

Community Governance Review

Report of the Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Housing and Health

Date: 14 December 2021

Agenda Item: 11

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Key Decision? **NO**

Local Ward **All**

Members



Council

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 A community governance review is a legal process that provides an opportunity for principal councils to review and make changes to community governance within their areas. It involves consulting those living in the area and other interested parties and making sure they have a say in how their local communities are represented.
- 1.2 The Review can consider one or more of the following options:
- creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes
 - the naming of parishes and the style of new parishes and the creation of town councils
 - the electoral arrangements for parishes (for instance, the ordinary year of election; council size; the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding)
 - grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes
 - other types of local arrangements, including parish meetings
- 1.3 The Review cannot:
- change the number of councillors on Lichfield District Council
 - change Lichfield District Council ward boundaries
 - change the amount of money that a parish council raises through your council tax (known as 'precept')

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council approves the Terms of Reference of the Community Governance Review and Formal Notice of Community Governance Review as set out at Appendix A.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government published in 2010 recommends that principal councils should undertake a Review of its area every 10-15 years.

3.2 It is now deemed appropriate to undertake a Review of all parishes within Lichfield District to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries, and remove any parish boundaries anomalies that may exist.

3.3 A Community Governance Review is required to take into account:

- the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
- the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish

The council is required to ensure that community governance within the area under review will:

- be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and
- be effective and convenient

Any other factors, such as council tax precept levels, cannot be considered.

3.4 Before making any recommendations or publishing final proposals, the council must consult local government electors for the area under review and any other person or body (including a local authority) which appears to the council to have an interest in the review.

3.5 The proposed Terms of Reference including timeline and draft Notice are set out in **Appendix A**. This will entail an extensive consultation exercise with all relevant stakeholders.

3.6 The council recognises that residents’ active participation in decision making on local governance is important in developing strong, sustainable communities. It is therefore committed to engaging effectively with the diverse communities it serves and enabling local people to participate meaningfully in the review.

3.7 The effective date for changes to community governance arrangement is 1 April 2023.

3.8 A project team has been established to take forward this project drawn from key services within the authority to collate the evidence base, undertake the consultation and draft proposals. A project manager has been assigned to ensure key milestones and statutory deadlines are met.

Alternative Options	A community governance review is a statutory obligation of the district Council, we can delay undertaking one, however there are advantages in undertaking this review before the next District and Parish elections in 2023 or before one is invoked by request from the electorate.
Consultation	The Community Governance Review will be discussed extensively with all key stakeholders and residents during 2 cycles of consultation.
Financial Implications	None arising from this report. A one off reserve has been provided to support any advertising, bookings or other costs associated with the review.
Approved by Section 151 Officer	Yes
Legal Implications	The process is detailed in Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and advice on best practice and training has been sought from Association of Electoral Administrators to support this project.
Approved by Monitoring Officer	Yes

Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	This project supports the development of strong, sustainable communities with participation in decision making in respect of the governance arrangements of parish councils.
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Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	None identified at this stage.
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Crime & Safety Issues	None identified at this stage.
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Environmental Impact	None identified at this stage.
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GDPR / Privacy Impact Assessment	None identified at this stage.
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	Risk Description & Risk Owner	Original Score (RYG)	How We Manage It	Current Score (RYG)
A	Consultation is not undertaken in line with requirements of Act - HOS	Yellow (material)	Training and advice sought from AEA	(Green (tolerable))
B	That electorate may invoke a review as prescribed under the act at any time - HOS	Yellow (material)	Undertake the review to a timetable we can support	(Green (tolerable))
C	That review creates additional work across council services	Yellow (material)	That a project team is established to feed in and manage the work generated by the review and any decision	(Green (tolerable))
D	Insufficient capacity to support level of consultation and considerations - HOS	Yellow (material)	Additional temporary resources have been put in place - risks around project team member availability due to other projects are managed	(Green (tolerable))

	Background documents Any previous reports or decisions linked to this item
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	Relevant web links Any links for background information which may be useful to understand the context of the report
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