

<b>Council Meeting</b>		<b>Agenda Item:</b>
<b>Meeting Date</b>	27 April 2022	
<b>Report Title</b>	Community Governance Reviews	
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Roger Truelove	
<b>SMT Lead / Head of Service</b>	David Clifford – Head of Policy, Communications and Customer Services	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Keith Alabaster – Electoral Services Manager (acting)	
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>No</b>	
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>	
<b>Recommendations</b>	1. That Council approves the commencement of the Community Governance Review and approves the terms of reference.	

## 1. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report asks the Council to agree to conduct the community governance review and approve the terms of reference, which sets out how the review will be conducted, the timetable, and the proposed consultation arrangements.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The Council has a statutory duty under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to regularly review anomalous parish boundaries. Whilst it only has to commence a community governance review if a valid petition is received, it is good practice to undertake a review wherever anomalous parish boundaries have occurred.
- 2.2 A Community Governance Review can be undertaken for any of the following reasons:
- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
  - Amending the names and styles of parishes;
  - **Amending the boundaries and/or electoral arrangements of parishes;** or
  - Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.

For the purpose of this review, the proposal is only to review parish boundaries in the specified areas – see 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet point above.

- 2.2 Ward Members for Queenborough & Halfway and Murston have requested a review of anomalous parish boundaries. New housing developments, that are now occupied by residents, have parish boundaries dissecting parts of the developments. Access to these developments are exclusively through other parishes or unparished areas. This has led to neighbours being in a different

parish or in an unparished area and their voting arrangements are different for parish/town council elections. The areas to be reviewed are:

- **Lucas Close, Queenborough – Sheerness Town Council area.**
- **Great Easthall Estate, Murston – Tonge Parish area.**

### **3. Proposal**

3.1 The Council is asked to agree to conduct the community governance review and to agree to the terms of reference for the review (Appendix I), together with maps of the affected areas (Appendix II).

### **4. Alternative Options**

4.1 Council could choose not to commence the review. This option is not recommended in view of the duty in the 2007 Act to keep anomalous parish boundaries under regular review. Council could also agree an alternative terms of reference, but this is not recommended as any changes must be consistent with the statutory guidance.

### **5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

5.1 The Council has a statutory duty to consult electors and other persons or bodies with an interest. Those persons must be informed of any recommendations and the reasons for the decisions must be published. The terms of reference sets out how the Council proposes to consult as part of the review. The following groups and bodies will be consulted during the review:

- Local government electors in the areas that fall under the review.
- Parish councils/meetings.
- Borough and County Councillors.
- Kent County Council.
- Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC).
- The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBC) – borough ward boundaries will also need to be reviewed, so they are coterminous with any new parish boundaries.

### **6 Implications**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>
Corporate Plan	Conducting the review in a way which fulfils our statutory obligations as efficiently as possible while also encouraging all sections of the community to make their views known will contribute to the council's corporate Priority 4: Renewing local democracy and making the council fit for the future.
Financial, Resource and Property	The review will be financed through existing resources and £5,000 has been budgeted to conduct the review, within the Electoral Services budget.
Legal and Statutory	Chapter 3 of Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 devolves the power to take decisions about matters such as the creation of parishes, changes to parish boundaries and electoral arrangements including warding

	and numbers of parish councillors from the Secretary of State and the Electoral Commission to principal councils in England. Principal councils are also required to have regard to guidance on undertaking community governance reviews, which has been published by the Boundary Commission.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this time.
Sustainability and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None identified at this stage
Health & Wellbeing	None identified at this stage
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	In undertaking the consultation, the council will have regard to the joint statutory guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in respect of reflecting the identities and interests of the local community and that it is effective, convenient and accessible to everyone. A full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken by the council before any final decision is taken on the review.
Privacy and data protection	None identified at this time.

## 6 Appendices

6.1 The following appendices are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference CGR 2022
- Appendix 2 – Maps of CGR areas

## 7 Background Papers

Chapter 3 of Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The full text of the 2007 Act can be accessed at: [Local government and public involvement in health act 2007](#).

Guidance on Community Governance Review which is issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The guidance can be accessed at: [Guidance on community governance reviews](#).