

Mid Devon District Council Community Governance Review (CGR) 2022

Electoral review of parish areas

Outline

The Council commenced its review of parish council boundaries and the number of parish councillors for each parish in December 2021. The First Stage of public consultation, seeking views from a wide range of groups and individuals, including all the parish councils within the Mid Devon District Council area, elected representatives and others that had an interest, was concluded at the end of February 2022. As a result, the Council received 77 submissions, expressing their views ranging from changes to existing parish council boundaries to making no changes. A number of submissions included very detailed reasoning for change and maps to support their submissions.

Electoral Review Committee (ERC)

The ERC members considered all the submissions and ‘met’ on three occasions to discuss each one and the summary below sets out the Committee’s draft proposals for the second stage of consultation, which will commence in August 2022.

Areas that are excluded from the review are: Crediton, Cullompton and Tiverton Town Councils. The boundaries and the corresponding number of councillors for each Town Council, has been determined by The Local Government Boundary Commission for England on its conclusion of the District Council ward boundary electoral review, published in January 2021.

At the conclusion of the second consultation period, the ERC will recommend its draft proposals to the Council.

Second Stage Consultation

Having considered all submissions received by the end of February, the ERC is now seeking views on its draft proposals for the future structure of parish boundaries and where appropriate, outlined its reasons for such proposals.

1. During the first consultation stage, no submissions were received from a number of parish areas and as such, the draft proposals for those parishes have been be listed as “NO CHANGE”. However, the **ERC would still consider any representations for change and/or receive support for the draft proposals from parish councils and other interested persons.**
2. Those parishes are listed below:

Bampton; Bickleigh; Bow; Brushford; Butterleigh; Cadbury; Chawleigh; Cheriton Fitzpaine; Clannaborough; Clayhanger; Colebrooke; Cruwys Morchard; Culmstock; Down St Mary; Eggesford; Hemyock; Hockworthy; Holcombe Rogus; Huntsham; Kennerleigh; Lapford; Poughill; Sampford Peverell; Stockleigh English; Stockleigh Pomeroy; Templeton; Thorverton;

Uplowman; Upton Hellions; Washford Pyne; Wembworthy; Woolfardisworthy; Zeal Monachorum.

3. At the same time, a number of submissions were received requesting “NO CHANGE” to parish boundaries, which are listed below:

Clayhidon; Coldridge; Copplestone; Morchard Bishop; Newton St Cyres; Nymet Rowland; Oakford; Puddington; Shobrooke; Washfield.

4. A number of submissions were received from both parish councils and local residents requesting that certain parish council boundaries be changed, which are set out below:

Bradninch Town Council

The Town Council is currently made up of the Town Ward and Rural Ward. A proposal was submitted to that the two parish wards be set up a single ward. However, due to the fact that the Parliamentary Boundary runs through the Town Council area, it was an electoral requirement to keep the two parish wards as they exist. Given that the number of electors in the rural ward is only slightly over 1,000, the Town Council suggested that the number of councillors be set as

- i) Bradninch (Rural Ward) be reduced from 2 to 1
- ii) Bradninch (Town Ward) be increased from 10 to 11

Burlescombe

Whilst the parish council had submitted a response of no change to its boundaries, it had requested that the number of parish councillors be reduced from 9 to 7. However, following further information from the parish council it appears that some issues had arisen that this may now not be the case. The ERC has, therefore, decided that it would invite further comments for the Second Stage consultation.

Cheriton Bishop

A submission was received requesting that an area of land east of the existing parish boundary be included within the Cheriton Bishop boundary. However, the area of land concerned is within another local authority area and cannot therefore take place.

Crediton Hamlets

A number of submissions from individuals had been received with regard to the creation of a ‘Yeoford’ Parish, although no map specifying the potential boundary was submitted. As the Electoral Review Terms of Reference (ToR) does not include a provision for creating new parishes, this could not be considered.

[By way of explanation, the provision of creating new parishes under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (LGPIHA) 2007, was brought in to encourage the creation of new parishes in those areas that were un-parished. This is not the case in respect of Crediton Hamlet PC.]

The parish council also submitted a representation opposing the idea of a separate 'parish' for Yeoford. If the existing Yeoford parish ward was removed from their parish, leaving only Hookway, it would not be large enough in respect of the electorate to be a viable separate parish.

Therefore, the ERC takes the view that the Crediton Parish Council should remain a single parish.

However, given the number of electors within the Yeoford ward of the parish, it is **proposed that the number of parish councillors for that ward be increased from 5 to 7.**

Cruwys Morchard and Thelbridge (Normansland Village)

A submission was received concerning that the area was split by the two district ward boundaries of Sandford & Creedy ward, and Way ward. Under the new district ward boundaries that come into effect in May 2023, this would bring both areas into a single district ward (Way). However, the village still lies between both parishes (53 properties in Cruwys Morchard PC and 56 properties in Thelbridge PC). As such, the ERC would welcome the views from the parish councils and residents.

Hittisleigh

Following on from the first stage submission (no. 33) regarding the fringes of the parish boundary and subsequent comments considered by the ERC has agreed that further consultation should take place and the views of neighbouring parish councils be invited.

Kentisbeare

The parish council requested that Dulford Home Farm to Broad Road (Hunters Lodge) and Lower Kingsford – new road, be transferred to the parish boundary. However, this is not possible as these properties are within the local authority area of East Devon.

Loxbeare

Request for the parish to become part of Tiverton parish. As the boundaries for Tiverton Town Council have already been determined by the Local Government Boundary Commission, Loxbeare cannot be included. The proposal is to make no changes to the parish boundary.

Morebath

A submission was received suggesting that the parish should be merged with Bampton Parish Council. However, no formal representation from Bampton

Town Council has been received. As Morebath's only boundaries are with Bampton, it was agreed that this should be put forward for the 2nd Stage giving the opportunity for making any further representations from both councils and residents.

Sandford

The parish council submitted a proposal that "Knathorne" and "Rolestone" (on the boundary with Sandford and Morchard Bishop) to be included inside the Sandford Parish Boundary. As a consequence, Morchard Bishop Parish Council has consulted with the residents affected, who have all expressed their views that they wished to remain within their existing parish boundaries. The ERC has therefore concluded that there should be no change to the boundaries.

Stoodleigh

Two submissions were received concerning the boundaries of the parishes of Stoodleigh, Templeton and Washield, affected by the A361. Although it has a minimal effect, it was decided to seek further submissions at this consultation stage.

Halberton, Willand and Uffculme

The most complexed submissions related to those submitted by the parish councils of Halberton, Willand and Uffculme, plus a number of individual representations.

Halberton PC is geographically the largest of the three parishes and lies entirely within the District ward of Halberton. Uffculme PC is warded with the Village Ward in the District Ward of Lower Culm and the Ashill Ward in the District Ward of Upper Culm. Willand PC lies entirely within the District Ward of Lower Culm.

There is long history of disagreement concerning the boundaries between Halberton and Uffculme and Halberton and Willand, partly stoked by perceived difficulties in road communication brought about by the construction of the M5 motorway. This appears to have been exacerbated by the recent housing development at Lucombe Park situated on the outskirts of Uffculme village, but within Halberton parish.

Other concerns relating to the Mid Devon Business Park and Bidwell were also considered.

Therefore, the ERC proposed the following options for Halberton, Willand and Uffculme form part of the stage 2 public consultation:

Option 1 – Lucombe Park move from Halberton to Uffculme and the Mid Devon Business Park move from Halberton to Willand.

Option 2 – Option 1 (as set out above) together with the area north east of Bridwell Avenue be moved from Halberton to Uffculme.

Option 3 – Options 1 and 2 (as set out above) together with Hitchcocks.

The Council would seek to receive the views of both individuals and the parish councils.

5. Another important part of the CGR relates to the number of councillors to be elected to each parish council.

Listed below are those parishes that the ERC has proposed for consultation with the relative parish councils and to also invite all other parish councils to respond with any proposals for change:

- i) Bradninch (Rural Ward) be reduced from 2 to 1
- ii) Bradninch (Town Ward) be increased from 10 to 11
- iii) Burlescombe be reduced from 9 to 7
- iv) Cheriton Fitzpaine be reduced from 9 to 8
- v) Colebrooke be reduced from 9 to 7
- vi) Copplestone be increased from 7 to 9
- vii) Crediton Hamlets (Yeoford Ward) be increased from 5 to 7
- viii) Silverton (North Ward) be reduced from 2 to 1
- ix) Silverton (Village Ward) be increased from 9 to 10
- x) Willand be increased from 11 to 12