

**REPORT No. 1**

**REPORT TO THE MEETING OF COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE  
REVIEW COMMITTEE ON 22<sup>nd</sup> OCTOBER 2019**

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**Meeting:** Community Governance Review Committee

**Date:** 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2019

**Subject:** Community Governance Review Process and Timetable

**Report of:** Richard Ellis, Corporate Services Manager

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Dann

**Status:** For Consideration

**Relevant Ward(s):** All

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1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide the Community Governance Review Committee with an overview of the review process and proposed timetable.
- 1.2 To provide members with additional background information to assist in the review process and to highlight areas for consideration identified by Officers.
- 1.3 To allow Members of the Committee to identify any areas for more detailed research/study by Officers.

2 Recommendations:

- 2.1 **To approve the review process, timetable and communication plan outlined in the report.**
- 2.2 **To note the matters for consideration flagged in this report for more detailed review.**
- 2.3 **To agree the time and dates for future meetings.**

3 Summary of Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.1 At its meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2019 Council agreed to undertake a Community Governance Review of all civil parishes within the district and approved the Terms of Reference for the review (Appendix A).

- 3.2 Council agreed to set up the Community Governance Review Committee to consider submissions made by interested parties and to make recommendations to Council with regard to any proposed changes to existing parish governance arrangements.
- 3.3 An initial period of public consultation commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> October and runs until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020. During this time any interested party is able to submit comments on existing parish governance arrangements and/or proposals for change. These will be collated and brought back to a subsequent meeting of the Community Governance Review Committee for consideration alongside any suggestions for change identified as a result of a review of existing arrangements by Officers.
- 3.4 It is important that parish governance arrangements reflect what is best for a particular area and should command the support of the local electorate. This can be facilitated through existing parish councils and meetings so their views will carry substantial weight. Any proposed changes should comply with the Government's publication 'Guidance on Community Governance Reviews' issued in March 2010 (Appendix B) the main provisions of which are summarised in the Terms of Reference.

#### 4 Impact on Communities

- 4.1 Community governance reviews provide the opportunity for principal councils to review and make changes to community governance arrangements in their areas to reflect local circumstances, for example, in relation to changes in population or in reaction to specific or local issues. The provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, which devolved powers to carry out and implement reviews to principal councils, are intended to improve the development and coordination of support for citizens and community groups so that they can make the best use of empowerment opportunities

#### 5 Key Facts

- 5.1 The Review officially commenced with publication of the Notice of Review on 1<sup>st</sup> October and under national guidance should be completed within 12 months (by the end of September 2020).
- 5.2 An initial 4 month consultation period ends on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020. Consultations have been sent to all parish councils and parish meetings, district and county councillors, local Members of Parliament, Leicestershire County Council and the Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils.

- 5.3 Emerging issues and proposals received during the consultation will be collated and assessed by Officers against the national guidance and local arrangements. These will then form the subject of a report to the Community Governance Review Committee in order to agree initial recommendations to Council in June 2020. This will be followed by a period of consultation on the initial recommendations prior to final recommendation being submitted to Council for approval in September 2020.
- 5.4 Information to support the Review has been collated including plans of existing parish boundaries with information from the Council's Local Land and Property Gazetteer with existing properties and current developments plotted in blue. (Appendix C). Electorate information will be updated following publication of the new register in December.
- 5.5 A table showing existing parish councils and parish meetings, parish council size (number of councillors), electorate and information from the parish elections is attached as Appendix D.
- 6.0 Matters for Consideration
- 6.1 During the consultation period Officers will carry out further analysis on existing parish governance arrangements alongside submissions received from interested parties. These will be collated and reported back to the Community Governance Review Committee for consideration prior to making initial recommendations to Council on any proposed changes..
- 6.2 There are a number of parish meetings that we have had difficulty making contact with and another has confirmed that the parish meeting never meets. Officers will follow up on these to ascertain how many parish meetings do not meet the statutory requirement of an annual meeting between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> June plus one other meeting a year.
- 6.3 There has been significant new housing development within the district since the last review and in some instances this has been on or just over existing parish boundaries which could potentially be confusing and inconvenient for the residents of new and existing properties in the area and be contrary to any sense of local identity. The outcome of the consultation period should highlight any such issues which are of concern to the parishes affected. The review can recommend changes to parish boundaries.
- 6.4 In general terms the parish councillor to elector ratio within the district is less than that suggested nationally. However, local circumstance should prevail where existing council size has stood the test of time. Harborough has relatively few contested parish elections which would suggest that in most instances there would be no justification for increasing council size but where a specific case can be made this is something that can be considered. Conversely it is possible to reduce council size in instances where a parish council is consistently unable to fill vacancies.

6.5 Grouping of parishes under a single parish council or joint meeting can be considered where a case can be established for doing so. It is also possible to consider warding within a parish where a case can be made for introducing it or for reviewing the boundaries of existing parish wards. Wards in Lutterworth and Broughton Astley were recently reviewed as part of the Local Government Boundary Commission's Electoral Review of Harborough District Council so there would need to be a strong case for making further changes to the warding in these parishes. The other warded parish is Thurnby and Bushby where there may be a case for review as it was difficult to establish where the ward boundary now lay (due to new development) during the run up to the 2019 district and parish elections.

## 7 Legal Issues

7.1 The power to undertake Community Governance Reviews is provided to the District Council as a principal authority under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (sections 79-102).

7.2 Any agreed changes will need to be implemented through completion of a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order under seal. Any changes agreed to parish boundaries will not change any related district ward, county division or parliamentary boundary.

## 8 Resource Issues

8.1 The review has been provided for in the Corporate Services team plan and will be undertaken within existing resources.

## 9 Equality Implications

9.1 The review is aimed at ensuring that parish governance arrangements best meet the needs of the local area. An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out for any specific proposals arising from the review.

## 10 Impact on the Organisation

10.1 The review will enable the Council to take a holistic view of community governance arrangements within the District and ensure that such arrangements best meet the needs of local communities in line with the Council's vision and priorities

## 11 Community Safety Implications

11.1 No implications identified.

12. Carbon Management Implications

12.1 No implications identified.

13. Risk Management Implications

13.1 No implications identified.

14. Consultation

14.1 The review will be widely advertised and responses to the consultation process will be sought from:

Existing parish and town councils and parish meetings

Local residents

Businesses

Community groups and organisations

County Council

District and County Councillors

Local Members of Parliament

Any other persons or bodies having an interest in the electoral arrangements of the locality

The National and Local Associations of Parish and Local Councils will be consulted.

15. Options Considered

15.1 Not to undertake a district wide review. It is considered that a district wide review is the most appropriate option to ensure that a consistency in approach to parish governance and to meet the expectation that the Council will keep community governance arrangements under periodic review.

16. Background Papers

16.1 Guidance on community governance reviews (DCLG and LGBCE)  
March 2010

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**Previous report(s): *Council 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2019 – Community Governance Review***

**Information Issued Under Sensitive Issue Procedure: *N***

**Ward Members Notified: *N***

**Appendices:** *list any appendices here including title and filename in brackets (e.g. Performance Data 2010 (perfdata.doc)).*

- A. CGR Terms of Reference (Approved by Council 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2019)**
- B. Guidance on Community Governance Reviews (DCLG and LGBCE)**
- C. Plans showing existing parish boundaries**
- D. Existing parish information**