

CHRISTCHURCHBOROUGH COUNCIL

Review of Community Governance Arrangements within the Borough of Christchurch

Terms of Reference

Introduction

Christchurch Borough Council is conducting a Community Governance Review of the whole of the Christchurch Local Authority area in accordance with Part 4 Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The Council is required to have regard to the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. This guidance was considered when drawing up the Terms of Reference (TOR).

What is a Community Governance Review?

A Community Governance Review offers the opportunity to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries, tied to firm ground features and to remove any anomalous parish boundaries. It can take place for the whole or part of the Borough to consider one or more of the following:-

- 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.

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.

The aim of the review is to consider and bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and efficient, more effective and convenient delivery of local services and ensure electors across the whole Borough will be treated equitably and fairly.

Why undertake this Community Governance Review

This review is taking place following the decision of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government that he is minded to support the Future Dorset submission to abolish the existing nine principal councils in Dorset and replace them with two new Unitary Councils including one for the whole of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

The Council believes that parish councils could play an important role in terms of community empowerment at the local level and wants to ensure that parish governance within the Borough is robust, representative and enabled to meet new challenges. Furthermore, it wants to ensure that there is clarity and transparency to

the areas that parish councils represent and that the electoral arrangements of parishes – the warding arrangements and the allocations of councillors – are appropriate, equitable and readily understood by their electorate.

Areas to be reviewed

The Community Governance Review includes the whole of Christchurch Borough Council area.

Who will undertake the Review?

The Borough Council is responsible for conducting the review. The Council has established a task and finish group which will be responsible for making both draft and final recommendations during the process. In coming to its recommendation in the Review, the Council will need to take account of the views of local people. A full consultation process will form part of the Review to take full account of the views of local people.

The Borough Council will publicise the review by displaying a notice at the Civic Offices, placing articles on the Council's website and in the Council's magazine, Christchurch Courier. The Council will also write to all existing parish councils, the Dorset Association of Town and Parish Councils, Borough Councillors and the relevant County Councillors, the MP, and Dorset County Council.

The Council will be required to approve the final recommendations prior to the Community Governance Order being made.

Timetable for the review

A timetable for the review is attached herewith. The programme and timeline may be adjusted after representations have been received by local people and interested bodies in response to the initial public consultation. This will allow the Council a degree of flexibility in the interests of ensuring that it manages the review process efficiently. Any adjustments to the programme and timetable will be approved by the Council and published on its website.

Electorate forecasts for the Borough

The Review will be conducted using electoral data taken from the 1 September 2017 electoral register.

When the Council comes to consider the electoral arrangements of the parishes in its area, it is required to consider any change in the number or distribution of the electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts. Electorate forecasts will be prepared by the Council using extant planning permissions and the Local Plan to project the five-year electorate forecast.

These forecasts will be made available to all interested parties as early as possible in the review process in accordance with the government's guidance so that they are available to all who may wish to make representations.

Representations

Christchurch Borough Council welcomes all representations from any person or body who may wish to comment or make proposals on any aspect of the matters under review. Representations should be addressed to: Democratic Services, Christchurch Borough Council, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 1AZ. Representations may be sent by email to cgr@christchurchandeastdorset.gov.uk or via the Council's website at www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk

All initial representations must be made by 23 February 2018.

The Council will consult with the local government electors for the area under review and any other person or body who appears to have an interest in the Review and take the representations that are received into account by judging them against the criteria in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

All representations received will be published, as will the reasons for accepting or rejecting any such representations. In accordance with the Act, representations received in connection with the Review will be taken into account, and steps will be taken to notify consultees of the outcome of the Review.

How will the results be disseminated?

The Council will publish full details on the Council's website; press releases will be issued at key points and key documents will be on deposit at the civic offices.

This Review is deemed to have commenced on the date of this Notice

Dated 20 November 2017

CHRISTCHURCH BOROUGH COUNCIL
Community Governance Review 2017/18
Programme and Timetable

Stage	Date/Timeline	Timescale	Outline of Activity
Commencement	Council 16/11/2017		Approval of Terms of Reference and timetable
	20/11/2017		Publication of Notice and Terms of Reference and Stakeholder Notification of commencement of the review.
Preliminary Stage	27/11/2017 to 21/12/2017	4 weeks	Offer of local briefings and meetings with stakeholders
Stage One – Invite initial submissions	02/01/2018 to 23/02/2018	8 weeks	Initial submissions invited Consultation/Representations. Consultation with stakeholders
Stage Two – Consider submissions	26/02/2018 to 24/04/2018 Community Committee 28/03/2018 Sp. Community Committee * 24/04/2018 Council 24/04/2018	8 weeks	Consideration of submissions received – draft recommendations prepared * Consider volume and whether special Community Committee is required prior to Council (24/04/2018)
Stage Three – Publish Draft Recommendations	25/05/2018 to 20/07/2018	8 weeks	Publish draft recommendations for further consultation.
Stage Four – Final Recommendations	23/07/2018 to 04/09/2018 Sp. Community Committee* 22/08/2018 Council 04/09/2018	5 weeks	Consideration of further submissions received and prepare final recommendations Final recommendations published – concluding review * Special Community Committee required to consider recommendations Council resolves to make a Reorganisation Order
Implementation	02/05/2019 (Elections)		Effective date of any changes to parish/town boundaries and electoral arrangements