

# **Cherwell District Council**

## **Council**

**18 December 2017**

### **Community Governance Review – Graven Hill**

#### **Report of Chief Executive**

This report is public

#### **Purpose of report**

To agree to carry out a Community Governance Review (CGR) as soon as practical to consult on the principle of including the development of Graven Hill within the boundaries of Bicester Town Council.

#### **1.0 Recommendations**

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To agree to hold a Community Governance Review as soon as practical to consult on the principle of including the development site of Graven Hill within the boundary of Bicester Town Council.

#### **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 A partial Community Governance Review was carried out in 2016/17 focussing on Upper Heyford and the opportunity to increase or decrease councillors parish and town councillors only.
- 2.3 At the time of the last full review in 2013, development at the site of Graven Hill had not commenced and it was too early to be included in review, however since then there has been much progress and proposals are now being considered with regard to the future management of facilities and public open space. As a result a request has been received from the Leader of the Council that a Community Governance Review be undertaken.
- 2.4 These reviews are labour intensive and time consuming and consequently do not happen often. However, it is important for the council to take the opportunity to ensure that boundaries remain appropriate in the light of development which has

taken place, and any development which is known will take place in the reasonably near future.

### **3.0 Report Details**

- 3.1 The Graven Hill development currently falls outside the current electoral boundaries of Bicester (as set out in the appendices to this report). This can create issues with identity, e.g. it is far more likely that residents of Graven Hill will associate with Bicester rather than Ambrosden and urban developments may be charged on the basis of rural parish precepts whilst using the facilities of the urban area it is part of, and may require upkeep of common parts on those developments, which in effect will be unfunded unless parishes with traditionally low precepts significantly increase their precept.
- 3.2 Through conducting a Community Governance Review, the Council can formally change the boundaries between parishes and move an area from one parish to another. Whilst legislation requires that Community Governance Reviews should take place at least once every fifteen years and therefore a review is not required a review can take place if the Council resolves or upon receipt of a valid community governance petition.
- 3.3 A Community Governance Review is an intensive process which involves high levels of consultation in order to comply with legislation. If a decision is made as a result of the review to change a parish boundary and move an area from one parish to another this would normally take place in the next ordinary election year for the larger parish/town after the completion date of the review.
- 3.4 Due to the current review programme that the team is engaged with across both councils the earliest that a review could be commenced is currently anticipated to be in early 2018 with completion by late 2018. The next scheduled election dates for Bicester Town Council and Ambrosden Parish Council are 2019.

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

- 4.1 At the time of the last full and partial Community Governance Reviews, it was too early to consider Graven Hill, however outline planning is now in place for the self build homes and a request has been received from the Leader of the Council to consult on the principle of including the development site of Graven Hill within the boundary of Bicester Town Council.

### **5.0 Consultation**

Bicester Town Council  
Ambrosden Parish Council

The councils have been advised that Council will be asked to conduct a Community Governance Review and meetings have been offered to discuss the effect the consultation proposal may have on their boundaries.

## 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: To carry out a Community Governance Review with a view to implementing in May 2019. This is the preferred option.

Option 2: To carry out a review with a view to implementing in May 2023. This is not recommended as it would cause unnecessary delay to the review and could result in delays to decisions to the management arrangement for public open space and amenities.

Option 3: Not to carry out a review. This is not recommended as it would not allow the consideration of which parish Graven Hill should sit.

## 7.0 Implications

### Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 The costs of carrying out the review can be met from existing budgets.

Comments checked by:

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### Legal Implications

- 7.2 The proposals in the report are in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement and Health Act 2007 and will also serve to manage anomalies in community governance and polling places that are present, and are likely to occur.

Comments checked by:

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### Risk Implications

- 7.3 The proposals ensure that the Council is meeting requirements to keep community governance arrangements and polling districts under regular review.

Comments checked by:

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## 8.0 Decision Information

### Wards Affected

Bicester South and Ambrosden

## Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

N/A

## Lead Councillor

None

## Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1	Map of Graven Hill area parish boundaries
Background Papers	
None	
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