

# **Cherwell District Council**

## **Council**

**17 October 2016**

### **Community Governance Review 2016 and Parliamentary Boundary Review Consultation**

## **Report of Chief Executive**

This report is public

### **Purpose of report**

To provide details of a Community Governance Review (CGR) to be undertaken; to request appointment of Members to a Working Group for the CGR and to respond to the Parliamentary Boundary Review consultation.

## **1.0 Recommendations**

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Review (appendix 1)
- 1.2 To delegate authority to the Head of Law and Governance, in consultation with Group Leaders, to appoint two Members per Political Group to a Working Group to consider the Community Governance Review and the Parliamentary Boundary Review
- 1.3 To delegate authority to the Chief Executive to finalise Cherwell District Council's response to the Parliamentary Boundary Review, in consultation with the Working Group

## **2.0 Introduction**

- 2.1 The last Community Governance Review for Cherwell was completed in 2013. This resulted in various changes across the district, including changes to parish boundaries and increased numbers of Parish Councillors.
- 2.2 In addition to this, the Boundary Commission for England are currently consulting on initial proposals for Parliamentary Constituency Boundary changes, in time for the next scheduled General Election in 2020.

### **3.0 Report Details**

#### **Community Governance Review - Upper Heyford Parish**

- 3.1 As part of the last CGR, a request was received from Upper Heyford to split the parish. The Working Group at that time considered the request, and felt that as the rate of development was very slow at the time, a better decision would be to Ward the parish.
- 3.2 Following further discussions with Upper Heyford Parish Council and the Ward Members, the decision was taken to leave Upper Heyford as it was. It was agreed that Officers would monitor the situation regarding future development, with a commitment to carry out a further CGR within a 5 year period if circumstances changed.
- 3.3 Following a change of Chairman of Upper Heyford Parish Council, as well as changes to the Heyford Park Residents' Association, an initial meeting was held in July 2016 between representatives of Upper Heyford Parish Council, the Residents' Association and officers from Democratic and Elections.
- 3.4 During the meeting officers outlined the CGR process, including timescales and an initial indication of what work would be undertaken by Cherwell District Council.
- 3.5 Any changes agreed as part of the new CGR would come into force during the next ordinary year of election, which for Upper Heyford Parish Council would be 2019. This gives all parties plenty of time to consult all residents of the existing Parish on the proposals, and to implement a 'shadow Parish Council' in the event that everyone agrees to the split of the Parish.
- 3.6 A CGR Working Group needs to be established in order to work through the details of the proposed split, agree the consultation document for distribution to the existing Parish, and to make recommendations to full Council for consideration.

#### **Community Governance Review - Stratton Audley Parish Council**

- 3.7 During Sumer 2016, Stratton Audley Parish Council contacted the Democratic and Elections team to ask about the process for increasing numbers of Parish Councillors.
- 3.8 As a CGR is required for Upper Heyford, it seems sensible to incorporate the request from Stratton Audley into the same review.
- 3.9 Officers intend to make all Parish Councils aware of the CGR process being undertaken, in case any others wish to increase or decrease the number of Parish Councillors they have.
- 3.10 Apart from Upper Heyford, no other parish boundary issues will be considered during this review; involvement of other parishes will be purely related to numbers.

## **Parliamentary Boundary Review**

- 3.11 The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) is an independent and impartial non-departmental public body, which is required to review Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England.
- 3.12 This review will result in a reduction of constituencies in England from 533 to 501, with electorate sizes between 71,031 and 78,507. Final recommendations will be made to Parliament in September 2018.
- 3.12 On 13 September 2016, the BCE published initial proposals for consultation, with the consultation period lasting until 5 December 2016. Full details of the proposals are available from the [BCE website](#)
- 3.13 As this consultation period finishes before the next scheduled meeting of full Council, officers propose to combine the Community Governance Review and Parliamentary Boundary Review into one working group, with authority delegated to the Chief Executive to finalise the response of Cherwell District Council to the BCE.

## **4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 4.1 Cherwell District Council committed to undertake a further CGR relating to Upper Heyford at the conclusion of the previous review in 2013.
- 4.2 It is important for Cherwell District Council to respond to the BCE consultation on Parliamentary Boundaries, due to the impact on all residents of the District.

## **5.0 Consultation**

<b>Consultee Name:</b>	<b>Consultee Response:</b>
All Parish Councils in relation to CGR	Responses will be circulated to the Working Group when established

## **6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 6.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not to conduct a CGR or submit a response to the BCE on the Parliamentary Boundary Proposals. This is rejected as CDC has previously committed to a CGR for Upper Heyford, and not responding to the BCE consultation could result in the District having Constituency boundaries imposed which do not offer the best representation for the electorate

## **7.0 Implications**

## Financial and Resource Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Comments checked by: Paul Sutton, Chief Finance Officer, 0300 0030106,  
paul.sutton@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

## Legal Implications

7.2 The Council is empowered to undertake a Community Governance Review by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. In undertaking the review it must take steps to ensure that the outcome of the review reflects the identities and interests of the area being reviewed and the need to ensure effective and convenient community governance. Statutory guidance on the process can be found at

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/8312/1527635.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/8312/1527635.pdf)

Comments checked by: Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance – 0300 0030107  
kevin.lane@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

## 8.0 Decision Information

### Wards Affected

All

### Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

### Lead Councillor

None

## Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Proposed Terms of Reference for Community Governance Review
<b>Background Papers</b>	
None	
<b>Report Author</b>	Emma Faulkner – Democratic and Elections Officer
<b>Contact Information</b>	Tel: 01327 322043 Email: emma.faulkner@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk