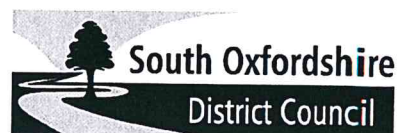


Strategic Management Board



Listening Learning Leading

Letter to the clerks of all town and parish councils
and parish meetings

David Buckle

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

david.buckle@southoxon.gov.uk
Benson Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford
Wallingford OX10 8HQ
Tel: 01491 823103 Fax: 01491 823134
Textphone: 18001 01491 823103

24 July 2013

Dear Parish Clerk

Draft Terms of Reference for Community Governance Review

At its meeting on 18 July 2013 the Council agreed the attached draft terms of reference for the community governance review. These incorporate the requests that we have received from individual town and parish councils to date.

I am now commencing the formal consultation on these draft terms of reference, which will run until the end of September. Council will agree the final terms of reference at its meeting on 24 October 2013. If you wish to add a further specific proposal to the terms of reference, now is the time to do so.

At this stage may I remind you that the consultation is about what should be included in the terms of reference, not the merits or otherwise of individual proposals. You will have a full opportunity to make those comments in due course. If your council does not wish us to consider a particular proposal in principle, you will need to have clear reasons why.

One particular issue that I would like to draw your attention to is a request that we received from the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils to consider amalgamating very small parish councils or parish meetings in the terms of reference. I would welcome hearing your views on whether or not the council should consider this.

Please send your responses to cgr@southoxon.gov.uk.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact Steven Corrigan (steven.corrigan@southoxon.gov.uk, telephone 01491 823049).

Yours sincerely

David Buckle
Chief Executive

www.southoxon.gov.uk



South Oxfordshire District Council

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

Introduction

The Council proposes to undertake a community governance review (CGR) pursuant to Part 4, Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 of the whole of the district of South Oxfordshire. The 2007 Act vested powers with the council to undertake such a review.

The Council will undertake the review in accordance with the Guidance on community governance reviews issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) in April 2008 ("the guidance").

Currently, the council proposes to consider the following parish matters:

Parish/Area	Matters to be considered
Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe	Creating a single parish council to cover both parishes
Brightwell-cum-Sotwell	Moving land east of the Wallingford by-pass (but not bounded by the by-pass) into Wallingford parish
Didcot	Amending the boundary of the parish to incorporate that part of the Millbrook estate that is currently in East Hagbourne parish and parcels of land allocated for housing in Long Wittenham and West Hagbourne parishes
East Hagbourne	Creating a single ward parish
Goring	Reducing the number of parish councillors to 10 and renaming the parish Goring-on-Thames
Harpsden	Amending the boundary of the parish to include land south of Rotherfield Road, currently in Henley-on-Thames parish
Henley-on-Thames	Amending the boundary of the parish to include land north of Gillott's Lane and land south of Greys Road,

	both areas currently in Harpsden parish
Rotherfield Peppard	Amending the boundary of the parish to include a triangle of land bounded by Peppard Road, Widmore Lane and Blounts Court Road, currently in Sonning Common Parish
Shiplake	Amending the boundary of the parish to include land south of Bolney Lane and land north of Woodland Road, both areas currently in Harpsden parish
Sonning Common	Amending the boundary of the parish to include Chiltern Edge school, currently in Kidmore End parish; reviewing the boundary with Rotherfield Peppard parish along Shiplake Bottom and Blounts Court Road; and making a minor adjustment to the boundary with Kidmore End and Eye and Dunsden parishes at the junction of Kennylands Road and Peppard Road. Revising upwards the number of parish councillors
Wallingford	Amending the boundary of the parish to include land bounded by the Wallingford by-pass, currently in Brightwell-cum-Sotwell and Cholsey parishes Moving land west of the by-pass along Hithercroft into either Brightwell-cum-Sotwell or Cholsey parish
West Hagbourne	Moving land forming part of the Great Western Park development (but not including the buffer zone) into Didcot parish
Wheatley	Amending the northern boundary of the parish to align with the A40, incorporating land currently in Holton parish
Whole district	Any other matters that the council considers warrant a review

The Council received requests to review all of the above matters in response to a letter sent to parish and town councils in April 2013.

That letter set out the items the review could cover as follows:

- altering the boundaries of a parish
- creating a new parish
- merging two or more parishes
- warding or de-warding a parish

- changing a parish name
- dissolving a parish council
- changing the number of councillors who sit on a parish council (the law states that the minimum number is five)
- grouping parishes under a common parish council

The letter also set out the factors that the council would take into account in making decisions:

- natural or man-made boundaries that help to define clearly one community from another
- housing developments that straddle parish boundaries, thereby resulting in people being in different parishes from their neighbours
- effective representation of local residents at parish level
- the LGBCE's proposals for the warding of South Oxfordshire for the purposes of district council elections
- the newly created county council electoral divisions
- views expressed in relation to any changes, particularly from those people directly affected

The council now proposes to add one further item to this list:

- the extent to which proposals reflect the identities and interests of the affected community

The council will decide the final list of matters for inclusion in the CGR once it has formally consulted on these draft terms of reference.

Why is the Council undertaking the review?

The guidance states that it is good practice for principal councils (in this context that means this council) to undertake CGRs every 10-15 years. It is now more than 15 years since a district wide review took place. The LGBCE has also recently completed a review of district warding arrangements, which has resulted in widespread changes some of which cut across existing parish boundaries. For these reasons the council considers it timely to carry out a CGR now, in time for implementation of any changes at the next scheduled parish council elections in 2015.

Consultation

The council is publishing these terms of reference in draft and seeking comments from interested parties by 30 September. It will then consider a report detailing responses and finalise the terms of reference at its meeting on 24 October.

Once it has finalised the terms of reference the council will make them available widely, including through circulation to parish and town councils and via its website. Where proposals involve moving properties from one parish to

another, the council will pay particular attention to making affected residents of such properties aware of the proposals and given them the opportunity to comment before it takes any decisions.

When the council publishes the terms of reference it will also publish the approximate number of properties and the electorate directly affected by proposals to change parish boundaries. It will do this for both 2013 and 2018, the latter figure based on known housing developments and their likely implementation dates.

TIMETABLE FOR THE REVIEW

The 2007 Act requires that a principal council must complete a CGR within 12 months of the date of publication of terms of reference. The proposed timetable below complies with the legal requirement.

Action	Timetable
Council considers responses to consultation and agrees final terms of reference	24 October 2013
Terms of reference published and consultation commences	1 November 2013
Initial consultation closes	31 January 2014
Council agrees draft proposals for consultation	20 February 2014
Further consultation closes	4 April 2014
Council agrees changes	24 April 2014

How to respond

Please submit any comments on these draft terms of reference via email to cgr@southandvale.gov.uk. The council does not require a hard copy of any submission. For those without access to email please send any submission to:

CGR
Legal and Democratic Services
South Oxfordshire District Council
Benson Lane
Crowmarsh Gifford
Wallingford
OX10 8QS

The council is particularly interested to hear comments on the following:

Are the factors that the council will take into account when coming to decisions the right ones? Are there others that it should add?

Should the council decline to consider any of the parish matters included in the table? If yes, for what reason?

Are there other parish matters that council should include in the final terms of reference? If yes, what are they?

Should you require any further information or need clarification on the review process, please contact:

Steven Corrigan
Democratic Services Manager
Telephone: 01491 823049
Email: steven.corrigan@southandvale.gov.uk

Map 28

Wheatley Parish Proposal



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- Existing Parish Boundary
- Proposed Boundary Change
- Area Affected

1:14,312



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