

## **Boundary Review working party – Meeting Notes**

**Wednesday, 5 August 2020 at 10:00am**

Present:

Councillors: S Jones, D Bowater, R Goodchild, J M Freeman (apologies: D Scott)

Officers: M Saccoccio, S Sandiford, B Dunleavy (CBC)

The meeting was convened to consider a response to the current Local Government Boundary Commission consultation on proposed changes to Central Bedfordshire ward boundaries. Published proposals were that the new housing development on land east of Leighton-Linslade (“Clipstone Park”) be incorporated into Leighton Buzzard North ward and to balance this, that land in the Bassett Road area be moved from LB North into Linslade.

Brian Dunleavy advised that CBC had been given an extension beyond the consultation deadline of 7 September. It was anticipated that CBC would seek consent to undertake a community governance review on Leighton-Linslade boundaries rather than be embargoed for five years – there was concern that this was a long period of time for residents.

The Boundary Commission had advised Mr Dunleavy that consent for a community governance review would need to be sought from the Commission. Local support would need to be demonstrated and any recommendations should not completely disregard Boundary Commission recommendations.

It was discussed that this local support could be demonstrated by the knowledge that residents to the east of the town were using Leighton-Linslade facilities including schools, doctors, dentists, library, town centre, leisure centre, parks and sports facilities, playgroups, children’s activities etc. It was suggested that showing these facilities on a map could support the submission.

Community cohesion was the priority and it was important that proposed warding arrangements supported integration into existing settlements and was not seen as divisive.

It was proposed by Councillor R Goodchild and seconded by Councillor J M Freeman that Eggington “Clipstone” ward be split into two, with the northern part integrated into Leighton Buzzard North and the southern into Leighton Buzzard South.

Differing views were expressed about potential changes to Leighton-Linslade parish ward boundaries to achieve a balance of electorate numbers and natural boundaries. A number of potential options were suggested. It was suggested that natural boundaries be used where possible, such as the river, the railway and major arteries such as Hockliffe Road.

**RECOMMENDED to Council to consider the following in respect of the Local Government Boundary Commission consultation on local authority ward boundaries:**

- 1) That the Town Council supports the inclusion of the new housing at Clipstone Park into Leighton Buzzard wards and recognises that this will require changes to existing warding to balance electorate numbers.**
- 2) That the Town Council supports Central Bedfordshire Council's request to undertake a Community Governance Review on Leighton-Linslade parish wards as soon as practicable, due to the natural and already existing community cohesion between that development and the settlement of the town, with residents of that area already using town facilities including schools, doctors, dentists, arts and leisure facilities and children's groups and activities.**
- 3) That Council considers whether to submit a more detailed corporate response on proposed ward boundaries for both Central Bedfordshire and Parish wards, or whether political groups and/or individual Councillors submit their own comments to the consultation.**

Meeting closed at 11:20am.