

MINUTES OF ELECTORAL REVIEW OF CHORLEY COUNCIL COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE Tuesday, 13 November 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Peter Wilson (Chair), Councillors Alistair Bradley, Aaron Beaver, John Dalton, Margaret France, John Walker, Paul Walmsley and Alan Whittaker

OFFICERS: Rebecca Huddleston (Director (Policy and Governance)), Chris Moister (Head of Governance and Property Services), Phil Davies (Electoral Services Manager) and Cathryn Filbin (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Danny Gee, Adrian Lowe and Paul Leadbetter

11 Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 15 August 2018 of Electoral Review of Chorley Council Committee

AGREED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 August be approved as a correct record.

12 Timeline

Members of the Committee were informed that the LGBCE has delayed the announcement of its' final decision on the ward boundary arrangements to 26 March 2019 (previously 12 March) due to its workload. All other deadlines remain unchanged.

13 LGBCE - draft recommendations on warding arrangements

The Committee considered a summary report and the LGBCE's draft recommendations for new warding arrangements across the borough, as part of its' electoral review of Chorley Council.

When formulating its' draft recommendations, the LGBCE considered the written representations submitted as part of its' initial public consultation, which ran from 26 June until 3 September 2018. The purpose of the consultation was for interested groups and individuals to put forward their suggestions on how the new ward boundaries should be mapped out.

(Councillors Alistair Bradley and Paul Walmsley entered the room.)

It was reported that the LGBCE's draft recommendations were broadly based on the council's submission. However, in some areas of the borough the LGBCE considered

that the proposals the council put forward did not provide for the best balance between the different aspects of its' (LGBCE's) statutory criteria, and as such alternative boundaries have been identified.

Members of the Committee were informed that the LGBCE was currently carrying out a public consultation on its draft recommendations, the scope for which includes the names of each ward.

During debate, members agreed that the majority of the draft recommendations were acceptable, particularly the proposal to bring Coppull into one ward. However, the suggestion to include the area of Heskin within the Croston and Mawdesley ward was considered unsuitable as there was no obvious community identity between Heskin and the rest of that ward.

Members of the Committee agreed with Councillor Whittaker who argued that historically and practically Heskin aligns itself with the Eccleston area of the borough. However, by including Heskin in the ward of Eccleston, Charnock Richard and Euxton South would increase the variance for this ward to +13%, while Croston and Mawdesley would have a -19% variance, neither of which would be acceptable to the LGBCE. Simply moving another area of the Eccleston, Charnock Richard and Euxton South ward into the Croston and Mawdesley ward to reduce the variance difference would not be acceptable either, as the council would be effectively submitting the same proposal which the LGBCE had previously rejected.

The Committee considered that the only way to overcome the various issues associated with Heskin being placed in a ward containing Eccleston, was to propose altering the boundary of Euxton so that a suitable compromise could be reached. Officers were tasked to review the three wards, and put forward a proposal to the next meeting of the Committee to take place in the New Year.

Members of the Committee were informed that the LGBCE had already granted the council a special extension from the 14 January to 25 January 2019 to respond. This will allow members to debate the authority's response at the next council meeting on 22 January 2019.

AGREED:

1. That the following wards proposed by the LGBCE in its' draft recommendations be accepted:

- Adlington & Anderton
- Buckshaw & Whittle
- Chorley East
- Chorley North
- Chorley North East
- Chorley North West
- Chorley South East
- Chorley South West
- Clayton East, Brindle & Hoghton
- Clayton West & Cuerden
- Coppull

2. That officers be tasked to re-examine the following ward boundaries -

- Eccleston, Charnock Richard and Euxton South
- Croston and Mawdesley
- Euxton

with a view to moving the area of Heskin into the Eccleston, Charnock Richard and Euxton South ward, whilst maintaining elector equality in all three wards.

3. That the Committee be reconvened in the New Year to consider a response to the LGBCE's consultation including ward names which will be referred to a meeting of full council 22 January 2019, prior to it being submitted to the LGBCE by 25 January 2019.

14 Polling Stations (access/suitability)

Members were informed that once the final recommendations on Chorley's ward boundary arrangements had been approved the authority will be required to undertake a review of its polling places. This review falls in line with the national polling place review which takes place every 5 years.

The review is not expected to commence until May 2019. However, officers sought approval to conduct a preliminary consultation from relevant groups and individuals (including elected members) to gather information on existing polling places/stations and to identify any potential new ones.

AGREED: That a preliminary review can take place.

Chair

Date