

## **BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN**

### **Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Thursday 3 November, 2011 at 6.30 pm at Civic Offices, Telford**

#### **PRESENT:**

Councillors M.J. Smith (Mayor), R.K. Austin, S. Bentley, K.T. Blundell, S.P. Burrell, E.J. Carter, E.A. Clare, S. Davies, B.H. Duce, A.J. Eade, R.C. Evans, A.R.H. England, N.A.M. England, I.T.W. Fletcher, V.A. Fletcher, E.J. Greenaway, T.J. Hope, M.B. Hosken, M.G. Ion, A. Lawrence, A.A. Mackenzie, C.N. Mason, A.D. McClements, W.A.M. McClements, A.A. Meredith, J.C. Minor, C.P.R. Mollett, F.R. Picken, G.C.W. Reynolds, S.A.W. Reynolds, K.S. Sahota, R.G. Scammell, J.M. Seymour, R.J. Sloan, C.F. Smith, A.J. Stanton, B.J. Thompson, K.L. Tomlinson, W.L. Tomlinson, C.R. Turley, P.R. Watling and D.R.W. White.

#### **54. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors F.M. Bould, D.G. Davies, N.A. Dugmore, C.B.A. Elliott, G.M. Green, K.R. Guy, A.S. Jhavar, R.T. Kiernan, J. Loveridge, L.A. Murray, R.A. Overton and H. Rhodes.

#### **55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

#### **56. REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES: COUNCIL RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION PROPOSALS**

Councillor K.S. Sahota, Leader of the Council, presented the reports of the Head of Governance which were attached as Appendices A and B. He told Members that the report marked as Appendix A presented the initial proposals as published by the Boundary Commission for England. These proposals were for replacing the existing Telford and The Wrekin constituencies with a Telford North and The Wrekin constituency and a Bridgnorth and Telford South constituency. The proposed Telford North and the Wrekin constituency would include all of the Telford & Wrekin council area north of the M54, including Wellington and Newport and the borough's Wrockwardine ward. The Bridgnorth and South Telford constituency would bring all of Telford south of the M54 together with parts of Shropshire including Shifnal, Albrighton, Bridgnorth and Much Wenlock

The report marked as Appendix B comprised an alternative proposal that had been requested by Cabinet on 20 October 2011. The alternative proposal would both respect the identity of Telford as a town and provide for a surrounding mixed market town and rural constituency. It was vital that any proposals submitted would meet the Boundary Commission's primary and secondary criteria. The primary criterion stated that electorates of each constituency should fall within the range between 72,810 and 80,473, 5% either side of the electoral quota of 76,641. The secondary criteria addressed special geographical considerations (size, shape and accessibility of a constituency), local government boundaries (as they existed on 6 May 2010), boundaries of existing

constituencies and any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies. The Commission had stated in its initial proposals that none of the secondary criteria would override the necessity to achieve an electorate in each constituency within the allowable range.

The alternative proposal (Appendix B) met the primary and secondary criteria and provided for one constituency that included all of the urban heart of the town. The constituency names contained within the proposals were disappointing. The constituencies as outlined in the alternative proposals should be named Telford and The Wrekin & Bridgnorth.

The Leader told Members that the initial proposal from the Boundary Commission were counter productive and would create an unnatural divide between north and south Telford. The alternative proposals would see a Telford Urban constituency which would cover most of the urban parts of north and south Telford, including Ironbridge, with the exception of Wellington. The Wrekin Market Towns and Rural constituency would include Wellington, Newport, Albrighton, Shifnal, Bridgnorth and Much Wenlock and surrounding rural area. The alternative proposal would better reflect the nature of the area and satisfy the Commission's key criteria around electorate size. Telford should be a constituency in its own right; the arbitrary use of the M54 to divide the town would split communities and break natural local ties.

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the opposition group, told Members that he was disappointed with the alternative proposals, particularly in relation to Wellington. The primary criterion for the range of elector numbers for each constituency was clear. The town was growing and future development would quickly mean that the proposals for a Telford urban constituency would exceed the permitted range of electors. He could not support the alternative proposals.

Councillor A.D. McClements believed that the Boundary Commission proposals were disruptive and would have the effect of breaking up well established communities. She supported wholeheartedly the alternative proposals and the constituency names of Telford and The Wrekin & Bridgnorth.

A number of Members joined the debate, speaking both for and against the submission of alternative proposals to the Boundary Commission.

Councillor R.J. Sloan, Chairman of the Boundary Review Committee, told Members that as far back as 1918 the Wrekin constituency had included Much Wenlock. It was right that a range of views were submitted as part of the consultation by all those with views on this matter. He noted that the ranges of numbers within any constituency would always change over time but added that the guidance from the Boundary Commission clearly set the context for the submission of alternative proposals.

Councillor K.S. Sahota moved and Councillor R.J. Sloan seconded that:

- Council agree to the submission of alternative proposal for a Telford urban and a market towns/ rural hinterland constituency;

- That the suggested names of the constituencies should be Telford and The Wrekin & Bridgnorth
- The Interim Chief Executive be delegated to prepare a formal written submission along these lines in consultation with the Leader of the Council
- That the Interim Chief Executive and Leader of the Council be tasked with attending the Boundary Commission's public hearing at Ludlow on 7-8 November to make oral submissions in support of this alternative proposal.

A recorded vote was requested.

Votes cast were as follows:

***In favour:***

*Councillors M.J. Smith (Mayor), R.K. Austin, E.A. Clare, S. Davies, B.H. Duce, R.C. Evans, A.R.H. England, N.A.M. England, M.G. Ion, A.A. Mackenzie, C.N. Mason, A.D. McClements, W.A.M. McClements, J.C. Minor, F.R. Picken, G.C.W. Reynolds, S.A.W. Reynolds, K.S. Sahota, R.J. Sloan, C.F. Smith, B.J. Thompson, C.R. Turley, P.R. Watling and D.R.W. White. (24)*

***Against:***

*Councillors S. Bentley, S.P. Burrell, E.J. Carter, A.J. Eade, I.T.W. Fletcher, V.A. Fletcher, E.J. Greenaway, T.J. Hope, M.B. Hosken, A. Lawrence, A.A. Meredith, C.P.R. Mollett, R.G. Scammell, J.M. Seymour and A.J. Stanton. (15)*

***Abstained:***

Councillors K.T. Blundell, K.L. Tomlinson and W.L. Tomlinson (3)

Following a recorded vote, the alternative proposal was carried and it was

**RESOLVED: that -**

- Council agree to the submission of an alternative proposal for a Telford urban and a market towns/ rural hinterland constituency;**
- The names of the constituencies should be Telford and The Wrekin & Bridgnorth**
- The Interim Chief Executive be delegated to prepare a formal written submission along these lines in consultation with the Leader of the Council**
- That the Interim Chief Executive and Leader of the Council be tasked with attending the Boundary Commission's public hearing at Ludlow on 7-8 November to make oral submissions in support of this alternative proposal.**

The meeting ended at 7.07 pm

**Speaker**.....

**Date** .....