

BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Boundary Review Committee held on Thursday, 26th September, 2012 at 6.00 p.m. in the Civic Offices, Telford, Shropshire

PRESENT: Councillors K.T. Blundell, S. Davies, A.J. Eade, and R.A. Overton.

BRC-9 CHAIRMAN

Councillor R.A. Overton was elected Chairman for the meeting in the absence of the Committee's appointed Chairman.

BRC-10 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd August 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman

BRC-11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

N.J. Dugmore, A.D. McClements and R.J. Sloan

BRC-12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

BRC-13 BOROUGH ELECTORAL REVIEW – SUBMISSION ON COUNCIL SIZE

Members received the report of the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection which contained proposals for a preferred council size of 54 councillors. Full Council had debated the matter of council size on 13 September and had tasked the Boundary Review Committee with approval of the Council's submission document to LGBCE. In addition, council had required that the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection ensure that the submission document was with LGBCE by the end of September.

The council's proposed submission was for the retention of 54 councillors based upon Commission's statutory criteria and the requirements and aspirations of a Co-operative council and the community served by the council. Particular points raised within the submission supporting a council size of 54 were:

- Co-operative council working placed greater requirements for councillors to engage with the community
- Electors deserved an effective and convenient level of representation, the current ratio of councillors to electors was manageable
- Current arrangements worked effectively, delivering significant council savings and securing improvement in a number of key priority areas

- Scrutiny structure was robust and high quality, the council benefitted from the service and this could be compromised by reductions in the number of councillors
- A councillor survey had identified increasing workload increases for a majority of those responding
- Workloads would increase as more responsibilities were passed down from central government
- The Borough had a young and the population was growing quickly, councillor numbers needed to be able to offer good representation in the light of population growth
- The Borough contained significant areas of deprivation, councillors representing those wards would tend to have significant workloads, continued spending reductions and recessionary pressures would increase the support required in those communities.

The submission also identified significant future trends that would require an effective number of councillors in order to deal with:

- Transfer of Public Health services from NHS
- Impact of the Welfare Reform agenda
- Demands of Localism agenda
- Providing services and support to communities in very difficult financial circumstances
- Engagement/support of local business
- Corporate Parenting requirements
- Adult Social Care pressures
- Public spending cuts and reductions in available staff support placing more demands on time/resources of councillors

Members debated the submission briefly. It was agreed that, in the opening section of the submission a minor amendment be made to reflect the fact that nearly 25% of the Borough's wards contained neighbourhood areas ranked amongst the 10% most deprived in the country.

Councillor S. Davies, referring to an alternative submission from the main opposition group was concerned that any proposals to return to a Committee structure would have significant effects on already scarce staff resources. Councillor A.J. Eade, leader of the main opposition group, confirmed that those issues would be addressed in his group's submission, together with a number of other significant issues.

RESOLVED – That the council's formal submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) for a Council size of 54 councillors be approved and that the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy &

Public Protection make arrangements for documents to be submitted to LGBCE by the end of September.

The meeting ended at 6.04 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: