

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE – 22ND NOVEMBER 2018

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee

- 1. note and endorse the contents of the report; and**
 - 2. agree that the report in itself constitutes the terms of reference of the Community Governance Review, and endorse its publication as being the commencement of the Community Governance Review.**
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Extract from the Minutes of the Community Governance Review Sub-Committee meeting on 8th November 2018

11 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Sub-Committee considered a report setting out the terms of reference for the Community Governance Review.

The Constitution Committee at its meeting on 20th September 2018 had resolved that:

1. a Borough-wide review of the governance arrangements of all of the Borough's town and parish councils be undertaken, commencing as soon as reasonably practicable after the 2019 all-out elections, and concluding well in advance of the May 2023 elections;
2. a sub-committee of the Committee be appointed to conduct the review, working with an officer working group, and make appropriate recommendations to the Constitution Committee for decision; and
3. the sub-committee comprise representatives of all of the Council's political groups, on the basis of the following proportionality: 4:1:1:1 (Conservative: Labour: Independent: Liberal Democrat), drawn from the Constitution Committee, provided that the Liberal Democrat Group representative shall be nominated by its Group Leader.

Prior to considering the report, members received a presentation by Dr Melvin Humphreys, a trainer and specialist in community governance reviews at the Association of Electoral Administrators. Dr Humphreys outlined the legislative framework for the review, the key stages involved and the four principal duties of the Council which were as follows:

1. to adopt and publish terms of reference;
2. to consult parish councils and other relevant bodies and invite representations by such bodies and from electors;
3. to ensure an open and transparent decision-making process, with clear reasons given for each decision; and
4. to publish the outcome of the review in the form of a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Dr Humphreys answered members' questions.

The Committee then considered the report which set out the terms of reference for the review.

The review would relate to the whole of the Borough, and would consider town and parish council governance arrangements. This would include changes to parish areas and parish electoral arrangements such as alterations to parish boundaries; the merging, creation and abolition of parishes; the naming of parishes; the numbers of parish councillors; whether to divide a parish into wards; and the grouping of parishes under common councils. The review could include a review of any Borough ward boundaries where the parish and Borough ward boundaries were no longer coterminous following a parish boundary change. The review would also deal with consequential matters such as the transfer of parish council staff, property and assets, or the setting of precepts for any new parish councils that may be formed.

A key part of the review would be public consultation which would take place over several months and include local electors, parish councils, and other bodies with an interest in the review such as local businesses and public and voluntary organisations.

In carrying out the review, the Council would be bound by the requirements of the relevant legislation and the terms of reference for the review as adopted by the Council. The Review would be completed when the Council had adopted a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order.

The first stage of the review was the adoption of the terms of reference. This would be followed by a period in which officers would gather the necessary information to help shape the review, taking into account any issues raised by parish councils and others prior to the formal consultation process. A set of proposals and a consultation plan would then be prepared for members' consideration.

RESOLVED

That the Sub-Committee

1. notes and endorses the contents of the report for consideration by the Constitution Committee; and

2. agrees that the report in itself constitutes the terms of reference of the Community Governance Review, and endorses its publication as being the commencement of the Community Governance Review.