

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Published 1 November 2016

1. INTRODUCTION

Why undertake a community governance review?

- 1.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (LGPIH) devolved the power to take decisions relating to the creation or abolition of parishes, the boundaries parishes and the electoral arrangements of parish councils from the Secretary of State and the Electoral Commission to principal councils. From 2008, district councils have had responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews and have been able to decide whether to give effect to the recommendations made in those reviews. In making that decision, Councillors needs to take into account the views of local people and to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
- 1.2 On 29 July 2015, Wyre Forest District Council decided in principle to undertake a Community Governance Review (CGR), under section 82 of the 2007 Act, following a request by Stourport-on-Severn Town Council for a review to address anomalies that it perceives in the distribution of seats to various wards that make up the Town Council. The background to the request is that the allocation of seats for the Town Council wards was changed as part of the work done by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on the electoral review of Wyre Forest District Council. This Council did not comment in the Boundary's Commission's work in respect of the Town Council, as that was a matter of interest to the Town Council.
- 1.3 In a case such as Stourport where a parish council exists, under section 88 of the 2007 Act, any review must make one of the following recommendations:
 - (a) Recommendations that the area of the parish should not be abolished and that its area should not be altered;
 - (b) Recommendations that the area of the parish should not be altered;
 - (c) Recommendations that the parish should be abolished;

The review must also make recommendations:

- (d) as to whether or not the name of the Parish should be changed;
- (e) as to whether or not the parish should continue to have a council.

A community governance review cannot look solely at the electoral arrangements of the Town Council.

Who will undertake the Community Governance Review?

- 1.4 As principal authority, the District Council is responsible for undertaking any community governance review. The Council is responsible for agreeing the Terms of Reference for the review and agreeing the draft and final recommendations prior to any Community Governance Order being made.
- 1.5 The lead officer for this review is Ian Miller, Chief Executive of Wyre Forest District Council.

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 Before making any recommendations or publishing final proposals in line with legislative requirements, the District Council will take full account of the views of local people. The District Council will comply with the legislative requirements by:
 - Consulting Local Government electors for the area under review – a notice will be published on the council's website and at the Town Council's Civic Centre Offices, New Street, Stourport informing residents of the Review and inviting responses;
 - Consulting any other person or body (including District and County Councillors representing the area) which appears to the principal authority to have an interest in the review;
 - Taking into account any representations received in connection with the Review.
- 2.2 When taking account of written representations, the District Council is bound to have regard to the need to secure that community governance within the area under the review:
 - Reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area; and
 - Is effective and convenient
- 2.3 In order to ensure that this review is conducted transparently, as soon as practicable, the District Council will publish its recommendations and take such steps as it considers sufficient to ensure that persons who may be interested in the review are informed of the recommendations and the reasons behind them.
- 2.4 The District Council will also notify the outcome of the review to any persons or bodies who submit written representations.
- 2.5 A Community Governance Review must, by statute, be concluded within a twelve month period from the day on which the review commences. A Community Governance Review commences when the Council publishes its Terms of Reference and it concludes when the District Council publishes the recommendations made in the review.

Timetable for the review

Action	Timetable	Dates
Report to Council to approve the Terms of Reference.		27 July 2016
Commencement of review, publication of Terms of Reference		1 November 2016
Introductory Stage – Invite initial submissions.	3 months	1 February 2017
Consideration of consultation response by full Council and approval of draft proposals (if any).		22 February 2017
(If required) Consultation on draft proposals	3 months	March – June 2017
(If required) Obtain Boundary Commission's formal consent to any proposed changes to electoral arrangements		April/May 2017
Approval of order by Council (assuming LGBCE's consent obtained)		26 July 2017 or September 2017
Proposed effective date of Order; next ordinary elections for Stourport-on-Severn Town Council		May 2019

Stourport-on-Severn Parish Electoral Arrangements

- 2.6 The Stourport-on-Severn parish currently has a council comprising of 18 Councillors and has six Parish Wards, as set out on the map at the end of this document. The existing electoral arrangements for each Parish Ward within the Parish are shown in the table below. These arrangements arose from the work done by the Local Government Boundary Commission on the electoral review of Wyre Forest District Council in 2014 and were given effect by the Wyre Forest (Electoral Changes) Order 2015 No.70. They were used for the ordinary elections to the Town Council on 7 May 2015 and the delayed election to Areley Kings East ward held on 9 June 2015.

Current Electoral Arrangements

Ward	Number of Councillors	Electorate (June 2016)	Electors per Councillor (rounded)
Areley Kings East	3	2536	845
Areley Kings West	2	2076	1038
Central	2	1955	978
Lickhill	3	2223	741
North	2	4139	2070
Stour & Wilden	6	3302	550
Stourport-on-Severn	18	16231	(variance of 1,520 electors between lowest and highest number of electors per councillor)

- 2.7 There is no legal provision that each Town / Parish Councillor should represent, as near as possible, the same number of electors. However, Wyre Forest District

Council considers that it is not in the interests of effective and convenient local government to have such significant differences in levels of representation between parish wards.

- 2.8 It is important to avoid the risk that, where one or more wards of a parish are over represented by councillors, the residents of those wards (and their councillors) could be perceived as having more influence than others on the council.

Draft Proposals for addressing the imbalance of councillors

- 2.9 **Proposal 1** – is to do nothing and remain with the current electorate arrangements as set out in the table below.

Ward	Number of Councillors	Electorate (June 2016)	Electors per Councillor (rounded)
Areley Kings East	3	2536	845
Areley Kings West	2	2076	1038
Central	2	1955	978
Lickhill	3	2223	741
North	2	4139	2070
Stour & Wilden	6	3302	550
Stourport-on-Severn	18	16231	(variance of 1,520 electors between lowest and highest number of electors per councillor)

- 2.10 **Proposal 2** (based on June 2016 electorate). This proposal sets out the number of councillors that the Local Government Boundary Commission originally consulted on in their Draft Recommendations in April 2014. Stourport-on-Severn Town Council raised no objections to these proposals for the distribution of seats between the town council wards.

Ward	Number of Councillors	Electorate (June 2016)	Electors per Councillor (rounded)
Areley Kings East	3	2536	845
Areley Kings West	2	2076	1038
Central	2	1955	978
Lickhill	3	2223	741
North	4	4139	1035
Stour & Wilden	4	3302	825
Stourport-on-Severn	18	16231	(variance of 297 electors between lowest and highest number of electors per councillor)

- 2.11 When considering any electoral arrangements, the council is required to consider any change in the number or distribution of electors which is likely to occur in the period of

five years from the date the review starts. Electorate forecasts have been prepared based on the 2014- Office of National Statistics Subnational Population Projections. The estimate of electorate for 2021 for proposal 2 is set out in table below.

Proposal 2 (based on the electorate estimate for 2021)

Ward	Number of Councillors	Electorate (2021 estimate)	Electors per Councillor (rounded)
Areley Kings East	3	2578	859
Areley Kings West	2	2109	1054
Central	2	1986	993
Lickhill	3	2259	753
North	4	4205	1051
Stour & Wilden	4	3355	839
Stourport-on-Severn	18	16492	(variance of 301 electors between lowest and highest number of electors per councillor)

2.12 **Proposal 3** – a different arrangement of the number of councillors per Parish Ward which would result in the variance being less than 297 (based on the June 2016 electorate) and less than 301 (based on the electorate estimate for 2021), if this is statistically achievable. This may result in a proposal being put forward which decreases or increases the overall number of Councillors on the Town Council.

2.13 The Local Government Act 1972 states that the number of parish councillors for each parish council shall not be less than 5. However, there is no upper limit in law. Research conducted in 1992 suggested almost all parish councils serving over 20,000 people had between 13 and 31 councillors. Locally Kidderminster has 18 councillors serving a population of 55,530 and Bewdley has 13 Councillors serving a population of 9,470. Therefore given that the population for Stourport-on-Severn is only 20,292 and currently has the same number of councillors as Kidderminster, there would have to be a strong case made to increase the number of councillors from the current 18.

2.14 In view of the above issues for consideration on the number of councillors, the proposal below achieves greater electoral equality per councillor per parish ward (than proposal 2) by reducing the overall number of councillors by 3 to 15.

Reduction in the overall number of councillors (based on June 2016 electorate)

Ward	Number of Councillors	Electorate (June 2016)	Electors per Councillor (rounded)
Areley Kings East	2	2536	1268
Areley Kings West	2	2076	1038
Central	2	1955	978
Lickhill	2	2223	1112
North	4	4139	1035
Stour & Wilden	3	3302	1101
Stourport-on-Severn	15	16231	(variance of 290 electors between lowest and highest number of electors per councillor)

Reduction in the overall number of councillors (based on the electorate estimate for 2021)

Ward	Number of Councillors	Electorate (2021 estimate)	Electors per Councillor (rounded)
Areley Kings East	2	2578	1289
Areley Kings West	2	2109	1055
Central	2	1986	993
Lickhill	2	2259	1129
North	4	4205	1051
Stour & Wilden	3	3355	1118
Stourport-on-Severn	15	16492	(variance of 296 electors between lowest and highest number of electors per councillor)

2.15 Consultation – How to submit your views

If you have written comments that you would like to submit about how you view potential future arrangements under these Terms of Reference, please send them to arrive no later than 1 February 2017 by email to:

CGRStourport@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

or by post to:

Electoral Services
Wyre Forest District Council
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster
DY11 7WF

2.16 Publication of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference will be published on the District Council's website: www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/CGRStourport and will be available for public inspection at:

- Wyre Forest District Council's offices, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster DY11 7WF
- Stourport-on-Severn Town Council's Office or Stourport-on-Severn Library, Civic Centre, New Street, Stourport-on-Severn, DY13 8UN
- The Worcestershire Hub, Vicar Street, Kidderminster DY10 1DB

Terms of Reference agreed by Full Council on 27 July 2016

Ian Miller
Chief Executive