

Community Governance Review Sub-Committee Agenda

Date: Monday, 18th February, 2019
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road,
Sandbach CW11 1HZ

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the foot of each report.

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in any item on the agenda.

3. **Public Speaking Time/Open Session**

In accordance with Procedure Rules Nos.11 and 35 a period of 10 minutes is allocated for members of the public to address the meeting on any matter relating to the work of the body in question. Individual members of the public may speak for up to 5 minutes but the Chairman or person presiding will decide how the period of time allocated for public speaking will be apportioned where there are a number of speakers. Members of the public are not required to give notice to use this facility. However, as a matter of courtesy, a period of 24 hours' notice is encouraged.

Members of the public wishing to ask a question at the meeting should provide at least three clear working days' notice in writing and should include the question with that notice. This will enable an informed answer to be given.

4. **Minutes of Previous meeting** (Pages 3 - 6)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8th November 2018.

Contact: Paul Mountford, Executive Democratic Services Officer
Tel: 01270 686472
E-Mail: paul.mountford@cheshireeast.gov.uk

5. **Community Governance Review: Members' Interests** (Pages 7 - 12)

To consider a report on members' interests in relation to the community governance review.

6. **Community Governance Review: Project Plan** (Pages 13 - 22)

To consider the Project Plan for the community governance review.

7. **Community Governance Review: Consultation Plan** (Pages 23 - 36)

To consider the Consultation Plan for the community governance review.

8. **Community Governance Review: Communications Plan** (Pages 37 - 50)

To consider the Communications Plan for the community governance review.

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the
Community Governance Review Sub-Committee
held on Thursday, 8th November, 2018 at The Ballroom, Sandbach Town
Hall, High Street, Sandbach, CW11 1AX

PRESENT

Councillors J Bratherton, M Deakin, S Edgar, R Fletcher, P Groves, A Martin
and B Walmsley

Officers

Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance
Julie North, Democratic Services Manager
Diane Barnard, Electoral Services Manager
Paul Mountford, Executive Democratic Services Officer

Other Members present

Councillor D Hough

7 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**RESOLVED**

That Councillor Andrew Martin be appointed Chairman for the current
municipal year.

8 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**RESOLVED**

That Councillor Peter Groves be appointed Vice-Chairman for the current
municipal year.

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

10 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

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.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.25 pm

Councillor Andrew Martin (Chairman)

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Community Governance Review Sub Committee

Date of Meeting: 18th February 2019

Report Title: Community Governance Review: Members' Interests

Senior Officer: Daniel Dickinson: Director of Legal Services

1. Report Summary

This Report is an overview of the various levels in which Cheshire East Members may engage with the Community Governance Review, the potential Interests which may arise, those parts of the Member Code of Conduct which relate to them and the several measures by which they may be addressed. At this early stage in the Review, the report is for Members' information only.

2. Recommendation

That the Sub-Committee note the contents of this report.

3. Background

On 20th September 2018 the Constitution Committee decided to undertake a Borough-wide Community Governance Review, to be driven forward and co-ordinated by its Sub-Committee and commencing as soon as reasonably practicable after the May 2019 elections. Members will be involved in the Review at several levels and requested a report regarding potential conflicts of interest.

4. Legal Implications

Parties aggrieved by a Community Governance Review Order may apply for judicial review on grounds including unfair or biased process or consideration. Risk of challenge may be mitigated by observance of the Council's Code of Conduct and implementation of the several measures available to address conflicts of interest.

5. Member Involvement in the Review

5.1 Potentially, Cheshire East Members may be involved in the Review at one or more of five levels.

5.2 First: sitting at Full Council they will

- consider certain recommendations on key elements of the review made by the Constitution Committee
- decide the extent to which they will give effect to those recommendations and
- make the Cheshire East Community Governance Review Order accordingly
- including in the Order any necessary consequential provisions regarding the transfer of property, funds, responsibilities or liabilities between parishes.

5.3 Secondly: sitting on the Constitution Committee they will

- consider the review and recommendations of the Sub-Committee and
- recommend to Full Council which parish areas, names and electoral arrangements should be retained, which changed, and in what way, including any necessary consequential provisions as indicated above.

5.4 Thirdly: sitting on the Community Governance Review Sub-Committee they will assist in the conducting of a Borough-wide Review

- consulting interested parties and
- recommending to the Constitution Committee whether
 - the areas of existing parishes should be retained, altered or abolished
 - existing parishes should be amalgamated or separated
 - parish names should be changed or retained
 - whether the electoral arrangements of any existing parishes should change
 - what electoral arrangements should apply to any new parishes ie: election years, councillor numbers, the number and boundaries of wards
 - the Local Government Boundary Commission should be asked to make related changes eg: to make borough wards co-terminus with altered parish boundaries.

5.5 Fourthly: if they are Parish Councillors, they may take part in at least three consultation stages, debating and framing Parish consultation responses. Their participation may involve comments, proposals and objections regarding the area and governance arrangements of their own Parish and related changes to adjoining Parishes. As parish areas and electors change, parish precepts may rise or fall. As electoral arrangements change, the number of councillor seats may rise or fall.

5.6 Fifthly, they may have a variety of interests in the Review in their capacity as local residents and members of local community groups.

6. The Cheshire East Member Code of Conduct

- 6.1 The Code governs five types of interests which may arise: disclosable pecuniary interests, personal interests, prejudicial interests, bias and predetermination.
- 6.2 Unless they have a dispensation, Members should take no part in matters in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. The definition of disclosable pecuniary interest covers an office carried on for employment or gain.
- 6.3 Members should declare a personal interest in matters likely to affect any body exercising functions of a public nature (ie: a Parish Council) where they are members of that body or in a position of general control or management.
- 6.4 Members need not declare a personal interest in matters affecting their own wellbeing or financial position as long as they (or their family, close associates, employers, partnerships, companies) are not affected to a greater extent than the majority of other Council tax payers, ratepayers, or inhabitants of the electoral division or ward, as the case may be, are affected by the decision. This may cover a rise or fall in precept.
- 6.5 A personal interest will become a prejudicial interest where the matter (ie: the Community Governance Review) affects the financial position of a public body (ie: a Parish Council) and if it is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest.
- 6.6 Beyond exercising public speaking rights, Members should take no part in a matter if they are or appear biased or have predetermined a matter. Members are allowed a predisposition: previous actions or statement will not be taken by themselves as proof of predetermination but Members must not approach a decision with their minds made up.
- 6.7 In limited circumstances, the Audit & Governance committee may grant dispensations allowing Members to take part in and vote on matters in which they have disclosable pecuniary interests and prejudicial interests: this does not extend to cases of predetermination.

7. Measures Available to Address Conflicts of Interest

- 7.1 On 29th September 2016 the Audit & Governance Committee granted six general dispensations until 28th September 2020 for decisions regarding
- Members allowances, payments or indemnities
 - Ceremonial Honours
 - Statutory Sick Pay

- Setting Council Tax or precepts
- Setting Council Tax Reduction Schemes or Local schemes for business rates
- School meals, transport or travelling expenses .

7.2 On 18th February 2016 the Audit & Governance Committee delegated power to the Director of Legal Services in consultation with the Committee Chair and Members, to grant for dispensations in relation to disclosable pecuniary interests in five cases

- the number of Members barred from participating would be so great as to impede the transaction of the business
- the number of Members barred from participating would upset the political balance so as to alter the likely outcome of the vote
- dispensation would be in the interests of persons living in the borough
- every Cabinet Member would be barred from participating in an Executive decision
- it would be otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

Any member who believes that they have such an interest should seek advice from the Acting Director of Legal Services.

8. In Conclusion

Work on the Community Governance Review will not begin in earnest until after the May elections. As it progresses towards discussion of parish-specific options and proposals, the Monitoring Officer will consider which combination of

- Monitoring Officer dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests
- Audit & Governance Committee dispensations for prejudicial interests
- standing, general declarations for all Members, recorded at the outset of Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings

supported by

- general Advice Notes to Members with shared roles & Interests
- specific advice to individual Members on their particular circumstances ie:
 - o declaration of personal or prejudicial interests,
 - o declaration of involvement but retention of an open mind
 - o avoidance of participation at particular stages

will best address the circumstances and issues actually arising.

9. Contact Information

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

Name: Sheila Dillon sheila.dillon@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Job Title: Planning & Highways Manager

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Community Governance Review Sub Committee

Date of Meeting: 18 February 2019

Report Title: Community Governance Review: Project Plan

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

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. The CGR Sub-Committee has previously agreed (8 Nov 2018) the terms of reference for the Community Governance Review.
- 1.2. This report provides an update on the progress made to date and, in particular, the project management arrangements, process and timeline that are proposed in order that the review is properly conducted and delivers an appropriate set of recommendations which can be implemented in advance of the May 2023 elections.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the Community Governance Review Sub-Committee
 - 2.1.1. Note the contents of the report.
 - 2.1.2. Recommend that the Constitution Committee:
 - 2.1.2.1. Approve the process and timeline that the report proposes, including the areas of focus outlined in paragraph 6.7.
 - 2.1.2.2. Approve the proposed indicative dates for future meetings of the Sub-Committee and the Constitution Committee.
 - 2.1.2.3. Authorise officers to take all necessary actions to undertake and conclude the review in accordance with the plan outlined herein.
 - 2.1.2.4. Authorise the Head of Democratic Services and Governance in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Constitution Committee to make any necessary adjustments to the project plan as the review progresses.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. The recommendations are made in accordance with the decision taken by the Constitution Committee on 20 September 2018 to undertake such a review and to create a sub-committee to drive forward that review
- 3.2. The Constitution Sub Committee subsequently approved the Terms of Reference for the review and these proposals align with those terms.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. Not Applicable

5. Background

- 5.1. It is good practice to review community governance every 10-15 years. CEC was created in 2009 and has yet to hold a full review of town and parish council governance.
- 5.2. The review is a major piece of work with borough-wide implications. It is therefore critical that it is properly managed in an open and transparent manner. The process presented here fully aligns with the project management principles created and adopted by the Council's Programme Management Office (PMO)
- 5.3. Any redefinition of parish and parish 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.
- 5.4. At key stages of the review decisions will be required by the Sub Committee and, in some case, the Constitution Committee. Dates for future meetings of these committees have therefore been included in the project timeline, although in some instances these are indicative only at this stage

6. The Project Plan and its Management

- 6.1. The proposed project management structure is illustrated in Appendix A.
- 6.2. It should be noted that the membership of the project working group will flex as the project progresses through its different phases. It will draw upon the necessary expertise from a range of services within the council including:
 - Democratic services
 - Research and Consultation
 - Community Engagement
 - Legal
 - Spatial Planning

- Council Tax
- Media and Communications
- PMO

The group meets regularly, currently on a fortnightly basis.

- 6.3. A high-level timeline is shown in Appendix B. This illustrates that the project will be conducted in 4 phases:
- a) Data gathering and identification of points of focus
 - b) Preparation of initial proposals and a pre-consultation survey
 - c) Formal consultation on 'final' proposals, adjusting these accordingly and gaining approval
 - d) Amend/update relevant records
- 6.4. Work has already begun on the first phase with some early data analysis completed. Population growth forecasts have also been commissioned. The next steps will be workshops to identify the points of focus and to record the rationale for their selection or otherwise.
- 6.5. Towards the end of each stage progress reports will be presented to the sub-committee for approval and possible referral for decision to the Constitution Committee. Such approvals will be sought before progressing to the next phase.
- 6.6. It is recognised that there may be instances where conflicting opinions and options could arise. Sufficient contingency time has been incorporated into the plan to allow for these to be resolved and/or the plan to be modified.
- 6.7. This is a major project and it is important that it is not perceived as 'change for change's sake'. It is therefore intended that the focus be on the following areas:
- 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
 - Consultation feedback

7. Implications of the Recommendations

7.1. Legal Implications

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

7.2. Finance Implications

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

7.3. Policy Implications

7.3.1. There are no direct policy implications

7.4. Equality Implications

7.4.1. There are no direct equality implications

7.5. Human Resources Implications

7.5.1. There are no direct HR implications

7.6. Risk Management Implications

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

7.6.2. Of note is that CEC is aware of a small number of parish council governance-related issues, together with other matters which have arisen, for example, in connection with recent and proposed housing developments. The review will deal with these in borough-wide, coordinated way, so as to ensure consistency of approach – and prevent the risks associated with having a piecemeal, uncoordinated, reactive approach, which would challenge resources and timescales of delivery.

7.7. Rural Communities Implications

7.7.1. 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”.

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

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

7.9. Public Health Implications

7.9.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

8. Ward Members Affected

8.1. All wards

9. Consultation & Engagement

- 9.1. Consultation and engagement are critical factors in this review process in order to demonstrate the validity of any change proposals. Separate consultation strategies and communications plans have been developed and will be presented to this committee individually.
- 9.2. Public engagement will not formally commence until after the all-out elections in May 2019 in order to avoid any perceived conflicts.

10. Access to Information

- 10.1. Supporting documents are available upon request to the report's authors.

11. Contact Information

- 11.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officers:

Name: David Laycock

Job Title: Project Manager

Email: david.laycock@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Or:

Name: Paul Mountford

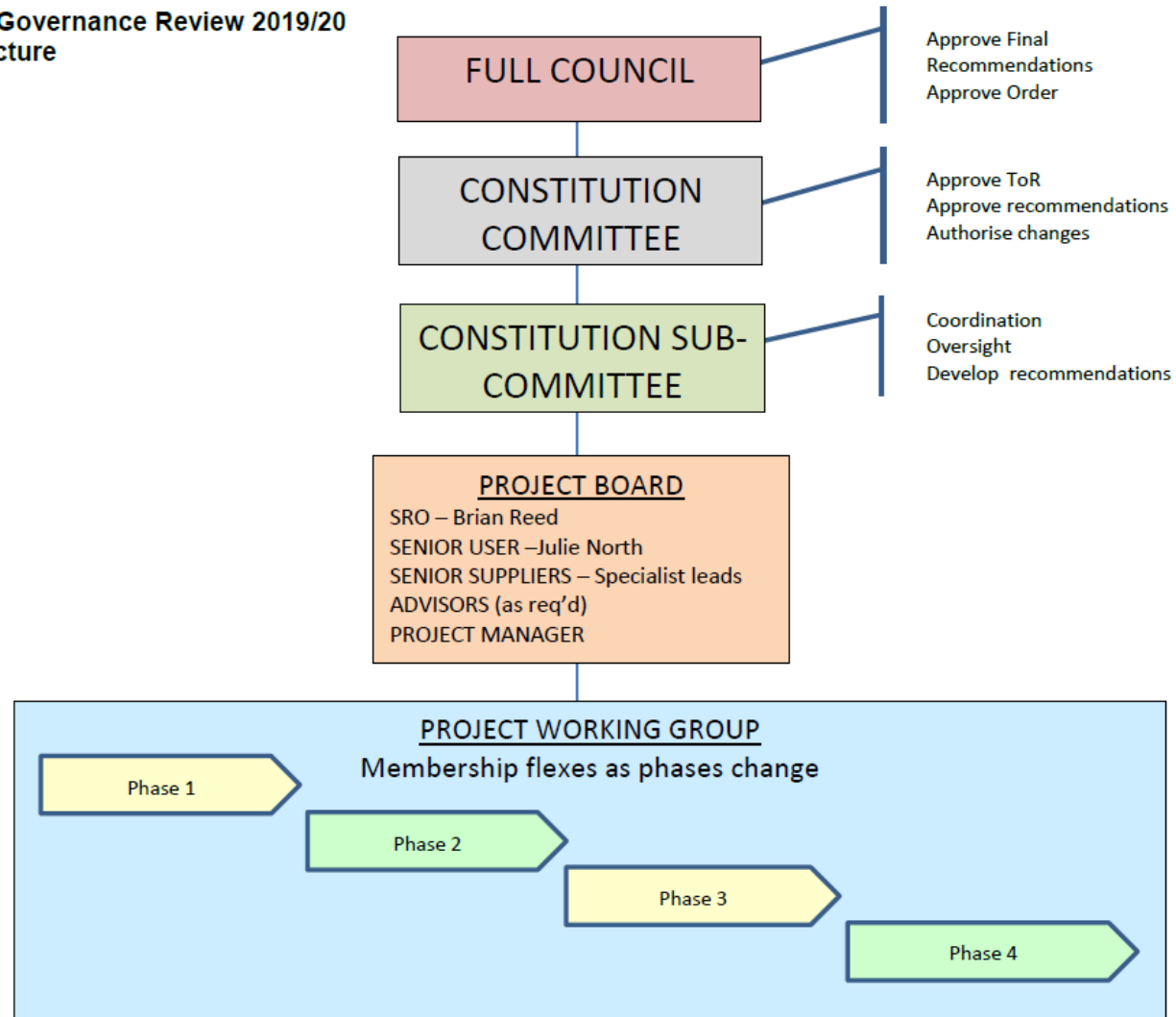
Job Title: Executive Democratic Services Officer

Email: paul.mountford@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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APPENDIX A

Community Governance Review 2019/20 Project Structure



OFFICIAL

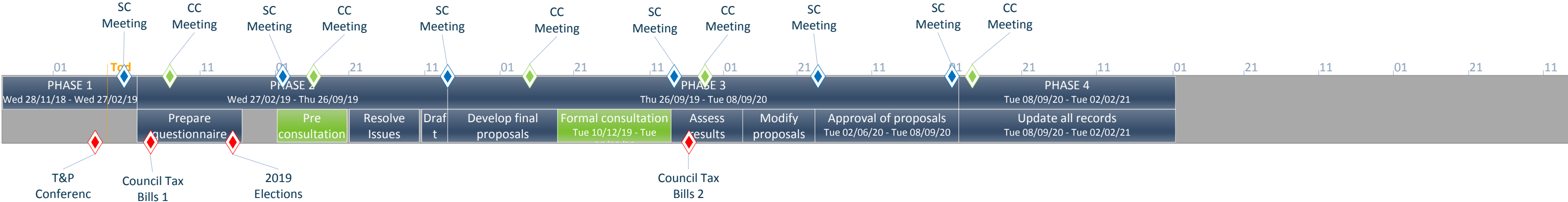
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APPENDIX B – INDICATIVE TIMELINE & MEETING DATES

CGR SUB-COMMITTEE	
SC Meeting 1	18/02/19
SC Meeting 2	06/06/19
SC Meeting 3	26/09/19
SC Meeting 4	27/02/20
SC Meeting 5	04/06/20
SC Meeting 6	03/09/20

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE	
CC Meeting 1	21/03/19
CC Meeting 2	27/06/19
CC Meeting 3	21/11/19
CC Meeting 4	19/03/20
CC Meeting 5	17/09/20 (TBC)

FULL COUNCIL	
October Meeting	17/10/20 (TBC)



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Community Governance Review Sub Committee

Date of Meeting: 18 February 2019

Report Title: Community Governance Review: Consultation Plan

Senior Officer: Mark Taylor- Interim Executive Director Corporate Services

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report sets out the proposed Consultation Plan for the Community Governance Review.
- 1.2. The Review will require the Council to consult with local people and other stakeholders, and to take account of representations received in connection with the Review. To this end, a Consultation Plan has been produced as set out at Appendix 1.
- 1.3. The aim of the Plan is to ensure that the Council obtains high level feedback on any current issues or potential changes to current town and parish council community governance arrangements.
- 1.4. The Sub-Committee is asked to consider and recommend approval of the Consultation Plan in its current draft form. An updated Plan will be developed to include those details which are not yet known and will be brought back to the Sub-Committee.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the Community Governance Review Sub-Committee
 - 2.1.1. Note the contents of the report.
 - 2.1.2. Recommend that the Constitution Committee:
 - 2.1.2.1. Approve the consultation plan in its current draft form as set out at Appendix 1 this report.
 - 2.1.2.2. Approve the indicative list of stakeholders/consultees as set out at Appendix 1 to this report.
 - 2.1.2.3. Authorise the Head of Democratic Services and Governance in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the

Constitution Committee to make any necessary adjustments to the consultation plan as the review progresses.

1. Reason for Recommendations

- 1.1. The Consultation Plan aims to ensure that the Council receives high level feedback from consultees, within the defined time-frame.

2. Other Options Considered

- 2.1. No other options have been considered.

3. Background

- 3.1. A Consultation Plan is an integral component of the community governance review and will provide a systematic approach to consultation, ensuring high level feedback.
- 3.2. The Plan sets out details of the target audience and methods of consultation, as well as the proposed methods of evaluating and reporting feedback.

4. Implications of the Recommendations

4.1. Legal Implications

- 4.1.1. The Consultation Plan conforms to the requirements of the community governance review as set out in regulations and guidance.

4.2. Finance Implications

- 4.2.1. The resource implications are dealt with in the draft Consultation Plan.

4.3. Policy Implications

- 4.3.1. There are no specific policy implications.

4.4. Equality Implications

- 4.4.1. An Equality Impact Assessment will be published alongside the Consultation Plan.

4.5. Human Resources Implications

- 4.5.1. There are no specific human resources implications.

4.6. Risk Management Implications

- 4.6.1. Details of the risk assessment are set out in the draft Consultation Plan.

4.7. Rural Communities Implications

- 4.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

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

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

4.9. Public Health Implications

4.9.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

5. Ward Members Affected

5.1. All wards

6. Consultation & Engagement

6.1. The approach to consultation and the timeline involved are set out in the draft Consultation Plan.

7. Access to Information

7.1. The background documents to this report are available for inspection on request.

8. Contact Information

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

Name: Phil Christian

Job Title: Business Intelligence Manager

Email: phil.christian@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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Community Governance Review

Consultation Plan – DRAFT

Consultation Overview

Background/situation

A Borough-wide Review, in respect of the governance arrangements of all of the Borough's town and parish councils is to 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 Community Governance Review in respect of town and parish councils in the Borough will provide the opportunity for Cheshire East Council to review and make appropriate changes to town and parish council community governance. This Review will require the Council to consult with local people and other bodies, and to take account of representations received in connection with the Review. Although the Review would cover the whole Borough, it is anticipated that changes to governance arrangements would not be requested or required in the majority of cases in our town and parish councils. However the Review would help to address governance issues raised within some parishes, including concerns about the impact of new housing developments on some parish boundaries; some of which arise from allocations within Cheshire East Local Plan.

Desired outcomes

To obtain high level feedback / views on any current issues and potential changes to current town and parish council community governance.

Consultation Plan

Target audience

- Residents of Cheshire East
- Cheshire East Council Members/ Councillors
- Town and Parish Councils in Cheshire East
- Resident Associations / Local Community Groups

Consultation Methods

- Hard copy survey
 - Paper questionnaire to be available at all libraries and key contact centres
 - Optional: available at all Town and Parish Councils
- Online survey
 - Cheshire East website – link
 - Email to all Parish/Town Councils in CEC area
 - Local press – weblink
 - Social media pages – Twitter & Facebook page link
 - Send to members of the Digital Influence Panel members via an e-mail campaign – est. 1,300 members.

Equality Impact Assessment

- Democratic Services to undertake and own the Equality Impact Assessment which will be published alongside this consultation.

Timescales

		Date – Week beginning														
Phase 2 - Activity																
	25th Feb	4th Mar	11th Mar	18th Mar	25th Mar	1st Apr	8th Apr	14th Apr	22nd Apr	29th Apr	6th May	13th May				
Draft questionnaire / materials																
Finalise questionnaire																
	20th May	27th May	3rd Jun	10th Jun	17th Jun	24th Jun	1st Jul	8th Jul	15th Jul	22nd Jul	29th Jul	5th Aug	12th Aug	19th Aug	26th Aug	
Finalise questionnaire																
Print paper questionnaire																
Distribute questionnaire																
Consultation period																
Input paper questionnaire																
Q/A checks																
Analyse data																
Draft report																

		Date – Week beginning													
Phase 3 - Activity															
	9th Sept	16th Sept	23rd Sept	30th Sept	7th Oct	14th Oct	21st Oct	28th Oct	4th Nov	11th Nov					
Draft questionnaire / materials															
Finalise questionnaire															
Print paper questionnaire															
Distribute questionnaire															
	18th Nov	25 th Nov	2nd Dec	9th Dec	16th Dec	23rd Dec	30th Dec	6th Jan	13th Jan	20th Jan	27th Jan	3rd Feb	10th Feb	17th Feb	24th Feb
Consultation period	Live 20th														End 26th

Input paper questionnaire															
	2nd Mar	9th Mar	16th Mar	23rd Mar	30th Mar	6th Apr	13th Apr								
Q/A checks															
Analyse data															
Draft report															

Resources

(Note: There will be costs associated with the resources identified below.)

Phase 2

Staffing

Staff estimates are as follows but will vary depending on response achieved.

Low Response – Estimate approx... 500 responses

Set up and support 10 days + Est: 1 full day input per 100 paper responses received / 3 days cleaning & quantitative analysis/ 5 days coding/ 7 days report writing = 26 full days

- 1 x Senior Research Officer required – costs to be re-charged to Democratic Services
 - 18 days support
- 1 x Research Support Officer required - costs to be re-charged to Democratic Services
 - 8 days support

Medium Response – Estimate approx... 1,500 responses

Set up and support 10 days + Est: 1 full day input per 100 paper responses received / 4 days cleaning & quantitative analysis/ 7 days coding/ 9 days report writing = 31 full days

- 1 x Senior Research Officer required – costs to be re-charged to Democratic Services
 - 21 days support
- 1 x Research Support Officer required - costs to be re-charged to Democratic Services
 - 10 days support

High response... Estimate approx.... 3,000 responses

Set up and support 10 days + Est: 1 full day input per 100 paper responses received/ 5 days cleaning & quantitative analysis/ 10 days coding/ 11 days report writing = 37 full days

- 1 x Senior Research Officer required – costs to be re-charged to Democratic Services
 - 24 days support
- 1 x Research Support Officer required - costs to be re-charged to Democratic Services
 - 13 weeks support
- 1 x External Admin Support - costs to be re-charged to Democratic Services
 - 4 weeks support

Postage

2nd Class postage to Libraries & key contact centres (large letter)

Return Postage of questionnaires (based on 50% response rate)

(Optional) 2nd class postage to all Town & Parish Councils
Return Postage of questionnaires (based on 50% response rate)

Printing

Sending to all libraries and key contact centres:

200 x Paper Questionnaires & Return Envelopes
18 x supporting information (Based on 10 pages in B&W)

(Optional) Sending to all Town & Parish Councils

(20 per town/parish council) 3,000 x paper questionnaires (based on 3 pages in b&w) & return envelopes
145 x supporting information

Phase 3

Staffing

Low Response – Estimate approx... 500 responses

Set up and support 10 days + Est: 1 full day input per 100 paper responses received / 3 days cleaning & quantitative analysis/ 5 days coding/ 7 days report writing = 26 full days

- 1 x Senior Research Officer required – costs to be re-charged to Democratic Services
 - 18 days support
- 1 x Research Support Officer required - costs to be re-charged to Democratic Services
 - 8 days support

Medium Response – Estimate approx... 1,500 responses

Set up and support 10 days + Est: 1 full day input per 100 paper responses received / 4 days cleaning & quantitative analysis/ 7 days coding/ 9 days report writing = 31 full days

- 1 x Senior Research Officer required – costs to be re-charged to Democratic Services
 - 21 days support
- 1 x Research Support Officer required - costs to be re-charged to Democratic Services
 - 10 days support

High response... Estimate approx.... 3,000 responses

Set up and support 10 days + Est: 1 full day input per 100 paper responses received/ 5 days cleaning & quantitative analysis/ 10 days coding/ 11 days report writing = 37 full days

- 1 x Senior Research Officer required – costs to be re-charged to Democratic Services
 - 24 days support
- 1 x Research Support Officer required - costs to be re-charged to Democratic Services
 - 13 weeks support
- 1 x External Admin Support - costs to be re-charged to Democratic Services
 - 4 weeks support

Postage

2nd Class postage to Libraries & key contact centres (large letter)

Return Postage of questionnaires (based on 50% response rate)

(Optional) 2nd class postage to Town & Parish Councils that are effected by change

Return Postage of questionnaires (based on 50% response rate)

Printing

Sending to all libraries and key contact centres:

200 x paper questionnaires (based on 3 pages in b&w) & return envelopes

18 x supporting information (based on 10 pages in b&w)

(Optional) Sending to Town & Parish Councils that are affected by change

Unknown until after phase 2

(?? per town/parish council) ?? x paper questionnaires (based on 3 pages in b&w) & return envelopes

?? x supporting information

Reporting, feedback and evaluation

Analysis Tools

- SPSS – quantitative analysis
- Excel – qualitative and quantitative analysis
- Nvivo – qualitative analysis

Report

- Full Report Recommended

Public communication Recommendations

- Full length report promoted on CE Consultation web page
- Media release of key points and promoting link to the full results

Risk Assessment

RISK: Unrepresented sample/results

- Due to low response from more deprived populations, young people and people living in rural areas
- Due to campaign groups who may skew results

MITIGATION:

- Reach out to broadest possible range of age groups, demographics and partners.

RISK: Legal challenge

MITIGATION:

- Follow Gunning Principles regarding consultation that have been challenged in many judicial reviews as detailed below
- **Formative Stage** - Consultation must take place when the proposal is still at an influential stage. You cannot consult on a decision that has already been made otherwise consultation is not only unfair but also pointless and a waste of time/resources. A council does not have to consult on all the options they have considered and can consult on one preferred option, however, have to inform respondents as such and inform of the reasoning's behind the decision.
- **Sufficient reasons** – Those being consulted should be made aware of the basis on which a proposal for consultation has been considered. It is important that you provide all relevant information that could influence the nature of the responses to

allow for intelligent consideration. Areas where participants' views cannot influence the situation should be disclosed at the outset.

- **Timing** - Adequate time must be given for consideration and response. Formal consultation should be open for a minimum of 12 weeks and ideally should not be undertaken over holiday periods e.g. Christmas - you should not consult during election periods. Other survey work which is not statutory in nature (such as this consultation on supported bus services) should be open for between 4-12 weeks dependent on the topic and target audience.
- **The findings of the consultation must be thoroughly taken into account** - The decision maker must thoroughly consider the findings of the consultation otherwise they can be accused of already having made up their mind or failing to take into account a relevant consideration of the results. An officer can summarise consultee responses as long as it is a fair representation and they note all relevant points of importance.



Working for a brighter future together

Community Governance Review Sub Committee

Date of Meeting: 18 February 2019

Report Title: Community Governance Review: Communications Plan

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

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. To inform the Sub-Committee and seek a recommendation to the Constitution Committee for approval of the Community Governance Review Communications and Engagement Plan.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the Community Governance Review Sub-Committee
 - 2.1.1. Note the contents of the report.
 - 2.1.2. Recommend that the Constitution Committee:
 - 2.1.2.1. Approve the CGR Communications and Engagement Plan as set out in Appendix A to this report.
 - 2.1.2.2. Authorise the Head of Democratic Services and Governance in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Constitution Committee to make any necessary adjustments to the Communications and Engagement Plan as the review progresses.

3. Reason for Recommendations

- 3.1. To set out a comprehensive and co-ordinated plan for communications and engagement around Cheshire East's Community Governance Review.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. None. Not having a coordinated communications approach is not an option.

5. Background

- 5.1. Cheshire East Council (CEC) is conducting a review of town and parish council governance arrangements across Cheshire East; this to be mainly implemented after the all-out elections in May 2019.
- 5.2. Cheshire East has 186 town and parish council wards in 135 town and parish councils covering the whole borough. CEC is responsible for electoral and governance arrangements within the borough including: town and parish boundaries; numbers of town and parish councillors; and Arrangements for wards and the meetings of groups of parish councils.
- 5.3. It is good practice to review community governance every 10-15 years. CEC was created in 2009 and has yet to hold a full review of town and parish council governance.
- 5.4. CEC is aware of a small number of parish council governance-related issues, together with other matters which have arisen, for example, in connection with recent and proposed developments. The review will deal with these in borough-wide, coordinated way, so as to ensure consistency of approach and prevent the risks associated with having a piecemeal, non-holistic, uncoordinated, reactive approach, which would place a greater strain on resources – taking longer to deliver and at an increased cost to tax payers
- 5.5. CEC will consult on the scope of the review, topics and proposals that can be included. CEC will then consult on proposals. CEC hopes to conclude the review well before the May 2023 local elections.
- 5.6. In order to carry out this review effectively and in line with government guidance and legislation, it is vital that effective and extensive communications activity promotes participation in the consultations by residents and other key stakeholders.
- 5.7. Communications publicity and engagement will inform stakeholders about the CGR process, the key milestones and the expected timeline to completion and adoption.
- 5.8. The aim is to build understanding of the CGR process, drive public engagement, protect and enhance the reputation of the council and reinforce the key messages – especially the timescale for implementation of any changes, a review is normal good practice, that any proposed changes will be consulted on fully and all views and comments will be taken into consideration before any final decisions.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

Legal Implications

6.1.1. If the CGR consultations are not well publicised, promoted and facilitated across all stakeholders the council runs the risk that the review will be challenged over the level of consultation and may face a formal judicial review.

6.1.2. Publicity and communications must be compliant with local government guidance re the pre-election 'purdah' period – between 14 March and 10pm on polling day on 2 May 2019 – and not (nor be perceived to) promote any party or candidate in the local elections.

6.2. Finance Implications

6.2.1. No direct implications

6.3. Policy Implications

6.3.1. There are no direct policy implications arising from this report.

6.4. Equality Implications

6.4.1. There are no direct equality implications arising from this report.

6.5. Human Resources Implications

6.5.1. The communications plan will be carried out using existing staffing resources.

6.6. Risk Management Implications

6.6.1. The communication of, and promotion/publicity, around the council's holistic CGR approach will help avoid the risk associated with carrying out a review without adequate consultation – which could potentially lead to legal challenge/judicial review.

6.7. Rural Communities Implications

6.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities arising from this report, other than the key need to keep rural communities fully informed of the process and to encourage their participation.

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

6.8.1. There are no direct implications for children and young people arising from this report.

6.9. Public Health Implications

6.9.1. There are no direct implications for public health arising from this report.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1. All ward Members' wards will be affected in that the consultations around CGR will be communicated across all wards and will seek to engage all stakeholders, including Members.

8. Consultation & Engagement

8.1. This is dealt with in the main body of the report.

9. Access to Information/Contact Information

9.1. The Community Governance Review Communications and Engagement Plan is attached as Appendix A.

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

Name: Tim Oliver

Job Title: Senior Media Relations Officer

Email: tim.oliver@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Communications and Engagement Plan



Community Governance Review (2018/19)

January 2019

Client: Kath O'Dwyer	Service / Team: Democratic Services		
Location: Westfields	Contact Details: 86607		
Approvers:			
Name	Role / notes		
Brian Reed / Diane Barnard (BR) (DB)	Head of Democratic Services and Governance / Electoral Services Manager		
Dan Dickinson (DD)	Acting Director Legal Services		
Kath O'Dwyer (KOD)	Acting Chief Executive/Returning Officer		
Cllr Andrew Martin	Chairman of CGR Sub-Committee and Constitution Committee		
Comms Plan personnel:			
Name	Email	Phone	Role
Tim Oliver (TO)	tim.oliver@cheshireeast.gov.uk	Office: x86591 Mobile: 07879 117185 Home: 01663 747671	Communications Lead
Michael Moore (MM)	Michael.moore@cheshireeast.gov.uk	01270 686581	Contributor (CEC communications manager)
Rhiannon Hilton (RH)	rhiannon.hilton@cheshireeast.gov.uk	01270 686587	Social media contributor (CEC Comms)
Nickki Hughes (NH)	nickki.hughes@cheshireeast.gov.uk	01625 378245	Online Services Manager

Background:

Cheshire East Council (CEC) is conducting a review of town and parish council governance arrangements across Cheshire East after the all-out elections in May 2019.

Cheshire East has 186 town and parish council wards in 135 town and parish councils covering the whole borough. CEC is responsible for electoral and governance arrangements within the borough including:

- Town and parish boundaries
- Numbers of town and parish councillors
- Arrangements for wards and the meetings of groups of parish councils

It is good practice to review community governance every 10-15 years. CEC was created in 2009 and has yet to hold a full review of town and parish council governance.

CEC is aware of a small number of parish council governance-related issues, together with other matters which have arisen, for example, in connection with recent and proposed developments. The review will deal with these in borough-wide, coordinated way, so as to ensure consistency of approach – and prevent the risks associated with having a piecemeal, uncoordinated, reactive approach, which would challenge resources and timescales of delivery.

CEC will consult on the scope of the review, topics and proposals that can be included. CEC will then consult on proposals. The council hopes to conclude the review well before the May 2023 local elections.

Budget

There is no dedicated communications budget. The resources and staff time of the corporate media and communications team will be utilised as appropriate.

£0.

Communications objectives / outcomes:

Aim: To inform the general public and specific stakeholders about the CGR process and key milestones and timeline.

Aim: To build understanding about the CGR process and of the important messages that nothing is changing 'for now' and that any proposed changes will be fully consulted upon and views/comments taken into consideration.

Aim: To promote the perception of CEC as a 'responsible, efficient and effective organisation'.

Aim: To promote and increase partnership working within the borough.

Stakeholders / audiences:

List all decision makers, influencers, affected staff, affected service users, interested parties – please include other relevant information e.g. current position in relation to the issues and where we want to move them to.

Stakeholder	Notes
Residents/general public	
Media	
Cheshire East Council (CEC) members	
Cheshire East Council staff	
Town and parish clerks/councils in the borough	
Local MPs	
Community groups	
Other stakeholders	

Risks / opportunities:

List all risks and opportunities, specifying which stakeholders, objectives or actions they may affect.

RISK: Failure to follow best practice and carry out CGR within a reasonable period

RISK: Failure to complete CGR and adopt any recommendations before planned 2023 elections

RISK: Lack of clarity on messaging could raise a perception/concerns among residents and elected members around 'Gerrymandering' of council and/or parliamentary seats

RISK: Breach of 'purdah' rules around council communications between 14 March (purdah starts) and 10pm on 2 May 2019 (Election Day)

RISK: Failure to be seen to be co-operating with partner councils and other key stakeholders

RISK: Perceived failure to adequately consult with residents and other stakeholders – leading to judicial review

OPPORTUNITY: Reassert the strength of, and commitment to, partnership working

OPPORTUNITY: To show that Cheshire East Council is a 'responsible, efficient and effective organisation'

OPPORTUNITY: To show that Cheshire East Council is forward thinking and 'ahead of the game'

Approach / Strategy:

Messaging and engagement must be:

- Clearly articulated
- Factual and politically neutral/non-partisan
- Not breach 'purdah rules' during the pre-election period – nor be perceived in any way as not impartial
- Link to, and be consistent with, previous factual narratives around community governance
- Focussed on outcomes around engagement with town and parish councils and local residents
- Clearly branded as Cheshire East that builds consistency around Comms and engagement activity.

We aim to

1. Inform residents and stakeholders and build interest around CGR:
 - a. The need to ensure people's views are heard and any concerns addressed
 - b. To encourage active involvement in shaping the review 'issues' and taking part on the consultation on proposals made
 - c. To ensure residents/wider stakeholders are aware of engagement exhibitions/workshops and deadlines for taking part

We will do this by:

- Creating/applying a confident and consistent factual tone of communications
- Media releases at key moments in the CGR process
- Social media posts re-purposing content from media releases and other resources
- The use of strong visual images/video to accompany media content
- Build specific interest via original social media activity (following the principles of engaging social media as described in CEC's Social Media Vision) - including:
 - Visualisation / infographics / videos
 - Informing process interaction
 - Did you know...?
- Signposting residents and specific stakeholders to media release content/repurposed content.
- Internal staff communications (Team Voice)
- Being prepared with confident, evidence-based statements/responses to media/stakeholder inquiries.

Key messages:

- *Nothing is changing now*
- *CEC is holding a borough-wide review in respect of the governance arrangements of all the borough's town and parish councils*
- *It is NOT a review of Cheshire East Council's own borough ward boundaries or electoral arrangements – these are the responsibility of the Boundary Commission for England in Whitehall*
- *Holding a review of community governance is normal and good practice*
- *We won't make changes for 'change's sake'*
- *Any changes proposed will be fully consulted on by residents and other key stakeholders*
- *We will consult (on remit/areas to be reviewed) – and consult again (on any changes proposed)*
- *'Holistic' borough-wide planned review is better than a piecemeal reactive approach and more cost effective*
- *Cheshire East Council is acting now – to be 'ahead of the game'*
- *An expert adviser on CGR has praised CEC for being so well organised, sensible, thorough and prompt in its approach*

Action Plan / Tasks *(Can be in the table provided or a separate spreadsheet)*

ACTIVITY	CHANNEL(S)	AUDIENCE(S)	CASH COST	NON-CASH RESOURCES	DATE /TIMESCALE	AIMS / MESSAGES	RISKS / NOTES	ACTION – WHO	COMPLETE
Website pages created for CGR content	CEC website	Residents town and parish councils + wider stakeholders	£0	Staff time	January 2019	Inform residents and key stakeholders. Share key messages about CGR, the purpose and process etc		NH	Draft written
Media Release	Press release issued to all media	Residents, town and parish councils + wider stakeholders	£0	Staff time	05/02/2019	Launch of campaign to inform residents and share key messages about CGR, the purpose and process etc		TO	Completed – media release issued
Social media support	Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn	Residents, town and parish councils + wider stakeholders	£0	Staff time	From 05/02/2019 onwards	Launch of 'raise awareness' drive, encourage involvement and build engagement Share key messages		RH	Completed - ongoing
Media Release	Press release issued to all media	Residents, town and parish councils + wider stakeholders	£0	Staff time	28/05/2019 to flag up start of 7-week survey on 03/06/2019 (Runs until 19/07/2019)	Pre-consultation survey of key stakeholders (town and parish councils). 7 weeks. Reinforce key messages about CGR process		TO	

Social media support	Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn	Residents, town and parish councils + wider stakeholders	£0	Staff time	28/05/2019 And then from 03/06/2019 onwards	Raise awareness, encourage involvement and build engagement Share key messages		RH	
Media Release	Press release issued to all media	Residents, town and parish councils + wider stakeholders	£0	Staff time	10/12/2019	Launch of 15-week formal consultation on proposals. Inform residents and stakeholders and reinforce key messages		TO	
Social media support	Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn	Residents, town and parish councils + wider stakeholders	£0	Staff time	10/12/2019 onwards	Raise awareness, encourage involvement and build engagement Share key messages		RH	
Media Release	Press release issued to all media	Residents, town and parish councils + wider stakeholders	£0	Staff time	02/03/2020 And/or 09/03/2020	Only two/one weeks to go until close of formal consultation period on proposals. Inform residents and stakeholders and reinforce key messages		TO	
Social media support	Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn	Residents, town and parish councils + wider stakeholders	£0	Staff time	02/03/2020 And/or 09/03/2020	Raise awareness, encourage involvement and build engagement Share key messages		RH	

Media Release	Press release issued to all media	Residents, town and parish councils + wider stakeholders	£0	Staff time	19/03/2020	Thank residents and wider stakeholders for their comments /submissions via consultation. Deploy any positive relevant figures (how many councils took part, total number of representations etc) Inform residents and stakeholders and reinforce key messages		TO	
Social media support	Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn	Residents, town and parish councils + wider stakeholders	£0	Staff time	19/03/2020	Raise awareness, build engagement. Share key messages		RH	
Media Release	Press release issued to all media	Residents, town and parish councils + wider stakeholders	£0	Staff time	June 2020 & following as required	Formal approvals of proposals for CGR Reinforce key messages		TO	
Social media support	Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn	Residents, town and parish councils + wider stakeholders	£0	Staff time	June 2020 & following as required	Raise awareness, build engagement. Share key messages		RH	
Media Release	Press release issued to all media	Residents, town and parish councils + wider stakeholders	£0	Staff time	28/09/2020	Constitution Committee approval/decision re CGR proposals Reinforce key messages		TO	

Social media support	Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn	Residents, town and parish councils + wider stakeholders	£0	Staff time	28/09/2020	Raise awareness, Share key messages		RH	
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Add additional rows as required

Project Evaluation Report

Summary of spend		
Item	Supplier	Cost
		£
		£
		£
		£
		<i>Add additional rows as required</i>
Total Spend		£

Activity metrics			
Media	Number		
Releases			
Statements			
Queries			
Monitored mentions	Positive:	Neutral:	Negative:
Digital and social content / conversations			
Publications			
Events / Direct engagement opportunities			

Performance against Communications Objectives				
Communications Objective	Measure(s)	Target	Actual	Link to Corporate Priority
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

Add additional rows as required

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