

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

19 JULY 2022

Title:

**Community Governance Review of Towns and Parishes in the
Waverley Borough Council Area
Final Recommendations**

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Paul Follows, Leader of the Council

Head of Service: Robin Taylor, Head of Policy and Governance

Key decision: Yes

Access: Public

1. Purpose and summary

- 1.1 A Community Governance Review (CGR) looks at the governance arrangements of the towns and parishes in the area under review and seeks to ensure that these are reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area.
- 1.2 At Full Council on 14 December 2021, the Council approved the commencement of a CGR and its terms of reference. The first stage of consultation took place between 17 January 2022 and 25 February 2022. At Full Council on 17 May 2022, the method to evaluate the submissions in the initial consultation and the commencement of the second stage of consultation was approved.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to report the recommendations of the Executive to the Council.

2. Recommendation

That the Executive recommends to Full Council that:

- (a) the final recommendations as set out in annexe 1 are approved; and
- (b) consent is sought from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to:
 - i. amend the boundaries in their final recommendations for new Borough wards to ensure the boundaries are coterminous; and
 - ii. change the Town Council size and warding arrangements for Farnham, Godalming and Haslemere.

3. Reason for the recommendation

- 3.1 The final recommendations have been formulated with consideration to key data for each parish and parish ward. This includes electorate projections and housing development data, submissions received at both stages of consultation, the parish/town council size, whether there is agreement between affected parishes and positive and/or negative effects on the electorate.

4. Background

- 4.1 A Community Governance Review is a legal process whereby the Council looks at the governance arrangements of parishes in the area under review – in this case the whole of Waverley Borough Council area. The initial phase of the consultation took place between 17 January and 25 February 2022.
- 4.2 At Full Council on 17 May, the method to evaluate submissions was agreed. i.e.
- Is there agreement between affected parishes?
 - Does the change have merit in making the areas concerned more logical for the residents?
 - Does the change require consent from the LGBCE?
 - What impact will the change have on the electorate?
 - Are there wider implications if the change is made?
 - Is there likely to be support from the wider community?
- 4.3 Each submission in the first stage of consultation was assessed and draft recommendations were published on 3 May 2022. Key stakeholders were contacted by email and letter and were invited to submit representations on an online survey, by email or by post.
- 4.4 A total of 19 responses were received, 13 via the online survey and 6 emails. The responses are included in Annexe 1. Each response has been considered alongside other key data available.

Impact of the Local Government Boundary Review on the Community Governance Review

- 4.5 The Local Government Boundary Commission England (LGBCE) have conducted a review of the Borough wards throughout Waverley. Their final recommendations were published on Tuesday 29 March 2022. A Statutory Instrument will be used to enact the Order, and this is likely to be passed before parliament rises for the summer recess.
- 4.6 Once the order has been made, the final recommendations are protected and cannot be changed without consent from the LGBCE. However, consent may be granted if the Council requests an amendment following recommendations from the CGR. Authorisation of consent may be delegated to the Chief Executive of the LGBCE or considered by the Full Board.

- 4.9 Consent may be granted or denied by the LGBCE. If consent is granted, a new order will be made. If consent is denied, the boundaries and other matters will remain as previously set out in the original Order.
- 4.10 A table of the final recommendations and whether LGBCE consent is required is included in Annexe 2.

Provisional timescale of implementation of changes

4.11

Final Recommendations report to Full Council	9 July 2022- Full Council
Publish final recommendations and send to LGBCE for consideration	August 2022
LGBCE consider recommendations and consent granted or denied	Autumn 2022
Polling district and polling place review conducted	Autumn 2022 – reported to Full Council on 13 December 2022
Election held on new borough and parish wards	May 2023

5. Relationship to the Corporate Strategy and Service Plan

- 5.1 A CGR supports the strategic priority of local, open, participative government.

6. Implications of decision

6.1 Resource (Finance, procurement, staffing, IT)

The cost of implementing the proposed changes will be met within existing budgets. Resourcing will be met from within the current team resources.

The council tax precepts from parish and town councils will be impacted due to the changes proposed.

- Council tax bases which are used to calculate council tax precepts for towns and parishes will need to be updated.
- Where numbers of parish council members are changing, if members allowances are due there will be an impact on the annual budget requirement.
- Residents which will be moving across boundaries, therefore paying council tax for different parish/town councils.

6.2 Risk management

The CGR was embarked upon as a result of proposals from Farnham and Godalming Town Councils during the Boundary Review relating to the coterminosity of borough and town wards which could not be accommodated in that review. As part of the CGR, all town and parishes were asked if there were any amendments they would like to make to their councils and administrative areas. Several parishes asked for amendments to be made. There are

reputational risks involved in refusing all amendments or not considering the proposals in good faith.

6.3 Legal

The Community Governance Review must be conducted in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and associated statutory guidance from central government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).

6.4 Equality, diversity and inclusion

An Equality Impact screening assessment was undertaken which indicated that there were no equality, diversity or inclusion implications resulting from the recommendations contained in this report.

6.5 Climate emergency declaration

There are no climate emergency impacts.

7. Consultation and engagement

7.1 A communications plan, including social media, website, press releases and direct mail to certain stakeholders was undertaken at both consultation stages.

7.2 The Terms of Reference (Annexe 3) set out the list of consultees the Council would inform during the consultation periods. These consultees were informed of both consultation periods and were invited to submit representations.

8. Other options considered

8.1 The Council may decide to make no changes to the parish and town councils within the Borough area. If this option is chosen, boundary changes would be implemented in the town council areas (Farnham, Godalming and Haslemere) in line with the current proposals in the LGBCE final recommendations.

8.2 If the Council decides to accept some of the recommendations but does not seek consent from the LGBCE, the electoral wards would not be coterminous, and it would be harder to administer both Borough and Parish elections. Furthermore, it is not possible to make any changes without consent from the LGBCE where they have set out the arrangements for a parish or town council.

9. Governance journey

9.1 The Executive is asked to make a recommendation to Full Council.

Annexes:

Annexe 1 – Summary of responses and Final Recommendations

Annexe 2 – Table of final recommendations

Annexe 3 – Terms of Reference

Background Papers

There are no background papers, as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972).

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Agreed and signed off by:
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Strategic Director: 20/06/22
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