

## **ITEM 12 Test Valley Borough Council Community Governance Review – Terms of Reference**

Report of the Corporate Portfolio Holder

### **Recommended:**

**That the draft Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Review, contained in the Annex to this report, be approved and published on the Council's website on 9 November 2017.**

#### **SUMMARY:**

- In October 2017, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England published its final recommendations for Test Valley Borough Council's new electoral arrangements. These will come into force at the May 2019 local elections.
- The new borough electoral arrangements have resulted in a number of anomalies in the relationship between borough ward boundaries and parish boundaries. A Community Governance Review will provide the opportunity to consider whether changes should be made to parish arrangements in response to these and other issues raised by local people. It is intended that any new parish arrangements will also take effect at the May 2019 local elections.
- As the principal authority, Test Valley Borough Council is statutorily responsible for carrying out the Review. The conduct of the Review will be overseen by the Council's Community Governance Review Members Group. Formal decisions as to the Terms of Reference for the Review and the recommendations arising from the Review will be made by the Full Council.

### **1 Introduction and background**

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) published their final recommendations on new borough electoral arrangements for Test Valley on 3 October 2017. These new electoral arrangements will come into force at the May 2019 local elections.
- 1.2 The Council has publicly committed to undertaking a Community Governance Review, following the conclusion of the LGBCE review. The new borough electoral arrangements have resulted in a number of anomalies in the relationship between borough ward boundaries and parish boundaries. A Community Governance Review will provide the opportunity to consider whether changes should be made to parish arrangements in response to these and other issues raised by local people.

- 1.3 Changes to community governance arrangements that can be considered by the Review include:
- Altering the boundaries of existing parishes
  - Changing the names of existing parishes
  - Creating a new parish or abolishing an existing parish
  - Creating or abolishing parish councils
  - The electoral arrangements for parish councils (including the number of councillors and arrangements for parish warding)
  - The grouping or de-grouping of parish councils (and consequential changes to their electoral arrangements)
  - The “style” of a parish (enabling an area to be known as a town, community, neighbourhood or village rather than a parish).
- 1.4 A Community Governance Review officially begins with the publication of the Terms of Reference. Once this has been published, the Council will be legally bound to carry out the Review in accordance with its terms.
- 1.5 As the principal authority, Test Valley Borough Council is statutorily responsible for carrying out the Review. The conduct of the Review will be overseen by the Council’s Community Governance Review Members Group (comprising Councillors Maureen Flood (chair), Nick Adams-King, Jan Budzynski, Mark Cooper, Celia Dowden, Ian Hibberd and Phil Lashbrook.
- 1.6 Formal decisions as to the Terms of Reference for the Review and the recommendations arising from the Review will be made by the Full Council.

## **2 Next steps**

- 2.1 The Review will consist of two periods of public consultation, where the Council will seek proposals from local government electors in Test Valley, as well as parish and town councils, parish meetings, and other interested parties on what changes they wish the Council to consider.
- 2.2 The first period of consultation will seek proposals on changes to existing parish arrangements, and will run for 11 weeks (from 13 November 2017 to 29 January 2018). All responses received during this period of consultation will be considered by the Community Governance Review Members Group and used to draw up draft recommendations for changes to parish arrangements in the borough. The draft recommendations will be subject to agreement by Full Council.

- 2.3 The draft recommendations will then form the basis of a second period of consultation, which will run for 8 weeks (from 4 May to 6 July 2018). This second consultation will also include details of what are referred to as “consequential matters”, such as how assets will be proportioned between parishes in the event of any change.
- 2.4 Following the conclusion of this second period of consultation, a final set of recommendations will be produced for consideration by Full Council. The publication of these final recommendations will mark the official end of the Review.
- 2.5 The timings of the consultation periods have been planned to allow the necessary legal and administrative work to be completed in order for any new parish arrangements to take effect at the May 2019 local elections.

### **3 Corporate objectives and priorities**

- 3.1 The conduct of a Community Governance Review is one of the Council’s Corporate Action Plan projects.
- 3.2 The Review will seek to ensure that community governance in Test Valley reflects the identities and interests of local communities, and is effective and convenient.

### **4 Consultations/communications**

- 4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to consult local government electors and any other persons or bodies with an interest on any changes to community governance arrangements in Test Valley.
- 4.2 The Community Governance Review Members Group will approve a consultation and communication strategy to guide the conduct of the review.

### **5 Options and options appraisal**

- 5.1 The proposed Terms of Reference contained in the Annex to this Report are commended to Council by the Community Governance Review Members’ Group as providing a suitable framework for a Community Governance Review.
- 5.2 The Council is not legally required to conduct a Community Governance Review at this time. However, a number of proposals for changes to community governance arrangements were made to the LGBCE during its review of Test Valley Borough Council electoral arrangements, which the LGBCE did not have the power to consider. The Review will provide the opportunity for proposals on community governance arrangements to be considered by the Council.

- 5.3 Furthermore, the statutory guidance indicates that it is good practice to review community governance arrangements every 10-15 years. The last full review of Test Valley’s parish arrangements concluded in 2007, and it is therefore now appropriate to again carry out a borough wide review.

## **6 Resource implications**

- 6.1 There are no additional resource implications arising from this report.

## **7 Legal implications**

- 7.1 A Community Governance Review must be conducted in accordance with provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, and other relevant statutory provisions.
- 7.2 The Review will have regard to the “Guidance on Community Governance Reviews” issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the LGBCE.
- 7.3 Once published, the Review will be conducted in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

## **8 Equality issues**

- 8.1 After consideration, no equality issues were identified arising from the Terms of Reference for the Review.

## **9 Other issues**

- 9.1 Community safety - none
- 9.2 Environmental health issues - none
- 9.3 Sustainability and addressing a changing climate - none
- 9.4 Property issues - none
- 9.5 Wards/communities affected – all

## **10 Conclusion and reasons for recommendation**

- 10.1 The draft terms of reference contained in the Annex to this Report have been developed by taking into consideration the legislative requirements for undertaking a Community Governance Review, as well as the need to make the Review process as understandable and accessible as possible.
- 10.2 The publication of the Terms of Reference on the Council’s website (as recommended) will allow the first round of consultation to begin on Monday 13 November.

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u>			
None			
<u>Confidentiality</u>			
It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.			
No of annexes:	1	File ref:	
(Portfolio: Corporate) Councillor Flood			
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