

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2022

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| Report Title | COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW FOR STROUD DISTRICT | | | |
| Purpose of Report | To seek approval of Council to carry out a Community Governance Review for the following Town and Parish Council areas: Cam Dursley Eastington Frampton Horsley Hunts Grove Minchinhampton Nailsworth Standish Stonehouse Woodchester | | | |
| Decision(s) | Council RESOLVES: a) That in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, a Community Governance Review be undertaken for the Parish and Town Council areas of Cam, Dursley, Eastington, Frampton, Horsley, Hunts Grove, Minchinhampton, Nailsworth, Standish, Stonehouse and Woodchester. b) To conduct the Community Governance Review in accordance with the Terms of Reference contained in Appendix A of this report. c) To establish a working group to oversee the process of the Community Governance Review and propose recommendations in view of the consultation responses. | | | |
| Consultation and Feedback | If a Community Governance Review is conducted, two full consultation exercises will be undertaken during the process. | | | |
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| Options | The approved recommendations of the previous Community Governance Review held in 2019 commit the Council to undertake a Review for the parish/town council areas of Eastington, Standish and Stonehouse, but it is open to the Council not to carry out a Community Governance Review for the other parish areas that have requested a Review take place. | | | |
| Background Papers/ Appendices | Appendix A - Terms of Reference Appendix A - Annexe A – Parish governance arrangements and electorate | | | |
| Implications (further details at the end of the report) | Financial | Legal | Equality | Environmental |
| | No | Yes | No | No |

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A Community Governance Review (CGR) provides the opportunity for the Council to review and make changes to the existing governance arrangements of Parish and Town Councils in the district, in order to ensure that:
 - 1.1.1 Parish governance is robust, representative and able to meet new challenges; and
 - 1.1.2 There is clarity and transparency to the areas that parish/town councils represent and that the electoral arrangements of parishes are appropriate, equitable and readily understood by their electorates.
- 1.2 A CGR can consider a number of issues, including whether to:
 - 1.2.1 Abolish or create a new parish (this may be where an area is not currently parished, or as a result of bringing together two or more existing parishes);
 - 1.2.2 Change the name of a Parish or set the style of a new Parish Councils;
 - 1.2.3 Alter the boundary or warding arrangements of one or more existing Parish;
 - 1.2.4 Bring a number of Parishes together as a grouped parish council; and
 - 1.2.5 Alter the number of seats on an existing Parish Council.
- 1.3 A CGR may not alter the external boundary of the Stroud district or any other principal council. However, the review may make consequential electoral arrangement recommendations to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England regarding the District Wards and the Electoral Divisions of Gloucestershire County Council where there is sufficient evidence that this would result in more convenient electoral arrangements.
- 1.4 There is no requirement to change existing arrangements within parishes undertaking a CGR if it is felt that they are fit for purpose.

2. WHY UNDERTAKE A COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW?

- 2.1 The council has the power to conduct a review of any part of the council's area at any time. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England recommends that councils review local government arrangements every 10 to 15 years.
- 2.2 A full CGR took place across the whole of the Stroud district in 2019 and several changes were implemented across a number of parish and town council areas including the establishment of Hunts Grove Parish Council. When approving the final recommendations of the 2019 review, Council resolved for a further CGR to be undertaken for the parishes that contain the Great Oldbury development (Eastington, Standish and Stonehouse) by the end of 2023. The reasoning for this was that at the time of the last review, Great Oldbury was a new development and any decisions made may not reflect the identity of a community which was yet to have established.
- 2.3 Ahead of commencing this CGR, all Parish and Town Councils were asked if there had been any significant changes to their electoral arrangements since 2019 and whether their parish or town council areas should be considered for a CGR. Representations were received from Cam, Dursley, Frampton-on-Severn, Hunts Grove and Nailsworth

Parish/Town Councils. Reasons for a review to take place ranged from increasing the number of councillors on the council to carrying out a review of parish boundaries as outlined in the table below.

| Parish/Town Council | Reason for a CGR |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Cam Parish Council | To increase the number of councillors on the council (currently 16) |
| Dursley Town Council | To increase the number of councillors on the council (currently 17) |
| Hunts Grove Parish Council | To increase the number of councillors on the council (currently 5) |
| Frampton-on-Severn Parish Council | To increase the number of Councillors on the council (currently 11) |
| Nailsworth Town Council | To review their northern and southern electoral boundaries between Nailsworth, Horsley, Minchinhampton and Woodchester |

2.4 Within their request for a CGR to take place, Nailsworth Town Council submitted a map outlining the proposed boundary changes for their council area. Several changes are proposed which impact on neighbouring parish boundaries including Horsley, Minchinhampton and Woodchester. As a result of this, Horsley, Minchinhampton and Woodchester Parish areas must be included in this CGR to allow for consultation to take place with the parish councils and residents.

2.5 It is therefore recommended that a CGR is conducted for Cam, Dursley, Eastington, Frampton, Horsley, Hunts Grove, Minchinhampton, Nailsworth, Standish, Stonehouse and Woodchester ahead of the next scheduled local elections.

3. PROCESS OF A COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

3.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires the council to ensure that community governance within the area under review will be:

- reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area, and
- effective and convenient.

3.2 When considering this criteria, the Council should take into account a number of influential factors, including:

3.2.1 The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and

3.2.2 The size, population and boundaries of a local Community or Parish (the current governance arrangements for the parishes recommended for review including electorate forecasts can be found at Annexe A).

3.3 The Council must determine the terms of reference under which a CGR is to be undertaken (Appendix A). The terms of reference must specify the area under review and legislation requires that a CGR must be completed within 12 months of publication of the terms of reference.

3.4 Legislation specifies the process to be followed including two consultation stages as set out in the timetable below:

| Stage | Action | Timescale |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Commencement | Publish terms of reference and timetable. | 21 October 2022 |
| Preliminary stage | Research - Consider consultation arrangements and electoral forecasts. | 21 October - 30 October 2022 |
| Consultation Stage 1 | Initial submissions invited. | 31 October – 29 January 2023 (13 weeks to take account of the Christmas period) |
| Stage 2 | Consideration of submissions received. Draft recommendations prepared. | 1 February 2023 – 1 March 2023 |
| Consultation Stage 3 | Draft recommendations published and consulted on. | 1 March – 26 April 2023 (8 weeks) |
| Stage 4 | Consideration of submissions received. Final recommendations prepared. | May 2023 |
| Final stage | Recommendations submitted to full Council for approval. | July 2023 |

3.5 Before making any recommendations or publishing final proposals the council will take full account of the views of local people and other stakeholders. The Council will comply with the statutory consultative requirements by:

- 3.4.1 Consulting local government electors and residents within the areas;
- 3.4.2 Consulting any other persons or bodies (including local councils) which appear to the council to have an interest in the CGR;
- 3.4.3 Notifying and consulting with Gloucestershire County Council; and
- 3.4.4 Taking into account any representations received in connection with the CGR.

3.6 Once the review has been completed, any changes to the governance arrangements will be implemented at the next local elections scheduled to take place in May 2024.

4. CGR WORKING GROUP

4.1 It is recommended that that a CGR Working Group is established to include the Ward Councillors of those parish/town council areas that are involved in the Review.

4.2 The purpose of the Working Group will be to develop draft and final recommendations by considering the submissions received alongside a range of other important matters,

including the statutory criteria, government guidance and the terms of reference of the review in a series of workshops held after each consultation period.

- 4.3 A briefing for the Town and Parish Councils involved in the CGR and the respective District Ward Member(s) took place on the 12 October 2022. Ward members were provisionally invited to take part in the CGR Working Group subject to Council approval.

5. COUNCIL DECISION

- 5.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement Health Act 2007 devolved power to carry out a Community Governance Review to Principal Councils. The decision to conduct a CGR therefore sits with the District Council.

6. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

The resource requirements are expected to be largely officer time. Any additional costs to be incurred will need to be identified from within existing budgets.

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5.2 Legal Implications

The general powers of the Authority as a principal council to conduct a Community Governance Review (CGR) of its area are contained in Section 82 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ("2007 Act").

The 2007 Act states that the principal council may, by order, give effect to the recommendations made in the review and it 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 principal council must 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.

The 2007 Act requires principal councils to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State for and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. The principal council is required to draw up and publish the terms of reference for the review and make recommendations.

The 2007 Act requires a principal council, as soon as practicable after it has decided to what extent it will give effect to the recommendations made in a community governance review, to publish its decision and the council's reasons for making that decision and thereafter, to take sufficient steps to inform interested persons of its decision and reasons.

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5.3 Equality Implications

There are not any specific changes to service delivery proposed as a result of this decision. The Council will however consider any equality implications when formulating its recommendations. A full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken if any of the protected grounds may be affected as a result of the final recommendations.

5.4 **Environmental Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.