

SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF THE PARISHES OF BASCHURCH AND

PIMHILL (KNOWN LOCALLY AS BOMERE HEATH AND DISTRICT

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007

DRAFT PROPOSALS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Shropshire Council has resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review of the Parishes of Baschurch and Pimhill. The area to be included in the review is the whole of the Parishes of Baschurch and Pimhill.
- 1.2 The Council gave public notice of a Community Governance Review and published the Terms of Reference for the review of the Parishes of Baschurch and Pimhill in December 2023. Copies of the Terms of Reference were sent by e-mail to the Parish Councils and to other stakeholders in the area. Information on the effect of the review was also available for inspection at the Councils offices at Shirehall, Shrewsbury and on the Council's website.
- 1.3 The Terms of Reference were intended to prompt local consideration and initiate discussion in order that the Council could take account of local feeling when preparing its Draft Proposal Document. All concerned were invited to submit their comments in writing by 26 January 2024.
- 1.4 Baschurch Parish Council proposed moving the Walford Heath ward of Pimhill Parish into the parish of Baschurch and creating of a new ward of the parish council consisting of both Walford village and the Walford Heath ward, with one councillor elected to represent that ward.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Parish of Baschurch is currently represented by 12 Councillors, split over two wards. The Parish of Pimhill is represented by 13 Councillors split over 5 wards.

2.2 The current and projected electorate figures for the wards in the Parishes of Baschurch and Pimhill are set out in the tables below:

Baschurch

Parish	Number of Councillors	Number of Electors (October 2023)	No of Electors (April 2028)	Ratio of Electors per Councillor
Baschurch	12	2,325	2,649	1: 218

Parish Wards	Number of Councillors	Number of Electors (October 2023)	No of Electors (April 2028)	Ratio of Electors per Councillor
Weston Lullingfields	3	463	508	1: 169
Baschurch	9	1,862	2,141	1: 238

Pimhill

Parish	Number of Councillors	Number of Electors (October 2023)	No of Electors (April 2028)	Ratio of Electors per Councillor
Pimhill (Bomere Heath)	13	1,880	1,969	1: 90

Parish Wards	Number of Councillors	Number of Electors (October 2023)	No of Electors (April 2028)	Ratio of Electors per Councillor
Bomere Heath	8	1,129	1,165	1: 146
Fitz	2	275	309	1: 155
Leaton	1	162	162	1: 162
Preston Gubbals	1	209	223	1: 223
Walford Heath	1	105	110	1: 110

2.3 The current Shropshire Council division boundaries were made by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England during its recent review and necessitated the boundaries crossing several Parishes. Unless they are amended by order following a Community Governance Review, the new boundaries may not

provide for effective and convenient local governance or reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area.

- 2.4 To avoid this situation arising at the next ordinary elections due to be held in May 2025, Shropshire Council is undertaking a review of the electoral arrangements for the Parishes of Baschurch and Pimhill under the provisions of Section 82 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, as well as the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued in accordance with Section 100(4) of the Act by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Electoral Commission (Revised March 2010).
- 2.6 The review also provides an opportunity to consider whether the historic electoral boundaries for Baschurch and Pimhill remain appropriate, after taking account of recent residential development as well as that proposed by 2029 and beyond. The provision of more obvious and appropriate external boundaries for the parishes have been considered in the interests of community identity and community cohesion. In accordance with statutory guidance the review is seeking to establish boundaries which follow the line of permanent or established physical features, rather than the ancient field boundaries which mean little to today's residents, where possible
- 2.7 The Terms of Reference document published in December 2023 set out the objective of the review to consider whether there should be any changes to the boundaries between the parishes of Baschurch and Pimhill.
- 2.8 During the preparing of these draft recommendations, the Council has taken account of the comments received from Baschurch Parish Council and Pimhill Parish Council.
- 2.9 Public comment at the end of the first stage of this process has been limited.

3.0 PROPOSED BOUNDARY CHANGES

- 3.1 It is proposed that the boundary between the Parishes of Baschurch and Pimhill be amended to move the Walford Heath ward (hatched on Plan A, attached) of Pimhill Parish into the Baschurch Parish.

3.2 It is proposed that the Parish of Baschurch have three wards – the existing Weston Lullingfield Ward coloured green on Plan A, attached; a reduced Baschurch ward, coloured yellow on the Plan A, attached; and a new Walford and Walford Heath ward, coloured red on Plan A attached.

3.3 It is proposed that the Parish of Pimhill have 4 wards – Bomere Heath, coloured yellow on Plan B attached; Fitz, coloured green on Plan B attached; Leaton, coloured blue on Plan B attached; and Preston Gubbals, coloured red on Plan B attached.

3.3 The current and projected electorate figures for the proposed wards in the Parishes of Baschurch and Pimhill are set out in the tables below:

Baschurch

Parish and Parish Wards	Number of Councillors	Number of Electors (October 2023)	No of Electors (April 2028)	Ratio of Electors per Councillor
Baschurch Parish	12	2,432	2,755	1: 230
Walford and Walford Heath	1	271	294	1: 294
Baschurch	9	1,698	1,953	1: 217
Weston Lullingfields	2	463	508	1: 254

Pimhill

Parish and Parish Wards	Number of Councillors	Number of Electors (October 2023)	No of Electors (April 2028)	Ratio of Electors per Councillor
Pimhill (Bomere Heath and District) Parish	13	1,775	1,859	1:143
Bomere Heath	8	1,129	1,165	1: 146
Fitz	2	275	309	1: 155
Leaton	1	162	162	1: 162
Preston Gubbals	2	209	223	1: 112

3.4 It is further proposed that the name of the Parish of Pimhill be amended to Bomere Heath and District.

4.0 PARISH COUNCIL SIZE:

4.1 The law requires that when considering whether to establish a pattern of wards for the purposes for elections, the Council must first consider whether it is desirable for any part of the parish to be separately represented on the Parish/Town Council. Secondly, it is necessary to consider whether the number or distribution of electors within the parish/town would make a single election of councillors impracticable.

4.2 There is little guidance on the appropriate number of councillors required to represent a parish, other than there not being any less than five councillors. Where there is no maximum number and no rules on the allocation of councillors, in recent years the Council has used the National Association of Local Councils' formula as a guide

4.3 The Aston Business School has also published research on the appropriate levels of representation.

4.4 In large parishes such as Baschurch and Pimhill there is a very strong case for dividing the parish into electoral wards, as community identity and community interests tend to focus on a locality or neighbourhood. This can be an existing housing estate, a shopping centre or some community facility. Where there is evidence that different parts of a town have had their own sense of identity historically this supports the establishment or retention of electoral wards.

4.5 Baschurch

It is proposed that the Parish of Baschurch comprise of 12 Councillors Split over 3 wards:

Baschurch	9
Walford and Walford Heath	1
Weston Lullingfields	2

4.5 Pimhill

It is proposed that the Parish of Pimhill should comprise of 13 Councillors over 4 wards:

Bomere Heath	8
Fitz	2
Leaton	1

5.0 **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

5.1 An initial timetable for this review was outlined in the Terms of Reference document published in December 2023 but has been extended to allow for a longer period of consultation as follows:-

Stage	What happens?	Timescales
Commencement	Terms of Reference are published	14 December 2023
Stage one	Initial Submissions are invited	15 December 2023 to 26 January 2024
Stage two	Consideration of submissions received – Draft Recommendations are prepared	27 January 2024 to 20 March 2024
Stage three	Draft Recommendations are published – consultations on them	21 March 2024 to 10 May 2024
Stage four	Considerations of submissions received – final recommendations are prepared	11 May 2024 to 31 May 2024
	Final recommendations are published – concluding review	End June 2024
	Council resolves to make a Reorganisation Order	July 2024

- 5.2 These draft proposals set out Shropshire Councils initial recommendations for the future of Community Governance for Baschurch and Pimhill. The Council will now allow a further period, in accordance with the above timetable for public consultation.
- 5.3 Final Proposals will be made in response to the outcome of these consultations and they may wholly change the Draft Proposals to encompass the broadly held views of the residents of the affected areas, insofar as they are compatible with the legal tests and principles referred to throughout this document.
- 5.4 There will then be a short period after the final proposals are published before the Shropshire Council approves the recommendations and then seeks the consent of the LG BCE to make the formal Order. This period will allow further time for any final submissions and arguments to be made covering matters which did not arise during earlier stages of the review.
- 5.5 A period for comments on the draft proposals has now opened and this lasts until 10 May 2024.

6.0 HOW TO CONTACT US

- 6.1 Comments should be submitted to the Democratic Services Section of Shropshire Council by e-mail at communitygovernance@shropshire.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can contact us at the following address:

Democratic and Electoral Services
Shropshire Council
The Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND

Should you require any further information or need clarification on the review process, please use the above contact details.

