

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Constitution Committee

Date of Meeting: 18th February 2016
Report of: Head of Governance and Democratic Services
Subject/Title: Parish Councils – Community Governance Reviews

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 The report suggests that the Community Governance Review Sub-Committee be convened to undertake a review of governance arrangements in respect of certain parishes.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to RESOLVE:

1. That the Community Governance Review Sub-Committee be convened to conduct a community governance review of the following Parish arrangements:
 - (a) the potential reduction of the number of Councillors for Minshull Vernon and District Parish Council;
 - (b) the potential merging of Bulkeley and Ridley Parishes into one Parish;
 - (c) the potential to create a common parish council for Hassall and Betchton Parish Councils with a reduced number of seats; and
 - (d) the potential alternative arrangements for Lyme Handley Parish Council, Doddington and District Parish Council and Burland Parish Council, all of which currently have insufficient Councillors elected to be able to operate.
2. That the remit of the review be contained to those Parishes listed above, unless any other matters of importance arise during the course of the review.
3. That the Chairman of the Community Governance Review Sub-Committee be given delegated authority to extend the remit of the review should other parish matters of importance arise.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Council has received requests from Minshull Vernon and District Parish Council and Bulkeley and Ridley Parish Council to review their governance arrangements. Hassall and Betchton Parish Councils may be interested in creating a common parish council with a reduced number of seats (due to being inquorate at past meetings). In addition the Council is aware of three further Parishes which have insufficient Councillors elected to be able to operate.
- 3.2 Under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 responsibility for Community Governance Reviews falls to the Principal Council. Cheshire East Council has a duty to keep parish arrangements under review.
- 3.3 It is therefore recommended that a Parish review be conducted in these areas.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 Not applicable

6.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 No policy implications have been identified.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The Council has a statutory duty to conduct and meet the costs associated with undertaking the Community Governance Review. The main cost will be in relation to any consultation carried out with electors and others with an interest in the review.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 The review would be conducted under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Government's guidance on conducting community governance reviews.

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 No risks have been identified.

10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 Minshull Vernon and District Parish Council have made a request to Cheshire East Council that consideration be given to reducing their number of Councillors from 22

to 18, following being unable to elect Councillors to vacant seats in the May 2015 elections. The Parish Council currently has 8 members returned out of 22. They are just quorate with 8 Members elected, but two of the wards within the parish have no elected members.

- 10.2 Bulkeley and Ridley are two separate parishes which operate as one Parish Council with one Chairman and Clerk. The Parish Council has made a request to Cheshire East Council for consideration to be given to merging the two parishes into one parish, as they feel that this would cause less confusion for electors.
- 10.3 Hassall and Betchton Parish Councils may be interested in creating a common parish council with a reduced number of seats (due to being inquorate at past meetings).
- 10.4 It is suggested that Cheshire East Council responds to these requests by conducting a Community Governance Review to address the issues raised and that the Community Governance Review be convened for this purpose.
- 10.5 The Community Governance Review would then be conducted under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Government's guidance on conducting community governance reviews.
- 10.6 It is proposed that the opportunity be also taken to simultaneously review three other Parish Councils, where the Council is aware that they have been unable to elect sufficient Councillors to be able to operate. These are:
- Lyme Handley Parish Council – which has five seats, all of which are vacant;
 - Doddington and District Parish Council - of which 3 of the 6 wards of the parish have all their seats vacant (Blakenhall – 3 seats; Doddington - 1 seat; Lea - 1 seat).
 - Burland Parish Council – which has 9 seats of which 7 or vacant.
- 10.7 It is suggested that the remit of the review be contained to those Parishes listed above at the current time unless any other parish matters of importance arise during the course of the review.

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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