

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**
DATE: **WEDNESDAY, 30 APRIL 2014**
REPORT BY: **HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**
SUBJECT: **COMMUNITY REVIEW UPDATE**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To recommend to County Council draft final proposals on the community review.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The County Council has a statutory duty to keep Town & Community Council boundaries and electoral arrangements for communities within its area under review. The County Council has not previously undertaken a comprehensive community review only limited reviews affecting a small number of Town & Community Councils.

2.02 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 and for the review to commence.

2.03 The first formal stage of the community review was to seek and obtain proposals from Town & Community Councils and other interested parties. These were considered in preparing draft proposals for the second stage of consultation.

2.04 At a meeting of the County Council on the 23 October 2013 and Cabinet on the 19 November 2013 draft proposals were agreed for consultation. All Town & Community Councils were sent copies of the draft proposals at the end of November seeking observations by the end of January 2014. The draft proposals were also put on the Council's website and sent to other interested parties. Public notice was also given in the press. During November consultation meetings were held hosted by Buckley, Caerwys and Flint Councils.

2.05 Attached as Appendix A to this report is a list of all Town & Community Councils and other interested parties who responded to the consultation on the draft proposals.

2.06 All comments received during the consultation period have been carefully considered by officers in preparing the draft final proposals which are attached as Appendix B. The maps showing changes to ward and community boundaries (appendix 7) have been made available in Member Services and the Group Rooms and for the press and public are available as background papers to the report.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 Of the 34 Town & Community Councils within Flintshire the draft report is proposing no alteration to the current arrangements in respect of the 14 listed in Appendix C. For these Town & Community Councils it is considered that there are no anomalies with the current arrangements that need to be rectified.

3.02 The representations received from a few other Town and Community Councils were advocating no change to the existing arrangements, notwithstanding that, officers had identified anomalies with the current arrangements. Draft proposals were therefore made to correct the current anomaly and the Town or Community Council was consulted on such draft proposals under the previous stage of the review. Where the Town or Community Council has not raised objection to such a draft proposal it has become the final proposal.

3.03 Where a Town or Community Council has during consultation suggested a change to its external ward boundaries there has been consultation with the other Town or Community Council whose boundary would be affected. Where the other Council affected is agreeable the Council has adopted such a proposal. As explained in paragraph 6.02 of Appendix B, if such a final proposal is adopted the County Council would submit a report recommending such change to the Local Democracy & Boundary Commission for Wales. The Commission will then make recommendations to the Welsh Government, including consequential changes to the County Council electoral divisions. Where the other Town or Community Council affected object to the proposed change in the external boundary then it is considered there has to be a good reason to proceed.

3.04 During the various consultation stages some Town or Community Councils or other interested persons have made representations to change Town or Community Council ward boundaries. An important consideration with any such proposals is that any new Town/Community wards should fit wholly within the existing electoral divisions for the County Council. Otherwise as explained in paragraph 6.03 of Appendix B this will cause practical difficulties with the Local Government elections scheduled for 2017. The draft final proposals avoid any such practical difficulties.

3.05 In arriving at the draft final proposals as shown in Appendix B the Council's officers have considered:-

- The need to address any existing anomalies.
- The need to comply with the guiding principles.
- The need to take account of the wishes of the Town & Community Councils and other interested parties.
- The need to avoid practical difficulties with the Local Government elections scheduled for 2017 as detailed in paragraph 6.03 of Appendix B.
- Avoiding any obvious inconsistency of approach between similar Town or Community Councils.

3.06 For 29 Town & Community Councils the draft final proposals have not changed from the draft proposals previously agreed by Council and Cabinet. The consultation on the draft proposals has led to differences in what is proposed for the following 5 Town & Community Councils:-

- Hawarden
- Hope
- Penyffordd
- Mold
- Whitford

The changes for each of these are considered in turn in the following paragraphs.

3.07 During consultation on the draft proposals Hawarden Community Council made detailed representations explaining how the draft proposals to reduce the size of the Council would lead to inconsistencies with other similar towns and communities. It went on to propose that the size of the Community Council should be increased to 20 Councillors. This proposal addressed the current inconsistent ratio of electorate to Councillors between the different wards. During the consultation period there was also consultation with each County Councillor from the Hawarden community. The draft final proposal is to agree with what has been suggested by Hawarden Community Council as set out in paragraph 7.79 of Appendix B.

3.08 During consultation on the draft proposals Penyffordd Community Council reiterated its previous representations that certain properties at the Penyffordd end of the Wrexham Road should be included in its community rather than in the Hope community. Hope Community Council considered this and agreed to this change in its external boundary. This provides the opportunity to alter the internal ward boundaries within the Hope community without causing problems at the Local Government elections scheduled for 2017. The draft final proposal now reflects representations from Hope Community Council that the ward boundaries should be redrawn along the River Alyn. As indicated in paragraph 7.101 of Appendix B.

- 3.09 There is only a minor change in the draft final proposal for Penyffordd from that in the draft proposal previously agreed by Council and Cabinet. This is to add the change to the external boundary with Hope Community Council as a result of that Community Council indicating it had no objection to this change proposed by Penyffordd Community Council.
- 3.10 The draft final proposal for Mold is only slightly different to the draft proposal that County Council and Cabinet previously agreed. The difference is two minor amendments to ward boundaries to reflect the wishes of Mold Town Council. These are detailed in paragraphs 7.124 and 7.125 of Appendix B.
- 3.11 During consultation on the draft proposals Whitford Community Council made representations that it should be de-warded. This proposal was supported by the local County Councillor. The draft final proposal is to agree with the de-warding of Whitford Community Council rather than having 10 Councillors for the Carmel ward and 2 for the Whitford ward as in the draft proposal.
- 3.12 It will be seen from paragraphs 3.07 to 3.11 that the changes from the draft proposals are all a reflection of the representations received from the 5 Town & Community Councils affected.
- 3.13 The next stage of the process is for the Cabinet to consider the draft final proposals contained in Appendix B, together with the observations of County Council on those draft proposals. Once the final proposals have been agreed by the Council's Cabinet the future stages of the review are detailed in paragraphs 6.01 to 6.05 of Appendix B.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 For the Council to consider the draft final proposals contained in Appendix B and make observations on those proposals for consideration by the Cabinet.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

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 with the Local Democracy & Boundary Commission.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

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

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix A - List of responses to consultation.
Appendix B - Draft Final Proposals
Appendix C - List of Town & Community Councils where no alterations proposed

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

1. Maps comprising Appendix 7 of Draft Final Proposals.
2. Draft Proposals November 2013

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