

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**DATE:** **WEDNESDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2013**

**REPORT BY:** **HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

**SUBJECT:** **COMMUNITY REVIEW**

**1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 For Council to recommend to the Cabinet the Council's community review proposals for the purposes of consultation.

**2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 The County Council has a statutory duty to keep Town & Community boundaries and electoral arrangements for communities within its area under review. Over a period of time the numbers living in the communities change as a result of factors such as new housing developments. This can lead to anomalies and inconsistencies, not only between differing communities but also within different wards of a single community.

2.02 The County Council has not completed a community review of all electoral areas since coming into being. There have only been limited reviews affecting a small number of Town & Community Councils. In 2000 minor amendments were made in Bagillt and Gwernaffield. In 2008 minor amendments were made in Cilcain and Higher Kinnerton.

2.03 At its meeting on the 28 February 2013 the County Forum received a report on the proposed community review. The report explained the background and that it was intended to commence the review in the near future pursuant to the provisions in the Local Government Act 1972. The report explained the importance of Town & Community Councils being fully involved at each stage of the process. On the 12 March 2013 all Town & Community Councils were written to seeking their views on the draft guiding principles for the review.

2.04 Following reports to County Council on the 16 April 2013 and to the Cabinet on the 23 April 2013 the guiding principles of the review were agreed, together with the consultation process for the first formal stage of the review and that the review be commenced.

2.05 The first formal stage of the community review was to seek and obtain proposals from Town & Community Councils and other interested parties. The Clerks of all Town & Community Councils were written to

on the 3 May 2013 with a form for submission of any proposals. Similarly all County Councillors and other interested parties were written to inviting proposals by the 2 July 2013.

- 2.06 In addition to giving public notice of the review a series of consultation meetings were held co-hosted with individual Town Councils in Mold, Connah's Quay and Holywell.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.01 At the consultation meeting held in Mold Town Hall on the evening of the 22 May 2013, as a result of representations made by a representative of Leeswood Community Council, it became clear that the seventh and eighth guiding principles needed to be clarified. The Leeswood Community Council is divided into the Leeswood and Pontblyddyn wards. Whilst the vast majority of the community live in the Leeswood ward the Pontblyddyn ward represents a separate community identity but elects two of the thirteen total members on the Community Council. The important point is that the ratios of electors to Councillors across the two wards is very similar so that an elector's vote carries the same weight irrespective of whether they reside in the Leeswood or Pontblyddyn wards.
- 3.02 All Town & Community Councils were subsequently informed that the objective of the seventh and eighth guiding principles is to have approximately the same ratios of electors to Councillors across the different wards that a town or community may be divided into. As long as this is achieved there does not need to be the same number of Councillors in each ward. This was also added to the relevant part of the Councils website giving information about the community review. Council is asked to endorse this clarification of the seventh & eighth guiding principles.
- 3.03 The vast majority of Town & Community Councils responded to the consultation either indicating they were content with the current arrangements or making proposals for change. There is no requirement for Town and Community Councils to make a proposal. Those that did not were reminded on 5 July but no further proposals were subsequently made. All proposals received have been carefully considered to see if they would rectify any current anomalies and for compliance with the guiding principles. Where a proposal involves changing the Town or Community Council boundaries the neighbouring authority affected has been consulted to obtain its views.
- 3.04 Where no change to an external community boundary is proposed, the town/community wards arising from this review should lie wholly within a single County Council electoral division. The proposals to change internal ward boundaries received from Connah's Quay, Hope and Saltney Councils, together with that from County Councillor Carver for Hawarden would create practical problems for the

scheduled 2017 local government elections. It is purely for this reason that they are not incorporated into the draft proposals prepared by the officers following consultation with the Local Democracy & Boundary Commission for Wales (The Commission). The Commission will make proposals to amend the county electoral divisions in their future electoral review scheduled to be completed after the 2017 local government elections. That review could include recommendations to change both the county electoral divisions and the community ward boundaries to reflect the current proposals from the Town & Community Councils referred to above.

- 3.05 Attached as Appendix A to this report are the officers' community review draft proposals being reported to County Council prior to consideration by the Cabinet. Where external community boundaries or internal ward boundaries are proposed for change maps are available for inspection in Member Services.
- 3.06 The next stage of the process is for the Cabinet to agree the Council's proposals and for those proposals to be the subject of a similar nine week consultation period. Once the Cabinet has agreed the proposals for the purposes of this consultation stage they will be advertised in the press and on the Council's website and details sent to all Town & Community Councils and other interested parties. It is also proposed to again co-host with individual Town or Community Councils a series of consultation meetings similar to those held under the first public consultation stage.
- 3.07 The response to this consultation period will be analysed and reports submitted to Council and Cabinet to decide what changes should be made to the proposals in the light of the consultation responses received.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.01 The Council recommends to Cabinet:-
- a) That the seventh & eighth guiding principles be clarified as indicated in paragraph 3.02 above.
  - b) That Council consider any changes it would wish Cabinet to make to Appendix A prior to those proposals going out for consultation.
  - c) That the second formal consultation stage be as indicated in paragraph 3.06 above.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.01 There is adequate budget provision for the cost of publicity and consultation.

**6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 None as a result of this report.

**7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 None as a result of this report.

**8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 None as a result of this report.

**9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 The workload arising from the community review can be accommodated within existing resources.

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 As previously agreed by Council and Cabinet including the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 As previously agreed by Council and Cabinet including the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission and with political Group Leaders.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 Appendix A – Officers' community review draft proposals.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985  
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

All proposals received under the first formal stage of consultation.

**Contact Officer:** Peter Evans  
**Telephone:** 01352 702304  
**Email:** peter.j.evans@flintshire.gov.uk