

Committee: Council

Agenda Item

Date: 26 July 2016

12

Title: Community Governance Reviews 2016/17

Author: Peter Snow, Democratic and Electoral
Services Manager, 01799 510430

Item for decision

Summary

1. This report sets out for approval a proposed programme of community governance reviews (CGRs) in 2016/17. It follows an approach already received from Little Easton Parish Council and a more recent approach from Little Canfield Parish Council.

Recommendations

2. To agree to conduct a statutory review of parish arrangements at Little Canfield and Takeley with particular reference to the Priors Green development. The review will be referred to the Electoral Working Group to determine the timing of a CGR, consider the options for any change and to make recommendations. Approval to conduct a review of the parishes of Little Easton and Great Dunmow has already been given but the review has been delayed until the outcome of the planning appeal for housing development currently lodged with the Secretary of State becomes known.

Financial Implications

3. *None. There are no costs associated with the recommendation. There will be some printing costs but it is expected these can be accommodated within existing budgets and the CGR will inevitably eat up a great deal of officer time. This can be factored in to existing service plans.*

Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

Email from Little Canfield Parish Council dated 5 May 2016 requesting a CGR and published guidance

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	Full consultation will be undertaken as part of the CGR process
Community Safety	None

Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	Great Dunmow North, Takeley, and Thaxted and the Eastons
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

6. A formal approach has been received from Little Canfield Parish Council for a review to be carried out of parish arrangements at Little Canfield and Takeley with particular reference to the Priors Green development. The parish council has not identified a proposed review outcome.
7. The Council has powers available under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to take decisions about parish arrangements and to implement any changes agreed by order. The matters that may be reviewed include the creation or abolition of parishes, the alteration of boundaries of existing parishes, and changes to the electoral arrangements of a parish council.
8. The purpose of a community governance review is to ensure that parish boundaries continue to reflect local identities and result in effective and convenient local government.
9. A CGR was carried out several years ago at Priors Green, at a fairly early stage of the development, but it was not possible at that time to identify a solution that met the test of widespread public support. Members will of course be aware that the development area known as Priors Green is divided between the two parishes and that further provision of new housing is continuing.
10. The method used in conducting the CGR will be to consult widely in the local community, propose alternative options for consideration, and find an agreed solution that is able to command widespread support. If it proves possible to achieve an accepted solution the Council is able to approve new parish arrangements by order bringing those arrangements into effect. If a change of parish boundaries is agreed it will be necessary to agree revised parish electoral arrangements. Depending on the timetabling of that change it might be necessary to arrange for a new election of parish councillors earlier than the scheduled date of 2019.

11. District ward boundaries are unlikely to be affected as both parishes fall within the same ward. In any case, the definition and implementation of district wards falls within the province of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
12. If the Secretary of State determines the outstanding planning appeal for the development of land to the west of Woodlands Park, it might prove possible to run a CGR to review the parishes of Great Dunmow and Little Easton in tandem with the Priors Green review.
13. The likely timing is that a CGR can be commenced in late summer or early autumn of 2016 and proposals for any change brought back for consideration in early 2017.

Risk Analysis

14.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
2 – parish arrangements do not reflect community interests or identities	3 – if a review does not take place there is significant risk of parish arrangements not reflecting community interests	2- if parish arrangements do not reflect community interests, this may lead to a loss of identity or involvement in parish affairs	Undertaking a full CGR will ensure that public views can be made known, and community interests and identities can be identified and taken into account in making recommendations

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.