

Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee



Report of head of legal and democratic

Author: Steven Corrigan, Democratic Services Manager

Telephone: 07717 274704

E-mail: steven.corrigan@southandvale.gov.uk

To: Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee

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Community Governance Review – final recommendations

Recommendations: To

1. agree final recommendations in relation to each item subject to a community governance review, which are set out in the schedules attached to this report; and
2. authorise the head of legal and democratic to make a reorganisation of community governance order to implement the changes agreed.

Purpose of report

1. To invite the committee to make final decisions in respect of a number of community governance reviews.

Background

2. This report represents the final element of the community governance review that the council commenced earlier this year. The committee agreed to undertake a number of community governance reviews at its meeting in February 2022 and agreed terms of reference on matters submitted by parish councils. The committee agreed draft proposals for consultation at its July meeting and also agreed revised terms of reference to provide for a longer consultation period and time to analyse the responses. The process that the committee has been through to arrive at this point are set out in previous reports to the committee meetings held on 28 February and 25 May 2022 and the minutes of this meetings, and therefore the detail is not repeated in this report.
3. The committee is now invited to agree final recommendations for implementation.

Final recommendations

4. The consultation period on the committee's draft proposals ran from 30 June until 29 July 2022. Thame Town Council requested and was granted an extension until 3 August to allow the matter to be considered at its scheduled meeting on 2 August. The consultation was advertised via the media and council's website. All parish councils directly impacted by a proposal were contacted directly. Notification of the engagement exercise with a link to the consultations was included in InFocus for district councillors and the South news for parish councils with a link to the consultation. A report summary of the engagement responses is attached for each review.
5. A schedule covering each matter is attached with a recommendation and justification for the recommendation.
6. Once the committee has taken final decisions, work will commence immediately to make the necessary order to bring the changes into effect in time for the 2023 parish council elections. This will include making applications, if required, to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to make related alteration orders to make district wards and county divisions coterminous with such changes. At its meeting on 14 July 2022, Council authorised the head of legal and democratic, in consultation with the Chair of this committee, to submit any such applications.

Financial Implications

7. If the committee decides to make changes this will involve making legal orders, producing high quality maps to show any new boundaries and adjusting council tax records, specifically to cover the costs of transferring the council tax records of properties that move parish. These costs will be met from existing budgets.

Legal Implications

8. The community governance review has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements laid down in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the joint guidance on community governance reviews published by the Communities and Local Government Department and LGBCE in 2010.
9. Once the order has been made, officers will request the LGBCE to make any related alterations order to make district wards and county divisions coterminous with any revised parish boundaries.

Climate and Ecological Emergencies Implications

10. There are no implications arising from this report.

Risks and Options

11. There is no statutory duty placed on the council to undertake community governance reviews, so the committee has the option at any time to cease work.

However, given the stage now reached, there is no obvious reason why it would want to do this.

12. There is a risk that someone could challenge the outcome of a particular review item through judicial review. Council officers have mitigated against this by ensuring that at all times the council has followed the requirements laid down in the 2007 Act and guidance.

Conclusion

13. The committee is invited to agree final decisions in respect of a number of community governance review matters having regard to the consultation responses and report schedules attached to this report.

Background papers

None