

Council

Date of Meeting:	22 June 2021
Report Title:	Community Governance Review of Town and Parish Council Governance
Report of:	Constitution Committee (Pre-Annual General Meeting)
Wards Affected:	All Wards

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report seeks direction and clarification from Council in respect of a Community Governance Review (CGR) of Town and Parish Council Governance, following a meeting of the Constitution Committee which took place on 6th April 2021.
- 1.2. The CGR project has been in progress for over two years. The next stage of the project is to undertake a formal consultation process, which will enable residents and other stakeholders to express their views in response to formal consultation proposals, developed by the CGR Sub Committee. As a consequence of the resolution of the Constitution Committee of 6th April, Council's direction and clarification is now needed, in order to ensure that an appropriate course of action is followed for the CGR. This aligns with the Council's "Open and Enabling Organisation" Corporate Plan Priority, in:
 - ensuring that there is transparency in all aspects of Council decision making;
 - listening, learning and responding to our residents; and in
 - promoting and developing the services of the Council through regular communication and engagement with all residents.
- 1.3 There are two options available to full council. These have been clarified following the initial Constitution Committee recommendation to provide further evidence for consideration.

Option 1 To ratify the initial recommendation of the Constitution Committee.

Option 2 To reinstate the original recommendation to the Committee

Both possibilities are set out below.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The recommendation of the Constitution Committee 6 April 2021 is ratified and the Chief Financial Officer as part of the midyear review is to provide a report to full council on the variation needed to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to fund the proposal.

OR

2.2 Agree the recommendation of the Community Governance Review Sub-Committee, on 26th February 2021, as recommended to the Constitution Committee. (see Appendix 2)

3. Reasons for Recommendations Option Appraisal

3.1. Option 1

3.1.1 Option 1 requires funding which is outside of the current budgetary framework. The Committee has no delegated funding and the responsibility for the balanced budget rest with full Council. The amount of funding sought is fluid as it is not known how many parish or town councils would seek to use this funding. An upper working estimate of £2-3 per head of population holding a poll would suggest a budget envelope of up to £600,000. The identification of budget and consequential reduction in funding elsewhere will need to be considered in the MTFs midyear review and be provided to full council for decision.

3.1.2 This cannot be done by supplementary revenue estimate as there is no additional funding external to the organisation. A virement would require transfer of funding from another part of the MTFs. This will require full council to identify the source of funding and then to receive and vote on the consequence change to service provision or charging proposal.

3.1.3 The timetable for the CGR was set to ensure the matters were resolved prior to the next elections in May 2023. The delay may result in any proposals being unable to be implemented in time for the next election. (See policy implications paragraph 6.3)

3.1.4 The recommendation that the outcome of any poll or referenda is binding (even if limited to the committee) is would then expose the Council to a suggestion that it had improperly fettered its own discretion.

3.1.5 If a set position is supported or rejected by the poll and it is agreed to be binding then it is crystallised to the exclusion of all other representations and considerations. Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 Section 93 requires a number of factors to be considered and this would open the council to further potential legal challenge and cost.

3.2. Option 2

- 3.2.1** Option 2 would not place any additional financial burden upon the local authority.
- 3.2.2** Option 2 does not fetter the discretion of the council in reaching any final decision and reduces risk of challenge.
- 3.2.3** The commencement of the consultation, although delayed should still provide sufficient time to properly consider and conclude the governance review process.
- 3.3** Nothing in option 2 prevents a parish or town council holding its own poll to establish the wishes and feeling of the residents in their area. It will be a matter for the parish or town council to consider the appropriate timing of any poll. In particular, if this occurs now and forms part of the consultation response but acknowledging the proposal may change as a result of the consultation, or does it occur later in response to fully formed or final set of proposals.

4. Background

- 4.1** At its meeting held on 20 September 2018, the Constitution Committee 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 relevant proportionality drawn from the Constitution Committee, provided that the Liberal Democrat Group representative shall be nominated by its Group Leader.

- 4.2** Following that meeting, the Community Governance Review Sub Committee was established, with agreed terms of reference. These can be found, together with the report to the Constitution Committee, which met on 22 November 2018, here:
<http://modern.gov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=487&MID=7088#AI43589>

- 4.3** The terms of reference for the Community Governance Review referenced the need for the Council to publish its plan for consultation during the

review, including the receipt of submissions to assist in the preparation of draft proposals.

- 4.4** A pre-consultation survey was initiated on the 28th October 2019, which invited any person or body interested in the review to provide a response to a survey. The survey itself was “live” for a period of 14 weeks. Having formally closed on the 31st January 2020, the Council received submissions from:

Individuals	201
On behalf of a town/parish council	56
As an elected ward councillor	11
On behalf of a group, organisation or club	6
As a former elected ward councillor	1
On behalf of a local business	1
Total	276

- 4.5** At its meeting held on 6 March 2020, the Sub-Committee considered the pre consultation survey responses and the next steps for the review. It resolved that the pre-consultation survey responses be received and the initiation of the development of the Council’s proposals for all parish ward boundaries be approved. Since that meeting, 6 Member workshops have taken place to develop the draft proposals for consultation.

- 4.6** At those workshops, Members gave informal consideration to the following data:

- 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 2 years or so;
- Electorate growth forecasts up to 2025 (the period advised by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England);
- Pre-consultation survey submissions;
- 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.

- 4.7** The review is being conducted in four phases:

- Stage 1 – Data gathering and identification of points of focus and a pre-consultation engagement, where initial submissions are invited (completed).

- Stage 2 – Consideration of submissions received and draft recommendations are prepared (completed).
- Stage 3 – Formal 12 week consultation on published draft recommendations (current stage for consideration).
- Stage 4 – Adjust draft recommendations accordingly, with final recommendations being prepared to seek approval via Full Council (Autumn 2021).
- Review Closure – Publish final recommendations, amend/update relevant records and, if appropriate, undertake a resolution to make a reorganisation order (Autumn onwards, to be concluded well in advance of the May 2023 elections).

4.8 The CGR Sub-Committee, on 26th February 2021, recommended to the Constitution Committee that the draft proposals appended to the report be formally agreed for the purposes of consultation, and that they be consulted-upon for a 12-week period (see Appendix 2) to this report - <http://modern.gov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=569&MID=7944#A154901>

4.9 At the meeting of the Constitution Committee on 6th April 2021, an amendment (without notice) was moved to the recommendation. The amendment requires that where there was a proposed change to a parish boundary or name, and where requested by the relevant parish council, those affected should be given the opportunity of a referendum, during the consultation period. The view was expressed that, where a parish council could not afford the cost of a referendum, the cost should be met by Cheshire East Council.

The amendment further requires the poll to bind the Committee.

4.10 Officers advised that there was no budget to support referenda and that such activity would be outside the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Officers also advised that the outcome of any referenda would not be binding upon Cheshire East Council. Nevertheless, the Committee supported the proposal, as can be seen in Appendix 1.

4.11 As things currently stand, the ongoing progress of the review has had to be halted. The Constitution Committee's recommendations would, if implemented, be outside of the MTFs and may create an expectation amongst stakeholders that the outcome of any referenda would be binding upon the Council placing the Council at risk of challenge.

4.12 The original recommendation of the CGR report, would respectfully seek a resolution of Council which aligns with that which the CGR Sub-Committee recommended at its meeting on 26th February 2021. This will enable the formal CGR consultation to proceed within budget and remove the risks associated with the referenda proposals.

5 Consultation and Engagement

5.1 The consultation and engagement elements of the CGR are considered in the “Background” section to this report.

6 Implications

6.1 Legal Implications

6.1.1 The general powers of Cheshire East Borough Council as a Principal Council to conduct a Community Governance Review of its area (CGR) are contained in Section 82 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the 2007 Act).

6.1.2 Section 93 of the 2007 Act sets out the duties with which the Principal Council must comply when undertaking a CGR, including the duty to consult electors and others during the CGR process. The cornerstone principles of the CGR are contained in Section 93(4) and require the principal council to have regard to the need to secure that community governance within the area under review reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area, and is effective and convenient.

6.1.3 Section 100 of the 2007 Act requires principal councils to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (formerly the Department for Communities and Local Government) and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

6.1.4 Section 81 of the 2007 Act requires the principal council to draw up and publish the terms of reference for the review which are attached at Appendix A to this report

6.1.5 Sections 87 to 91 of the 2007 Act set out the recommendations arising from the CGR. The principal council is required to make recommendations as to:

- i. whether a new parish or parishes should be constituted
- ii. whether existing parishes should or should not be abolished or whether the area of existing parishes should be altered or
- iii. what the electoral arrangements for new or existing parishes, which are to have parish councils, should be

6.1.6 In addition, the principal council has a discretion to also make recommendations about:

- i. the grouping or degrouping of parishes
- ii. adding parishes to an existing group of parishes or
- iii. making related alterations to the boundaries of a principal councils' electoral areas

6.1.7 A poll may be persuasive and important relevant information for the decision-making body (full council) to properly consider. The weight attributed to the outcome of any poll may depend upon the form of question, turn out or other relevant factors. It cannot be conclusive, nor can it be used to control or limit matters that are recommended for consultation. The legislative framework provides for a process and the relevant factors to be considered. The consultation process is intended to stimulate reasoned feedback from all concerned, responses which explain the basis upon which the consultee's position is founded, where possible are encourage as is, putting forward reasoned alternatives. A poll that simply provides a "yes" or "no" answer may be limited to only expressing a view on the question asked.

6.2 Finance Implications

6.2.1 Option 1 provides for a budget requirement outside of the MTFS. If, as suggested this cost is met by Cheshire East no additional funding from an external source has been identified and therefore it will of necessity require a virement within the MTFS. Changes to the MTFS must remain balanced and Council will need to identify the additional saving or charges to balance this demand. This will then be subject to detailed review and considered in the mid-year MTFS review.

6.2.2 Option 2 There would appear to be no direct financial implications for this Council, which can be identified at this stage. There will be financial implications for town and parish councils, which they will consider when making representations in response to the formal consultation.

6.3 Policy Implications

6.3.1 Option 1

6.3.1.1 The Project Plan for the Community Governance Review (CGR) has been carefully planned to facilitate timely reports to the relevant informal, and formal Member bodies:

- a. CGR Working Group
- b. CGR Sub Committee
- c. Corporate Policy Committee
- d. Council

- 6.3.1.2** The Project Plan also provides for essential periods of preparatory work which will be needed to deal with the implications of changes to parish council governance. This work includes:
- a. work to rearrange electoral database records and make other preparations for the May 2023 local elections, followed by appropriate periods of testing;
 - b. work to make precept calculations, reconfigure Council Tax databases, and make other changes to systems in readiness for appropriate periods of notification to affected parish councils and for Council Tax billing preparation to be completed and tested.
 - c. significant additional work to assess the implications for staffing and delivery of services by parish councils.
- 6.3.1.3** In order to have sufficient time to undertake the above, the Project Plan assumes that Full Council approval to proceed with the Consultation will be given at this meeting of Council and that the consultation would then commence almost immediately.
- 6.3.1.4** The recommendation of the Constitution Committee, that referenda should take place if so requested by affected parish councils, would build-in potentially lengthy delays which could have a profound effect upon the remainder of essential elements of the Project Plan. If the Committee's recommendation was to be agreed by Council, parish councils would need to be notified again of the consultation proposals. They would need to be given a reasonable period of time to consider whether they wished to formally request a referendum (28 days). Depending upon the number of referenda requested, electoral preparations would then need to take place (3-4 months, based upon a potential request-rate of 20% of parish councils). The outcomes of the referenda would then need to be studied in detail by the CGR Working Group, the CGR Sub Committee, the Corporate Policy Committee and Council (3-4 months), in order to understand the implications of the requests and to determine whether there should be changes to the consultation proposals, before the formal consultation could commence.
- 6.3.1.5** In total, therefore, whilst some assumptions and estimations have had to be made, there could be a number of additional measures, added to the Project Plan, which could amount to as much as 9 months to deliver. If this transpired to be the case, the Project Plan would be fundamentally impacted, and it is the view of officers that there would be insufficient time to complete the other necessary Council Tax and electoral preparations in time for their required implementation in 2023. This would leave the Council with the potential prospect of abandoning the review and starting again, the work which commenced in late 2018.

6.3.2 Option 2 - There are no direct policy implications.

6.4 Equality Implications

6.4.1 There would appear to be no direct equality implications for this Council, which can be identified at this stage.

6.5 Human Resources Implications

6.5.1 There are no direct HR implications.

6.6 Risk Management Implications

6.6.1 Accepting the closure of the period of pre-consultation and the progression to proposal-development is a necessary step to progressing the review and so any delay will have implications to the overall timetable.

6.7 Rural Communities Implications

6.7.1 Any rural community implications will be known during the development of the proposals, when changes to boundaries are considered, which will therefore be considered at the decision-making stage.

6.8 Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

6.8.1 There are no direct implications for children and young people.

6.9 Public Health Implications

6.9.1 There are no direct implications for public health.

6.10 Climate Change Implications

6.10.1 There are no direct implications for climate change.

6.11 Ward Members Affected

6.11.1 All wards will be affected to some extent and ward members may choose to make representations as part of the consultation process.

6.12 Consultation & Engagement

6.12.1 Consultation and engagement are critical factors in this review process, in order to demonstrate the validity of any change proposals.

6.12.2 The first stage of informal consultation has now concluded. A second and formal period of consultation is now proposed on the recommendations. This will follow the requirements relating to the duty to consult electors and others during the CGR process as detailed in Section 93 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Brian Reed: Head of Democratic Services and Governance Brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk 07973754722
Appendices:	1: Minute extract of the meeting of the Constitution Committee, which met on 6 th April 2021 2: Minute extract of the meeting of the Community Governance Review Sub-Committee, which met on 26 th February 2021 3: Report to the Community Governance Review Sub-Committee, which met on 26 th February 2021 4: Link to 26 February meeting: http://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=569&MID=7944#A154901
Background Papers:	As above

**Extract from the minutes of the meeting of the Constitution Committee held on
6 April 2021**

**COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW-FORMAL CONSULTATION ON DRAFT
PROPOSALS**

The Committee considered a report on the draft proposals for formal consultation on the community governance review, and the recommendations of the Community Governance Review Sub-Committee in relation thereto.

The Community Governance Review Sub-Committee meeting on 26th February 2021, having considered the draft proposals, had resolved:

That the Sub-Committee recommends to the Constitution Committee that the draft proposals attached at Appendix B to the report be formally agreed for the purposes of consultation and consulted upon for a 12-week period, subject to any amendments required to reflect the response of Holmes Chapel Parish Council to the pre-consultation survey.

A number of amendments had been made to the draft proposals following feedback from the Sub-Committee, including reference to the response from Holmes Chapel Parish Council to the pre-consultation survey. In addition, the maps had been amended to display all the potential expansion areas within each map view.

It was confirmed that all parish council clerks and chairmen, as well as other organisations affected by the community governance review, would be notified when the 12-week consultation period commenced. Parish councils and others would be able to feed back their comments through the dedicated Cheshire East Council website or in writing. Consideration was also being given to holding briefings for parish councils.

There was support among members for the suggestion that, where there was a proposed change to a parish boundary or parish name, and where requested by the relevant parish councils, those affected by the change should be given the opportunity of a referendum on the matter. Reference was made to the postal ballot-type “referendums” which had been put in place in respect of the Community Governance Reviews for Crewe and Macclesfield shortly after the Council came into being. It was also felt that where a parish council could not afford such a poll, the costs should be met by Cheshire East Council.

Officers advised that there was no budget for any referendum or poll and that this was outside of the existing budget framework. Any financial implications outside of existing resources would need to be considered as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

Officers, and the Council’s external adviser, Dr Humphreys, further advised that it would be appropriate for any referendum or poll to take place after the consultation, when the proposals were formulated. However, members considered it appropriate to

seek the views of residents on the proposed changes in the consultation document during the consultation period.

Officers further advised that the outcome of any such referendum would not be binding on the Council although it could be taken into consideration by Council when making a decision on the final recommendations. Members felt that it should be binding on the Constitution Committee and referred to in the report to Council.

RESOLVED:

That the draft proposals attached at Appendix B to the report be formally agreed for the purposes of consultation and consulted upon for a 12-week period, and that where there is a proposal to change a parish name or alter a parish boundary, Cheshire East Council will conduct a referendum, reflecting the request of the parish council, and the result of that referendum will be binding.

Extract from the Minutes of the Community Governance Review Sub-Committee meeting on 26th February 2021

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - FORMAL CONSULTATION ON DRAFT PROPOSALS

The Sub-Committee considered a report on the draft proposals for formal consultation.

At its meeting on 6th March 2020, the Sub-Committee had considered the pre-consultation survey responses and the next steps for the review. It had resolved that the pre-consultation survey responses be received and that the initiation of the development of the Council's proposals for all parish ward boundaries be approved. Since that meeting, six member workshops had taken place to develop draft proposals for consultation. The draft proposals were set out in Appendix B to the report. If approved, they would be the subject of a 12-week consultation exercise in accordance with the terms of reference for the review.

Dr M Humphreys of the Association of Electoral Administrators was in attendance at the meeting to provide an expert opinion on the consultation process and the further progress of the Community Governance Review.

Officers advised that the references to 'proposed expansion areas' in the maps attached to the report would be changed to 'potential expansion areas' before the consultation commenced.

Councillor L Gilbert referred to an administrative error in the report in that Holmes Chapel Parish Council had responded to the pre-consultation survey and that, if the Parish Council's response had been taken into consideration, the draft consultation proposals relating to Holmes Chapel could have been different. He therefore asked that the consultation proposals be reviewed before the consultation commenced, to take account of the Parish Council's response to the pre-consultation survey.

The Chairman asked officers to discuss the matter further with Councillor Gilbert after the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the Sub-Committee recommends to the Constitution Committee that the draft proposals attached at Appendix B to the report be formally agreed for the purposes of consultation and consulted upon for a 12-week period, subject to any amendments required to reflect the response of Holmes Chapel Parish Council to the pre-consultation survey.

[Changes were also agreed to be made to Draft Recommendations report text, which can be found on the Council's website, but which are not pertinent to the matters addressed in this report to Council.]

Community Governance Review Sub Committee

Date of Meeting: 26 February 2021

Report Title: Community Governance Review – Formal Consultation on Draft Proposals

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

1. Report Summary

- 1.1 Following its meeting held on 6 March 2020, there have been 6 Member workshops to develop the attached informal draft recommendations at Appendix B, which if approved, will be the subject of a 12-week consultation exercise.
- 1.2 Dr M Humphries will be available during the meeting to provide an expert opinion on the consultation process and the further progress of the Community Governance Review.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To recommend to the Constitution Committee that:

The draft proposals attached at Appendix B to this report be formally agreed for the purposes of consultation and consulted-upon for a 12-week period.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

The terms of reference for the Community Governance Review, attached at Appendix A, as approved by the Constitution Committee on 22nd November 2018, referenced the need for the Council to formally consult on the draft proposals.

4. Other Options Considered

No other options have been considered, as there is a statutory duty to consult electors and others during the CGR process as detailed in Section 93 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

5. Background

5.1 At its meeting held on 20 September 2018, the Constitution Committee resolved that :

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;

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

the sub-committee comprise representatives of all of the Council's political groups, on the basis of relevant proportionality drawn from the Constitution Committee, provided that the Liberal Democrat Group representative shall be nominated by its Group Leader.

5.2 Following that meeting, a Community Governance Review Sub Committee was established, which agreed the terms of reference, as set out in Appendix A. These were subsequently approved by the Constitution Committee.

5.3 The terms of reference for the Community Governance Review, referenced the need for the Council to publish its plan for consultation during the review, including the receipt of submissions to assist in the preparation of draft proposals.

5.4 A pre-consultation survey was initiated on the 28th October 2019, which invited any person or body interested in the review to provide a response to a survey. The survey itself was "live" for a period of 14 weeks. Having formally closed on the 31st January 2020, the Council received submissions from:

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5.5 At its meeting held on 6 March 2020, the Sub-Committee considered the pre consultation survey responses and the next steps for the review, and resolved that the pre-consultation survey responses be received and the initiation of the development of the Council's proposals for all parish ward boundaries be approved. Since that meeting, 6 Member workshops have taken place to develop the draft proposals for consultation.

5.6 At those workshops, Members gave informal consideration to the following data:

- 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 2 years or so;
- Electorate growth forecasts up to 2025 (the period advised by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England);
- Pre-consultation survey submissions;
- 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.

5.7 As previously reported, the review is being conducted in four phases:

- Stage 1 – Data gathering and identification of points of focus and a preconsultation engagement, where initial submissions are invited (completed).
- Stage 2 – Consideration of submissions received and draft recommendations are prepared (completed).
- Stage 3 – Formal 12 week consultation on published draft recommendations (current stage for consideration).
- Stage 4 – Adjust draft recommendations accordingly, with final recommendations being prepared to seek approval via Full Council (Autumn 2021).
- Review Closure – Publish final recommendations, amend/update relevant records and, if appropriate, undertake a resolution to make a reorganisation order (Autumn onwards, to be concluded well in advance of the May 2023 elections).

5.7 The Sub-Committee is now requested to;

1. Give formal consideration to the informal deliberations and conclusions of the Member workshops, and determine the consultation proposals based upon the content set out in Appendix B to this report; and

2. Recommend to the Constitution Committee that a formal 12 week consultation exercise on those draft proposals commence (stage 3, as outlined above).

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications

6.1.1 The general powers of Cheshire East Borough Council as a Principal Council to conduct a Community Governance Review of its area (CGR) are contained in Section 82 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the 2007 Act).

6.1.2 Section 93 of the 2007 Act sets out the duties with which the Principal Council must comply when undertaking a CGR, including the duty to consult electors and others during the CGR process. The cornerstone principles of the CGR are contained in Section 93(4) and require the principal council to have regard to the need to secure that community governance within the area under review reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area, and is effective and convenient.

6.1.3 Section 100 of the 2007 Act requires principal councils to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (formerly the Department for Communities and Local Government) and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

6.1.4. Section 81 of the 2007 Act requires the principal council to draw up and publish the terms of reference for the review which are attached at Appendix A to this report

6.1.5 Sections 87 to 91 of the 2007 Act set out the recommendations arising from the CGR. The principal council is required to make recommendations as to:

- a) whether a new parish or parishes should be constituted
- b) whether existing parishes should or should not be abolished or whether the area of existing parishes should be altered or
- c) what the electoral arrangements for new or existing parishes, which are to have parish councils, should be

In addition, the principal council has a discretion to also make recommendations about:

- d) the grouping or degrouping of parishes
- e) adding parishes to an existing group of parishes or
- f) making related alterations to the boundaries of a principal councils' electoral areas

6.2. Finance Implications

6.2.1. There would appear to be no direct financial implications for this Council, which can be identified at this stage. There will be financial

implications for town and parish councils, which they will consider when making representations in response to the formal consultation.

6.3. Policy Implications

6.3.1 There are no direct policy implications.

6.4. Equality Implications

6.4.1. There would appear to be no direct equality implications for this Council, which can be identified at this stage.

6.5. Human Resources Implications

6.5.1. There are no direct HR implications.

6.6. Risk Management Implications

6.6.1. Accepting the closure of the period of pre-consultation and the progression to proposal-development is a necessary step to progressing the review and so any delay will have implications to the overall timetable.

6.7. Rural Communities Implications

6.7.1. Any rural community implications will be known during the development of the proposals, when changes to boundaries are considered, which will therefore be considered at the decision-making stage.

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

6.8.1. There are no direct implications for children and young people.

6.9. Public Health Implications

6.9.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

6.10. Climate Change Implications

6.10.1. There are no direct implications for climate change.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1. All wards will be affected to some extent and ward members may choose to make representations as part of the consultation process.

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. The first stage of informal consultation has now concluded. A second and formal period of consultation is now proposed on the recommendations. This will follow the requirements relating to the duty to consult electors and others during the CGR process as

detailed in Section 93 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

9. Access to Information / Contact Information

9.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Brian Reed

Job Title: Head of Democratic Services and Governance

Email: brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk