Community Governance Review Update

Divisional Boundary Review and Community Governance Reviews (CGRs)

As you will be aware by now, we have two Boundary Reviews approaching. The Community Governance Review (CGR) that affects Town and Parish Councils was instigated by Shropshire Council's previous administration and was due to commence formal stages last summer following the elections. Such a review has not been undertaken since 2009. However, last October, Shropshire Council received notification from the Local Government Boundary Commission that it required a review of its Divisional Boundaries which must start by October 2022 and complete by October 2023. There has been some delay in the All-Party Working Group, set up to consider the review, due to the recent by election, but the Group is now up and running. The legal position is that the Divisional Boundary Review must take precedence and be completed before the CGR review can formally start. Population numbers per division will need to be considered following new development as government guidance requires around 3500 electorate per division (plus or minus 10%), final decisions being taken by the Boundary Commission.

However, whilst the formal process for Divisional Reviews will start this October, it would greatly assist the Group's deliberations if they were aware of your CGR proposals.

As you know there has been a great deal of development around market towns, much of which is located outside of the market town boundaries within the parishes outside of the market towns. There are instances in the market towns where the market town will be providing infrastructure needs of new development and it may be appropriate that those areas of new development should come within the towny boundary rather than remaining outside in the rural parishes. This would need to be subject to negotiation and agreement between those town and parish councils affected. Some small parishes may feel there would be benefit in joining up with another parish council but at the same time could retain their identity be warding themselves or indeed grouping.

The All-Party Working Group are therefore seeking your proposals before October to ascertain those areas where there is agreement between councils and those where there are difficulties. This will not only help the Divisional Review process but will aid the work on the Parish and Town Council CGR which must start after October 2023 and must complete within one year, in time to be signed off to come into force for the May 2025 elections.

The Group are therefore urging Town and Parish Councils to enter discussions and negotiations with neighbouring parishes and principal authority Councillors, to identify what might work in your areas or where you have tried but not been able to achieve agreement. The Annual Parish Meeting (held between March and the end of June) will provide an opportunity for you to consult informally with residents on any changes

to the governance of your areas. There will be more formal consultations as legally required once the formal process commences after October 2023. It is important to understand that timescales will be tight and once Terms of Reference are published, the reviews have to be completed within 12 months.

We are aware that some of you have already submitted expressions of interest and may not have received an acknowledgement. We are therefore asking if you would submit or resubmit your proposals, updated as necessary. SALC has offered to assist by collating your submissions for the All-Party Group which should therefore be emailed to alc@shropshire.gov.uk . SALC has provided a table below which may be helpful and if you have any questions etc, please let Dianne or Gail know and we will do our best to answer your queries.

Name of Council	Discussed or agreed with other Councils?	Proposal put forward/reason and any areas of difficulty	Informal Consultations with Residents/others?

Cllr Cecilia Motley,

Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture, Leisure & Tourism, Museums and Transport

February 2022