



**REPORT TO:** Civic Affairs Committee

29 October 2019

**LEAD OFFICER:** Head of Sustainable Communities and Wellbeing

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## **Community Governance Review Thriplow Parish Council**

### **Executive Summary**

1. To consider a request from Thriplow Parish Council for a Community Governance Review to change the number of parish councillors representing each parish ward, with the overall number of parish councillors remaining the same.
2. The review is to consider whether the existing balance of representation should change from Thriplow Village parish ward currently being represented by 7 councillors and the Heathfield parish ward currently being represented by 2 councillors. The Parish Council has proposed that the Thriplow Village ward should be represented by 5 councillors and that the Heathfield ward should be represented by 4 councillors.

### **Key Decision**

No

### **Recommendations**

3. It is recommended that the Committee:
  - (a) agrees the request from Thriplow Parish Council for a Community Governance Review to consider changing the number of parish councillors representing each of the parish wards.
  - (b) agrees, with or without amendments, the draft terms of reference (Appendix A); and
  - (c) agrees, with or without amendments, the proposed timetable set out in the draft terms of reference.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

4. Thriplow Parish Council have requested a Community Governance review to consider the number of parish councillors representing each parish ward to more accurately reflect the numbers in the electorate of each parish ward.

## Details

5. A request has been received from Thriplow Parish Council that representation should change from Thriplow Village ward being represented by 7 councillors and Heathfield ward being represented by 2 councillors, to Thriplow Village ward being represented by 5 councillors and Heathfield ward being represented by 4 councillors. The request was received on 2 May 2019.
6. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (“the 2007 Act”) provides for a Principal Council to conduct a review of the community governance arrangements for the whole or part of its area for the purpose of considering whether or not to make any changes to Parish boundaries or size, and/or the creation of new parishes; and the review of the electoral arrangements for new and/or existing parishes. Section 93 of the 2007 Act allows principal councils to decide how to undertake such a review, provided that they comply with the duties in the Act which apply to councils undertaking reviews. If, following a review, the Council decides that changes should be made to the electoral arrangements they may make an Order giving effect to the changes.

## Considerations

7. The current electorate for Thriplow Parish is 897<sup>i</sup> and the existing number of parish councillors is 9. Thriplow Village ward currently has an electorate of 385 and is represented by 7 parish councillors. The Heathfield ward currently has an electorate of 512 and is represented by 2 parish councillors as represented in Table 1.
8. There is no expectation that electorate numbers will change significantly in the next 5 years<sup>ii</sup>.
9. The Parish Council has requested that the balance of parish councillors be updated to give the Village Ward 5 Councillors and the Heathfield Ward 4 Councillors in order to better reflect the electorate numbers in each parish ward.

**Table 1: Thriplow: Current Electorate Numbers and Representation by Ward**

Thriplow - Current	WARDS				Total
	Thriplow		Heathfield		
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Proportion</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Proportion</i>	
Electors	385	43%	512	57%	897
Parish Councillors	7	78%	2	22%	9

**Table 2: Thriplow: Current Electorate Numbers and Proposed Representation for Consideration by Ward.**

PARISH:  Thriplow - Proposed	WARDS				Total
	Thriplow		Heathfield		
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Proportion</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Proportion</i>	
Electors	385	43%	512	57%	897
Parish Councillors	5	56%	4	44%	9

10. If a principal council decides that a parish should be warded, it should give consideration to the levels of representation between each ward. That is to say, the number of councillors to be elected from each ward and the number of electors they represent. (*LGBCE: Guidance on Community Governance Reviews: 165*)
11. The LGBCE offers no specific guidelines for what might constitute significant differences in levels of representation; each case will need to be considered on its merits. Principal councils should be mindful that, for the most part, parish wards are likely to be significantly smaller than district or London borough wards. As a consequence, imbalances expressed in percentage terms may be misleading, disguising the fact that high variations between the number of electors per councillor could be caused by only a few dozen electors. (*LGBCE: Guidance on Community Governance Reviews: 167*).
12. Tables 3a, 3b and 3c below shows the numbers and proportions of parish councillors by ward and size of electorate for all warded parishes in SCDC. There has not been a recent review of any of the warded parishes in the district. The parish of Fen Ditton was warded by LGBCE in order to balance representation in County Council Elections and in view of planned developments in Fen Ditton West.

**Table 3a: Electorate Size and Parish Councillor Representation by Ward in Fen Ditton Parish.**

FEN DITTON PARISH	PARISH WARDS				Total
	FD East		FD West		
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	
Electors	588	95%	28	5%	616
Parish Councillors	6	67%	3	33%	9

**Table 3b: Electorate Size and Parish Councillor Representation by Ward in Little Wilbraham Parish.**

LITTLE WILBRAHAM PARISH	PARISH WARDS				Total
	Little Wilbraham		Six Mile Bottom		
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	
Electors	238	69%	105	31%	343
Parish Councillors	5	71%	2	29%	7

**Table 3c: Electorate Size and Parish Councillor Representation by Ward in Great and Little Chishill Parish.**

GREAT CHISELL PARISH	PARISH WARDS				Total
	Great Chishill		Little Chishill		
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	
Electors	457	90%	50	10%	507
Parish Councillors	6	86%	1	14%	7

## Options

13. The Committee could resolve to commence a Community Governance Review to consider changing the number of parish councillors representing the Thriplow Village and Heathfield wards of Thriplow parish. Alternatively, the Committee could decide that a Community Governance Review at this time is not necessary.
14. Should the Committee agree to commence a Community Governance Review of the parish of Thriplow, they will need to:
  - (a) agree, with or without amendments, the draft terms of reference (Appendix A); and
  - (b) agree the timetable set out in the draft terms of reference or set an alternative timetable.

## Implications

### Legal

15. By section 82 the 2007 Act Councils have a discretionary power to undertake a CGR.

Section 93 the 2007 Act states the following duties of a Council in undertaking a review:

“(1) The principal council must comply with the duties in this section when undertaking a community governance review.

(2) But, subject to those duties, it is for the principal council to decide how to undertake the review.

(3) The principal council must consult the following—

(a) the local government electors for the area under review;

(b) any other person or body (including a local authority) which appears to the principal council to have an interest in the review.

(4) The principal council must have regard to the need to secure that community governance within the area under review—

(a) reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area, and

(b) is effective and convenient.

(5) In deciding what recommendations to make, the principal council must take into account any other arrangements (apart from those relating to parishes and their institutions)—

(a) that have already been made, or

(b) that could be made,

for the purposes of community representation or community engagement in respect of the area under review.

(6) The principal council must take into account any representations received in connection with the review.

(7) As soon as practicable after making any recommendations, the principal council must—

(a) publish the recommendations; and

(b) take such steps as it considers sufficient to secure that persons who may be interested in the review are informed of those recommendations.

(8) The principal council must conclude the review within the period of 12 months starting with the day on which the council receives the community governance petition or community governance application.”

These duties are reflected within the Terms of Reference agreed by Committee prior to commencement and must be considered in making a decision.

Section 100(1) of the 2007 Act empowered the Secretary of State to issue guidance as to the carrying out of CGRs. By section 100(4) of the Act, the Council is obliged to have regard to any such guidance issued.

The currently relevant Guidance was published the DCLG in March 2010 (“the Guidance”).

## **Staffing**

16. Staff time will be required to carry out the review and has been allocated within the Sustainable Communities and Wellbeing Service Plan for 2019/20. The time will be spent consulting interested parties, taking account of any representations received and reporting back to the Committee.

## **Risks/Opportunities**

17. Undertaking a Community Governance review will give Thriplow and Heathfield residents the opportunity to engage with local democracy and determine how they wish to be represented in future. There is a risk to SCDC of not providing effective governance.

## **Equality and Diversity**

18. The Council will work with Thriplow Parish Council to identify and consult with interested parties. The Community Governance Review will involve formal consultation with the Local Member for Thriplow.

## **Consultation responses**

19. The Chair and Clerk of Thriplow Parish Council and the local member have been made aware of this report.

## **Effect on Council Priority Areas**

### **A modern and caring Council**

20. Appropriate community governance arrangements will help the Council to sustain existing successful, vibrant villages and establish successful and sustainable new communities. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (Section 100(4)) requires principle councils to undertake Community Governance Reviews in accordance with the guidance below.

## **Background Papers**

The Local Boundary Commission for England: Guidance on Community Governance Review: March 2010.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: Draft Terms of Reference: Thriplow Community Governance Review 2019

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<sup>i</sup> Data from the 2018 Electoral Review as the 2019 Electoral Review is currently in progress and data is not yet available.

<sup>ii</sup> Greater Cambridge Housing Trajectory and Five-year Housing Land Supply: September: 2019