

Report of the Assistant Director of Governance & ICT

City of York Council Community Governance Review

1. Summary

- 1.1 To seek agreement to the proposed processes for undertaking a city wide Community Governance Review of the parishing arrangements for the City of York, including the Terms of Reference and the timetable for the review.

2. Background

- 2.1 The last review of parish arrangements was undertaken in 2002 with the recommendations accepted and enacted by the Department of Communities and Local Government in 2008. The Council has a responsibility under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to carry out community governance reviews either of its own volition or in response to a petition meeting certain statutory requirements.
- 2.2 It is appropriate to instigate a community governance review now for a number of reasons:
- Government guidance indicates that it would be good practice to consider undertaking a review every 10 to 15 years and keep the council area under review in the interim.
 - The recent electoral Review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for the ward structure of York means that some parish boundaries no longer reflect ward boundaries.

- Some Parish Councils have identified a wish to change their arrangements. For example Strensall with Towthorpe Parish works on a different electoral cycle from the City Council and all other parishes and has previously indicated a wish to change this.

3. The Review Process

3.1 The Community Governance Review can consider the following alterations to parish arrangements:

- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
- The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes;
- The electoral arrangements for parishes (the ordinary year of election; council size, the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding), and
- Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes

3.2 The Council is required 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
- Is effective and convenient.
- In doing so the community governance review is required to take into account:
 - The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
 - the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 Public consultation is an essential element of undertaking a review. The Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Review sets out a timetable of stages for the receipt of formal proposals, the time frame for considering of representations and for recommendations to be drafted for consideration by Full Council.
- 4.2 The timescale for the review is dependent upon the proposals which come forward at the initial stage of consultation and responses to the issues raised within the terms of reference. Some proposals may be straightforward, uncontroversial and widely supported. It may be possible to implement such recommendations before the next elections. Others may require an extended period of consultation with individuals directly affected and more reflection before proposals can be developed and implemented.

5. Options

- 5.1 Members may:
- Support the commencement of the review, approve the terms of reference and agree the timetable.
 - Delay the review until after the parish elections in 2015.
 - Decide not to commence a review.

6. Implications

6.1. Financial

The costs of undertaking a review will be met from existing resources

Equalities

The review will consider a range of equalities issues. In particular the impact of any changes on community cohesion will be an important factor in determining recommendations

Legal

The Council's powers and duties in respect of community governance reviews are set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The Review must be conducted having regard to guidance from the Secretary of State and Electoral Commission.

6.2 There are no significant Crime and Disorder, Information Technology, Property, Human Resources or other implications

7. Recommendation

The Committee is requested to approve the commencement of and terms of reference for the Community Governance Review.

Reason: To allow consultation on parish arrangements for York in regard to improving the community engagement at local level.

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**Report
Approved**

Date 19/8/2014

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes

Annex A: Terms of Reference for Community Governance Review