

TC/3976/21

Oswestry Town Council

Report from the Town Clerk to Council – 24th February 2021

Community Governance Reviews

Purpose

To consider submitting a request for a Community Governance Review and to establish a draft scope of a review.

Background

Appendix A is an e-mail from Shropshire Council which sets out its commitment to consider undertaking Community Governance Reviews throughout Shropshire following the next Local Government Elections, currently scheduled to be held in May 2021.

The Town Council have, on several occasions, expressed some frustration regarding development which is planned outside its boundary, but which has a direct impact on the town.

Appendix B - correspondence from Oswestry Rural Parish Council regarding press coverage which followed a Town Council meeting. For completeness this meeting resolved to request **“the Town Clerk to make enquiries with regards the process of reviewing parish boundaries”**.

Process

Shropshire Council request **“that in view of the forthcoming pre-election period, representations are initially sought from Parish and Town Councils on changes that might be considered to be less controversial in nature. These should demonstrate some element of support from the Local Community and surrounding Parishes. Communication between Parishes to establish common ground is encouraged. It is anticipated that such reviews will commence soon after the elections.”**

They also note that **“it is anticipated that a further exercise will run alongside this to identify areas which need to be reviewed but on which agreement may be more difficult to reach. Reviews for such areas will follow.”**

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It could be argued that it is difficult to know whether a proposal will be controversial or not without going through a process to establish what the scope of a review will cover. However, it is clear from the correspondence with Oswestry Rural Parish Council that they would be prepared to discuss the matter.

Timetable

Any changes made are likely to be effective from the date of Local Government Elections which are scheduled to be held in May 2025 with representations and enquiries registered by 12th March 2021.

Way Forward and Recommendations

The timing of this request for submissions as Councils head into the pre-election period is not necessarily helpful as it could raise some controversial issues. With this in mind, Council are asked to consider:

- Whether or not it wishes to request a Community Governance review and respond to Shropshire Council accordingly?
- The reasons for requesting a review and initial views on the scope;
- Requesting the Town Clerk to meet with Clerks of any parishes, potentially affected, to discuss the matter.

Arren Roberts
Town Clerk

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Appendix A

Forwarded to Town and Parish Councils and to Parish Meetings, Shropshire

Community Governance Reviews

Shropshire Council has resolved to consider undertaking Community Governance Reviews throughout Shropshire following the next Local Government Elections, currently scheduled to be held in May 2021.

In view of the forthcoming pre-election period, representations are initially sought from Parish and Town Councils on changes that might be considered to be less controversial in nature. These should demonstrate some element of support from the Local Community and surrounding Parishes. Communication between Parishes to establish common ground is encouraged. It is anticipated that such reviews will commence soon after the elections.

We will be working with SALC to bring information to those parishes affected so that the process is fully understood and they have a timely opportunity to engage and consult with their communities and neighbouring councils.

It is anticipated that a further exercise will run alongside this to identify areas which need to be reviewed but on which agreement may be more difficult to reach. Reviews for such areas will follow.

Any changes made are likely to be effective from the date of Local Government Elections which are scheduled to be held in May 2025.

Please send representations and any enquiries to democracy@shropshire.gov.uk by 12 March 2021.

Claire Porter

Director of Legal and Democratic Services

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Appendix B

Dear Arren

I have been asked to write to you concerning the proposed boundary review and the Town Council's desire to have development land earmarked for the Innovation Park transferred to the parish of Oswestry. Members are disappointed that we were not consulted and learned of your proposals in the local press.

Apparently, as part of a previous boundary review carried out in 2011, Oswestry Rural Parish Council agreed to a boundary change to allow Oswestry Town Council to have a piece of land near the leisure centre at Mile End and, in exchange, the Parish Council gained some land along Racecourse Road and another small piece of land at Broomhall Lane.

If Oswestry Town Council would like the Parish Council to relinquish any land as part of a future boundary change then we shall welcome discussions so that we can work together to reach an amicable arrangement.

All the best

Sharon

Sharon Clayton MPA, BA (Hons), Fellow SLCC

Clerk

Oswestry Rural Parish Council