

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Council - 1 April 2014

Report of Chief Officer for Legal and Governance

Status: For Decision

Also considered by: Governance Committee – 13 March 2014

Key Decision: No

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Fleming

Contact Officer(s) Ian Bigwood – Ext. 7242

Recommendation to Governance committee: That it be recommended to Council that

- (a) a community governance review be undertaken in the Parish of Shoreham to investigate the creation of a new parish ward;
- (b) a community governance review be undertaken to investigate the boundary between the parishes of Chevening and Sevenoaks Weald in the vicinity of Bowzell Green; and
- (c) the terms of reference for the review set out in appendix C to the report be adopted.

Recommendation to Council: That

- (a) that a community governance review be undertaken in the Parish of Shoreham to investigate the creation of a new parish ward;
- (b) that a community governance review be undertaken to investigate the boundary between the parishes of Chevening and Sevenoaks Weald in the vicinity of Bowzell Green; and
- (c) that the terms of reference for the review set out in appendix C to the report be adopted.

Reason for recommendation: representations have been received from Shoreham Parish Council to create a new ward of the parish and from Chevening Parish Council to amend its boundary.

Introduction

- 1 District Councils are required to keep parish council governance under constant review. Representations have been received from the parish councils of Shoreham and Chevening.
- 2 Notwithstanding that a community governance review for the whole of the Sevenoaks District was carried out in 2012, there is an opportunity to deal with these requests and make any recommended changes in time for the local government elections in May 2015.

Shoreham Parish Council Proposal

- 3 The Shoreham Parish Council proposal to create an additional ward (The Romney Street Ward) of the parish is at appendix A and a map showing the proposed boundary is at appendix B (the plotted parish boundaries are effective from 1st April 2015). The number of electors within the proposed new ward is 159 (February 2014). There is support from one of the local District Council members and there appears to be support from some local residents.

Recommendation

- 4 There appears to be sufficient interest in the creation of a new parish ward for the District Council to undertake a community governance review. The District Council is required to consult interested parties. There are costs involved in having wards within parishes (e.g. separate elections) so it is suggested that all households within the Parish of Shoreham are written to, asking for their views on this proposal.

Chevening Parish Council Proposal

- 5 The occupants of four properties in the Bowzell Green area have suggested they transfer from Chevening Parish into Sevenoaks Weald Parish as they have a greater affinity with the Weald community. Both Chevening Parish Council and Sevenoaks Weald Parish Council support the proposal.

Recommendation

- 6 This is a minor proposal from a handful of residents which has the support of the two parish councils involved. A community governance review can be held alongside the Shoreham Parish Council review.

Recommendation

- 7 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (LGPIH) requires the District Council to draw up terms of reference for a community governance review. The review begins when the District Council publishes the terms of reference. The suggested terms are attached as appendix C and include a timetable for the review and intended consultees.

Key Implications

Financial

There are no cost implications for the District Council in conducting a community governance review apart from staff resources.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

District Councils are required to keep parish council governance under review. There is an opportunity to review these two matters before the next scheduled parish council elections.

Equality Impacts

Part of the purpose of the LGPIH is to ensure that from time to time a review of boundaries is undertaken to bring about better local democracy and fair representation within communities. The review therefore has a positive contribution of promoting equality.

Conclusions

The proposals from Shoreham and Chevening Parish Councils appear to have merit and it seems sensible for the District Council to conduct a community governance review ahead of the next full parish council elections in May 2015 when any amendments to existing arrangements can be made effective.

Appendices

Appendix A – Shoreham Parish Council proposal

Appendix B – Proposed boundary of Romney Street Ward

Appendix C – Proposed terms of reference

Background Papers:

[Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007](#)

[Guidance on community governance reviews \(published jointly by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Electoral Commission\) – April 2008](#)

Christine Nuttall
Chief Officer for Legal and Governance