



Christchurch Borough Community Governance Review Consultation Paper



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SECTION 1

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Christchurch Borough Council, at its meeting on Thursday 16 November 2017 resolved that a Community Governance Review be conducted for those parts of the borough of Christchurch, as defined in Section 4 of this document, in accordance with Part 4, Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. 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.
- 1.2 This consultation document is divided into two sections. Section 1 provides background to the review process and explains how the review will be undertaken. Section 2 details the specific topics for consideration by the review and poses a series of questions to assist those wishing to make representations.

2 What is a Community Governance Review?

- 2.1 A community governance review is a process which invites the public and other interested parties to comment upon and submit suggestions about the most suitable way of representing local communities.
- 2.2 A community governance review offers the opportunity to review and put in place, or make changes to, community governance systems and structures. This can be done by 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 (e.g., the ordinary year of election; council size, the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding); and
 - (d) Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.
- 2.3 The Council is required to ensure that community governance within the area under review will:-
- (a) be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and
 - (b) be effective and convenient.
- 2.4 In assessing this criteria, 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.

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- 2.5 The aim of the review is to bring about improved and stronger community engagement, more cohesive communities, better local democracy and more effective and convenient delivery of local services; ensuring electors across the whole Borough are treated equitably and fairly.

3 Why undertake this Community Governance Review?

- 3.1 This review is taking place following a decision made at Council on 16 November 2017 and is partly in response to the Secretary of State's minded-to decision to re-organise the principal local authority structure within Dorset.
- 3.2 The Council believes that parish councils and parish meetings play an important role in terms of community empowerment at the local level and wants to ensure that parish governance within the Borough continues to be robust, representative and enabled to meet new challenges. Furthermore, it wants 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 readily understood by their electorate.

4 Areas to be reviewed

- 4.1 The Community Governance Review includes all parts of the Christchurch Borough Area.

5 Who will undertake the Review?

- 5.1 Christchurch Borough Council is responsible for conducting the review. The Council has established an elected Member working group which will be responsible for making both draft and final recommendations during the process. In coming to its recommendation in the Review, the Council will need to take account of the views of local people. A full consultation process will form part of the Review to obtain these views.
- 5.2 The Borough Council will publicise the review by displaying a notice at the Civic Offices, placing articles on the Council's website and in the Council's magazine, Christchurch Courier or in local newspapers. The Council will also write to all relevant parish councils, the Dorset Association of Town and Parish Councils, Residents Associations, Dorset County Council, Borough Councillors and the relevant County Councillors and MP.
- 5.3 The Council will be required to approve the final recommendations prior to the Community Governance Order being made.

6 Timetable for the review

- 6.1 An extract of the timetable for the review is included at Appendix 1 to this consultation document. The programme and timeline may be adjusted after representations have been received from local people and bodies in response to the initial public consultation. This will allow the Council a degree of flexibility in the interests of ensuring that it manages the review process efficiently. Any adjustments to the programme and timetable will be approved by the Council and published on its website.
- 6.2 The review will include four key stages:-
Stage One – Invitation of Initial submissions
Stage Two – Consideration of Initial submissions
Stage Three – Publish Draft Recommendations for Consultation
Stage Four – Final Recommendations
- 6.3 This document relates to Stage One of the process and is inviting initial submissions.

7 Electorate forecasts for the Borough

- 7.1 The Review will be conducted using electoral data taken from the December 2017 electoral register.
- 7.2 When the Council comes to consider the electoral arrangements of the parishes in its area, it is required to consider any change in the number or distribution of the electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts. Electorate forecasts have been prepared by the Council using extant planning permissions and the Local Plan to project the five-year electorate forecast.
- 7.3 It is the government's guidance that these forecasts should be made available to all interested parties as early as possible in the review process, so that they are available to all who may wish to make representations. The electorate forecasts are therefore set out in Appendix 2 to this consultation document.

8 Representations

- 8.1 Christchurch Borough Council welcomes all representations from any person or body who may wish to comment or make proposals on any aspect of the matters under review. Representations that are received will be taken into account by judging them against the criteria in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 8.2 All initial submissions and representations must be made by 23 February 2018.

8.3 Representations may be sent by email to cgr@christchurchandeastdorset.gov.uk

Representations may also be returned to:

Electoral Services
Christchurch Borough Council
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Christchurch
Dorset BH23 1AZ.

Please entitle your response '*Christchurch Borough Community Governance Review 2017/18 – Initial Submission*'.

- 8.4 It would be helpful if you could make clear in your response whether you represent an organisation or group, and in what capacity you are responding.
- 8.5 All representations received will be published, as will the reasons for accepting or rejecting any such representations. In accordance with the Act, representations received in connection with the Review will be taken into account, and steps will be taken to notify consultees of the outcome of the Review.
- 8.6 An electronic version of this consultation paper is available to download from our web site, together with a Microsoft Word version of the consultation response form. Visit www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/426208 or scan the QR code on the front of this paper.

9 Publication of responses – confidentiality and data protection

- 9.1 Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published, or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes.
- 9.2 If you want any information you provide to be treated as confidential, you should be aware that under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply, and which deals with, amongst other things, obligations of confidence. In view of this, it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential.
- 9.3 If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give any assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by IT systems will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Council.

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- 9.4 Christchurch Borough Council will process your personal data in accordance with Data Protection legislation and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

10 How will the results be disseminated?

- 10.1 The Council will publish full details on the Council's website; press releases will be issued at key points and key documents will be on deposit at the council offices.

SECTION 2

11 Scope of the Review

11.1 The review must make a series of recommendations based on the following topics, some of which are dependent upon and relate to each other.

(a) Parish Areas

- creating, merging and abolishing parishes;
- alternative styles for any new parishes;
- lesser boundary alterations between existing parishes;
- changes to parish names;
- grouping parishes under a common council.

(b) Electoral Arrangements

- whether to have a parish council or not;
- the size of the council;
- whether to ward the parish or not;
- drawing up appropriate ward boundaries;
- allocating councillors to wards.

11.2 Arising from the review, it may be necessary for the Council to consider a series of 'consequential matters' (where permitted) but these are not included within this initial submission consultation document.

11.3 This consultation document is structured to address the topic areas and assist with the development of recommendations required by the review. To assist those wishing to make representations, a series of questions are included in this document. Where applicable, these questions request respondents to indicate how they feel the proposals meet the Community Governance Review criteria. These criteria are referred to at paragraphs 2.3 of this document.

11.4 Furthermore, a separate annex of maps is available to assist with making representations. These maps show the existing parish arrangements for Hurn and Burton parishes. The remainder of the Borough, which is unparished, is shown through a series of maps for each polling district. These polling district areas should not be seen as a constraint when making a submission.

Parish Areas

12 Creating, merging and abolishing parishes, Alternative styles for any new parishes, and Lesser boundary alterations between existing parishes

12.1 The review must make recommendations as to what new parishes (if any) should be constituted in the area. A 'new parish' is defined in the legislation as:

- (a) establishing an unparished area as a parish;

- (b) aggregating one or more unparished areas with one or more parished areas;
- (c) aggregating parts of parishes;
- (d) amalgamating two or more parishes;
- (e) separating part of a parish.

12.2 Christchurch Borough Council currently has two parishes, Hurn and Burton. The remainder of the Borough is unparished.

12.3 If a new parish is constituted, the review must make recommendations as to the name of the new parish; whether or not the new parish should have a parish council, the electoral arrangements of that council and whether or not the new parish should have one of the alternative styles.

12.4 The Alternative Styles that may be applied to new parishes, in addition to parish or town, are:-

- (a) Community;
- (b) Neighbourhood; and
- (c) Village.

Question 1

Do you consider there is a requirement to establish a new parish by either:

- **establishing an unparished area as a parish,**
- **aggregating one or more unparished areas with one or more parished areas,**
- **aggregating parts of existing parishes,**
- **amalgamating two or more parishes, or**
- **separating parts of a parish or parishes?**

If yes, please provide details of the proposals including a map illustrating the proposed boundary, the reasons for the proposal and explain how you feel the proposal will:

- (a) be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and**
- (b) be effective and convenient.**

You should also include suggestions for a proposed parish name, whether the parish should have a council, whether the parish should have an alternative style and what electoral arrangements should apply.

12.5 The review must also make recommendations in relation to each of the existing parishes under review including whether those parishes should or should not be abolished; or whether the area of the existing parishes should be altered possibly due to recent developments.

Question 2

Do you feel that any existing parish area should be altered or abolished?

If yes, please provide details of the proposals including a map illustrating the proposed boundary changes, the reasons for the proposal and explain how the proposal will:-

- (a) be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and**
- (b) be effective and convenient.**

12.6 The review must also make recommendations as to whether or not the name of existing parishes should be changed.

Question 3

Do you feel that the name of an existing parish should be changed?

If yes, please provide details of the proposal and explain your reasons for the proposal.

13 Grouping parishes under a common council or dissolving groups

13.1 The two existing Parish Councils in Christchurch are not grouped with other Councils and as such the provisions for dissolving existing groups do not apply in this review. The review may, however, make recommendations as to whether or not grouping provisions should be made.

13.2 Where an application is received for a parish to be grouped with a neighbouring parish or parishes, an order to this effect may be made. However, parishes shall not be grouped without the consent of the parish meetings of each of the parishes in the proposed group.

Question 4

Do you consider that any parish should be grouped with another parish or other parishes?

If yes, please provide details of the proposals, the reasons for the proposal and explain how the proposal will:

- (a) be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and**
- (b) be effective and convenient.**

You should also include suggestions for a proposed name for the group, whether the group should have a council and what electoral arrangements should apply.

Electoral Arrangements

14 Whether to have a parish council or not

- 14.1 The guidance for undertaking Community Governance Reviews states that recommendations for the dissolution of parish councils are undesirable, unless they are in cases of parishes with very low populations or where boundary changes are reordering the parish structure.
- 14.2 Where the review makes recommendations that a parish should have a council or that an existing parish council should be retained, the review must also make recommendations with regard to the electoral arrangements or changes to electoral arrangements.
- 14.3 'Electoral arrangements' in relation to an existing or proposed parish council are defined as:
- (a) the ordinary year of elections – the year in which ordinary elections of parish councillors are to be held. Should any proposals be made for new parishes it is recommended that the ordinary year of elections would coincide with the ordinary elections for all other parishes within Christchurch (e.g., May 2019 and then every four years thereafter);
 - (b) the council size – the number of councillors to be elected to the council, or (in the case of a common council) the number of councillors to be elected to the council by local electors in each parish;
 - (c) parish warding – whether the parish should be divided into wards for the purpose of electing councillors. This includes considering the number and boundaries of any such wards, the number of councillors to be elected for any such wards and the name of any such wards.

Question 5

Do you feel that a new parish proposed in response to Question 1 should have a council?

If yes, please provide details of the proposals, the reasons for the proposal and explain how the proposal will:

- (a) be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and**
- (b) be effective and convenient.**

You should also include suggestions for a proposed name for the council and what electoral arrangements should apply (see paragraph 14.3).

15 The size of the council

- 15.1 Council size is the term used to describe the number of councillors to be elected to the whole council. The Local Government Act 1972, as amended, specifies that each parish council must have at least five councillors; there is no maximum number. There are no rules relating to the allocation of those councillors between parish wards but each parish ward, and each parish grouped under a common parish council, must have at least one parish councillor.
- 15.2 The National Association of Local Councils published guidelines (circular 1126) suggesting that the minimum number of councillors for any parish council should be seven with a maximum of twenty-five.
- 15.3 The council size should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and the pattern of communities. Regard should be given to the difficulty of attracting sufficient candidates to stand for election. In some parishes, this has led to repeated uncontested elections and/or a need to co-opt members in order to fill vacancies. A parish council's budget and planned or actual level of service provision may also be important factors in reaching conclusions on council size.
- 15.4 A series of datasets and other information regarding the parishes is set out at Appendix 2 to this document. This information should be taken into account when considering the electoral arrangements.

Question 6

Should the number of councillors on an existing council be changed?

If yes, please indicate what the proposed number of councillors should be and the reasons for the proposal.

16 Warding of Parishes

- 16.1 Parish warding is the division of a parish into wards for the purpose of electing councillors. This includes the number and boundaries of any wards, the number of councillors to be elected for any ward and the names of wards.
- 16.2 In considering whether or not a parish should be divided into wards, consideration must be given to whether:-
- (a) the number, or distribution of the local government electors for the parish would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
 - (b) it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented.
- 16.3 Each case should be considered on its merits, and on the basis of the information and evidence provided during the course of the review.

17 Drawing up appropriate ward boundaries

17.1 In reaching conclusions on the boundaries between parish wards, the review should take account of community identity and interests in the area, and consider whether any particular ties or linkages might be broken by the drawing of particular ward boundaries.

18 Allocating councillors to wards

18.1 Furthermore, if the review decides that a parish should be warded, consideration must be given to the levels of representation between each ward. It is an important democratic principle that each person's vote should be of equal weight so far as possible, having regard to other legitimate competing factors, when it comes to the election of councillors.

18.2 Whilst there is no provision in legislation that each parish councillor should represent a similar number of electors, guidance suggests that it is not in the interests of effective and convenient local government, either for voters or councillors, to have significant differences in levels of representation between different parish wards. Such variations could make it difficult, in workload terms, for councillors to adequately represent the interests of residents. There is also a risk that where one or more wards of a parish are over-represented by councillors, the residents of those wards (and their councillors) could be perceived as having more influence than others on the council.

18.3 Where a community governance review recommends that two or more parishes should be grouped under a common parish council, then the review must take into account the same considerations when considering the number of councillors to be elected by each parish within the group.

19 Ward names

19.1 Where parish wards are proposed, the review should give some thought to existing local or historic places so that, where appropriate, these are reflected and there should be a presumption in favour of ward names proposed by local interested parties.

Question 7

Do you consider the parish should be divided into parish wards?

If yes, please provide details of the proposals including a map illustrating the proposed ward boundary, the reasons for the proposal and explain how the proposal will make the election of councillors more practicable and convenient.

You should also include suggestions for proposed parish ward names and the number of councillors that should represent the electorate in each ward.

Community Governance Review - Consultation Timetable

Stage	Date/Timeline	Timescale	Outline of Activity
Stage One – Invite initial submissions	02/01/2018 to 23/02/2018	8 weeks	Initial submissions invited Consultation/Representations. Consultation with stakeholders
Stage Two – Consider submissions	26/02/2018 to 24/04/2018	8 weeks	Consideration of submissions received – draft recommendations prepared
Stage Three – Publish Draft Recommendations	25/05/2018 to 20/07/2018	8 weeks	Publish draft recommendations for further consultation.
Stage Four – Final Recommendations	23/07/2018 to 04/09/2018	5 weeks	Consideration of further submissions received and prepare final recommendations Council resolves to make a Reorganisation Order
Implementation	02/05/2019 (Elections)		Effective date of any changes to parish/town boundaries and electoral arrangements

Electorate Data and Projected 5 Year Forecast

Appendix 2

Polling District	Parish (if applicable)	Baseline December 2017		Projected 5 year Forecast		Number of Councillors	Electors per councillor
		Properties	Electorate	Properties	Electorate		
BW - Burton & Winkton	Burton parish	1,864	3,439	1,923	3,548	10	355
GRA - Grange No. 1		1,681	2,642	2,018	3,172		
GRB - Grange No. 2		532	901	542	918		
HCA - Highcliffe No. 1		743	1,177	743	1,177		
HCB - Highcliffe No. 2		1,648	1,989	1,785	2,154		
JUA - Jumpers No. 1		978	1,771	986	1,785		
JUB - Jumpers No.2		845	1,647	963	1,877		
MFA - Mundeford & Friars Cliff No.1		881	1,267	894	1,286		
MFB - Mundeford & Friars Cliff No.2		1,456	2,419	1,495	2,484		
MFC - Mundeford & Friars Cliff No. 3		408	607	408	607		
NHA - North Highcliffe & Walkford No. 1		524	974	524	974		
NHB - North Highcliffe & Walkford No.2		1,145	2,097	1,181	2,163		
POA - Portfield No.1		1,150	1,773	1,228	1,893		
POB - Portfield No.2		731	1,292	744	1,315		
POC - Portfield No. 3		172	282	212	348		
PSA - Purewell & Stanpit No.1		1,508	2,335	1,511	2,340		
PSB - Purewell & Stanpit No.2		641	1,118	641	1,118		
SCA - St Catherine's & Hurn No.1	Hurn parish	291	529	291	529	6	88
SCB - St Catherine's & Hurn No.2		745	1,332	747	1,336		
SCC - St Catherine's & Hurn No.3		794	1,496	804	1,515		
TCA - Town Centre No.1		1,515	2,267	1,681	2,515		
TCB - Town Centre No.2		938	1,287	957	1,313		
WHA - West Highcliffe No.1		1,330	2,152	1,459	2,361		
WHB - West Highcliffe No.2		1,614	2,807	1,620	2,817		
Total		24,134	39,600	25,357	41,545	16	

**Christchurch Community Governance Review – Initial Submission Consultation Response Form
(Deadline: Completed responses must be received not later than 23 February 2018)**

Name of person completing response:		Postal Address:	
Email Address:			
Organisation or Group (if applicable):			
In what capacity are you responding?			

Question 1	Response
<p>Do you consider there is a requirement to establish a new parish by either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● establishing an unparished area as a parish, ● aggregating one or more unparished areas with one or more parished areas, ● aggregating parts of existing parishes, ● amalgamating two or more parishes, or ● separating parts of a parish or parishes? <p>If yes, please provide details of the proposals including a map illustrating the proposed boundary, the reasons for the proposal and explain how you feel the proposal will:</p> <p>(a) be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and</p> <p>(b) be effective and convenient.</p> <p>You should also include suggestions for a proposed parish name, whether the parish should have a council, whether the parish should have an alternative style and what electoral arrangements should apply.</p>	

Question 2	Response
<p>Do you feel that any existing parish area should be altered or abolished?</p> <p>If yes, please provide details of the proposals including a map illustrating the proposed boundary changes, the reasons for the proposal and explain how the proposal will:-</p> <p>(a) be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and</p> <p>(b) be effective and convenient.</p>	
Question 3	Response
<p>Do you feel that the name of an existing parish should be changed?</p> <p>If yes, please provide details of the proposal and explain your reasons for the proposal.</p>	
Question 4	Response
<p>Do you consider that any parish should be grouped with another parish or other parishes?</p> <p>If yes, please provide details of the proposals, the reasons for the proposal and explain how the proposal will:</p> <p>(a) be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and</p> <p>(b) be effective and convenient.</p> <p>You should also include suggestions for a proposed name for the group, whether the group should have a council and what electoral arrangements should apply.</p>	

Question 5	Response
<p>Do you feel that a new parish proposed in response to Question 1 should have a council?</p> <p>If yes, please provide details of the proposals, the reasons for the proposal and explain how the proposal will:</p> <p>(a) be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and</p> <p>(b) be effective and convenient.</p> <p>You should also include suggestions for a proposed name for the council and what electoral arrangements should apply (see paragraph 14.3).</p>	
Question 6	Response
<p>Should the number of councillors on an existing council be changed?</p> <p>If yes, please indicate what the proposed number of councillors should be and the reasons for the proposal.</p>	
Question 7	Response
<p>Do you consider the parish should be divided into parish wards?</p> <p>If yes, please provide details of the proposals including a map illustrating the proposed ward boundary, the reasons for the proposal and explain how the proposal will make the election of councillors more practicable and convenient.</p> <p>You should also include suggestions for proposed parish ward names and the number of councillors that should represent the electorate in each ward.</p>	

Additional comments	Response
<p>Please add any additional comments relevant to this Community Governance Review. Additional sheets may be supplied but please ensure these are clearly marked.</p>	