

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

**COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF WHOLE OF COUNCIL'S AREA
conducted under the Local Government and Public Involvement in
Health Act 2007**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Published on 1 November 2017

Submissions and comments required by 31 January 2018

Introduction

Central Bedfordshire Council has resolved to conduct a Community Governance Review of the whole of its area in accordance with Part 4, Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and statutory guidance on Community Governance Reviews (published jointly by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission 1 March 2010).

Why is the Council undertaking the review?

A Community Governance review provides an opportunity for principal authorities to review and make changes to community governance within their area. Such reviews can be undertaken when there have been changes in population or in reaction to specific, or local new issues to ensure that the community governance for the area continues to be effective and convenient and reflects the identities and interests of the community. Recently there has been significant population growth across the Council area particularly in Biggleswade, Leighton Buzzard and Silsoe. In the near future substantial growth is forecast for Houghton Regis, whilst further growth options are currently the subject of consultation as part of the draft Local Plan.

The government has emphasised that recommendations made in Community Governance Reviews ought to bring about improved community engagement, more cohesive communities, better local democracy and result in more efficient delivery of local services. Government guidance further states that it is good practice to conduct a full Community Governance Review at least every 10 to 15 years and to keep the area under review in the interim. Since it was established in 2009 the Council has yet to undertake a review and it is now considered timely to carry out a full review of the whole of the Council's area.

What is community governance?

In the context of Community Governance Reviews, the provisions of the 2007 Act are intended to improve the development and co-ordination of support for citizens and community groups so that they can make the best

use of empowerment opportunities. The government (through the 2007 Act and the Localism Act) and the Council recognise the important role that parish councils play in their local area both in terms of community empowerment and engagement and the delivery of local services. When carrying out the community governance review the Council must consider parish arrangements. A parish is a distinct geographical area with its own local government arrangements operating alongside other tiers of local government.

Parish councils are the most local tier of government in England. They are elected bodies with discretionary powers and rights laid down by Parliament to represent their communities and provide services for them, including a right to raise money by precept. Under the Local Government Act 1972 (“the 1972 Act”) and by passing a resolution, a parish council may be renamed a “town council”. Furthermore, under the provisions of the 2007 Act, a parish council may be known alternatively as a “community”, “village” or “neighbourhood” council. There are certain obligations which, by law, a parish council must fulfil including a requirement to hold an annual meeting (known as the ‘parish meeting’) and at least three other meetings a year.

A parish council is elected by the local government electors in the parish. Parish councillors are elected for 4 year terms. There must be at least 5 seats on the parish council. Larger parish councils may also be divided into wards for the purpose of elections. A parish with a small electorate may share a council with one or more neighbouring parishes, such an arrangement being variously known as a joint parish council, grouped parish council, common parish council or combined parish council.

To carry out its work a parish council has a number of powers at its disposal. These powers would not go beyond those available to Central Bedfordshire Council and as a whole would be more limited, but a parish council need only consider the concerns of the parish rather than the wider area when exercising them.

Parish council powers can include:

- Providing public facilities such as parks, community centres and burial grounds
- Functions relating to highways, including the repair of public footpaths and the provision of street lighting and bus shelters
- Contributing to the financing of traffic calming measures
- Introducing crime prevention measures, such as CCTV
- The right to be consulted on planning applications affecting the parish.

Where a parish has no parish council, certain functions of the parish council may be carried out by the parish meeting instead. The parish meeting discusses parish affairs.

The trustees of a parish meeting hold property and act on its behalf. The determination of whether a parish should have a parish council or not is

dependent on the number of local government electors in the parish. There are currently 8 parish meetings across the Council's area.

The main source of funding for parish councils (or parish meetings exercising parish council functions) is through levying a precept. This is a sum of money collected through the council tax bills (as an additional and distinct amount) of those residing in the parish. Where a precept is raised, its level will depend upon the financial demands upon the parish council including the level of services it provides.

There are currently 71 parish councils across the Council's area and 8 other parishes without a parish council where parish meetings are held. Further details on parish councils can be found on the website of the National Association of Local Councils at <http://www.nalc.gov.uk/>

Other (non parish) forms of community governance – In conducting a community governance review, principal councils must consider other forms of community governance as alternatives to or stages towards establishing parish councils. These include arrangements such as area committees, neighbourhood management, tenant management organisations, area/community forums, residents and tenants associations and community associations.

What is a Community Governance Review?

The review will consider:

- the creation, merger, alteration or abolition of parishes;
- parishing previously un-parished areas
- the naming of parishes and the style of any new or revised parish;
- electoral arrangements for existing parishes including council size, the number of councillors to be elected to the council, parish warding), and
- grouping parishes under a new common parish council with any of their surrounding areas.

Scope of this Community Governance Review

The whole of the Council's area is to be included in this review.

The Community Governance Review will **not** consider:

- the boundaries of UK parliamentary constituencies; and
- the boundaries and names of Central Bedfordshire Council wards.

- The Joint Committees of Biggleswade, Leighton-Linslade, Dunstable and Houghton Regis.

Parish Governance in Central Bedfordshire

The Council believes that parish councils play an important role in terms of community empowerment at the local level and wants to ensure that parish governance in our area continues to be robust, representative and enabled to meet the challenges that lie before it. Furthermore, it wants to ensure that there is clarity and transparency to the area 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.

The Council will particularly focus on

- the need to re-draw parish boundaries that have become anomalous where new housing developments straddle existing boundaries;
- the case for rationalising the level of representation on councils where the number of councillors is disproportionate to the electorate but bearing in mind that each parish council must have at least 5 councillors (there is no maximum number);
- the level of representation on councils where historically many parish councils, particularly smaller ones, have not been able to attract sufficient candidates to stand for election thereby leading to uncontested elections and/or a need to co-opt members to fill vacancies;
- the potential for grouping smaller parishes subject to the need for them to reflect closely the identity of their communities;
- requests to change the status or style of a parish to community, neighbourhood, village etc.
- whether to make consequential recommendations to the LGBCE for any related alterations to the boundaries of any CBC ward to ensure coterminosity between the new parish boundary and the related ward boundary.

The Government also made a commitment to parish councils in ‘Strong and Prosperous Communities’ (Local Government White Paper, October 2006) in which it emphasised: “Ultimately, the recommendations made in a community governance Review ought to bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services”

One of the overriding aims of this Terms of Reference is that it endeavours to lay out clear policies (for example, with regard to councillor numbers), which will ensure that the electors across Central Bedfordshire will be treated equitably and fairly.

Who will undertake this Review?

The Council is responsible for conducting the review. The Council's General Purposes Committee has delegated authority to make recommendations to the Council on the outcomes of Community Governance Reviews. Council will be required to approve the final recommendations before any Community Governance Order is made.

Consultation

In considering and making recommendations within these Terms of Reference, a full consultation process will form part of the Review to take account of the views of local people. The 2007 Act requires that the Council consults the local government electors for the area under review and any other person or body who appears to have an interest in the review. The Council must take representations into account by judging them against criteria laid out in the Act.

The Council intends to write to all parish councils, both when inviting initial submissions and when seeking views on the draft proposals. The Council will use information from the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and the Central Bedfordshire Housing Trajectory as at July 2017 as the primary sources of current and forecast properties in the area.

The Council will also identify any other person or body who it feels may have an interest in the Review and will be pleased to receive comments from any other person or body who wishes to make representations. Any such person that makes representation during the initial invitation to submit proposals will be invited to make comments in respect of the draft proposals.

The timetable for the Review below provides for a number of periods for comment and submissions by the public. Specifically these are:

- Three months after the publication of the Terms of Reference; and
- Two months after the publication of the Draft Recommendations.

The Council, through the General Purposes Committee, will conduct the review transparently with decisions being made in public and reasons given for those decisions. This is in line with Government guidance on conducting Community Governance Reviews. Meetings of the General Purposes Committee will take place in public and information will be available on the Council's website. The Council is keen to conduct meaningful consultation that leads to effective proposals.

The Council proposes to use the following mechanisms to keep consultees informed:

- General press releases
- Council website
- Key documents on deposit at relevant Council offices

- Briefings/public meetings with relevant stakeholders
- Direct personal communication

The Council will be mindful of the cost of consultation and will endeavour to ensure that consultation processes are cost effective.

The General Purposes Committee has agreed the following timeframe for the conduct of this review. The Committee will endeavour to keep to these dates and will not reduce the length of any consultation periods. However, if changes to dates are required, these will be published on the Council's website. A Community Governance Review is a lengthy process but the regulations require that they are concluded within a 12 month period following publication of the terms of reference.

Dates	Review Stage	Activity
26 October 2017		GP Committee – approves Terms of Reference
1 November 2017	Commencement	Terms of Reference published, Council notifies stakeholders
1 November 2017 – 31 January 2018	Stage One - Submissions	Initial submissions invited in response to consultation document
1 February 2018 – 29 March 2018	Stage Two – Consideration of Initial submissions	Consider submissions received and prepare draft recommendations
30 March 2018 – 30 June 2018	Stage Three – Publish Draft Recommendations for Consultation	Publish draft recommendations for further consultation with stakeholders and residents
1 July 2018 – 22 August 2018	Stage Four – Consider final recommendations	Consider submissions received and prepare final recommendations
August 2018*	Conclusion	Final recommendations are approved by GP Committee and recommended to Council
September 2018*	Resolution	Council resolves to make a Reorganisation Order
October/November 2018	Implementation	Effective date of Order Effective date of any changes to parish/town boundaries and electoral arrangements
2 May 2019		Parish Elections

* Date of meeting to be confirmed

A range of organisations operate within parishes and may be interested in the Review. The existing parish councils will have a clear interest along with any

group specific to the area. A list has been compiled of interested organisations and individuals who it is proposed will be consulted at the various stages of the Review. These are listed at the last page.

Consultation Strategy

The schedule below sets out our strategy for consulting on the Review to ensure that those affected are aware of the proposals and their potential impact.

Date	Action	Follow up
1 November 2017	Publish Terms of Reference and invite submissions by 31 January 2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Article on Council website 2. Press releases to local press 3. Inform all CBC Ward Councillors 4. Briefings/attend public meetings with key interested parties 5. Write to organisations as indicated in this ToR document 6. ToR available on deposit at Council offices, libraries, etc. 7. Email alerts to the Town & Parish Councils 8. Town & Parish Council Conference
30 March 2018	Publish Draft Recommendations and invite comments by 30 June 2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update Council website 2. Press releases to local press 3. Inform all CBC Ward Councillors 4. Write to organisations with Draft Recommendations document or summary information as indicated, offer drop in sessions for public where appropriate 5. Information leaflets about Draft Recommendations to all residents in areas affected 6. Publicise with remaining residents in unaffected areas 7. Draft Recommendations on deposit at Council offices, libraries, etc. 8. Town & Parish Council Conference
August 2018	Present final recommendations to GP Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GP recommendation to Council
October/November 2018	Council makes Reorganisation Order and agrees implementation dates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Press releases, website updates and formal correspondence with key parties affected.

PARISH AREAS AND STRUCTURE OF PARISHES

The legislation requires that the Council must have regard to the need to secure that community governance within the area under review:

- reflects the identities and interests of the community in each area and
- is effective and convenient, and
- takes into account any other arrangements for community representation or engagement in that area.

Parish areas

- the Council is anxious to ensure that electors should be able to identify clearly with the parish in which they are resident because it considers that this sense of identity and community lends strength and legitimacy to the parish structure, creates a common interest in parish affairs, encourages participation in elections to the parish council, leads to representative and accountable government, engenders visionary leadership and generates a strong, inclusive community with a sense of civic values, responsibility and pride;
- the Council considers that parishes should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity. The feeling of local community and the wishes of local inhabitants are primary consideration in the Review;
- the Council is anxious to balance carefully the considerations of changes which have happened over time, through population shifts or additional development for example, and which have led to a different community identity with historic traditions in its area.
- the Council will take into account the government's guidance that community cohesion should be taken into account in the Review.
- the Council will also have consideration to the government's strongly stated guidance that it "expects to see a trend in the creation, rather than the abolition, of parishes" and that "the abolition of parishes should not be undertaken unless clearly justified". The Council also notes that the government also considers that, where existing parishes are abolished, "it would be undesirable to see the area becoming unparished with no community governance arrangements in place.
- the Council considers that the boundaries between parishes will normally reflect the land between communities represented by areas of low population or pronounced physical barriers. These barriers will be either natural or man-made: they might include rivers, canals, roads, parks etc i.e. those barriers that oblige the residents of an affected area to have little in common with the remainder of the parish to which they may have been allotted.

- the Council will endeavour to determine boundaries that are and are likely to remain easily identifiable.

Viability of parishes

- The council encourages parishes in their aim to better represent the community's interests and deliver better services. It is important, however, that parishes are viable and possess a precept which enables them to actively and effectively promote the well-being of residents, as well as contributing to the real provision of services in an economic and efficient manner.
- In some rural areas parishes may have limited resources capacity to deliver effective local government but even so, arrangements in these parishes, when they accord with the wishes of the inhabitants of the parish, will at least represent convenient local government.
- The council will ensure that the review leads to parishes that are based on community identity and interest that effectively promote the well-being of residents and which are viable as an administrative unit.

Grouping parishes

- The Local Government Act 1972 states that parishes with less than 150 electors may not establish their own parish council. A grouping order is, however, permitted under Section 11 of the Act allowing consideration of an alliance of grouped parishes coming together under one parish council, with electors of the grouped parishes electing a designated number of councillors to the council. This has been found to be an effective way of ensuring parish government for small parishes that may otherwise be unviable, and may also be worth considering in order to avoid substantive changes to boundaries.
- The Council does, however, acknowledge the need for 'compatible grouping' and will take into account government guidance that "it would be inappropriate for it to be used to build artificially large units under single parish councils".
- There are no grouped parishes currently in the Central Bedfordshire area but there are 8 small parishes where parish meetings are held where there are fewer than 150 electors. These are Astwick (24 electors), Battlesden (27), Edworth (53), Eyeworth (70), Millbrook (106), Milton Bryan (138), Potsgrove (33) and Tingrith (123).

Naming parishes

- The council will aim to reflect existing local or historic place-names, and will give significant consideration to names suggested by local interested parties. Composite (or combined) names of parishes, however, rarely contribute to effective local government and the council wishes to avoid this, other than in exceptional circumstances where the demands of history or the preservation of local ties makes a pressing case for the retention of distinctive names.

Alternative styles for parishes

- The 2007 Act has introduced ‘alternative styles’ for parishes. If adopted, the ‘alternative style’ would replace the style “parish”. However, only one of three prescribed styles can be adopted: “community”, “neighbourhood” or “village”. In addition, it should be noted that the style of “town” is still available to a parish. However, for as long as the parish has an ‘alternative style’, it will not also be able to have the status of town and vice versa.
- Where a new parish is being created, the Council will make recommendations as to the geographical name of the new parish and as to whether or not it should have one of the alternative styles.
- Where an existing parish is under Review, the Council will make recommendations as to whether the geographical name of the parish should be changed, but it will be for the parish council or parish meeting to resolve whether the parish should have one of the alternative styles.

ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

What does ‘electoral arrangements’ mean?

An important part of our review will comprise giving consideration to ‘electoral arrangements’ – the way in which a council is constituted for a parish and covers:

- the ordinary year in which elections are held,
- forming a parish council,
- the number of councillors to be elected to the council,
- the division of the parish into wards for the purposes of electing councillors,
- the number and boundaries of any such wards,
- the number of councillors to be elected to any such ward,
- the name of any such ward.

These terms are explained in more detail below.

Ordinary year of election

The Local Government Act 1972 states that ordinary election of parish councillors should take place in 1976, 1979 and every fourth year thereafter. The government has indicated, however, that it would want the parish electoral cycle to coincide with the cycle for this Council so that costs can be shared.

Forming a parish council

There are strict rules governing when a parish council may be formed – legislation states:

- where the number of electors is 1,000 or more, a parish council must be created,
- where the number of electors is 151-999, a parish council may be created with the parish council being the alternative form of governance,
- where the number of electors is 150 or fewer, a parish council is not created.

At this point it may be appropriate to consider whether other forms of community governance are in place, which might make a parish council unnecessary in this area.

Number of parish councillors

Under legislation, the following factors must be considered when deciding the number of councillors to be elected:

- the number of local government electors for the parish,
- any change in that number which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day the review starts,
- the number of councillors should not be fewer than 5,
- there is no maximum number.

As stated above the minimum legal number of parish councillors is five and there is no maximum number. There is no legislative guidance regarding the ideal number of parish councillors and there is no legal sliding scale. In 1998 the National Association of Local Councils published its Circular 1126/1998 setting out guidance on the suggested number of parish councillors to be allocated depending on the size of the population represented. These allocations are below.

Electors	Councillors		Electors	Councillors
Up to 900	7		10,400	17
1,400	8		11,900	18
2,000	9		13,500	19

2,700	10		15,200	20
3,500	11		17,000	21
4,400	12		18,900	22
5,400	13		20,900	23
6,500	14		23,000	24
7,700	15		23,000+	25
9,000	16			

However, in rural authorities with sparsity of population, even this table may not be appropriate.

The Aston Business School also conducted research that was published in 1992 which recommended the following levels of representation:

Electors	Councillors
Up to 500	5 – 8
501 - 2,500	6 – 12
2,501 -10,000	9 – 16
10,001 – 20,000	13 – 21
Greater than 20,000	13 - 27

In considering the issue of council size, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is of the view that each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and the pattern of communities. Nevertheless, having regard to the current powers of parish councils, consideration should be given to the broad pattern of existing council sizes. This pattern appears to have stood the test of time and, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, to have provided for effective and convenient local government.

The council will follow government guidance which states 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”.

In parishes where there has been a history of uncontested elections the council will give very careful consideration to whether the levels of representation are appropriate – consideration may be given to the allocation of parish councillors across the Council’s area, investigating discrepancies that may exist in levels of representation and to address any inequalities.

There may be exceptions to the above, such as where there are high levels of service provision or particularly sparsely populated parishes – the council will take a view, considering any such exceptional factors.

The table below shows the number of seats which required co-option at the ordinary election held 2015 as well as those seats which were contested. The

number of seats requiring co-option (104) represents 15% of the overall number of parish seats across Central Bedfordshire (710).

Also shown is the elector ratio per seat for each parish/town council.

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL	PARISH WARD	PARISH SEATS	2015 Elections (2011 in brackets)		PARISH/WARD ELEC'RATE (Sep 2017)	RATIO ELECTORS TO SEATS
			Contested?	Co-opted Seats		
AMPTHILL TOWN	N/A	12	Y(N)	0(1)	6,250	521
ARLESEY TOWN	N/A	15	Y(N)	0(1)	4,424	295
ASPLEY GUISE	N/A	12	N(N)	8(0)	1,818	152
ASPLEY HEATH	N/A	9	N(N)	0(3)	521	58
ASTWICK(MEETING)	N/A	N/A	-	-	24	N/A
BARTON-LE-CLAY	N/A	13	N(N)	3(3)	4,081	314
BATTLEDEN (MEETING)	N/A	N/A	-	-	28	N/A
BIGGLESWADE TOWN	Holme	3	N(Y)	0(0)	1,834	611
	Ivel	7	Y(Y)	0(0)	6,769	967
	Stratton	5	N(Y)	0(0)	6,801	1,360
	Overall	15			15,404	1,027
BLUNHAM	N/A	10	N(N)	1(6)	827	83
BROGBOROUGH	N/A	7	N(N)	4(2)	276	39
CADDINGTON	N/A	10	N(Y)	3(0)	3,209	320
CAMPTON & CHICKSANDS	N/A	7	N(N)	4(3)	1,204	172
CHALGRAVE	N/A	7	N(N)	1(1)	397	57
CHALTON	N/A	7	N(N)	1(4)	464	66
CLIFTON	N/A	12	N(N)	1(1)	2,595	216
CLOPHILL	N/A	10	Y(N)	0(0)	1,420	142
CRANFIELD	Wharley End	2	N(N)	2(0)	145	73
	Cranfield	13	N(N)	3(3)	3,673	283
	Overall	15			3,818	255
DUNSTABLE TOWN	Central	3	Y(Y)	0(0)	3,775	1,258
	Icknield	5	Y(Y)	0(0)	6,344	1,268
	Manshead	3	Y(Y)	0(0)	3,883	1,294
	Northfields	5	Y(Y)	0(0)	7,451	1,490
	Watling	5	Y(Y)	0(0)	7,739	1,548
	Overall	21			29,192	1,390
DUNTON	N/A	7	N(N)	0(3)	560	80
EATON BRAY	N/A	9	N(N)	2(5)	2,129	237
EDWORTH (MEETING)	N/A	N/A	-	-	57	N/A
EGGINGTON	N/A	7	N(N)	0(5)	245	35
EVERSHOLT	N/A	7	N(N)	0(2)	352	50
EVERTON	N/A	7	Y(N)	0(1)	402	57
EYEWORTH (MEETING)	N/A	N/A	-	-	69	N/A
FAIRFIELD	N/A	7	Y(-)	0(-)	1,915	274
FLITTON & GREENFIELD	Flitton	5	N(Y)	0(0)	555	111
	Greenfield	5	N(N)	1(0)	596	119
	Overall	10			1,151	115

FLITWICK TOWN	East	7	Y(N)	0(0)	4,539	648
	West	10	N(Y)	0(0)	5,788	579
	Overall	17			10,327	607
GRAVENHURST	N/A	7	N(N)	0(1)	462	66
GREAT BILLINGTON	N/A	7	N(N)	2(4)	280	40
HARLINGTON	N/A	12	N(N)	4(3)	1,832	153
HAYNES	N/A	10	N(Y)	1(0)	995	100
HEATH AND REACH	N/A	9	N(N)	4(6)	1,168	130
HENLOW	Camp	2	N(N)	1(0)	1,017	509
	Village	10	N(N)	2(1)	1,819	182
	Overall	12			2,836	231
HOCKLIFFE	N/A	7	N(Y)	3(0)	787	112
H'TON CONQUEST	N/A	10	N(N)	1(4)	1,286	129
HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN	Houghton Hall	6	Y(Y)	0(0)	6,291	1,049
	Parkside	4	Y(Y)	0(0)	3,533	883
	Tithe Farm	4	Y(Y)	0(0)	3,294	824
	Overall	14			13,118	937
HULCOTE & SALFORD	N/A	7	Y(N)	0(0)	179	26
HUSBORNE CRAWLEY	N/A	7	N(N)	0(2)	183	26
HYDE	N/A	7	N(N)	1(3)	317	45
KENSWORTH	N/A	9	N(N)	0(0)	1,168	130
LANGFORD	N/A	13	N(N)	6(4)	2,590	199
LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN	Barnabas	3	Y(Y)	0(0)	4,260	1,420
	Brooklands	2	Y(Y)	0(0)	2,751	1,376
	Grovebury	4	Y(Y)	0(0)	6,231	1,558
	Leston	1	Y(Y)	0(0)	1,401	1,401
	Planets	2	Y(Y)	0(0)	3,493	1,747
	Plantation	3	Y(Y)	0(0)	4,573	1,524
	Southcott	4	Y(Y)	0(0)	5,270	1,318
	St George's	2	Y(Y)	0(0)	3,355	1,678
	Overall	21			31,334	1,492
LIDLINGTON	N/A	9	N(N)	1(2)	1,071	119
MARSTON MORETAINE	N/A	12	N(Y)	3(0)	4,442	370
MAULDEN	N/A	12	Y(N)	0(0)	2,498	208
MEPPERSHALL	N/A	10	N(N)	1(2)	1,415	142
MILLBROOK (MEETING)	N/A	N/A	-	-	122	N/A
MILTON BRYAN (MEETING)	N/A	N/A	-	-	141	N/A
MOGGERHANGER	N/A	9	N(N)	0(1)	516	57
NORTHILL	N/A	12	Y(Y)	0(0)	1,882	157
OLD WARDEN	N/A	7	Y(N)	0(1)	233	33
POTSGROVE (MEETING)	N/A	N/A	-	-	37	N/A
POTTON TOWN	N/A	15	Y(N)	0(4)	3,948	263
PULLOXHILL	N/A	7	N(N)	4(0)	835	120
RIDGMONT	N/A	9	N(Y)	4(0)	359	40
SANDY	Beeston	1	N(N)	0(0)	679	679
	Fallowfield	3	N(Y)	0(0)	1,534	511

	Ivel	5	N(Y)	1(0)	2,962	592
	Pinnacle	6	N(N)	3(1)	4,124	687
	Overall	15			9,299	620
SHEFFORD	N/A	15	N(N)	0(2)	5,076	338
SHILLINGTON	N/A	10	Y(N)	0(0)	1,619	162
SILSOE	N/A	10	N(N)	2(1)	2,296	230
SLIP END	N/A	7	N(Y)	0(0)	1,511	216
SOUTHILL	Broom	6	N(N)	3(1)	490	82
	Southill	3	N(N)	1(0)	268	89
	Stanford	3	N(N)	0(1)	212	68
	Overall	12			970	78
STANBRIDGE	N/A	7	N(N)	2(5)	615	88
STEPPINGLEY	N/A	7	N(Y)	1(0)	172	25
STONDON	N/A	10	N(Y)	1(0)	2,125	213
STOTFOLD	N/A	15	N(N)	2(1)	6,787	452
STREATLEY	N/A	7	N(N)	2(1)	1,384	198
STUDHAM	N/A	7	N(N)	0(2)	1,002	143
SUNDON	N/A	7	N(N)	3(1)	371	53
SUTTON	N/A	7	N(Y)	0(0)	234	34
TEMPSFORD	N/A	7	Y(N)	0(1)	486	69
TILSWORTH	N/A	7	N(N)	4(1)	336	48
TINGRITH (MEETING)	N/A	N/A	-	-	131	N/A
TODDINGTON	N/A	11	N(N)	0(2)	3,648	332
TOTTERNHOE	N/A	9	N(N)	2(3)	983	109
WESTONING	N/A	10	N(N)	2(1)	1,700	170
WHIPSNAD	N/A	7	N(N)	1(1)	387	55
WOBURN	N/A	9	N(N)	0(1)	781	87
WRESTLINGWORTH & COCKAYNE HATLEY	N/A	7	N(N)	0(1)	642	92
TOTAL					211,748	

The government makes a point “that the conduct of parish council business does not usually require a large body of councillors”. The Council will give careful consideration to whether the present levels of representation are appropriate or whether there is a “democratic surplus” in a parish.

The Council will also

- ensure that the allocation of councillors to parishes is broadly equitable across the Council’s area, while acknowledging that local circumstances may frequently merit variation;
- appreciate that there are different demands and consequently different levels of representation are appropriate between the urban and the rural parishes;

The Council acknowledges that there will be exceptions to the above, where some weight will be given to the following circumstances in forming the proposals:

- where representation may be required to meet the challenges of population sparsity;
- the traditional scale of representation in a particular parish;
- supporting a warding arrangement in a particular parish and achieving a good parity of representation between wards.

Parish warding

Each parish may be divided into wards – under legislation, the Council must consider:

- whether the number or distribution of local government electors would make a single election impracticable or inconvenient;
- whether it is desirable that any areas of the parish should be separately represented on the council.

The Council acknowledges government guidance that “warding of parishes in largely rural areas based on a single, centrally-located village may not be justified. Warding may be appropriate where the parish encompasses a number of villages with separate identities, or where there has been some urban over-spill into the parish”.

With regard to urban parishes, the government has suggested that “there is likely to be a stronger case for the warding of urban parishes. In urban areas community identity tends to focus on a locality, whether this be a housing estate, a shopping centre or community facilities. Each locality is likely to have its own sense of identity.” The Council will be mindful of this guidance and will endeavour to ensure that such urban wards focus on localities of distinct identity.

The Council will be mindful of all this guidance, noting further that “each case should be considered on its merits and on the basis of the information and evidence provided during the course of the Review”.

The Council wishes to emphasise that warding arrangements should be clearly and readily understood by and should have relevance for the electorate in a parish; they should reflect clear physical and social differences within a parish: one parish, but comprising different parts. Each case will be considered on its own merits and must meet the two tests laid out in the Act (detailed above).

The number and boundaries of parish wards

In reaching conclusions on boundaries between parish wards, the Council will take into account community identity and consider whether any ties or linkages may be broken by the drawing of particular boundaries. Proposals intended to reflect community linkages and identity must be soundly justified with demonstrable evidence of those identities and linkages.

The Council has noted the desirability of fixing boundaries which are, and will remain, easily identifiable, as well as taking into account any local ties which might be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries. It is important that ward boundaries should be clearly understood. They should represent the most appropriate grouping of local attachments within a parish that comprises different parts.

The Electoral Commission has suggested that a relevant consideration for the council when undertaking a review is that the district /county electoral divisions should not split an unwarded parish and no parish should be split by a boundary. This is merely a recommendation, but will be taken into account when carrying out this review.

The number of councillors to be elected for parish wards

Under legislation, the following factors must be considered when deciding number of councillors to be elected:

- the number of local government electors for the parish;
- any change in the number or distribution of local government electors which is likely to occur in the period beginning five years after the review start date.

The council will follow government guidance which states that “each person’s vote should be of equal weight so far as possible, having regard to other legitimated competing factors, when it comes to the election of councillors”.

The council is conscious of the risk that, where one or more wards of a parish are overrepresented by councillors, the residents of those parishes could be perceived to have more influence over the parish council. During the review the council is committed to consistently showing the ratios of electors to councillors that would result from its proposals and promoting equality of votes.

Naming of parish wards

The council will aim to reflect existing local or historic place-names and will give significant consideration in favour of ward names proposed by local interested parties.

ELECTORATE FORECASTS

The Council has used the 2017 Register of Electors published in December 2016 to provide existing parish/parish ward electorate figures.

The Review will consider any change in the number or distribution of the electors which is likely to occur in the next five years beginning with the day when the Review starts (Section 95 of the 2007 Act).

The Electorate forecast figures shown in the following table have been calculated by assuming a continued increase as seen over the last five years plus additional increases as a result of additional large planned developments assuming an average of 1.7 electors per dwelling. Where there have been decreases in electorate, the forecast has assumed a 0% increase.

Current and forecast electorate for the review area

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL	PARISH WARD	ELECTORS	ELECTORS PER PARISH (1 SEP 2017)	PLANNED DEVELOPMENT (ELECTORS)	ELECTORATE FORECAST (31 MAR 23)
AMPTHILL TOWN	N/A	6,250	6,250	371 (631)	6,881
ARLESEY TOWN	N/A	4,424	4,424	152 (258)	4,682
ASPLEY GUISE	N/A	1,818	1,818	9 (15)	1,833
ASPLEY HEATH	N/A	521	521	9 (15)	536
ASTWICK(MEETING)	N/A	24	24	0 (0)	24
BARTON-LE-CLAY	N/A	4,081	4,081	11 (19)	4,100
BATTLEDEN (MEETING)	N/A	28	28	0 (0)	28
BIGGLESWADE TOWN	Holme	1,834	15,404	9 (15)	16,934
	Ivel	6,769		891 (1,515)	
	Stratton	6,801		0(0)	
BLUNHAM	N/A	827	827	123 (209)	1,036
BROGBOROUGH	N/A	276	276	0 (0)	276
CADDINGTON	N/A	3,209	3,209	274 (466)	3,675
CAMPTON & CHICKSANDS	N/A	1,204	1,204	2 (3)	1,207
CHALGRAVE	N/A	397	397	1 (2)	399
CHALTON	N/A	464	464	4 (7)	471
CLIFTON	N/A	2,595	2,595	143 (243)	2,838
CLOPHILL	N/A	1,420	1,420	14 (24)	1,444
CRANFIELD	Cranfield	3,673	3,818	437 (743)	4,561
	Wharley End	145		0 (0)	
DUNSTABLE TOWN	Central	3,775	29192	26 (44)	30,065
	Icknield	6,344		296 (503)	
	Manshead	3,883		0 (0)	
	Northfields	7,451		192(326)	
	Watling	7,739		0 (0)	
DUNTON	N/A	560	560	1 (2)	562
EATON BRAY	N/A	2,129	2,129	9 (15)	2,144
EDWORTH (MEETING)	N/A	57	57	0 (0)	57
EGGINGTON	N/A	245	245	200 (340)	585
EVERSHOLT	N/A	352	352	3 (5)	357
EVERTON	N/A	402	402	7 (10)	412
EYEWORTH (MEETING)	N/A	69	69	0 (0)	69
FAIRFIELD	N/A	1,915	1,915	272 (462)	2,377

FLITTON & GREENFIELD	Greenfield	555	1,151	4 (7)	1,180
	Flitton	596		13 (22)	
FLITWICK TOWN	East	4539	10,327	50 (85)	11,033
	West	5788		365 (621)	
GRAVENHURST	N/A	462	462	24 (41)	503
GREAT BILLINGTON	N/A	280	280	3 (5)	285
HARLINGTON	N/A	1832	1,832	15 (25)	1,857
HAYNES	N/A	995	995	1 (2)	997
HEATH AND REACH	N/A	1168	1,168	9 (15)	1,183
HENLOW	Camp	1017	2,836	0 (0)	2,858
	Village	1819		13 (22)	
HOCKLIFFE	N/A	787	787	19 (32)	819
HOUGHTON CONQUEST	N/A	1286	1,286	886 (1,506)	2,792
HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN	Houghton Hall	6291	13,118	853 (1,450)	14,619
	Parkside	3533		30 (51)	
	Tithe Farm	3294		0 (0)	
HULCOTE AND SALFORD	N/A	179	179	3 (5)	184
HUSBORNE CRAWLEY	N/A	183	183	5 (8)	191
HYDE	N/A	317	317	0 (0)	317
KENSWORTH	N/A	1168	1,168	5 (8)	1,176
LANGFORD	N/A	2590	2,590	212 (360)	2,950
LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN	Barnabas	4260	31,334	44 (75)	33,547
	Southcott	5270		0 (0)	
	Planets	3493		217 (369)	
	Plantation	4573		455 (774)	
	St Georges	3355		0 (0)	
	Brooklands	2751		0 (0)	
	Grovebury	6231		585 (995)	
	Leston	1401		0 (0)	
LIDLINGTON	N/A	1071	1,071	31 (53)	1,124
MARSTON MORETAINE	N/A	4442	4,442	484 (823)	5,265
MAULDEN	N/A	2498	2,498	4(7)	2,505
MEPPERSHALL	N/A	1415	1,415	78 (133)	1,548
MILLBROOK (MEETING)	N/A	122	122	2 (3)	125
MILTON BRYAN (MEETING)	N/A	141	141	0 (0)	141
MOGGERHANGER	N/A	516	516	18 (31)	547
NORTHILL	N/A	1882	1,882	40 (68)	1,950
OLD WARDEN	N/A	233	233	0 (0)	233
POTSGROVE (MEETING)	N/A	37	37	0 (0)	37
POTTON TOWN	N/A	3948	3,948	379 (644)	4,592
PULLOXHILL	N/A	835	835	1 (2)	837
RIDGMONT	N/A	359	359	2 (3)	362
SANDY	Beeston	679	9,299	0 (0)	9,299
	Fallowfield	1534		0 (0)	
	Ivel	2962		0 (0)	
	Pinnacle	4124		0(0)	

SHEFFORD	N/A	5,076	5,076	172 (292)	5,368
SHILLINGTON	N/A	1,619	1,619	16 (27)	1,646
SILSOE	N/A	2,296	2,296	28 (48)	2,344
SLIP END	N/A	1,497	1,511	0 (0)	1,511
SOUTHILL	Broom	490	970	3 (5)	979
	Southill	268		1 (2)	
	Stanford	212		1 (2)	
STANBRIDGE	N/A	615	615	5 (8)	623
STEPPINGLEY	N/A	172	172	0 (0)	172
STONDON	N/A	2,125	2,125	104(177)	2,302
STOTFOLD	N/A	6,787	6,787	118 (201)	6,988
STREATLEY	N/A	1,384	1,384	0 (0)	1,384
STUDHAM	N/A	1,002	1,002	18 (31)	1,033
SUNDON	N/A	371	371	1 (2)	373
SUTTON	N/A	234	234	2 (3)	237
TEMPSFORD	N/A	486	486	3 (5)	491
TILSWORTH	N/A	336	336	1 (2)	338
TINGRITH (MEETING)	N/A	131	131	0 (0)	131
TODDINGTON	N/A	3,648	3,648	0 (0)	3,648
TOTTERNHOE	N/A	983	983	0 (0)	983
WESTONING	N/A	1,700	1,700	2 (3)	1,703
WHIPSNAD	N/A	387	387	1 (2)	389
WOBURN	N/A	781	781	5 (8)	789
WRESTLINGWORTH & COCKAYNE HATLEY	N/A	642	642	7 (12)	654
TOTAL			211748	8786 (14936)	226695

PROGRESSING THE REVIEW

The Council would like to hear the views of anyone who has a clear interest in this review or is impacted by its outcome as a resident. We are particularly interested in thoughts as to whether any changes to the current parish arrangements are needed.

An initial consultation form for phase one of the review has been devised to capture views through submissions in any format (e.g. submission form, letter or email) are welcome.

Consultation responses must be in writing, whether by submission form, letter or email, and must contain the name and residential address of the person submitting their views. All responses will be acknowledged.

COMPLETION OF REVIEW

This review will be deemed completed when the outcome is published on the website, at the main Council offices, Council Customer Service Centres and at libraries within Central Bedfordshire.

Reorganisation of Community Governance Order

If the outcome of the review requires that the council adopts a 'Reorganisation of Community Governance Order' the review will not be deemed complete until copies of the Order, maps that show the effects in detail, and the documents which set out the reasons for the decisions that the council has taken, are available at the council's offices, on the website, libraries and local contact points. The maps will be deposited with the Secretary of State at the Department of Communities and Local Government and at the Council's office at Chicksands. An indication of when the provisions in the Order will take effect will be given – for financial and administrative purposes this will be on 1 April in the designated year.

Electoral arrangements for new or existing parish councils

The electoral arrangements for a new or existing parish council will come into force at the date of the next ordinary elections to the parish council in 2019.

Consequential matters

The Reorganisation Order may cover consequential matters that could include:

- the transfer and management of property,
- the setting of precepts for new parishes,
- provision with respect to the transfer of any functions, property, rights and liabilities,
- provision for the transfer of staff, compensation for loss of office, pensions and other staffing matters.

In these matters the council will be guided by regulations that have been issued following the 2007 Act.

District ward boundaries

It may be necessary to recommend changes to boundaries to reflect the changes made at parish level. It will be for the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to decide if related alterations should be made, and the Commission may find it appropriate to conduct an electoral review of affected areas. The council will endeavour to include any such draft recommendations for alterations at the earliest opportunity for consultation that will arise after they become apparent.

How to contact us

Any queries regarding this Review should be directed to:

Democratic Services Manager
Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands
Bedfordshire
SG17 5TQ
Tel: 0300 300 4049

Alternatively, your submission may be emailed to:

cgr@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

These terms of reference will be published on the Central Bedfordshire Council website (www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/communitygovernance) and will be available for inspection at the address above.

Date of Publication: 1 November 2017

LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS/CONSULTEES

All CBC councillors
All Parish Councils
Bedfordshire Assn Town/Parish Councils
4 MPs
Political Associations/Organisations
Residents'/Tenants' Associations
Businesses/Business Forums/Small Business Federations/Area Forums

- Bedfordshire Green Business Network
- Bedfordshire & Luton Chamber of Business
- Leighton Buzzard Business Club

Chambers of Trade/Commerce
BRCC (Beds Rural Communities Charities)
CVS (Community Voluntary Services)
VCA (Voluntary Community Action)
Citizens Advice Bureau – local offices
CPRE Beds
Race Equality Council
Age Concern/Golden Years/Over 60s Groups/Senior Citizens
Police (Chief Constable)
Police (Police & Crime Commissioner)
Returning Officer, Bedford Borough Council
Returning Officer, Luton Borough Council

Public Consultation Meetings

Town/Parish Council Conference – 21 November 2017

Website

- Reminders of the Review consultation at regular stages during the consultation period on Council's homepage
- A dedicated webpage to be created for the Community Governance Review where the consultation document will be available for downloading
- Website also to host background information on the governance review, a link to the Terms of Reference, the consultation dates and contact details including an email address to be created specifically to receive and respond to consultation responses

Publicity

- Public Notice on Community Notice Boards
- Promotion through external digital channels
- Articles for Members' Information Bulletin, Staff Central
- References to the Review in Town and Parish Council newsletters
- Through invitation to respond, to be displayed at
 - Council Customer Service Centres (public facing offices)
 - Libraries