

**DRAFT FOR USE AT COUNCIL, FEBRUARY 2017**

Forest Heath District Council

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**For a Community Governance Review of the parish arrangements for Forest Heath District**

**Background**

1. Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Forest Heath District Council has the power to carry out a Community Governance Review (CGR) and to create and amend parishes and their electoral arrangements within the District. More information on CGRs and the guidance and legislation which the District Council will follow in carrying out the review can be found at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-governance-reviews-guidance>.
2. A CGR is a review of the whole or part of the Council's area to consider one or more of the following:
  - (a) the creation, merger, alteration or abolition of parishes;
  - (b) the naming of parishes and the style of new parishes; and/or
  - (c) the electoral arrangements for parishes including:
    - (i) the ordinary year of election;
    - (ii) the number of councillors to be elected; and/or
    - (iii) the warding (if any) of the parish.
3. There may also be consequential impacts of the CGR on district council, county council and parliamentary electoral arrangements which will need to be considered as part of this review and/or in later separate reviews.
4. A CGR provides an opportunity for the Council to review and make changes to community governance within its area. Such reviews can be undertaken where there have been or will be changes in population or in reaction to specific, local issues to ensure that the community governance for the area continues to be effective and convenient and it reflects the identities and interests of the community. In this instance, the CGR will examine a mixture of issues which have been identified by the District Council itself or through earlier consultation on the scope of the review with parish councils and other stakeholders. These are set out at the end of this document.
5. A CGR should:
  - (a) improve community engagement;
  - (b) provide for more cohesive communities;
  - (c) provide better local democracy; and
  - (d) result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

6. Final recommendations should be adopted and published within 12 months of the date of publication of these terms of reference. Implementation of any agreed changes will be explained in a formal Order made thereafter. This will set out when and how any new arrangements will come into effect, including any consequential impacts.

### **Process**

7. The next stage of the review will be consultation on recommendations for each of the issues included in the review. After this consultation, a final decision will be made and the Council may change its recommendation in the light of the information received.
8. The District Council is responsible for conducting the review. The Council (i.e. all District Councillors) will be the ultimate decision-maker. The Council's officers will carry out the administrative aspects of the review.
9. After taking a decision as to the extent to which it will give effect to any recommendations made in the CGR, the Council must publish its decision and the reasons for taking that decision. It must also take sufficient steps to ensure that persons that may be interested in the CGR are informed of the decision and the reasons for it. The key issue is transparency and who should be so informed will depend on the circumstances of each case. There are then statutory procedures which the Council must follow in making the consequential reorganisation order.
10. Official notices for the CGR, including this terms of reference, will be published on the Council's website.

### **Consultation**

11. When undertaking a CGR the Council is required to consult local government electors in the areas affected by the CGR and other persons or bodies which appear to the Council to have an interest in the CGR. These will include directly affected parish, town, district and county councils, MPs, other public sector bodies and, where appropriate, local businesses and voluntary and community organisations.
12. The Council will also publicise the review by a variety of methods, and encourage partners to do so. Relevant *organisations* will be consulted by letter or email. However, given the variation in the type and scale of issues under consideration, the Council proposes to consult with *local government electors* for the area by using two different methods of consultation, which it believes is a proportionate and equitable approach:
  - (a) Where specific properties may be directly affected by a proposal to transfer them between two *existing* parish council areas (without creating a new parish), the Council will attempt to write to each affected household or business to seek their views;
  - (b) Where a proposal relates to electoral arrangements affecting a whole parish and all of the electors in it (e.g. creation of new parishes,

splitting a parish into two separate parishes, parish wards, number of councillors, etc), the Council will consult electors primarily by way of an online survey. There is, however, no requirement to use the online survey to take part, and people may respond to the Council at the addresses given below by letter, email, telephone, petition or local survey instead.

13. The consultation period and associated publicity for the CGR will start in March 2017 and run until 5pm on Friday, 19 May 2017.
14. Before or at the start of this final consultation, the Council will:
  - publish these terms of reference for the review;
  - publish final recommendations in accordance with the terms of the Act;
  - publish electorate forecasts, where applicable to the matters under consideration; and
  - publish mapping to explain final recommendations, where applicable.

This and all other information relating to the CGR, including how to respond, will be available on the Council's website at <http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/CGR>.

15. All correspondence and queries in relation to the CGR should be directed to:

Job Title: Elections Manager

Postal Address: FHDC, District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall, Suffolk IP28 7EY

Email : ([cgr@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:cgr@westsuffolk.gov.uk))

Phone: Elections helpline 01284 757131

### **Timetable**

16. An illustrative timetable for the CGR is as follows:

1	Council considers terms of reference and decides on final recommendations for each issue in the review	22 February 2017
2	Publish terms of reference	March 2017
3	Publish and consult upon final recommendations	March to May 2017 (ending at 5pm on 19 May, 2017)
4	Council decides on the extent it will give effect to the recommendations, reflecting the outcome of consultation, and resolves to make any Order required to implement them	June or July 2017 meeting of Council

5	Publish decision on final recommendations	By end of August 2017
6	Order produced	As soon as practicable after publication of decision on final recommendations.

17. The timetable above may change as the review progresses.

**Matters under review**

18. The following table sets out the issues which will be examined in this CGR and on which comments are requested.

**TO BE COMPLETED AFTER COUNCIL MEETING ON 22 FEBRUARY 2017 –  
SEE COUNCIL REPORT**

No	Area or Properties Under Review	Parishes Directly Affected	Matters on which CGR will or could focus
1		•	
2		•	
3		•	

**Date of Publication of these Terms of Reference**

xxxxx 2017