

Full Council

15 February 2022

Community Governance Review – draft recommendations

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr S Flower, Leader of the Council

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director: M Prosser, Chief Executive

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Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

1. That the proposals set out in Appendix 1 be adopted by the Council as Draft Recommendations for the purposes of the Community Governance Review.
2. That, save as set out in the Draft Recommendations, the existing parishes in the Dorset Council area, and the names, boundaries, council size, groupings, and other parish governance arrangements in respect of those parishes, remain unchanged.
3. That the Draft Recommendations be published for consultation purposes from 28 February 2022 to 23 May 2022 inclusive.
4. That the results of the consultation be reported to Full Council on 14 July 2022.

Reason for Recommendation:

To ensure that community governance arrangements within the Dorset Council area are reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area and achieve electoral equality.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 On 15 July 2021, Full Council approved terms of reference for a Council-wide community governance review, looking at the existing parish governance arrangements in the Dorset Council area and inviting representations from local councils, residents and any interested parties in respect of current and future arrangements.
- 1.2 Initial submissions were invited between 5 August 2021 and 28 October 2021, and these were reviewed by a working group made up of the Group Leaders and the Deputy Group Leaders in preparing the draft recommendations set out in Appendix 1. A report of all the submissions received can be viewed on the Dorset Council Community Governance Review webpage [here](#).
- 1.3 Full Council is asked to agree draft recommendations which will then be subject to a second consultation period between 28 February 2022 and 23 May 2022 following which a report will be brought to Full Council for Final Recommendations to be determined.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 There are no financial implications to Dorset Council associated with this report.

3. Well-being and Health Implications

- 3.1 There are no well-being and health implications associated with this report.

4. Climate implications

- 4.1 There are no climate implications associated with this report.

5. Other Implications

- 5.1 There are no other implications associated with this report.

6. Risk Assessment

- 6.1 Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:
Current Risk: Low
Residual Risk: Low

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.1 A detailed Equalities Impact Assessment has been prepared and can be found attached to the Full Council report on 15 July 2021 [here](#).

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Draft recommendations from the Community Governance Review Working Group
Appendix 2 – List of town and parish councils identifying whether a response was received
Appendix 3 – Consultation report

9. Background Papers

[Local Government Boundary Commission for England - Guidance on Community Governance Reviews](#)

10. The Review

- 10.1 Dorset Council is undertaking a Community Governance Review of all the parishes within the Council area. In this review, the Council will be guided by the relevant legislation in Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (“the 2007 Act”), the [Guidance](#) on Community Governance Reviews that the government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England have issued (“the Guidance”), and [the Terms of Reference](#) for the review that were adopted by Full Council on 15 July 2021, with the timetable amended by Full Council on 14 December 2021.
- 10.2 The formal consultation period, inviting interested parties to make initial submissions, commenced on 5 August 2021 and closed on 28 October 2021. The consultation document was published on the Council’s website and was publicised on social media and through the Council’s newsletters. The review was also advertised through the local libraries with paper copies of the consultation document made available at these sites. More targeted engagement was also sent to:
- Town and parish council clerks with a poster for display on local noticeboards
 - Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils
 - Members of Parliament
 - Dorset Councillors
- 10.3 A report summarising the number and type of responses is attached at Appendix 3. 435 representations were received through the online survey

and an additional 45 representations were sent directly to the Council via email during the consultation period. Dorset Council also received 126 “tear off slips” from a leaflet produced by Bridport Town Council in support of their proposals. All submissions were reviewed by officers and the members’ working group overseeing the Review. The working group also reviewed areas where no representations were received from the parish or town councils or local residents, but where officers had identified that electoral equality was no longer achieved as a result of e.g., development in recent years. A list identifying the town and parish councils that responded to the consultation is attached at Appendix 2.

10.4 In preparing these draft recommendations for public consultation, the working group has been mindful of the initial submissions that have been received, which are referenced in this document and available to view on the Dorset Council Community Governance Review webpage [here](#).

10.5 The Council had balanced these submissions against the wider requirements and duties that are placed upon it in the 2007 Act and, in particular, the Council has a duty to ensure that community governance within its area reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area and is “effective and convenient”.

10.6 In assessing the criteria, 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

10.7 A number of representations refer to councillor numbers. Whilst the only statutory requirement in respect of numbers is that a parish council must have a minimum of 5 councillors, the National Association of Local Councils recommendations are set out below:

Electors	Councillors	Electors	Councillors
Up to 900	7	10,400	17
1,400	8	11,900	18
2,000	9	13,500	19
2,700	10	15,200	20
3,500	11	17,000	21
4,400	12	18,900	22
5,400	13	20,900	23
6,500	14	23,000	24
7,700	15	Over 23,000	25
9,000	16		

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England Guidance is clear that each parish should be considered on its own merits but states that Councils should bear in mind that the conduct of parish council business does not usually require a large body of councillors. However, the principal council should take into account the population, geography and the pattern of communities and also consider whether historically the parish council has had difficulty in attracting sufficient candidates to stand for election.

11. Draft recommendations by Area

- 11.1 As the review includes the whole of the Dorset Council area, the recommendations at Appendix 1 have been broken down into various sections relating to each parish where changes have been sought or recommended by the Working Group.

12. Next steps

- 12.1 The draft recommendations agreed by Full Council will be subject to a further period of consultation that will commence on 28 February 2022 and close on 23 May 2022, and a report of final recommendations will be considered by Full Council on 14 July 2022.
- 12.2 All representations received will be taken into account and will be measured against the criteria in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.