

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF THE STROUD DISTRICT

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Stroud District Council is carrying out a whole District Community Governance Review (CGR) in accordance with Part 4, Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 1.2 The Council is required to have regard to the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. This guidance has been considered when drawing up these terms of reference.

2. What is a Community Governance Review?

- 2.1 A CGR provides an opportunity to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries, which reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government. It can take place for the whole or part of the District to consider one or more of the following:
- (a) Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
 - (b) The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes;
 - (c) The electoral arrangements for parishes including:
 - the ordinary year of election;
 - the number of councillors to be elected; and
 - the warding (if any) of the parish
 - (d) Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes
- 2.2 The Council is required to ensure that community governance within the area under review will be:
- (a) Reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and
 - (b) Is effective and convenient
- 2.3 In doing so, the community governance review is required to take into account:
- (a) The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
 - (b) The size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish

3. Why undertake a Community Governance Review

- 3.1 Following a review of Stroud's district wards by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, a number of changes were introduced in May 2016. Whilst the Commission did not carry out a review of the parish or town councils in the district, they did agree some changes which amended the warding arrangements of the parish/town councils of Cam, Stonehouse, Stroud Town and Wotton-under-Edge.
- 3.2 The Council also wishes to undertake a CGR for the whole of the District in response to suggestions made by some parish/town councils due to population changes and shifts in 'natural settlements' caused by new development.
- 3.3 Government guidance states that it is good practice to conduct a full CGR at least every 10 to 15 years. The Council therefore wishes to review the changes outlined above to ensure that there is clarity and transparency to the areas that parish councils represent and that the electoral arrangements of parishes (the warding arrangements and the allocations of councillors) are appropriate, equitable and understood by their electorate.

4. Who will undertake the Review?

- 4.1 As the relevant principal authority, Stroud District Council is responsible for conducting any CGR within its electoral area. The Council will oversee the review and produce draft and final recommendations; Full Council will approve the final recommendations before a Community Governance Order (Order) is made.

5. Areas under review

- 5.1 The whole of the Stroud District area will be included in the CGR. The review will not automatically mean there will be changes but it will see if there is a case for change. The Council is not seeking a particular solution at this stage. It wishes to test views and assess what solutions are the right ones to pursue with each individual parish.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 The Council is required to consult the local government electors for the area under review and any other person or body who appears to have an interest in the review and to take the representations that are received into account. The Council will also identify any other person or body who it feels may have an interest in the review and write to them inviting them to submit their views at all stages of the consultation.
- 6.2 Before making any recommendations or publishing final proposals, a full consultation process will form part of the review to take full account of the views of local people and other stakeholders. The Council will comply with the statutory consultative requirements by:

- (a) consulting local government electors for the area under review;
- (b) consulting any other person or body (including a local authority) which appears to the Council to have an interest in the review;
- (c) notifying and consulting Gloucestershire County Council; and
- (d) taking into account any representations received in connection with the review.

6.3 The Council will publicise the review by displaying a notice at the Council Offices and on the Council's website. The Council will also write to all parish councils or any other community or resident groups of which the Council is aware, the Gloucestershire Association of Local Councils, District Councillors and the relevant County Councillors, the MP's and Gloucestershire County Council.

6.4 Information about each stage of the review will be published on the Council's website with key documents available at:

Stroud District Council Offices, Ebley Mill, Ebley Wharf, Stroud, GL5 4UB

(Opening hours: 8.45am to 5.00pm Monday to Thursday and 8.45am to 4.30pm on Friday)

7. Indicative timetable for the Community Governance Review

7.1

Details	Dates
Commencement of CGR – Terms of Reference published	3 September 2018
Initial consultation stage	3 September – 26 November 2018
Draft recommendations prepared	December – February 2018
Draft recommendations published	18 February 2019
Consultation on draft recommendations	18 February – 6 May 2019
Final recommendations prepared	May – June 2019
Final Recommendations considered and approved by full Council	18 July 2019
Community Governance Order(s) made	August – October 2019
New community governance arrangements come into force	May 2020 local council elections

7.2 Any Community Governance Order made following a CGR should, for administrative and financial reasons (for example setting up a new parish council and arranging for its first precept) take effect on the 1st April following the date on which the Order is made. Electoral arrangements will come into force at the first elections to any new parish council following the making of the Order.

8. Electorate Forecasts

- 8.1 The June 2018 Register has been used to produce existing parish ward electorate figures, which are set out in Annexe A.
- 8.2 When the Council comes to consider electoral arrangements for the parish councils in its area, it is required to consider any change in the number or distribution of electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the Review starts.
- 8.3 Electorate forecasts have been prepared using information contained in the Local Plan to produce five-year forecasts, details of which are set out in Annexe A.

9. The present structure of parish councils and their electoral arrangements

- 9.1 As well as electorate information, Annexe A includes information regarding the following:
 - (a) Type of governance; e.g. parish/town council, joint council or parish meeting,
 - (b) Current number of parish councillors
 - (c) Ratio of current councillors to electorate,
 - (d) District Ward
 - (e) County Division
 - (f) Current Parliamentary Constituency.

10. Consequential Matters

- 10.1 When all the required consultation has been undertaken and the review completed the Council may make an Order to bring into effect any decision that it may make. If the Council decides to take no action then it will not be necessary to make an Order.
- 10.2 If an Order is made it may be necessary to cover certain consequential matters in that Order. These may include:
 - (a) the transfer and management or custody of any property
 - (b) the setting of a precept (council tax levy) for the new parish council
 - (c) provision with respect to the transfer of any functions, property, rights and liabilities
 - (d) Provision for the transfer of staff, compensation for loss of office, pensions and other staffing matters.
- 10.3 The Council will also take into account the requirements of the Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008 when calculating the budget requirement of any new parish councils when setting the council tax levy to be charged.

11. Representations

11.1 Stroud District Council welcomes representations during the specified consultation stages as set out in the timetable from any person or body who may wish to comment or make proposals on any aspect of the matters included within the Review.

11.2 Representations may be made in the following ways:

Online: Using the online submission form at
www.stroud.gov.uk/elections

By Email: elections@stroud.gov.uk

By post: Electoral Services (CGR)
Stroud District Council
Ebley Mill
Ebley Wharf
Stroud
GL5 4UB