

Community Governance Review

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| Portfolio: | Non-executive function |
| Ward(s) Affected: | All |

Purpose:

To agree to postpone the Community Governance Review due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Background

- 1.1. Members will recall that, at the meeting of the Full Council on 26 February 2020, it was agreed to continue to the second stage of the Community Governance Review (CGR).
- 1.2. At this meeting the Council agreed to establish a Working Group to agree the terms of reference and the options to consider in the next stage of the review. The Working Group met on 18 March 2020 and agreed in principle a way forward for the next stage of the review.

2. Postponement of Review

- 2.1. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, consideration has been given to whether the Council can continue to meet all of its obligations in respect of the CGR. In particular, officers are mindful that continuing with the CGR during the expected peak of the pandemic may not afford all of those affected a reasonable opportunity to participate in the consultation. A request has also been received from a parish councillor to pause the review due to the current circumstances.
- 2.2. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires that a principal council must conclude the review within the period of 12 months starting with the day on which the council begins the review. Legislation does not appear to provide for a CGR to be extended beyond this 12 month period.
- 2.3. Legal advice has been sought on whether, in these exceptional times, the Council can extend the timetable of the review. The advice concludes that the Council could lawfully postpone the completion of the review.
- 2.4. The Council is committed to reaching an outcome and will resume with the CGR as soon as considered reasonably practicable in order for the review to be concluded in a timely manner. It should be noted that any changes incorporated in a Community Governance Reorganisation Order would not come into effect until the elections in May 2023.

3. Options

3.1. The Council has the option to agree or not agree the recommendations put forward in this report.

4. Proposal

4.1. It is proposed that the Council agrees to pause the Community Governance Review and re-commence it once it is considered that it can meet all of its obligations in carrying out the CGR.

5. Resource Implications

5.1. There are no resource implications arising from this decision.

6. Recommendation

6.1. The Council is advised to RESOLVE that the Community Governance Review be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the timetable be amended, as set out at Annex A to this report.

Background Papers: [Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007](#)

Legal advice obtained (exempt)

Annexes Annex A – revised timetable

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Community Governance Review – Revised Timetable

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| Stage 1 | 1 | Report to full Council | 24 July 2019 | Council determines terms of reference of community governance review |
| | 2 | Publish terms of reference | 5 August 2019 | Council publishes terms of reference and notifies stakeholders of the commencement of the review. |
| | 3 | Initial consultation period on the options set out in the terms of reference | 5 August 2019 to 28 October 2019 (12 weeks) | Consultation letters to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • every household in Windlesham parish • Surrey County Council • Borough and County Councillors in the affected area • Windlesham Parish Council • Borough councillors representing those parishes • Local residents' and amenity groups operating within those parishes • Local businesses operating within those parishes |
| | 4 | Consider responses to initial consultation | 29 October 2019 31 December 2019 | Consider submissions and prepare draft recommendations for report to Council |
| | 5 | Report to full Council | 26 February 2020 | Council to receive details of outcome of initial consultation and consider draft recommendations |
| | 6 | Publish draft recommendations | 9 March 2020 | Council publishes draft recommendations for further consultation. |
| Stage 2 | 7 | Initial Working Group Meeting | 18 th March 2020 | |
| | 8 | Council Meeting | To be confirmed | |
| | 9 | Consultation Starts | To be confirmed | Week following Council meeting |
| | 10 | Consultation Period Finishes | To be confirmed | 6 week period |
| | 11 | Consider responses to further consultation | To be confirmed | Consider further submissions and prepare final recommendations for report to Council |

Annex A

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| | 12 | Report to full Council | To be confirmed - +3 months from step 8 | Council to receive details of outcome of further consultation and consider final recommendations |
| | 13 | Publish final recommendations | To be confirmed | Publish final recommendations |