

Constitution Committee

Date of Meeting: 19 September 2019

Report Title: Community Governance Review: Project Update

Senior Officer: Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. The Constitution Committee has previously approved (20 Sept 2018) a proposal to initiate a Community Governance review. Subsequently it also approved (22 Nov 2018) the terms of reference for the CGR work.
- 1.2. This report provides an update on the progress made to date. In particular it reports on:
 - the impact of the recent local and European election timing
 - the analysis of the wards which informs the review
 - the draft documents which will form the basis for the initial pre-consultation engagement with residents.
- 1.3. The report was considered by the Community Governance Review Sub-Committee at its meeting on 31st July 2019. The Sub-Committee recommended as follows.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the Constitution Committee approve:
 - 2.1.□.1. the process and amended timeline attached as Appendix A.
 - 2.1.□.2. that the analysis of wards, attached as Appendix B, be published as part of the pre-consultation survey; and
 - 2.1.□.3. the initiation of the pre-consultation survey based upon the text attached as Appendix C.

3. Other Options Considered

- 3.1. No other options have been considered.

4. Background

- 4.1. As previously reported, any redefinition of parish and ward boundaries will need to be completed well in advance of the next local elections due in May 2023. Sufficient time needs to be allowed in order that the electoral register can be updated to ensure that those elections are properly conducted and reflect any changes made.
- 4.2. As previously reported the review is being conducted in four phases:
 - Data gathering and identification of points of focus
 - A pre-consultation survey and developing initial proposals
 - Formal consultation on 'final' proposals, adjusting these accordingly and gaining approval
 - Amend/update relevant records
- 4.3. Detailed analysis of all the wards in the borough has now been undertaken and is included as Appendix B. This list includes data showing:
 - Electorate numbers taken from the 2019 electoral register
 - The number of councillor seats representing each ward
 - Wards where the respective town/parish council have requested a review within the last 12 months or so.
 - Electorate growth forecasts up to 2025 (the period advised by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England)
- 4.4. The rationale and methodology used to calculate the growth forecasts is explained in the separate report presented to the committee: "Electorate Forecasts for CGR Work"
- 4.5. The data includes some of the factors previously agreed as points of focus which were:
 - Known concerns expressed by parishes
 - Wards with significant variances to the average population density and/or councillor ratios
 - Local plan developments
 - Known built-environment changes
- 4.6. All these core facts will be considered, alongside residents' comments from the survey, when developing the final proposals.
- 4.7. Members of the public, and representative bodies, will have the opportunity of requesting that any wards and parishes, both large and small, should be included in the review for whatever reason.

5. The Project Plan and its timings

5.1. The project working group was meeting regularly up until the end of March 2019. At that time the Head of Democratic Services 'paused' the project, in accordance with the authority previously delegated to him, to allow Democratic Services to focus on the impending local and European elections. This has resulted in a 3 month shift in the timeline previously presented to the Committee. This delay will still leave more than adequate time for the review to be completed before the next local elections in 2023.

5.2. A revised timeline is attached as Appendix A.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications

- These have previously been acknowledged by the Constitution Committee at its meeting of 20 September 2018.

6.2. Finance Implications

- CLT have been advised of the resourcing costs and have accepted these as necessary.

6.3. Policy Implications

- There are no direct policy implications at this stage.

6.4. Equality Implications

- There are no direct equality implications at this stage.

6.5. Human Resources Implications

- There are no direct HR implications at this stage.

6.6. Risk Management Implications

- A risk log has been compiled by the project board and is monitored on a regular basis. Copies are available on request.

6.7. Rural Communities Implications

- Rural communities form a large part of the borough and it will therefore be important to ensure they fully engage in the review process. In particular one of the legal tests that must be applied during the review is to reflect the identities and interest of communities in that area – the "Communities of Identity".

6.8. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

- There are no direct implications for children and young people at this stage.

6.9. Public Health Implications

- There are no direct implications for public health at this stage.

6.10 Climate Change Implications

- There are no direct climate change implications at this stage.

7. Ward Members Affected

- 7.1. All wards

8. Consultation & Engagement

- 8.1. Consultation and engagement are critical factors in this review process in order to demonstrate the validity of any change proposals.
- 8.2. As previously reported these elements will be conducted in two stages: a pre-consultation survey designed to elicit the key areas we should be looking at followed by a formal consultation based on precise proposals developed as a result of that feedback.
- 8.3. It should be noted that, since the survey wording was seen by the Constitution Sub-Committee, the working party has agreed that the wording of question 4 should be changed to make it easier to understand. It now reads: "Are you able to provide any examples of community governance arrangements, within Cheshire East, which have enabled successful opportunities for active involvement, effective adoption of responsibilities and working together effectively?"

9. Access to Information

- 9.1. Supporting documents are available upon request to the report's author.

10. Contact Information

- 10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed in the first instance to:
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