

BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Boundary Review Committee held on Thursday 26th September 2013 at 6.00 pm in Darby House, Lawn Central, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors RSloan (Chair), K Blundell, S Davies, A Eade and R Overton

IN ATTENDANCE: P Griffiths (Democratic Services Manager) and P Smith (Democratic Services Team Leader).
A number of residents from Lilleshall were also in attendance.

BRC-09 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

BRC-10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors N Dugmore and A McClements

BRC-11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

BRC-12 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – LILLESBALL, DONNINGTON & MUXTON PARISH: TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee received the report of the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection concerning the terms of reference for a Community Governance Review (CGR). The CGR had been triggered following the submission of a valid petition calling for a separate parish to be formed for the Lilleshall ward of Lilleshall, Donnington & Muxton Parish Council.

The Chair reported that he would allow the lead petitioner – Mr P Hawkins – and the Chair of the Lilleshall, Donnington & Muxton Parish Council – Mr A Baker – to speak for up to five minutes each. This was to allow the Committee an opportunity to hear views from the local community about the petition and any representations relevant to the proposed terms of reference.

Mr Hawkins referred to his submission that was appended to the report. It was stated that there was clear support within the Lilleshall Ward for a review for the purpose of considering forming a separate Parish for the ward. A review of the whole Lilleshall, Donnington & Muxton parish had not been requested, and if the Review was widened, it would fundamentally alter the basis of the request and would not reflect the wishes of the petitioners. It was also important that the Review's findings were based on sound evidence.

Mr Baker stated that the existing Parish Council had served the area well over the last 70 years, and that there were no new circumstances that justified another

Community Governance Review only two or three years after the last one. He read out a number of comments that had been made by local people who were against a separate parish council for Lilleshall. It was felt that, like the previous CGR, the Review could not take place without considering the likely impact a separate parish for Lilleshall would have on the rest of the existing Parish. The Parish Council had organised a public meeting in Lilleshall on 14 October for the issues to be fully discussed.

The Democratic Services Manager then presented the draft Terms of Reference document that was appended to the report. In effect, the document set out the Council's policies for the conduct of the Review. It reflected the legislative framework against which the Review must operate, as well as providing background information to help to allow electors and other interested organisations to make informed submissions. The Council had a duty to ensure that community governance within the area under review met the 'Community of Identity' test, and should:

- Reflect the identities and interests of the community of that area;
- Be effective and convenient;
- Take into account any other, non-parish, arrangements for the purposes of community representation or community engagement in the area.

The draft Terms of Reference also set out the consultation strategy and timetable for the Review. The Council would endeavour to ensure that the consultation process was straightforward and cost effective, but all parties needed to recognise that the Council was under severe budget constraints and had fewer resources than at the time of the last CGR for the area. The Committee also needed to be mindful of the current review of Ward boundaries by the Local Government Boundary Commission, the outcome of which might impact on this CGR.

In response to Members' questions regarding the scope of the Terms of Reference, the Democratic Services Manager advised that, like the previous CGR for the area, it was unlikely that Lilleshall could be reviewed in isolation without considering the impact that a separate Lilleshall parish might have on the other Wards in the existing parish – eg: council tax income. However, the CGR was unlikely to be formally widened to cover the other Wards unless a valid petition was received for a separate Muxton or Donnington parish council. The Committee were mindful of the strong views that had been expressed on either side of the debate in Lilleshall, and there was a discussion on the merits of holding some form of non-binding referendum that would gauge the views of local residents. The cost of such an exercise was an issue, and it was suggested that a ballot based on a single straightforward question would be effective. Numbered ballot papers could be delivered to all local residents on the electoral register, with ballot boxes placed in a couple of locations in the ward. It was recognised that care would need to be taken on the wording of the question to be asked, and that interested parties should be consulted on that.

RESOLVED –

- (a) **that the Terms of Reference document, as appended to the report, be adopted and published, subject to the inclusion of a provision for a direct consultation exercise - with the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection being authorised, in consultation with**

the Chair of the Boundary Review Committee, to finalise the details of the consultation following further discussions with the appropriate community representatives;

- (b) that the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection be appointed as the 'Proper Officer' for the purposes of the Review.**

The meeting ended at 6.19p.m.

Chairman:

Date: