

Minutes



Listening Learning Leading

OF A MEETING OF THE

Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee

HELD AT 6.30 PM ON MONDAY 10 OCTOBER 2022

MEETING ROOM 1, ABBEY HOUSE, ABBEY CLOSE, ABINGDON, OX14 3JE

Present in the meeting room

Councillors: Lynn Lloyd (Chair), Sue Cooper (as substitute for David Turner) and Mocky Khan

Officers: Susan Baker (Electoral Services Team Leader), Steven Corrigan (Democratic Services Manager) and Chris McMullin (Electoral Services Officer)

Remote attendance:

Councillors: David Bartholomew and Ken Arlett (not permitted to vote)

Officers: Jordan Kennedy (Electoral Services Officer) and Susie Royse (Broadcasting Officer)

14 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Turner (with Councillor Cooper attending as substitute) and Councillor Filipova-Rivers.

15 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2022 as a correct record and agree that the Chair sign them as such.

16 Declarations of interest

Councillor Mocky Khan declared an interest in agenda item 12 – Community Governance Review – Didcot, as a Didcot Town Councillor (see minute 25).

17 Urgent business and chair's announcements

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There was no urgent business.

18 Public participation

Councillor Suter, Chairman of Great Haseley Parish Council, made a statement to the committee, which is set out under minute 23, Thame and Great Haseley.

Councillor Havel made a statement to the committee, which is set out under minute 25, Didcot.

19 Community Governance Review - final recommendations

The committee considered the head of legal and democratic's report on six community governance reviews. The committee had agreed to undertake the reviews at its meeting in February 2022 and agreed terms of reference on matters submitted by parish councils. In May, the committee had agreed draft proposals for consultation and agreed revised terms of reference to provide for a longer consultation period and time to analyse the responses.

Consultation had been carried out on proposals in each of the reviews. A schedule setting out the detail on each review was attached as a separate agenda item, along with the consultation results, an officer recommendation, and the justification for that recommendation. The committee was invited to agree the final recommendations for implementation. The minutes for each review are shown below.

The committee noted that after it had taken its final decisions on each community governance review, work would commence to make the necessary order to bring the changes into effect in time for the 2023 parish council elections. This included making applications to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to make related alteration orders to make district wards and county divisions coterminous with such changes. In July 2022, Council had authorised the head of legal and democratic, in consultation with the chair of this committee, to submit any such applications to the boundary commission.

RESOLVED: to

1. agree final recommendations in relation to each item below in minutes 20 to 25; and
2. authorise the head of legal and democratic to make a reorganisation of community governance order to implement the changes agreed.

20 Community Governance Review - Cuddesdon and Denton

The committee considered the community governance review CGR-A on a proposal to create a single ward covering Cuddesdon and Denton Parish Council.

The committee considered that Cuddesdon and Denton was an integrated community and that the warding arrangements, introduced when Cuddesdon Parish Council and Denton Parish Meeting became a single parish council, were not required to address separate community identities or to achieve effective and convenient representation.

RESOLVED: to remove the current warding arrangements for Cuddesdon and Denton Parish Council.

21 Community Governance Review - Henley-on-Thames and Bix and Assendon

The committee considered the community governance review CGR-B on a proposal to transfer Swiss Farm Touring and Camping site from Bix and Assendon parish to Henley-on-Thames parish.

The democratic services manager advised the committee that, since the publication of the agenda, Bix and Assendon Parish Council had confirmed that it had no objection to the proposed boundary change.

The committee noted that no objections had been received to the proposal from affected residents with three expressing support, no objection from Bix and Assendon Parish Council and support from Henley-on-Thames Town Council for the proposal.

The committee agreed the proposal because it would serve the identities and interests of the residents and provide effective and convenient representation at local government level.

RESOLVED: to transfer Swiss Farm Touring and Camping site from Bix and Assendon parish to Henley-on-Thames parish within the Henley-on-Thames North Ward.

22 Community Governance Review - Sonning Common

The committee considered the community governance review CGR-C on a request to increase the size of Sonning Common Parish Council from 12 to 15.

The committee noted that the number of parish councillors on Sonning Common Parish Council exceeded the number considered appropriate in the National Association of Local Council (NALC) guidance. The committee had seen no evidence to support an increase in the current size of the parish council.

RESOLVED: to make no change to the number of parish councillors for Sonning Common Parish council.

23 Community Governance Review - Thame and Great Haseley

Councillor Tim Sutter, Chairman of Great Haseley Parish Council, made a statement reiterating Great Haseley Parish Council's objection to any change to the parish boundary.

The committee considered the community governance review CGR-D, on a proposal to amend the parish boundary to include land currently within Great Haseley parish within Thame parish.

The committee agreed to make no change to the parish boundary because such a change would not address issues of the identity and interests of the local community or the effective and convenient representation of local residents.

RESOLVED: to make no change to the parish boundary between Thame parish and Great Haseley parish.

24 Community Governance Review - Thame

The committee considered the community governance review CGR-E on a proposal to revise the town council ward boundaries for the purposes of parish council elections.

The committee agreed the proposed change to the town council ward boundaries to provide for a better electoral balance between the wards in the interest of achieving effective and convenient local government representation and to provide for a more logical division of the parish.

RESOLVED: to amend the town council ward boundaries as set out in the map attached to the report schedule of the head of legal and democratic to the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee held on 10 October 2022.

25 Community Governance Review - Didcot

Councillor Mocky Khan declared an interest in this item as a Didcot Town Councillor, and as such did not take part in the decision-making on this item.

Councillor Victoria Haval addressed the committee in her capacity as a town councillor for the Ladygrove town ward. She opposed the revised proposal which would reduce the number of town councillors for Ladygrove ward from seven to six councillors at a time when development is increasing within the ward and would result in an imbalance in electoral representation in the future.

With only two members of the committee entitled to vote on this item, and with no agreement on a proposal, the committee agreed to defer this item to a future meeting of the committee.

26 The timing of future community governance

Officers presented a proposal to amend the requirement to carry out community governance reviews every four years. In 2017 the committee had agreed to undertake a community governance review every four years after the scheduled parish council elections, with any agreed changes implemented in time for the next scheduled elections. However, this had proved resource intensive. It also invited parish councils to consider and submit speculative requests, often on a repeat basis.

Legislation enables community governance reviews to be conducted at any time. Guidance issued by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and the Department for Communities and Local Government suggested that reviews could be triggered by:

- changes in population, or in reaction to specific or new local issues
- new housing developments expanding communities over time
- councils exercising their discretion, but conducting a review every 10 to 15 years
- a petition for the whole or part of the council's area, subject to rules around previous reviews carried out by the principal council

The guidance suggested that councils should consider undertaking a community governance review of its whole area in one go, rather than carrying out small scale reviews in a piecemeal fashion of smaller areas. However, specific reviews could be undertaken at any time, for example to adjust minor parish boundary anomalies.

Following an exchange of views, the committee agreed to defer consideration of this item until a future meeting when more members of the committee would be in attendance.

27 Great Western Park - proposed boundary review

The committee noted an agenda item on the process required for a review of the district council boundaries.

The committee requested that all members of the council receive details of the agenda item prior to the Council meeting on 13 October at which a motion on this matter had been submitted.

RESOLVED: to note the process for the review of principal area boundaries.

The meeting closed at 7:40pm

Chair

Date

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