

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS

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Wards affected: Lacey Green
Bledlow Cum Saunderton

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

That approval be given for Community Governance Reviews to take place in the parishes of Lacey Green and Bledlow Cum Saunderton.

Executive Summary

1. Wycombe District Council, as principal Council, must decide whether to undertake a Community Governance Review (CGR) to amend the electoral arrangements of the parish council(s). If it is agreed that a CGR is to be carried out, WDC must publish terms of reference and undertake a consultation of local residents and other interested parties
2. The Council will then consider the responses to the review and decide whether changes are to be made. If agreed, the change would be effective from January 2019
3. Lacey Green Parish Council, owners of two properties and a land owner on the boundary between Lacey Green and Bledlow Cum Saunderton Parish Councils have requested that the properties be moved from Lacey Green Parish Council to Bledlow Cum Saunderton. If agreed, this will require a consequential request being made to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to amend the ward boundary accordingly.

Corporate Implications

4. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enables a principal authority to carry out a Community Governance review of the electoral arrangements of the parishes within its area.

Financial Implications

5. There is no specific budget for CGRs. The anticipated cost will be the printing and postage of consultation leaflets/letters to local electors and other interested parties. Unless otherwise agreed, the full cost must be met by the District Council as there is no power to recharge to a Parish Council or any other Council.

Equalities Implications

6. Improvement of the electoral arrangements for the parish communities.

Sustainable Community Strategy/Council Priorities - Implications

7. The arrangements for elections underpin all the Council's activities and priorities.

Background and Issues

8. A principal Council may not carry out a review of its ward boundaries, as this is the responsibility of the Boundary Commission for England. However the electoral arrangements of a Parish Council may be altered by a principal Council as the result of a CGR either as a result of a petition, or at the request of the Parish Council itself or a local Member.
9. The decision to amend parish electoral arrangements cannot be taken by a principal Council without undertaking a CGR. A principal council does have the authority to refuse to undertake a CGR if it feels there would be absolutely no benefit to the community by such a review, but in the majority of cases, a review will be undertaken, even if the outcome of the review is to make no changes.

Consultation

10. At this stage, no consultation has taken place. However should approval be given to undertake a CGR, a formal consultation will be initiated as part of each review.

Options

11. The Council is obliged to decide formally whether or not to undertake these reviews

Conclusions

12. If the CGRs are approved, the Council will undertake both in accordance with The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and guidance provided by the Local Government Boundary Commission.

Next Steps

13. Following approval, the reviews will be commenced within two months.
14. Draft and final proposals will be brought back to this Committee after the consultation periods.
15. If agreed, any changes will become effective from January 2019

Background Papers

The formal requests received from the parish council and residents are held in Electoral Services.