

HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL



*Municipal Building,
Kingsway,
Widnes.
WA8 7QF*

29 January 2019

**TO: MEMBERS OF THE HALTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

You are hereby summoned to attend an Ordinary Meeting of the Halton Borough Council to be held in the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall on Wednesday, 6 February 2019 commencing at 6.30 p.m. for the purpose of considering and passing such resolution(s) as may be deemed necessary or desirable in respect of the matters mentioned in the Agenda.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David W. R.', is centered on the page.

Chief Executive

-AGENDA-

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COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council on Wednesday, 12 December 2018 in the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

Present: Councillors J. Bradshaw, Abbott, Baker, M. Bradshaw, D. Cargill, E. Cargill, Carlin, Cassidy, Dennett, Dourley, Fry, Gerrard, Gilligan, Harris, P. Hignett, R. Hignett, S. Hill, V. Hill, Horabin, Howard, Jones, Leck, M. Lloyd Jones, P. Lloyd Jones, C. Loftus, K. Loftus, Logan, MacManus, McDermott, A. McInerney, T. McInerney, Morley, Nelson, Philbin, Polhill, C. Plumpton Walsh, Joe Roberts, Rowe, Sinnott, G. Stockton, J. Stockton, Teeling, Thompson, Wall, Wallace, Wharton, Whitley, Woolfall, Wright and Zygadlo

Apologies for Absence: Councillors A. Lowe, J. Lowe, Nolan, N. Plumpton Walsh, June Roberts and Wainwright

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: D. Parr, I. Leivesley, M. Vasic, A. Scott, E. Dawson and G. Ferguson

Also in attendance: 9 members of the public and 1 member of the press

COU40 COUNCIL MINUTES

Action

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 17 October 2018, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

COU41 THE MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor made the following announcements:-

- He welcomed newly-elected Councillor Eddie Dourley to his first Council meeting;
- He reported on a recent event he and the Mayoress had attended at Churchill House at Chester University, to re-sign the Cheshire Armed Forces Covenant on behalf of the Borough.

COU42 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader made the following announcements:-

- The Local Government Boundary Commission for England had published its draft recommendations at the start of the second consultation period, on the new electoral arrangements for the Borough. He reported that the Ward Boundary Working Group would be considering the contents of the publication and a formal response from the Council would be submitted to the Commission by 11 February 2019;
- Each Member had been given a souvenir publication booklet on '*The Mersey Gateway – A Bridge to Prosperity*'.

COU43 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the Executive Board meetings on 18 October 2018 and 15 November 2018.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU44 MINUTES OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting on 3 October 2018.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU45 QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 8

It was noted that no questions had been received under Standing Order No.8.

(N.B. The following Councillors declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item of business as they all had family members employed by Halton Borough Council: Councillors Baker, E.Cargill, D.Cargill, Cassidy, Horabin, Nelson, Philbin, C. Plumpton Walsh, Polhill, Sinnott, Thompson, Wall and Wallace).

COU46 INITIAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2019/20 - KEY DECISION (EXB 52 REFERS)

The Council considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on an initial set of budget proposals for 2019/20.

An amendment in respect of the saving proposal at Item 28 in the Appendix to the report was proposed by Councillor Wharton. This referred to the bowling greens at Crow Wood Park, Hough Green Park and Leigh Recreation Ground being closed, or offered to bowling clubs to operate. The amendment was seconded by Councillor Polhill.

In accordance with Standing Order 16 (3), a recorded vote was taken.

The following Members voted FOR the motion:

Councillors Abbott, Baker, M. Bradshaw, J. Bradshaw, D. Cargill, E. Cargill, Carlin, Cassidy, Dennett, Dourley, Fry, Gerrard, Gilligan, Harris, P. Hignett, R. Hignett, S. Hill, V. Hill, Horabin, Howard, Jones, Leck, M. Lloyd Jones, P. Lloyd Jones, C. Loftus, K. Loftus, Logan, MacManus, McDermott, A. McInerney, T. McInerney, Morley, Nelson, Philbin, Polhill, C. Plumpton Walsh, Joe Roberts, Rowe, Sinnott, G. Stockton, J. Stockton, Teeling, Thompson, Wall, Wallace, Wharton, Whitley, Woolfall, Wright and Zygadlo

There were no votes against the motion.

There were no abstentions.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1) approve the initial budget proposals for 2019/20, as set out in Appendix 1, attached to the report, subject to the following alteration:-

That, following consultation with all bowling clubs in the Borough, Item No 28 in Appendix 1, should now read “ The bowling greens at Crow Wood Park, Hough Green and Leigh Recreation Ground be closed or offered to the bowling clubs to operate” and that the annual charge to individual bowlers be increased from £25 per annum to £30 per annum.

- 2) the present arrangement for four days unpaid leave for staff be continued for the next three years, commencing with the 2019/20 financial year; and
- 3) a Task and Finish Group be established to review those arrangements with a view to reporting back

Operational
Director - Finance

to Council on alternative options for the future.

(N.B. Councillor Ron Hignett declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item of business as he was a member of the Sci-Tech Public Sector Joint Venture Board)

COU47 DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2019/20 - KEY DECISION (EXB 50 REFERS)

The Council considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on the determination of the Council Tax Base for 2019/20.

In accordance with Standing Order 16 (3), a recorded vote was taken.

The following Members voted FOR the motion:

Councillors Abbott, Baker, M. Bradshaw, J. Bradshaw, D. Cargill, E. Cargill, Carlin, Cassidy, Dennett, Dourley, Fry, Gerrard, Gilligan, Harris, P. Hignett, R. Hignett, S. Hill, V. Hill, Horabin, Howard, Jones, Leck, M. Lloyd Jones, P. Lloyd Jones, C. Loftus, K. Loftus, Logan, MacManus, McDermott, A. McInerney, T. McInerney, Morley, Nelson, Philbin, Polhill, C. Plumpton Walsh, Joe Roberts, Rowe, Sinnott, G. Stockton, J. Stockton, Teeling, Thompson, Wall, Wallace, Wharton, Whitley, Woolfall, Wright and Zygadllo

There were no votes against the motion.

There were no abstentions.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The Council Tax Base for 2019/20 be set at 34,950 for the Borough, and that the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Environment Agency be so notified; and
- 2) Council set the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes as follows:

Operational
Director - Finance

Parish	Tax Base	
Hale	660	
Halebank	526	
Daresbury	173	
Moore	329	
Preston Brook	359	
Sandymoor	1,216	

COU48 2018/19 REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME (MINUTE EXB 53 REFERS)

The Council considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which set out a number of revisions to the Council's 2018/19 Capital Programme.

RESOLVED: That the revisions to the Council's 2018/19 Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report, be approved.

Operational
Director - Finance

COU49 TREASURY MANAGEMENT HALF YEAR REPORT 2018/19 (MINUTE EXB 54 REFERS)

The Council considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which provided an update on the Treasury Management Half Year Report 2018/19.

RESOLVED: That Council

1) adopts the updated Operational Boundary and Authorised Limits, as detailed in paragraph 3.18 of the report; and

2) notes the report.

Operational
Director - Finance

COU50 COMMUNITY SHOP (MINUTE EXB 56 REFERS)

The Council considered report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on the introduction of a Community Shop in Halton.

RESOLVED: That Council approve an amendment to the Capital Programme and a £50k capital allocation to provide a contribution towards the costs involved in developing a Community Shop in Halton.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

COU51 MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE
BOARDS AND THE BUSINESS EFFICIENCY BOARD

The Council considered the reports of the following
Boards in the period since the meeting of Council on 17
October 2018:-

- Children, Young People and Families;
- Employment, Learning and Skills and
Community;
- Health;
- Safer:
- Environment and Urban Renewal;
- Corporate Services; and
- Business Efficiency.

COU52 COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Council considered the reports of the following
Committees in the period since the meeting of Council on 17
October 2018:-

- Development Control; and
- Regulatory.

COU53 NOTICE OF MOTION - PERIOD POVERTY

PERIOD POVERTY

Council considered a Notice of Motion submitted in
accordance with Standing Order No. 6.

The following Motion was proposed by Councillor
Lauren Cassidy and seconded by Councillor Angela
Teeling:-

“Halton Borough Council calls for women and girls to be
shown the dignity they derive when dealing with their
periods.

The cost of sanitary products is unfair and exacerbates
‘Period Poverty’. Council notes that VAT continues to be
charged on sanitary products, yet they are not luxury
products but essential to both women and girls.

This Council is committed to supporting women within our
workplaces, ensuring our employees have the dignity they
deserve.

This Council RESOLVES:

- 1) To seek to ensure women and girls in Halton gain better access to sanitary products and to receiving a more positive, supportive culture towards periods in the workplace and at schools in Halton;
- 2) To write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, calling for an end to VAT on sanitary products; and
- 3) To support campaigns so that no women or young girls face 'Period Poverty' “.

Chief Executive

COU54 NOTICE OF MOTION - FOOD INSECURITY

FOOD INSECURITY

Council considered a Notice of Motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order No. 6.

The following Motion was proposed by Councillor Andrea Wall and seconded by Councillor Chris Loftus:-

“Halton Borough Council calls for the Government to take urgent measures to end food insecurity and the growing reliance of families being dependent upon Food Banks.

Council supports the End Hunger UK campaign supported by Oxfam, Child Poverty Action Group, UK Churches and the Trussell Trust amongst many others. A report from the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation previously suggested that as many as 8.4 million people in the UK are 'food insecure' and struggle to put enough food on the table to sustain themselves and their families.

This Council commends the good work undertaken by the Runcorn and Widnes Food Banks to help aid and support people in Halton.

Council further notes that, over the last six financial years due to the welfare reform brought in by Central Government, including a new sanctions regime, the spare room subsidy or bedroom tax and the roll out of full service Universal Credit, Halton has seen a 471% increase in the number of 3-day emergency food supplies distributed by foodbanks in Runcorn and Widnes.

This Council RESOLVES:

Chief Executive

- 1) To write to the Prime Minister expressing grave

concern at the UN findings on food insecurity, whilst the UK remains the sixth richest country in the world;

- 2) Council asks her to note that there are now approximately 2,000 food banks and food bank centres in operation and we are seeing rising levels of hospital admissions due to malnutrition and record levels of in-work poverty; and
- 3) Council calls on the Government to recognise that food insecurity is a worsening crisis in Halton and around the UK, making more people impoverished, impacting the NHS and worsening health deprivation.”

COU55 NOTICE OF MOTION - PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING

PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING

Council considered a Notice of Motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order No. 6.

The following Motion was proposed by Councillor Sandra Baker and seconded by Councillor Pauline Sinnott:-

“Halton Borough Council calls on Government to support an increase in public health funding and to ensuring a ‘prevention first’ approach in the health and social care system. In turn, the Council will, for its part, continue to support and fund public health initiatives to the best of our abilities - to prevent ill-health, reduce inequalities and support a health and social care system that is fit for the future. Around four in ten cancer diagnoses are preventable, largely through avoidable risk factors, such as stopping smoking and healthy diets.

This Council believes that the impact of cuts to public health on our communities is becoming difficult to ignore. This case becomes more pressing given the Government’s consideration of a ten-year plan for the NHS.

Council supports the view that:-

- It is harmful to our residents that the Council will have less grant and support from Government than in previous years.
- Without added investment in public health, people will needlessly suffer, families and community suffer and

employers face a burden through staff sickness and lost productivity.

Council RESOLVES to write to the Secretary of State for Health to call for an increase in public health funding and not to phase out the Public Health Grant by 2020/21, as is currently proposed.”

Chief Executive

COU56 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Council considered:

- (1) whether Members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Board during consideration of the following item of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be considered, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and
- (2) whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were applicable and whether, when applying the public interest test and exemptions, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

COU57 ACQUISITION OF ORCHARD HOUSE (MINUTE EXB 60 REFERS)

The Council considered a report of the Operational Director, People, on the acquisition and re-modelling of Orchard House.

RESOLVED: That Council include an amount, as stated in the report, in the Capital Programme, which will be fully funded by NHS England, to meet the cost of the Orchard House scheme.

Strategic Director
- People

Meeting ended at 7.21 p.m.

REPORT TO:	Council
DATE:	6 February 2019
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources
PORTFOLIO:	Leader
SUBJECT:	Ward Boundary Review
WARDS:	Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to submit the attached report to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). The attached report is the Council's response to the Commission's draft warding arrangements for the Borough.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) the Council endorses the attached response and that it be forwarded to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England; and**
- 2) the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, be authorised to make minor drafting amendments to the response prior to forwarding it to the Commission.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The LGBCE (the Commission) is undertaking an Electoral Review of the Council. This review had been triggered by the fact that the electorate in the Farnworth Ward in Widnes is 33% higher than the average electorate across each of the wards in the Borough. Significant divergence in the size of one ward from the average electorate in other wards of the Borough is one of the Commission's criteria that triggers a review.
- 3.2 The ward boundary review process is undertaken in four stages:
- 1) Preliminary Period – ended May 2018

The Commission invited the Council to submit its views on what it believes is the appropriate Council size for Halton. The Commission concluded at the end of this stage that it was 'minded' to recommend a Council size of 54.

2) Consultation on Warding Patterns: 26 June 2018 – 3 September 2018

The Commission invited the Council and other interested parties to submit to it suggestions for patterns of wards based on a Council of 54.

3) Consultation on Draft Recommendations: 4 December 2018 – 11 February 2019

Having considered responses to the above consultation on warding patterns, the Commission produced a set of draft recommendations and invited the Council and other interested parties to submit responses to these recommendations, hence this response.

4) Final Recommendations

The Commission will publish its final recommendations 26 March 2019. A Parliamentary Order will be made in summer 2019 with the first (all out) elections taking place with the new warding arrangements in May 2020.

3.3 As part of this phase (3) of the review the Commission has asked the Council for its views in relation to its draft recommendations. Attached to this report is that response. The response recommends the following:

- A boundary adjustment to the proposed Hough Green/Birchfield Wards.
- A boundary adjustment to the proposed Bridgewater/Grange Wards.
- That some ward names in the proposals be changed to best reflect those local areas affected by boundary changes.
- That there remains areas of concern with the Commission's proposals for the four parishes to the east of Runcorn, in particular with draft plans to create a Preston Brook and Vale Ward.

3.4 The Council is requested to endorse the response.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Council has to have sufficient Elected Members to ensure:

- its governance arrangements are effective;
- its scrutiny arrangements are effective;
- that there are sufficient Members to carry out the representational role of Councillors within the Borough; and
- that any new warding arrangements:
 - 1) Should leave each Councillor representing roughly the same number of voters as other Councillors elsewhere in the authority.

- 2) Should – as far as possible – reflect community interests and identities, and boundaries should be identifiable. Consider transport links, community groups and facilities, natural or physical boundaries, parishes and shared interests.
- 3) Should promote effective and convenient local government. Consider the number of Councillors for the geographic size of and the links between parts of the ward.

4.2 These issues have been taken into account in coming to this set of proposals.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. However, there will be a cost to the Council of implementing the eventual change to the pattern of wards. These costs will have to be met from existing Council resources.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES

6.1 There are no direct implications for the Council’s priorities, however, it is clearly important that the policy issues identified in paragraph 4 are met to ensure the efficient and effective running of the Council.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 There are no specific risks associated with this report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 There are no equality and diversity issues associated with this report.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Local Government Commission Technical Guidance Report	LGBCE website	Ian Leivesley Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources

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ELECTORAL REVIEW OF HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Response to the Local Government Boundary
Commission for England's draft recommendations for
revised Ward Boundaries for Halton

February 2019

Introduction

This document represents the Council's formal response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's draft recommendations for revised Ward Boundaries for Halton, published on 4 December 2018.

The Council is disappointed that the Commission did not accept its proposals submitted at stage 2 of the process. The Council felt its proposals satisfied the three statutory criteria the Commission is required to follow. However the Council is pleased to confirm that it is satisfied with the majority of the Local Government Boundary Commission's draft recommendations for Halton but is putting forward, in this submission, some proposed boundary adjustments.

The Council believes the changes proposed maintain existing communities and settlements as much as possible so that they retain their identities and local cohesion. Council Members have been invaluable in this process, with their local knowledge of the wards and communities they represent. A cross party working group of Members led on this important work, consulting all Members throughout the process.

It is the Council's view, based on the Commission's own draft warding arrangements, that the changes proposed in this document accurately represent Halton's communities and provide a better balance of the electorate across wards, maintaining effective and convenient local government for everyone living in Halton.

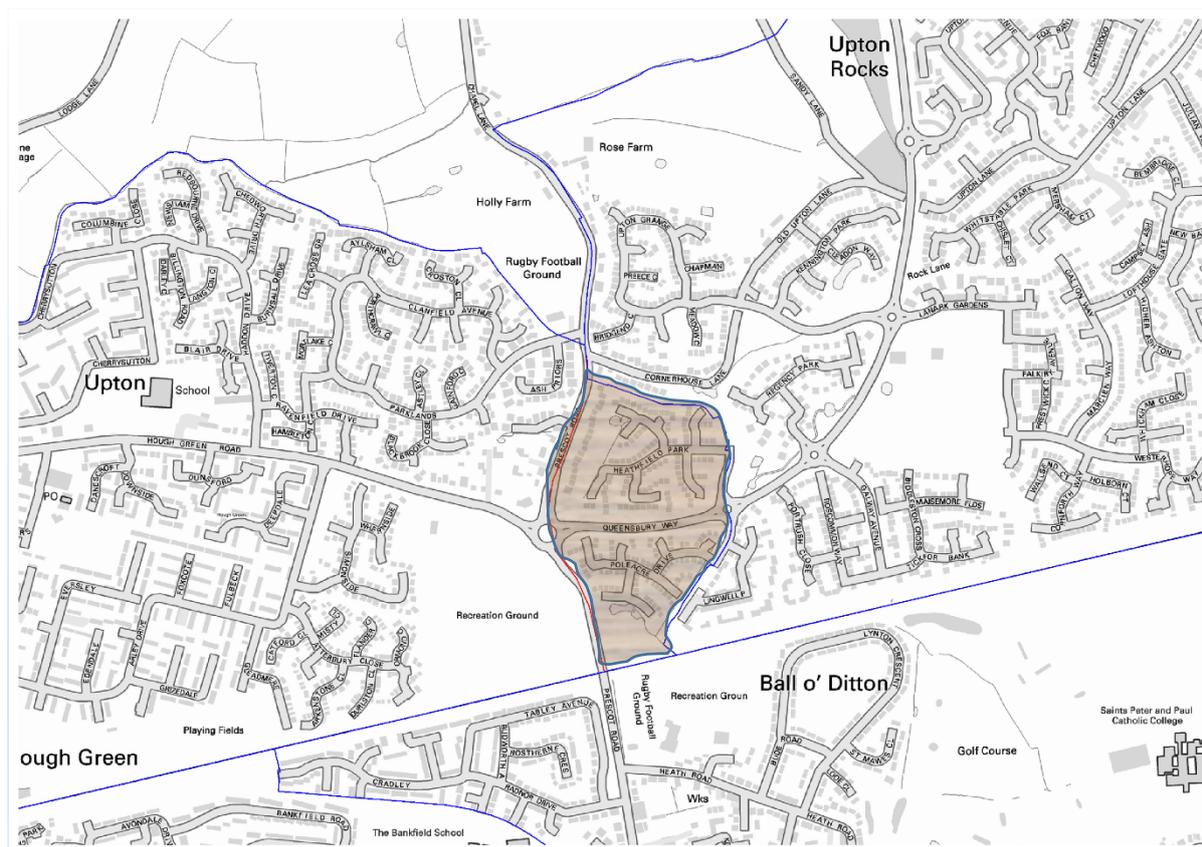
However, the Council would also like to express its concerns around the proposed arrangements for the parish areas in east Runcorn, in particular with Preston Brook and Vale Ward and the potential impact the Commission's draft proposals might have on this area of East Runcorn. The Commission's proposal in this area was something the Council had strived to avoid in its stage 2 proposals. It was the Council's view that warding arrangements should be based around only the parishes and the Council's plans for a single one member ward helped to best achieve this outcome.

Proposed Boundary Adjustments

The Council wishes to suggest that the following specific boundary adjustments be made to four wards in the Commission’s draft proposals.

Proposed Hough Green/Birchfield Wards

The Council proposes that the Boundary between the proposed Hough Green and Birchfield Wards moves to Prescott Road (i.e. retains the existing ward boundary)



Evidence

It is felt that this is necessary due to residents in the areas containing Poleacre Drive & Heathfield Park having no community identity with residents in the rest of Hough Green but having a strong identity with those residents living in the proposed Birchfield Ward. This area forms part of the modern housing development known as the Upton Rocks estate rather than being a part of the more established Hough Green area. The Council therefore believes those residents would be better served by elected representatives who will also cover the proposed Birchfield Ward.

Some of the facilities that the area shares with Birchfield Ward include:

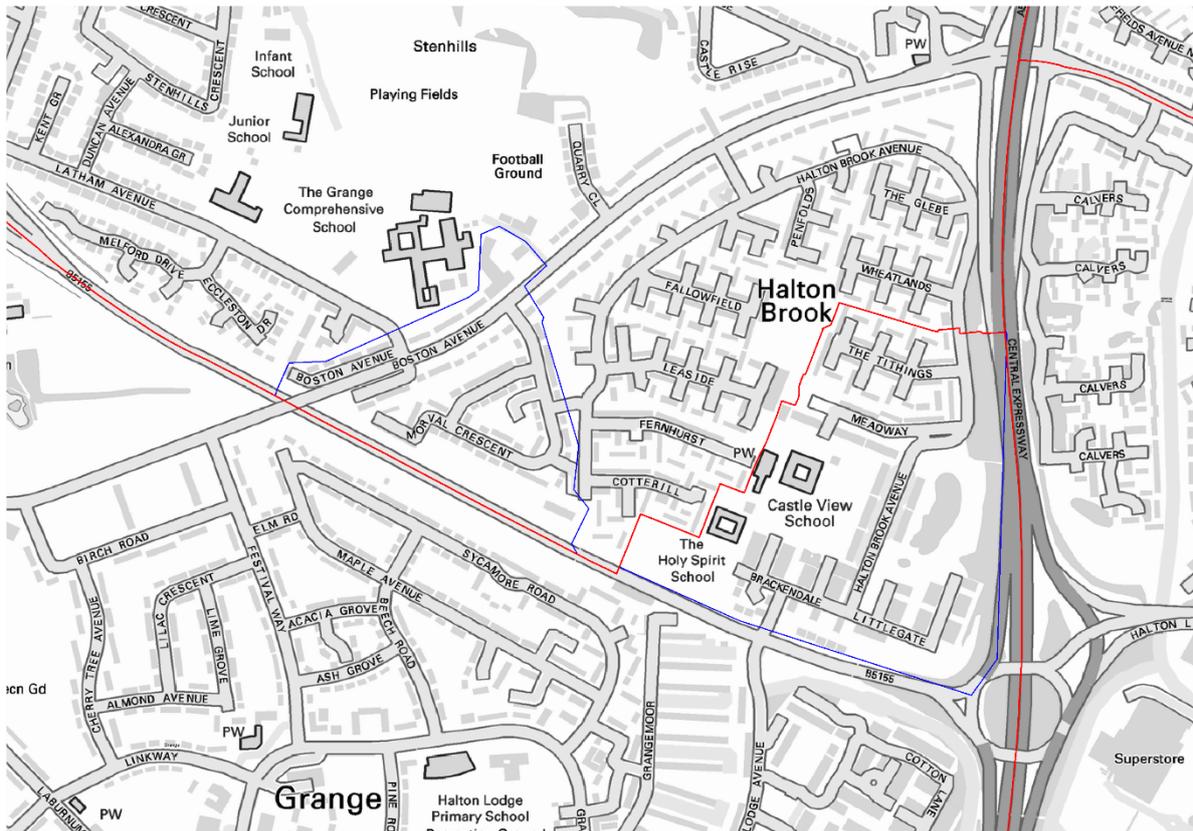
- Local shopping centre and Leisure facilities (Co-operative Shop/Observatory Public House)
- A large public park (Upton Rocks Park)

As a physical boundary it is felt that the proposal is confusing as it has a roundabout acting as a community gateway as well as a traffic gateway. It is felt that a stronger boundary is an extension of

the borough boundary down Prescott Road and Chapel Lane. This change would also include a strong natural barrier of the Prescott Road playing fields.

Proposed Bridgewater/Grange Wards

The Council proposes that the split dividing the Halton Brook estate, as proposed by the Commission, be removed. To ensure electoral equality it is proposed that this is balanced out by moving the area of Boston Avenue/Morval Crescent into the proposed Grange Ward.



Evidence

The draft proposals result in the Halton Brook estate being split between two wards, where previously it was within one. The Council recommends moving Morval Crescent from the proposed Bridgewater Ward to Grange Ward and moving roads in the Halton Brook estate that are proposed to be within the Grange Ward to the Bridgewater Ward.

Morval Crescent was built as part of the post war Grange estate development and was formerly within the Grange Ward until a previous electoral review. The Halton Brook estate was the first New Town estate built in Runcorn, following the designation of Runcorn as a New Town. The estate has only ever been in one ward. These changes will ensure community identity is better represented.

The 'swap' of these two areas would result in a minimal impact on overall elector numbers in both Wards.

Name Changes

The Council proposes that some ward names in the draft proposals be changed to better reflect those local areas affected by boundary changes. As much as possible, the Council favours retaining ward names that are currently in use so as to best reflect local areas and ensure continuity.

Appleton Chadwick Ward

As the Commission has removed the Chadwick area from the Council's Appleton Chadwick proposal it now makes no sense for the name to remain as Appleton Chadwick. **The Council proposes that the name should therefore be Appleton Ward.**

Kingsway Heath Ward

The proposed name should be changed to Highfield Ward. The ward contains only a partial element of the Kingsway road and none of the Kingsway estate. Highfield is more representative of the area as one of the most prominent thoroughfares is Highfield Road (which is also the address of the local clinic, Highfield Hospital).

Riverside and Town Ward

The Council proposes that the name should be changed to Central & West Bank Ward. The ward does not contain the area considered to be the 'town centre' of Widnes. Instead it contains the central industrial and large business areas of the town, as well as the largely residential historic area of West Bank.

Norton Ward

The Council proposes that the ward name should be 'Norton North Ward'. This would mean no name change for most electors in the proposed ward as it is largely the same as the existing Norton North Ward.

Preston Brook and Vale Ward

Brookvale estate and areas of Murdishaw form an altogether different community to the Preston Brook Parish area. These two principal communities share little similarity nor community identity which is a cause for concern for the Council.

If the Commission is minded to implement its draft proposals for this ward, **the Council believes that the name 'Norton South Ward' would better reflect the area.** However, see the Council's comments on this later in this response.

Old Town and Weston Point Ward

The term 'Old Town' receives mixed feelings from residents when it is used, which has resulted in the Council having a policy of not using the phrase "Old Town" in any of its street furniture/highway signage. The phrase is most commonly used to refer to the shopping area in Runcorn town centre and not the wider area. It is noted that the ancient village of Weston is not referenced in the draft proposed name.

Much of the electorate is currently within the Mersey Ward and the river is in close proximity to all areas of the draft proposed ward area. It should be noted that the Weston Point area was formerly in the Mersey ward.

The Council proposes that this ward should be named Mersey Ward.

South Runcorn Ward

The term South Runcorn is not currently used on highway signage, nor buildings or public infrastructure.

Beechwood is an established community with Beechwood School and Beechwood Community Centre being notable public buildings. The Heath School and the Heath Business Park are also within the proposed ward.

The Council proposes that ‘Beechwood and Heath Ward’ would be a more appropriate name.

Areas of concern

The Council wishes to raise a particular concern surrounding the Commission’s proposals for the four parishes to the east of Runcorn, in particular with the draft proposal to create a Preston Brook and Vale Ward. Due to the particular characteristics of the parishes in east Runcorn the Council had specifically tried to avoid the formation of wards that combine rural parishes with non parished urban areas.

The proposed Preston Brook and Vale Ward takes in Preston Brook Parish Council, some of Brookvale and some of Murdishaw. There are no community links between Preston Brook and the other two areas. Preston Brook currently lies in the Daresbury Ward along with the three other parish councils in East Runcorn. In its stage 2 response the Council specifically proposed a Council size of 55 members to accommodate opportunity for Preston Brook being a single member ward.

Preston Brook currently has very close links with Daresbury Parish Council area:

- They are both in the parish served by Daresbury Church. Preston Brook, therefore, forms a part of the faith community in the area.
- Children from Preston Brook pre-school historically become pupils at Daresbury School or Aston school (Aston is not in the Halton area).

The areas of Brookvale and Murdishaw have much in common with each other and other ‘new town’ areas than with Preston Brook:

- the heritage of the areas is quite distinct from the heritage of the Preston Brook area.
- both areas were part of the Runcorn New Town development from the early 1970s and consequently have developed an affiliation to schools, Faith groups and community facilities which are completely different to Preston Brook.

The creation of this new ward would result in dividing Brookvale and Murdishaw which already have a clear and strong identity. The Council believes that its stage 2 proposals would have better reflected local community identities in this area of Runcorn.

The Commission states in paragraph 58 “we consider these areas (Brookvale and Murdishaw Avenue) to be more readily accessible to and from Preston Brook”. The Commission states that this is because of the large roundabout known locally as the Murdishaw roundabout.

The Council wishes to highlight that the potential plans for the area close to this roundabout are uncertain. There is planned industrial/commercial development of the Whitehouse industrial estate which would result in increased HGV and other traffic thus creating a fluid but intimidating barrier between the two parts of the ward. The arrangements for the new proposed junction off the M56 (Junction 11a) would result in a complete revamp and change in status of the Murdishaw roundabout. This change in status could again severely hinder community identity and cohesion. This proposal, along with the existing physical barrier of the M56, would make travel across the proposed ward extremely difficult.

The parish councils in East Runcorn have discrete heritages. By linking the parish councils together in one form or another as proposed in the Council's stage 2 response, we would be protecting the distinct and discrete identities and allowing these identities to flourish. The plans for the transformation of the central areas of Runcorn around the railway station and the shopping/cultural areas would be enhanced by a commitment to the strengthening of the diversity of East Runcorn rather than the diminution of the heritage and identities that the Commission's proposals would bring.

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REPORT TO: Council

DATE: 6 February 2019

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Members' Allowance Scheme – Tri-annual Review

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To advise Council of the arrangements for a review to be conducted of the Independent Members' Allowances Scheme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Council note the process for review as set out in the report.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Under the Local Authority's (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003 the Scheme of Members' Allowances, which was approved in December 2015, effective from 1 April 2016, is due for review. It must be reviewed tri-annually.

3.2 In consultation with the Leader, the Chief Executive has invited three independent and respected private sector representatives to sit as an Independent Panel (the Panel) to review the Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances and to make recommendations to the Council with regard to the matters to be included in the scheme. The Panel members were identified as having private sector experience and also a strong understanding of the public sector, having worked closely with the public sector on numerous projects and partnerships. All three are independent of the Council.

The Panel consists of the following:-

Rachael Owen – Chief Executive, Halton Chamber

John Downes – MD, Langtree

John Lewis – MD, SOG Ltd

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The Panel will be provided with, and appraised of, the Council's current scheme of allowances. This recognises the time and commitment of all Councillors as well as incidental costs incurred such as use of their vehicles, homes, internet and telephone for Council business.

- 4.2 To enable the Panel to consider the appropriateness of the existing scheme, details of neighbouring authority schemes have been collated and will be made available to the Panel. This information is available on request.
- 4.3 The Panel will invite the Leaders of the three political groups on the Council to meet with them and share with them their thoughts on the current Members' Allowance Scheme and any changes they would wish to see.
- 4.4 The Panel will also invite all Members to share with them any thoughts they have on the current allowance scheme and any changes they would wish to see.
- 4.5 The Panel will be advised by the Chief Executive and the Council Solicitor and the Council Finance Officer on matters relating to the work of Elected Members, the law and other matters relating to Members Allowances.

5.0 PANEL FINDINGS

- 5.1 The findings of the Panel will be reported to the meeting of Council on 6 March 2019.

6.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Current Members' Allowance Scheme

Current Members' Allowance Schemes for neighbouring local authorities.