



East Dorset District Community Governance Review

Draft Recommendations



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Annex of parish and parish ward maps available as a separate document

1 Introduction

1.1 East Dorset District Council, at its meeting on Monday 4 September 2017 resolved that, following the receipt of a valid Community Governance Review petition, that a Community Governance Review be conducted for parts of the district of East Dorset, as defined in the published terms of reference, 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.

2 The Review

2.1 This Review commenced on 5 September 2017, when the Council published a Terms of Reference document and invited initial submissions from individuals or organisations who had an interest in the Review. In the Terms of Reference, the Council published a timetable for the Review.

2.2 The formal consultation period, inviting interested parties to make initial submissions, commenced on 9 October and closed on 18 December 2017. The consultation was published on the Council's web site and public notice boards, but more targeted engagement was sent to:-

- Relevant parish and town council clerks;
- Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils Chief Executive;
- Dorset County Council Chief Executive and local County Councillors;
- East Dorset Members of Parliament;
- Chambers of Trade, Commerce and Industry;
- Relevant Residents' and Community Associations;
- Housing Associations;
- Citizens Advice Bureaux;
- Local Libraries;
- The lead petitioner.

2.3 A copy of the consultation papers were also sent to each Member of East Dorset District Council.

2.4 To oversee the community governance review and to consider representations received during the initial submission phase, the Council appointed a Community Governance Review Task and Finish Group.

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- 2.5 In preparing these Draft Proposals, the Council has been mindful of the initial submissions that have been received, which are referenced in this document and attached as an appendix to these draft recommendations. The Council also has the role of balancing these submissions against the wider requirements and duties that are placed upon it in the 2007 Act. In particular, the Council has a duty to ensure that community governance within its area under review reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area; and is effective and convenient.
- 2.6 In assessing this criteria, the community governance review is required to take into account:-
- (a) The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
 - (b) The size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.
- 2.7 The aim of the review is to bring about improved and stronger community engagement, more cohesive communities, better local democracy and more effective and convenient delivery of local services; ensuring electors across the whole District are treated equitably and fairly.

3 Parish and Ward Boundary Changes

- 3.1 Reference is made in this paper to parish and parish ward boundaries being coterminous with other district, county or parliamentary boundaries. Extending parish or parish ward boundaries to break the coterminous arrangements would require the creation of additional parish wards as no parish or parish ward may straddle a principal boundary.
- 3.2 The alternative to breaking the conterminous relationship is to seek consent from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England for a related alteration to redraw the principal council boundary. Regard must be had to the effect and impact of such related alterations on the electoral equality of the principal council wards and divisions. Where such alterations are recommended in this paper, an assessment as to the likely success of alterations has been considered.

4 Draft Recommendations by Area

- 4.1 Since the Community Governance Review includes a review of various parts of East Dorset, this document is divided into a series of sections relating to each parish to assist the reader to follow the proposed changes. Some parishes are grouped together due to the nature of proposed recommendations.
- 4.2 Each section also follows a consistent structure, including a summary of the existing boundary areas, warding, the baseline electorate (August 2017) and the projected five-year electorate forecasts, the total number of councillors, the ratio of electors per councillor and the variance of this ratio from the average (where warded or grouped). Details of any representations received have been

referenced and an explanation for any proposed changes have also been included.

5 Next steps - Representations

- 5.1 All residents and any other persons or organisations wishing to make representations on the draft recommendations may do so by email to cgr@christchurchandeastdorset.gov.uk

Representations may also be returned to:

Electoral Services
East Dorset District Council
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Christchurch
Dorset BH23 1AZ.

Please entitle your response '*East Dorset Community Governance Review 2017 – Response to Draft Recommendations*'.

- 5.2 Representations that are received will be taken into account by judging them against the criteria in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 5.3 The deadline for receipt of comments is midnight on 31 May 2018.
- 5.4 It would be helpful if you could make clear in your response whether you represent an organisation or group, and in what capacity you are responding.
- 5.5 An electronic version of this consultation paper is available to download from our web site. Visit www.dorsetforyou.com/426005 or scan the QR code on the front of this paper.

6 Publication of responses – confidentiality and data protection

- 6.1 Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published, or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes.
- 6.2 If you want any information you provide to be treated as confidential, you should be aware that under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply, and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this, it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential.
- 6.3 If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give any assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by IT systems will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Council.

6.4 East Dorset District Council will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection legislation and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

A. AREA 1 - COLEHILL AND HOLT PARISHES (PETITION FOR NEW PARISH OF FURZEHILL)

1 Background

- 1.1 The parishes of Colehill and Holt have been combined into a single section due to the content of the petition received from residents of Furzehill.
- 1.2 The petition, which sought the establishment of a new parish of Furzehill from parts of the existing parishes of Colehill and Holt, stated:-

We the undersigned are electors of the proposed Parish of Furzehill and petition that East Dorset District Council call a governance review in order to grant the status of parish to the community, which is comprised of four hamlets known as: Furzehill; Dogdean; Grange; and Bothenwood: the Parish is to be known as the Parish of Furzehill and it is to be grouped under a common parish with the existing Parish of Holt, so that it is administered by an enlarged Furzehill and Holt Parish Council.

The Parish is requested to comprise an area, which is bounded by existing parish boundaries where possible and which includes at least –

- *the 95 dwellings of the following 5 electoral areas of Colehill West (Cranborne Road [6]; Dogdean [17]; Furzehill, Wimborne [64]; Grange [11]; High Hall[(1))*
- *and the 50 dwellings of the following 4 electoral areas of Holt (Bothenwood [7]; Furzehill, Wimborne [21]; Grange [8]; Long Lane, Wimborne [4])*
- *making a total of at least 149 dwellings. The dwellings in Smuggler's Lane are all included within the above two 'Furzehill, Wimborne' electoral areas.*

It is further requested that the Proposed Parish of Furzehill is recognised as having a rural nature and that the Parish should retain its current identity and character, which has similarities to the many hamlets in the Parish of Holt, but which is distinctly different from the expanding town of Wimborne and the urban Parish of Colehill.

If warding is required then it is requested that: the dwellings from Colehill West become Furzehill West; and the dwellings from Holt become Furzehill East.

- 1.3 As a baseline, data tables for each parish are shown separately, however, since this element of the review relates to the request to separate parts of the parishes of Colehill and Holt only, no reference is made to the boundary lines with other adjoining parishes.

Colehill

Parish Ward	Electorate 2017	Electorate 2022	Seats	Elector Ratio	Variance from average
Colehill East	3,996	4,025	10	403	+2.0%
Colehill Hayes	1,007	1,073	3	358	-9.4%
Colehill West	1,154	1,226	3	409	+3.5%

- 1.4 Colehill is currently divided into three wards, Colehill East with ten Councillor representatives, and Colehill Hayes and Colehill West, each with three Councillors.
- 1.5 The entire length of the parish boundary adjoining the neighbouring parish of Holt is coterminous with the district ward, county division and parliamentary constituency boundaries.

Holt

Parish	Electorate 2017	Electorate 2022	Seats	Elector Ratio	Variance from average
Holt	1,080	1,098	9	122	+0.0%

- 1.6 Holt parish is one of the largest geographical parishes in East Dorset, with a projected household number of 545 and 1,098 electors. It is unwarded and has 9 seats on the Council.

Summary of Representations Received

- 1.7 The Council received the following representations in relation to the request to establish a new parish of Furzehill:-
- (a) Geoffrey Chopping (Lead Petitioner) – reiterated the comments made in the petition to establish a new parish comprising part of Colehill West and part of the parish of Holt, with a suggested name of either Holt and Furzehill or Furzehill and Holt. Mr Chopping recognises the need for warding due to the existing boundary between Colehill West and Holt being coterminous with the District ward, County division and Parliamentary constituency boundaries. Finally, it is highlighted that for effective and convenient administration, the new parish should be grouped in common with the existing and larger parish of Holt.
 - (b) Mr Andy Hind (Chairman of the Furzehill Residents' Association) – this representation was identical to the representation received from Mr Chopping (see 1.7(a) above).
 - (c) Councillor Mrs Dover (District and County Councillor) responded that no change should be made to the existing parish arrangements.

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- (d) Dorset County Council raised no objection to the request for a new parish, however, commented that the formation of a new parish could have a minor impact on the divisional boundary of the County Council in any future review. If supported, a preference was expressed for the parish to be warded so as to permit the retention of the divisional boundary.
- (e) Holt Parish Council resolved unanimously to object to the proposal to separate 50 dwellings from Holt parish to form a Furzehill East Ward. The parish wished there to be no change to the parish boundary. The parish council considered that residents of the area form part of the community of Holt, with residents making use of the facilities in Holt including two public houses, three village halls, St James's First School, St James' Cottage Nursery, a number of community groups and have the option to be buried as parishioners in Holt cemetery.

The parish council further questioned the viability of the proposed parish of Furzehill and how it would be administered. The parish council did not wish to become a grouped parish and did not wish to take responsibility for its administration and governance. Finally, in relation to the proposed parish, concern was expressed that appropriate levels of representative interest would not be forthcoming to fill vacancies on the new council, with no applications to fill vacancies on Holt parish from residents in this area.

- (f) Colehill Parish Council also object to the request to establish a new parish of Furzehill. Furthermore the Parish Council do not consider that it would be effective or convenient in terms of administration overall.

In response to the consultation, the Parish Council suggest that there could be merit in re-warding the parish of Colehill to effectively establish a new parish ward for Furzehill. The suggest is for four parish wards named Colehill Furzehill, Colehill St Michaels, Colehill Central and Colehill Hayes.

On examination, it would be necessary to divide the Colehill St Michaels ward into two (North and South) as this area is divide by the existing County Division and District Ward boundaries, and a related alteration is highly unlikely to gain consent from the LGBCE due to the significance of the required change.

Applying the electoral equality test to this suggestion by the Parish Council whilst maintaining the number of seats as at present, the result shows a significant imbalance and is not considered by the Task and Finish Group to be acceptable.

It is an important democratic principle that each person's vote should be of equal weight so far as possible, having regard to other legitimate competing factors, when it comes to the election of councillors. Guidance suggests that it is not in the interests of effective and convenient local government to have significant variances in levels of representation between different

parish wards. There is a risk that where one parish ward is over-presented by councillors, the residents of that parish ward (and their councillors) could be perceived as having more influence than others on the council.

Parish Ward	Electorate 2022	Seats	Elector Ratio	Variance from average
Colehill Furzehill	261	1	261	-34.0%
Colehill St Michaels North	758	2	379	-4.1%
Colehill St Michaels South	1,043	2	522	+31.9%
Colehill Central	3,189	8	399	+0.9%
Colehill Hayes	1,073	3	358	-9.4%

- 1.8 The Task and Finish Group noted the intention expressed in the original Furzehill petition and in the subsequent representation received from Mr Chopping, that the new parish should be grouped with Holt Parish Council and administered by that parish council.
- 1.9 The Council is not permitted as part of a Community Governance Review to force upon a Council grouping arrangements without the consent of each participant parish. Holt Parish Council has made it clear that they do not wish to be part of a grouped parish council.
- 1.10 In light of this objection, and in the absence of any further evidence to the contrary, the Task and Finish Group were not convinced that the establishment of a new parish of Furzehill would bring about improved and stronger community engagement, a more cohesive community, better local democracy and more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

2 Draft Recommendations

- 2.1 As part of the current Community Governance Review of East Dorset District, under the terms of reference published on 5 September 2017, the Council has made the following draft recommendations in relation to the parishes of Colehill and Holt:
- 2.2 That:
- (a) a new Parish of Furzehill should not be established;
 - (b) no changes be made to the existing parishes of Colehill and Holt with regards to the area or electoral arrangements.
 - (c) in the absence of any changes to the existing arrangements, a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order is not required for this area under review.

B. AREA 2 – THREE LEGGED CROSS (PARISH BOUNDARIES OF VERWOOD, HORTON, HOLT AND WEST MOORS)

1 Background

- 1.1 This area was included within this review to consider anomalies, identified during the latter stages of the community governance review in 2014, with the boundaries between the parishes of Verwood, Horton, Holt and West Moors; and in particular with regards to land and property at the northern end of West Moors Road, Village Hall Lane and Sandy Lane.

Summary of Representations Received

- 1.2 The Council received the following representations in relation to this area:-
- (a) Knowlton Parish Council Chairman responded on behalf of the parish council to advise that whilst no amendments to any boundaries were suggested, the parish would consider any proposals to amend boundaries between Horton and Verwood during stage 3 of this consultation.
 - (b) Verwood Town Council also submitted a response which was in two parts.

Firstly to realign the boundary between Horton and Verwood transferring 10 properties in Village Hall Lane and part of West Moors Road into the parish of Verwood (Three Legged Cross parish ward).

Secondly, it was requested to amend the anomaly of Haywards Way (which the parish understood to be in Knowlton parish).
 - (c) West Moors Parish Council responded that no change should be made to their existing parish arrangements.
- 1.3 For clarity, the anomaly suggested by Verwood Town Council (1.2(b) above) in relation to Haywards Way was addressed in the 2014 Review where the boundary was redrawn to according to the wishes of the Town Council.
- 1.4 The Task and Finish Group considered the request of Verwood Town Council to transfer the properties in Village Hall Lane and part of West Moors Road from the parish of Horton to the parish to Verwood (Three Cross ward), affecting 11 properties (21 electors). The Task and Finish Group were satisfied that the boundary realignment met the assessment criteria and would establish more effective and convenient community governance and reflect the community identity in this area.
- 1.5 The boundary realignment would require a related alteration to the County Division boundary between Verwood and Moors; and to the District Ward boundary between Crane and St Leonards.

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- 1.6 The low number of properties and electors affected would not alter the electoral equality.

2 Draft Recommendations

- 2.1 As part of the current Community Governance Review of East Dorset District, under the terms of reference published on 5 September 2017, the Council has made the following draft recommendations in relation to the parishes of Horton and Verwood:
- 2.2 That:
- (a) the boundary of the existing parish of Verwood be redrawn to the west where it adjoins the parish of Horton to transfer the properties currently in the parish of Horton to the parish ward of Verwood (Three Cross);
 - (b) no other changes be made to the area or electoral arrangements for the parishes of Horton and Verwood;
 - (c) an East Dorset District Council (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order be prepared in accordance with the above recommendations and that the Order be effective from 1st April 2019 save for those recommendations relating to parish electoral arrangements which shall come into force on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2019.

C. AREA 3 – WITCHAMPTON (PARISH BOUNDARIES OF WITCHAMPTON, CHALBURY, CRICHEL AND HINTON)

1 Background

- 1.1 This area was included within this review to consider boundary alignments in the vicinity of the village of Witchampton identified during the latter stages of the community governance review in 2014.

Summary of Representations Received

- 1.2 The Council received a single representation from Witchampton Mill Residents' Association Limited requesting a minor alteration to the boundary between the parish of Witchampton and Chalbury where the historic boundary severs the rear gardens of nos. 10 to 16 Witchampton Mill and no longer follows the natural geography of the area.
- 1.3 The request does not require the transfer of any existing properties or electors but the Task and Finish Group considered that the suggestion would better reflect the village boundary and as such supported the request.
- 1.4 The boundary realignment would require a related alteration to the District Ward boundary between Handley Vale and Crane although with no change to elector number, there would be no impact on elector equality.

2 Draft Recommendations

- 2.1 As part of the current Community Governance Review of East Dorset District, under the terms of reference published on 5 September 2017, the Council has made the following draft recommendations in relation to the parishes of Witchampton and Chalbury:
- 2.2 That:
- (a) the boundary of the existing parish of Witchampton be redrawn to the east where it adjoins the parish of Chalbury;
 - (b) no other changes be made to the area or electoral arrangements for the parishes of Witchampton and Chalbury;
 - (c) an East Dorset District Council (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order be prepared in accordance with the above recommendations and that the Order be effective from 1st April 2019 save for those recommendations relating to parish electoral arrangements which shall come into force on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2019.

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