

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Council **DATE:** 17th May 2018
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PART I FOR DECISION

Community Governance Review of Parish Council arrangements within the Borough of Slough

1 Purpose of Report

To consider commencing a Community Governance Review (CGR) of Parish Council arrangements within the Borough.

2 Recommendations

The Council is requested to Resolve:

- (a) That a Community Governance Review of Parish Council arrangements in the Borough be conducted, in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- (b) That a Working Group be appointed comprising the Cabinet Member for Transformation and Performance, three further Labour Group Members and two members of the opposition (none of whom are on an existing parish council) to work with the Head of Democratic Services to agree the timetable and terms of reference of the Review for report to Council on 7th June 2018.

3 The Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

Effective governance arrangements are central to a successful modernised and transformational council and the Community Governance Review process is an essential part of those arrangements

4 Other Implications

(a) Financial

There will be a financial cost in conducting the Community Governance Review particularly in respect of the consultation process and advisory poll(s). There is no specific budget for this and the costs will seek to be accommodated within existing budgets.

(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The Review will be undertaken in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. This requires that local people are

consulted during a CGR, that representations received in connection with the review are taken into account and that decisions taken are publicised. The terms of reference of the CGR are for the Council to determine, but must specify the area under review. In undertaking the review the Council should ensure that community governance in the identified area will be reflective of the identities and interests of the communities in that area, and is effective and convenient. It can take into account any other arrangements that have or could be made for the purposes of community representation or engagement.

Government Guidance advises that any recommendations arising from the review should bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient service delivery.

(c) Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment of any recommendations arising from the Review will be undertaken and published.

5 Supporting Information

5.1 The last CGR for Slough was completed in 2013. There are currently 3 parish councils within the borough – Britwell, Colnbrook with Poyle and Wexham Court.

5.2 The 2013 Review resulted in:

- changes to the Boundary of **Britwell Parish Council** and a consequent reduction in the number of Councillors from 13 to 7;
- the Council noting that the advisory poll (undertaken as part of the CGR) returned a majority in favour of abolition of the Parish Council and agreed that public opinion be tested again in a further four years' time.
- the Council noting that the advisory poll (undertaken as part of the CGR) returned a majority in favour of the retention of **Wexham Court Parish Council** and reserving the right to test public opinion again in the future if it still has concerns about the Parish Council's governance arrangements.
- the Council reserving the right to test public opinion in an advisory postal poll at or after the next parish council elections in 2015 if it is not satisfied that **Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council** is engaging more widely with local people.

Next Actions

5.3 The Council committed to undertaking a further advisory poll to test public opinion on the future of Britwell Parish Council and reserved the right to test public opinion by way of an advisory poll in Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council and Wexham Court Parish Council as outlined above. The Council will need to decide what action it wishes to take and consider whether it wishes to take an opportunity to commence a further CGR.

Guidance on Community Governance Reviews

- 5.4 It is good practice for a council to undertake CGRs every 10-15 years. The CGR is a review of the whole or part of the Council area to consider one or more of the following:
- creating, merging, altering or abolishing
 - the naming of parishes and style of new parishes
 - the electoral arrangements for parishes, such as the ordinary year of election, council size, number of councillors to be elected to the council and parish warding
 - grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.
- 5.5 The Council is required to ensure that the CGR within the area under review will be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and is effective and convenient. The CGR is required to take into account the impact of existing community governance arrangements on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of any local community or proposed parish or town council. Reviews must be completed within a year starting with the Council publishing its Terms of Reference for the review
- 5.6 If the Council is minded to undertake a further CGR it is proposed that a Working Group be appointed comprising the Cabinet Member for Transformation and Performance, three further Labour Group Members and two members of the opposition (none of whom are on an existing parish council) to work with the Head of Democratic Services to agree the timetable and terms of reference of the Review for report to Council on 7th June 2018.

The Review

- 5.7 As part of the Review the Council must consult with local people and take into account any representations made in connection with the review.

Terms of Reference

- 5.8 Once approved by the Council the terms of reference for the review must be published. If any modifications are subsequently made to the terms of reference, these must also be published.
- 5.9 Parish Councils are fully consulted as part of the Review.

6 Appendices Attached

None

7 Background Papers

None