mere	Agree	It lies naturally in Mere
8	Recommendation 1 - Mere/Zeals	A resident of Mere	Agree	Area A is very close to Mere and much further then Zeals. Many people are amazed that it's not considered to be part of Mere already

9	Recommendation 1 - Mere/Zeals	A representative of a town or parish council affected by the proposals	Agree	The Hill Brush site is known as being in Mere by their postal address, residents and visitors, and I'm sure most people would be surprised to learn that its considered to in Zeals at present. Residents of the care home and other businesses will most likely use services and facilities in Mere, and recruit employees from there. It seems very disjointed to have it in Zeals when there are major road barriers (eg the A303) between that location and Zeals.
10	Recommendation 1 - Mere/Zeals	A resident of Mere	Disagree	There is potential for several businesses to open on the industrial site near the Hill brush company which is currently within the boundaries of Zeals. Moving this boundary within Mere will allow the cabal on the council and mere chamber of trade to keep businesses out and to keep the wages low.
11	Recommendation 2 - North Bradley/Trowbridge	A resident of Trowbridge (area to be transferred)	Agree	
12	Recommendation 2 - North Bradley/Trowbridge	A resident of Trowbridge (area to be transferred)	Agree	I want to be back in the parish of North Bradley
13	Recommendation 2 - North Bradley/Trowbridge	A resident of Trowbridge (area to be transferred)	Agree	I agree the recommendation as we are effectively part of North Bradley and are affected by all actions and activities emanating from North Bradley Parish Council. We are currently unable to participate in any of their decision making. Also, we are unable to exist our property without entering North Bradley.
14	Recommendation 5 - Broad Town/Clyffe Pypard	A resident of Broad Town	Disagree	I disagree with the proposal because there is no need to change it

15	Recommendation 5 - Broad Town/Clyffe Pypard	A resident of Clyffe Pypard (Area to be transferred)	Disagree	Clyffe Pypard is a historically a rural and dispersed community. It is isolated and not connected well with neighbouring settlements. Since the very sad closure of the village pub the sense of community has reduced and people from neighbouring settlements no longer come to the village. Removing outlying dwellings would only serve to increase this sense of isolation and connection to the wider locality. The proposed boundary change seems only concerned with the tidiness of lines on a map and serves no discernible purpose and would appear to benefit no one. The quiriness of English parishes and our boundaries should be preserved and celebrated not rubbed out.
16	Recommendation 5 - Broad Town/Clyffe Pypard	A resident of Clyffe Pypard (Area to be transferred)	Disagree	103 is geographically closer to Clyffe Pypard's Church & Pub, there is an already acknowledged deep connection with Clyffe Pypard and given that other isolated homes exist there is no difference in governance terms. Clyffe Pypard parish has to be driven through in order to shop or receive utility deliveries and road 87701 links Clyffe Pypard (C120) to 103. When you walk out of 103 you are in Clyffe Pypard. Other properties not unified in one parish are the norm. Moving the boundary is contrary to Clyffe Pypard's community plan, namely to protect our heritage identity. The parish should retain not loose properties like 103. 103 and Clyffe Pypard village share the same rare identity both being remote, rural locations away from a main traffic route with an ambience of peace and solitude. 103 has nothing in common with Broad Town having been in the parish of Clyffe Pypard since the domesday. This change will not make one iota of difference to governance and there is no need for this change
17	Recommendation 5 - Broad Town/Clyffe Pypard	A resident of Broad Town	Disagree	Between both parishes of Clyffe Pypard and Broad Town there are many remote and isolated properties like this one. I fail to understand how cherry picking this property will improve governance. The change is not needed and has no benefit.

18	Recommendation 6 - Chippenham (Pewsham and Hardens & Central wards)	A representative of a town or parish council affected by the proposals	Agree	No objection to the draft recommendation
19	Recommendation 9 - Wilcot, Huish, and Oare/West Overton	A representative of a town or parish council affected by the proposals	Disagree	Please see the document submitted to the CGR team via email, which is too long to submit here due to the word limit.
20	Recommendation 9 - Wilcot, Huish, and Oare/West Overton	A representative of a town or parish council affected by the proposals	Agree	Kennet Valley Parish Council support the proposal due to the remote location and proximity to 2 other properties within our Parish. The PC agreed unanimously to support the slight boundary change at a full parish Council meeting on 11/03/24.