

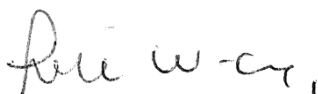
To the Members of Slough Borough Council

NOTICE OF MEETING

Dear Councillor,

You are summoned to attend an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of this Borough which will be held in the Main Hall - Chalvey Community Centre on **Tuesday 18th December, 2018 at 7.00pm**, when the business in the Agenda below is proposed to be transacted.

Yours faithfully



JOSIE WRAGG
Chief Executive

AGENDA

Apologies for Absence

	<u>PAGE</u>
1. Declarations of Interest	
<i>All Members who believe they have a Disclosable Pecuniary or other in any matter to be considered at the meeting must declare that interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in Section 4 paragraph 4.6 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter is discussed.</i>	
2. Community Governance Review of Parish Council Arrangements Within The Borough of Slough	1 - 132
3. Review of Polling Districts/Places	To Follow
4. Procedures For Settlement Agreements For Officers	To Follow

Press and Public

You are welcome to attend this meeting which is open to the press and public, as an observer. You will however be asked to leave before the Committee considers any items in the Part II agenda. Please contact the Democratic Services Officer shown above for further details.

The Council allows the filming, recording and photographing at its meetings that are open to the public. By entering the meeting room and using the public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and to the

possible use of those images and sound recordings. Anyone proposing to film, record or take photographs of a meeting is requested to advise the Democratic Services Officer before the start of the meeting. Filming or recording must be overt and persons filming should not move around the meeting room whilst filming nor should they obstruct proceedings or the public from viewing the meeting. The use of flash photography, additional lighting or any non hand held devices, including tripods, will not be allowed unless this has been discussed with the Democratic Services Officer.

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Council **DATE:** 18th December 2018

CONTACT OFFICER: Neil Wilcox Director of Finance and Resources
Sushil Thobhani Service Lead, Governance
Catherine Meek, Head of Democratic Services

(For all enquiries) (01753) 875011

WARDS: All

PART 1
FOR DECISION

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF PARISH COUNCIL ARRANGEMENTS
WITHIN THE BOROUGH OF SLOUGH

1. Purpose of Report

In line with the recommendations of the Council on 27th November 2018, this report:

- outlines the current anticipated position of how the facilities and services provided or supported by Britwell Parish Council and Wexham Court Parish Councils will be supported and developed in the event of their abolition.
- Outlines the financial position for the Council were the parishes abolished
- Sets out a timetable of consequential actions.

2. Recommendations

The Council is requested to consider the report and determine whether to Resolve:

(a) Britwell Parish Council

1. That the report and anticipated position of how the facilities and services provided or supported by Britwell Parish Council will be supported and developed in the event of their abolition be noted.
2. That Britwell Parish Council be abolished with effect from 1st April, 2019.
3. That Officers work with Britwell Parish Council on the transfer of assets and liabilities to Slough Borough Council in line with the timetable set out at paragraph 6.
4. That the timetable of consequential actions set out at paragraph 6 be endorsed
5. That the Director of Finance and Resources take all necessary actions, to give effect to the Council's decision.

(b) Wexham Court Parish Council

- 1 That the anticipated position of how the facilities and services provided or supported by

Wexham Court Parish Council will be supported and developed in the event of their abolition be noted.

- 2 That Wexham Court Parish Council be abolished with effect from 1st April, 2019.
 - 3 That Officers work with Wexham Court Parish Council on the transfer of assets and liabilities to Slough Borough Council in line with the timetable set out in paragraph 6.
 - 4 That the timetable of consequential actions set out at paragraph 6 be endorsed.
 - 5 That the Director of Finance and Resources take all necessary actions to give effect to the Council's decision.
- (c) That no other parish be constituted.

3. The Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

Effective governance arrangements are central to a successful modernised and transformational council and the Community Governance Review process is an important part of those arrangements.-

1. Other Implications

(a) Financial

If Council decides to abolish a parish council the Borough Council will have to 'wind up' the assets and existing liabilities of the parish. This report sets out the current anticipated position of how the facilities and services provided or supported by Britwell Parish Council and Wexham Court Parish Councils will be supported and developed in the event of their abolition. Information about the financial implications of abolition (taking into account available information) is set out at paragraph 3.

Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal challenge to decisions	Seek legal advice at all stages of the Review Having regard to Government Guidance on Community Governance Reviews	The aim of the review is to bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and more effective and convenient delivery of local services
Human Rights	None at this stage	
Employment Issues	See paragraph 4	
Equalities Issues	EIA prepared having regard to the public sector equality duty	
Community Support	Ensure consultation is appropriate and engages all interested parties so that community support for the way forward is effectively	Community engagement improved as a result of the recommendations of the review

	sought	
Communications	Consultation is appropriate and engages all interested parties	Residents given the opportunity to influence how their local area is governed
Community Safety	N/A	N/A

Financial No financial provision exists for this review and costs to date have been absorbed within existing budget provision. There may be additional costs associated with implementation, on-going legal advice and any subsequent challenge to recommendations could involve additional legal costs	Ensure the Council has regard to Guidance on Community Governance Reviews and recommendations are evidence based.	
Timetable for delivery	The Review must be completed within one year of commencement.	
Project capacity	Head of Democratic Services is the Review Manager currently supporting the Review with Project Officer support. ERS were commissioned to administer the advisory polls.	
Reputation	Ensure the Council has regard to Guidance on Community Governance Reviews and recommendations are evidence based	The outcomes of the review may address longstanding concerns about governance and probity in the borough

(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The conduct of a CGR is governed by Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ("the Act"). Slough Borough Council as a principal council must comply with both Part 4, Chapter 3 (Sections 79 to 102) of the Act and the Terms of Reference adopted by the Council for the purpose of carrying out the review. The council must have regard to the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews the relevant sections of which are set out in full at Appendix 6 to this report.

With regard to the dissolution of a Parish Council, the Council needs to be satisfied on the following points in each case:

- a) Whether there is clear evidence of local support for the abolition of the parish and the dissolution of the parish council;

- b) Whether such support has been maintained over a sufficient length of time (i.e. that the case for abolition has not been generated in the short term by an unpopular decision of the council, or a particular year's parish precept etc);
 - c) Whether the support is sufficiently informed (i.e. that a properly constituted parish council has had an opportunity to exercise parish functions and that local people therefore have had an opportunity to assess whether the parish council can contribute positively to local quality of life); and
 - d) Whether it can be demonstrated that if the parish is abolished there will be community governance which reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area and is effective and convenient.
- e) As part of this consideration the Council will consider the issue of community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of the parish.
- f) The Council should also take into account other arrangements that are already in place, or which could be made, for the purposes of community representation or community engagement. It must also have regard to the Guidance, which means that it should follow it unless it has good reason to depart from it.

It must also comply with the public sector equality duty below.

Equality and diversity issues are a mandatory consideration in the decision-making of the council. This is at section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 which says:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- (a) Tackle prejudice, and

- (b) Promote understanding.

Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act.

The relevant protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race,
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil partnership

- (c) Equalities Impact Assessment

To assist in complying with this duty an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was completed at the start of the Community Governance Review to ensure those with protected characteristics were not disadvantaged during the consultation. Since the recommendations were adopted by the Council on 27th November 2018 a further assessment has been undertaken to inform the Council's decision-making and is attached at Appendix 7. (To Follow)

4. Background

1.1 At its meeting on 27th November 2018 the Council considered the responses to the 2nd stage of the public consultation carried out as part of the community governance review of the Borough Council area and the recommendations of the Community Governance Review Group.

1.2 The Council resolved:

Britwell Parish Council

1. That the results of the advisory postal poll, the representations made by Britwell Parish Council and the written responses received during the consultation be noted.
2. That in light of the response to the consultation and findings of the Review as set out at paragraph 5.14 of the Council report, an extraordinary meeting of the Council be called on 18th December, 2018 to determine the abolition of Britwell Parish Council with effect from 1st April, 2019.
3. That the Director of Finance and Resources be requested to prepare:
 - a report to include how the facilities and services provided or supported by Britwell Parish Council will be supported and developed in the event of their abolition;
 - a draft order for the abolition of the Britwell Parish Council and the Civil Parish to take effect on 1st April, 2019, and a timetable of consequential actions.

Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council

1. That the written responses received in relation to Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council be noted.
2. That the results of the advisory postal poll on whether the parish council is effective and engages effectively with local people be noted.
3. That the parish council be urged to give consideration to the views expressed via the poll and improve its engagement with local people with an emphasis on the Westfield/Brands Hill area (PD CPA), where the poll demonstrated lower levels of public support.
4. That the borough council will review the parish's performance again toward the end of its next term of office and reserves the right to test public opinion in a further advisory postal poll if it is not satisfied that it is engaging widely with local people.

Wexham Court Parish Council

1. That the results of the advisory postal poll, the written responses received during the consultation and the audit report of the governance arrangements of the Parish be noted.
2. That in light of the response to the consultation and findings of the Review as set out at paragraph 5.31 of the Council report, an extraordinary meeting of the Council be called on 18th December, 2018 to determine the abolition of Wexham Court Parish Council with effect from 1st April, 2019.
3. That the Director of Finance and Resources be requested to prepare:
 - a report to include how the facilities and services provided or supported by Wexham Court Parish Council will be supported and developed in the event of their abolition;
 - a draft order for the abolition of the Wexham Court Parish Council and the Civil Parish to take effect on 1st April, 2019, and a timetable of consequential actions.

Council Deliberation – 27th November 2018

- 1.3 Representatives from Britwell and Wexham Court Parish Council's addressed the Council prior to the Debate commencing. A copy of the submissions made by the Parish Councils is attached at appendix 4.
- 1.4 Three letters were tabled at the Council meeting: (attached at Appendix 5)
 - Letter from Responsible Finance Officer - Wexham Court Parish Council – 27.11.18
 - Letter dated 27.11.18 from Berkshire Association of Local Councils
 - Letter dated 27.11.18 from Britwell Parish Council.
- 1.5 The Council considered each parish council in turn, taking into account the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews, the history of each Parish Council, concerns

noted earlier in the review, the results of the postal poll, and the specific responses received. It also took into account the public funding of the councils and the extent to which each delivered tangible benefits to its residents.

- 1.6 The Council was concerned to ensure that local government in Slough embodies the highest standards of governance and probity. It was very concerned by the shortcomings identified by the Review, which it felt reflected badly on the whole sector. The Council consider that Parish councils can play an important role in terms of community empowerment but need both robust governance and to be able to demonstrate value for money to their residents.
- 1.7 Prior to formal orders being made, the Council requested the Director of Finance & Resources to report to Council on how the facilities and services provided or supported by Britwell & Wexham Parish Councils will be supported and developed in the event of their abolition to enable members to judge the recommendation to abolish them against the Review's aim of bringing about improved community engagement, better local democracy, more effective and convenient local services and equitable treatment of electors across the whole Borough. An extract of the minute of the Council meeting held on 27th November is attached at Appendix 2.
- 1.8 The report to Council on 27th November also stated that a further report would be submitted setting out more detailed financial implications that might arise from a decision to abolish a parish or parishes, and this report does so at paragraph 3.
- 1.9 Whilst Government's guidance states 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' it is believed that the recommendations to abolish Britwell and Wexham Court Parish Councils are clearly justified for the reasons set out in the report to the Council meeting.

Community Engagement

- 1.10 The Guidance generally points out what the benefits of a Parish Council can be in terms of community engagement and the development of communities. It says that a parish should not be abolished unless clearly justified and this outcome should be exceptional.
- 1.11 Under Section 87(1) the Council must consider whether any new Parish Council should be established as part of the Community Governance Review. The Council on 27th September was advised that one comment was received during the consultation setting out the view that a Parish Council for Langley should be considered. The comment was a personal one and not made by, or on behalf of, the Langley Neighbourhood Forum. The Council welcomed the submission but did not consider that it provided enough evidence that the establishment of a Parish Council was warranted. There was no information on local support for such a proposal or on questions such as what services a new parish council might provide, the level of parish precept that would be needed to fund a new parish council of this size, and what the parish boundary might be. The Council resolved that a case for a new parish council had not been made.
- 1.12 The Council has had regard to the Guidance and Legislation and, in these particular

circumstances as set out in the report to Council on 27th November 2018, is of the view that there is sufficient opportunity for community engagement in each of the parish areas (including that set out below), that abolition is justified and that a new Parish Council is not required.

1.13 Britwell - Regular Borough Councillor Surgeries, Community Groups, Northern Neighbourhood Forum, Britwell Neighbourhood action group, Britwell and Northborough Police Community Forum.

1.14 Wexham - Regular Borough Councillor Surgeries, Residents Association, Community Groups, Police Community Forum.

Work to be undertaken and next steps

1.15 On the abolition of a Parish Council, Slough (SBC) becomes responsible for the assets and liabilities of the Parish Council. Arguably SBC also becomes responsible for the services currently provided by the Parish Council, but as these are largely discretionary services has no obligation to continue them. An outline of the assets, liabilities and services of Britwell and Wexham Court Parish Council that would be inherited is set out below.

Buildings/Assets

1.16 Buildings currently owned by Britwell Parish Council and Wexham Court Parish Council will transfer to the ownership of Slough BC. There will be a need to confirm that the required testing and certification checks have been undertaken for all of these buildings together with any condition surveys and the consideration of any maintenance requirements. With this caveat the anticipated position is as follow:

Britwell Parish Council

Building/Asset	Ownership etc	Comment
Community Centre, Long Furlong Drive, Slough, SL2 2PH	This property is registered at HM Land Registry under Title number BK344491. The title is freehold and the registered proprietor is Britwell Parish Council.	Upon any abolition of the Parish Council this land will vest in the Council.
Chicken Ranch Bar	Forms part of the Community Centre referred to above and let on lease. The terms of which remain to be established. The title to the Lease is not registered at the Land Registry but is likely to constitute an overriding interest binding upon the Council.	The burden of the Landlord covenants and the benefit of the tenant covenants in the lease will pass to the Council.
Two football pitches, Long Furlong Drive	Form part of the registered title referred to above. These pitches and other open land forming part of the title referred to above have been dedicated to the public as a public	Would transfer to SBC

	playing field and recreation ground	
Police Portacabin (used as a part time local office)	Forms part of the registered title referred to above and is let to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley for a term from and including 9 June 2009 up to and including 4 November 2106. Leasehold title registered under title number BK435389.	The burden of the Landlord covenants and the benefit of the tenant covenants in the lease will pass to the Council.

Wexham Court Parish Council

Building/Asset	Ownership etc	Comment
Parish Hall comprising two halls and a boardroom, Norway Drive	The freehold title is held by Slough Borough Council under Land Registry Title Number BK408871 but the land has been leased to Wexham Court Parish Council for a term expiring on 31 March 2032. The Parish Council's leasehold title is registered under title number BK421124.	Halls over two floors Recently refurbished Wheelchair lift installed. Upon any abolition of the Parish Council, the Parish Council's leasehold title will be extinguished by merger with the Council's freehold title.
Three tennis courts, Norway Drive	Part of Parish amenity land and maintained by Parish. Form part of the Parish Council's Leasehold Title number BK421124 referred to above.	Free to hire to residents. Upon any abolition of the Parish Council, the Parish Council's leasehold title will be extinguished by merger with the Council's freehold title.
Open Recreation land to the east of the Tennis Courts and Children's Play Area, Norway Drive	Part of Parish amenity land and maintained by Parish. Forms part of the Parish Council's Leasehold Title number BK421124 referred to above.	The Parish Council and the Council have entered into an agreement for surrender of part of this land back to the Council to permit the Development of Housing on this

		part.
Childrens' Play area, Norway Drive	Forms part of the Parish Council's Leasehold Title number BK421124 referred to above.	Upon any abolition of the Parish Council, the Parish Council's leasehold title will be extinguished by merger with the Council's freehold title.
Football pitches, The Cherries	The Council is the registered proprietor of the freehold title to this land under Title No BK408870. The land has been leased to Wexham Court Parish Council under a lease expiring on 31 March 2032. The Parish Council's title is registered under Title No. BK420710.	Upon any abolition of the Parish Council, the Parish Council's leasehold title will be extinguished by merger with the Council's freehold title.
Play area, the Cherries	The Council is the registered proprietor of the freehold title to this land under Title No BK408870. The land has been leased to Wexham Court Parish Council under a lease expiring on 31 March 2032. The Parish Council's title is registered under Title No. BK420710.	Upon any abolition of the Parish Council, the Parish Council's leasehold title will be extinguished by merger with the Council's freehold title.
Open air Gym – The Cherries	The Council is the registered proprietor of the freehold title to this land under Title No BK408870. The land has been leased to Wexham Court Parish Council under a lease expiring on 31 March 2032. The Parish Council's title is registered under Title No. BK420710.	Upon any abolition of the Parish Council, the Parish Council's leasehold title will be extinguished by merger with the Council's freehold title.
Bowls club, Norway Drive	Forms part of the Parish Council's Leasehold Title number BK421124 referred to above. The Parish Council have sub-let this to The Wexham Bowls Club for a term expiring on 30 March 2032.	Upon any abolition of the Parish Council, the Parish Council's leasehold title will be extinguished by merger with the Council's freehold title. The Wexham Bowls Club's sub-lease will continue to be

		binding upon the council by virtue of Section 139 of the Law of Property Act 1925.
Allotments – junction of Uxbridge road/church lane	Income £250. The title to this land is registered at the Land Registry under Title No. BK409783. Wexham Court Parish Council is the registered proprietor.	Upon any abolition of the Parish Council this land will vest in the Council. absorb into allotment portfolio

2 Support to facilities and services provided or supported by Britwell Parish Council and Wexham Court Parish Council in the event that the Parish Councils are abolished.

Britwell - Use of Hall and Playing Fields

- 2.1 The Hall is currently let out to both regular and occasional users. The football pitches are used at weekends. The regular bookings for the Hall are set out at Appendix 5.
- 2.2 In the event of abolition the Council noted that the borough council currently offers concessionary rates to voluntary and charitable organisations at all its community centres and these charges are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they adequately support local groups. The borough council’s ‘Five Year Plan’ makes it clear that it will work to build on the strengths of communities, including supporting local community groups and seeks a flexible approach to achieve the widest benefit to the local community. Between the Britwell Hub, the facilities on the parish site and elsewhere in Britwell, the capacity exists to accommodate all the various groups currently using the community building;
- 2.3 In the event of abolition, the borough council has no plans to change the status of the community centre and the borough council would work with the Neighbourhood Forum and other relevant groups to that end. The existing parish council building could continue to be used, linked with its outdoor recreation space, as a centre for local young people and sport. The nearby Britwell Hub on Wentworth Avenue provides a further local venue for recreational and social activities as well as learning and the local library. A Northern Neighbourhood Forum has been established as part of the joint partnership between Osborne and the borough council and it is intended the Forum will be developed to have a wider remit focused on improving the area to meet local people’s needs and engage with wider borough council services.
- 2.4 The Parish Council worked closely with Slough Leisure Services to provide a funfair and summer celebration and the Council will continue to work closely with existing community groups and forums to provide similar support for such events.

Wexham Court

- 2.5 There are two halls and a boardroom that are hired out to both regular and occasional users. The regular bookings for the Hall are set out at Appendix 5.
- 2.6 In the event of abolition the parish facilities would be run equally well by the borough council. The parish hall could be developed to provide a community hub, opening up to the wider local community and encouraging its use for community functions. This will be developed in response to local residents' feedback to determine community need.

3 Financial/Budget Implications/considerations

- 3.1 In taking on the activities and liabilities of the 2 parishes, the Council will be responsible for additional revenue expenditure of approx. £100,000 in 2019/20 (based on the 2018/19 parish budgets). The Council will maintain the services to residents currently offered by Britwell and Wexham parishes within its draft budget for 2019/20, offering a net saving to the residents of these areas, and with no impact on the rest of the borough. It is confident it can reduce, and within its current MTFs eliminate the deficits outlined below by using its expertise and experience in managing community assets to maximise the income opportunities, utilise the economies of scale of Council contracts to support the services currently provided, and redeploy transferring staff to vacant Council posts.
- 3.2 Whilst Britwell is budgeting for a surplus in the current year, Wexham is budgeting for a loss, which is not sustainable in the long term. The measures proposed by the council above, supported in the short term by transferring reserves, will underpin the long term availability of assets for the communities.
- 3.3 Specifically the Council will manage transferring assets using its corporate landlord model to ensure consistency, best value and provision of fit for purpose assets, which are compliant with appropriate legislation. The expertise of its Building Management Service has delivered substantial improvement in the way the borough council manages its estate and it is confident that this model can be easily applied across these Parish Councils in a cost effective way, working with residents to deliver services that benefit local communities.

Britwell Parish Council

The Current financial information produced for the current financial year is as follows:

Britwell Parish Council		
Precept		65,100
Less Council Tax Support Grant		(8,961)
Total Precept Loss		56,139
	Budget	
	2018/19	
	£	
Income	(92,150)	
Expenditure	70,576	
Budgeted Surplus	(21,574)	
Net Loss without Precept	43,526	
Saving on Council Tax Support Grant	(8,961)	
Net loss for year	34,565	Amount that will have to be found from economies of scale or other budgets
Reserves estimated as at 31/3/19	£ 100,445	

3.4 It can be seen that the Parish Council has over £100k in reserves and is currently budgeting for an in year surplus based on the numbers we have been given. If the in year precept (that will no longer be charged to residents) is removed the estimates show a loss. This loss is reduced down by the saving that the Council will make by no longer having to provide Council Tax support grant to the Parish Council (£9k). The net deficit to be covered by the Council will be £35k per annum if no additional savings and/or additional income can be identified.

Wexham Parish Council

Wexham Parish Council		
Precept		56,811
Less Council Tax Support Grant		(8,701)
Total Precept Loss		48,110
	Budget	
	2018/19	
	£	
Income	(108,760)	
Expenditure	125,750	
Budgeted Loss	16,990	
Net Loss without Precept	73,801	
Saving on Council Tax Support Grant	(8,701)	
Net loss for year	65,100	Amount that will have to be found from economies of scale or other budgets
Reserves estimated as at 31/3/19	£ 193,062	

3.4 It can be seen that the Parish Council has over £193k in reserves. It is however budgeting for an in year deficit based on the numbers we have been given. Again

when the in year precept is removed the estimates show a loss of £74k for the current year. This loss is reduced down by the saving that the Council will make by no longer having to provide Council Tax support grant to the Parish Council (£9k). The net deficit to be covered by the Council will be £65k per annum if no additional savings and/or additional income can be identified

4 Employee Considerations

- 4.1 Current employees are contracted to deliver services for the running of the Parish Councils, and further work will need to be undertaken to establish the nature of their contracts and the job roles. In accordance with the Cabinet Office’s Statement of Practice on Staff Transfers, even where (as here) the TUPE regulations do not apply, the principles of TUPE should be followed and the staff involved should be treated no less favourably than had the Regulations applied. Some roles may therefore transfer to the Borough Council upon abolition.
- 4.2 If there are roles in the parishes that are not deemed to transfer then they may become redundant on abolition. It would then be the responsibility of the Parish Council to deal with those employees in accordance with the statutory requirements although the Borough Council’s People Service would support them in this task. Additionally support would be given to secure redeployment where appropriate.

5 Community Governance Reorganisation Orders

- 5.1 The Orders will include details of the abolition of the Parish Councils and the transfer of property rights and liabilities
- 5.2 The Council is requested to delegate authority to the Director of Finance and Resources to take all reasonable steps to make the Orders.

6 Timetable of next actions

Final Recommendations approved by Council	18 December 2018	
Main provisions of Statutory Community Governance Review Orders approved	18 December 2018	Council decision published Order published when made
Parish Electors advised of outcome of Review	January 2019	
Orders come into effect	1 April 2019	
Detailed provision for parishes’ assets and liabilities	January – March 2019	
Effective date for abolition	1 st April 2019	

7 Appendices

1. Council Reports – 17th May 7th June, 27th September and 27th November 2018
2. Council – 27th November 2018 – Extract from Minutes
3. Letters tabled at Council meeting – 27th November 2018 -
4. Submission made by Wexham Court Parish council - Council meeting - 27th

November 2018

5. Parish Hall/playing fields - current Usage
6. Guidance on Community Governance Reviews – Extract
7. Equalities Impact Assessment (To Follow)

8 Background Papers

Guidance on Community Governance Reviews

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consulted during a CGR, that representations received in connection with the review are taken into account and that decisions taken are publicised. The terms of reference of the CGR are for the Council to determine, but must specify the area under review. In undertaking the review the Council should ensure that community governance in the identified area will be reflective of the identities and interests of the communities in that area, and is effective and convenient. It can take into account any other arrangements that have or could be made for the purposes of community representation or engagement.

Government Guidance advises that any recommendations arising from the review should bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient service delivery.

(c) Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment of any recommendations arising from the Review will be undertaken and published.

5 Supporting Information

5.1 The last CGR for Slough was completed in 2013. There are currently 3 parish councils within the borough – Britwell, Colnbrook with Poyle and Wexham Court.

5.2 The 2013 Review resulted in:

- changes to the Boundary of **Britwell Parish Council** and a consequent reduction in the number of Councillors from 13 to 7;
- the Council noting that the advisory poll (undertaken as part of the CGR) returned a majority in favour of abolition of the Parish Council and agreed that public opinion be tested again in a further four years' time.
- the Council noting that the advisory poll (undertaken as part of the CGR) returned a majority in favour of the retention of **Wexham Court Parish Council** and reserving the right to test public opinion again in the future if it still has concerns about the Parish Council's governance arrangements.
- the Council reserving the right to test public opinion in an advisory postal poll at or after the next parish council elections in 2015 if it is not satisfied that **Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council** is engaging more widely with local people.

Next Actions

5.3 The Council committed to undertaking a further advisory poll to test public opinion on the future of Britwell Parish Council and reserved the right to test public opinion by way of an advisory poll in Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council and Wexham Court Parish Council as outlined above. The Council will need to decide what action it wishes to take and consider whether it wishes to take an opportunity to commence a further CGR.

Guidance on Community Governance Reviews

- 5.4 It is good practice for a council to undertake CGRs every 10-15 years. The CGR is a review of the whole or part of the Council area to consider one or more of the following:
- creating, merging, altering or abolishing
 - the naming of parishes and style of new parishes
 - the electoral arrangements for parishes, such as the ordinary year of election, council size, number of councillors to be elected to the council and parish warding
 - grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.
- 5.5 The Council is required to ensure that the CGR within the area under review will be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and is effective and convenient. The CGR is required to take into account the impact of existing community governance arrangements on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of any local community or proposed parish or town council. Reviews must be completed within a year starting with the Council publishing its Terms of Reference for the review
- 5.6 If the Council is minded to undertake a further CGR it is proposed that a Working Group be appointed comprising the Cabinet Member for Transformation and Performance, three further Labour Group Members and two members of the opposition (none of whom are on an existing parish council) to work with the Head of Democratic Services to agree the timetable and terms of reference of the Review for report to Council on 7th June 2018.

The Review

- 5.7 As part of the Review the Council must consult with local people and take into account any representations made in connection with the review.

Terms of Reference

- 5.8 Once approved by the Council the terms of reference for the review must be published. If any modifications are subsequently made to the terms of reference, these must also be published.
- 5.9 Parish Councils are fully consulted as part of the Review.

6 Appendices Attached

None

7 Background Papers

None

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SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Council **DATE:** 7th June 2018
CONTACT OFFICER: Catherine Meek
Head of Democratic Services
(For all enquiries) (01753) 875011
WARD(S): All

PART I
FOR DECISION

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF PARISH COUNCIL
ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN THE BOROUGH OF SLOUGH

1 Purpose of Report

To agree the Terms of Reference and timetable for the Community Governance Review.

2 Recommendations

The Council is requested to Resolve:

- (a) That the timetable and Terms of Reference for the Review as set out at Appendix 1 be agreed and the Review launched on 10th June 2018.
- (b) That the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to take all necessary steps in relation to the Review following consultation, as appropriate, with the Commissioner for Transformation and Performance including amend the timetable for the Review if required.

3 The Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

Effective governance arrangements are central to a successful modernised and transformational council and the Community Governance Review process is an essential part of those arrangements.

4 Other Implications

(a) Financial

There will be a financial cost in conducting the Community Governance Review particularly in respect of the consultation process and advisory poll(s). There is no specific budget for this and the costs will seek to be accommodated within existing budgets.

(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The Review will be undertaken in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. This requires that local people are

consulted during a CGR, that representations received in connection with the review are taken into account and that decisions taken are publicised. The terms of reference of the CGR are for the Council to determine, but must specify the area under review. In undertaking the review the Council should ensure that community governance in the identified area will be reflective of the identities and interests of the communities in that area, and is effective and convenient. It can take into account any other arrangements that have or could be made for the purposes of community representation or engagement.

Government Guidance advises that any recommendations arising from the review should bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient service delivery.

(c) Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment of any recommendations arising from the Review will be undertaken and published.

5 Supporting Information

5.1 There are currently 3 parish councils within the borough – Britwell, Colnbrook with Poyle and Wexham Court.

5.2 The Council conducted a CGR in 2013 which resulted in:

- changes to the Boundary of **Britwell Parish Council** and a consequent reduction in the number of Councillors from 13 to 7;
- the Council noting that the advisory poll (undertaken as part of the CGR) returned a majority in favour of abolition of the Parish Council and agreed that public opinion be tested again in a further four years' time.
- the Council noting that the advisory poll (undertaken as part of the CGR) returned a majority in favour of the retention of **Wexham Court Parish Council** and reserving the right to test public opinion again in the future if it still has concerns about the Parish Council's governance arrangements.
- the Council reserving the right to test public opinion in an advisory postal poll at or after the next parish council elections in 2015 if it is not satisfied that **Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council** is engaging more widely with local people.

Next Actions

5.3 In 2013 the Council committed to undertaking a further advisory poll to test public opinion on the future of Britwell Parish Council and reserved the right to test public opinion by way of an advisory poll in Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council and Wexham Court Parish Council as outlined above.

5.4 At its meeting on 17th May 2018 the Council resolved that a Community Governance Review of Parish Council arrangements in the Borough be

conducted. The Council appointed a Working Group comprising the Cabinet member for Transformation and Performance and Councillors Cheema, Mann, Strutton, Swindlehurst and Wright to work with the Head of Democratic Services to agree the timetable and terms of reference of the Review for report to Council on 7th June 2018.

Terms of Reference and Timetable

- 5.5 The CGR is a review of the whole or part of the Council area to consider one or more of the following:
- creating, merging, altering or abolishing
 - the naming of parishes and style of new parishes
 - the electoral arrangements for parishes, such as the ordinary year of election, council size, number of councillors to be elected to the council and parish warding
 - grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.
- 5.6 The Council is required to ensure that the CGR within the area under review will be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and is effective and convenient. The CGR is required to take into account the impact of existing community governance arrangements on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of any local community or proposed parish or town council. Reviews must be completed within a year starting with the Council publishing the Terms of Reference for the Review
- 5.7 Following consultation with the Working Group draft terms of reference and a timetable for the Review are attached to this report for the Council's approval. The draft timetable for the Review is based on the Review commencing in June 2018.
- 5.8 Once approved by the Council the terms of reference for the review must be published. If any modifications are subsequently made to the terms of reference, these must also be published.

Implementation of Review Outcome

- 5.9 The outcome of the Review needs to be widely published and a Re-Organisation Order prepared if necessary. Any changes to a parish come into force at the first parish council election following the Order. The next scheduled Parish Council elections are on Thursday 2nd May 2019.
- 5.10 Parish Council's are fully consulted as part of the Review.

6 Appendices Attached

- 1 Proposed Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Review

7 Background Papers - None

Slough Borough Council

Review of Community Governance Arrangements within the Borough of Slough

Terms of Reference

Introduction

Slough Borough Council is undertaking a Community Governance Review of the whole of the Slough Borough Council area 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. This guidance was considered when drawing up the Terms of Reference (TOR).

What is a Community Governance Review

It is a review to consider one or more of the following:

- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
- The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes;
- The electoral arrangements for parishes (the ordinary year of election; council size, the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding), and
- Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes

The Council is required to ensure that community governance within the area under review will be: reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and is effective and convenient.

In doing so the community governance review is required to take into account:

- The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
- The size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.

The aim of the review is to consider and bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and efficient, more effective and convenient delivery of local services and ensure electors across the whole Borough will be treated equitably and fairly.

The Council will also take into account any other arrangements (apart from those relating to parishes and their institutions) that have already been made, or that could be made, for the purposes of community representation or engagement.

Why undertake this Community Governance Review

The Council carried out a Community Governance Review in 2013 The Review resulted in:

- changes to the Boundary of **Britwell Parish Council** and a consequent reduction in the number of Councillors from 13 to 7;
- the Council noting that the advisory poll (undertaken as part of the CGR) returned a majority in favour of abolition of the Parish Council and agreed that public opinion be tested again in a further four years' time.
- the Council noting that the advisory poll (undertaken as part of the CGR) returned a majority in favour of the retention of **Wexham Court Parish Council** and reserving the right to test public opinion again in the future if it still has concerns about the Parish Council's governance arrangements.
- the Council reserving the right to test public opinion in an advisory postal poll at or after the next parish council elections in 2015 if it is not satisfied that **Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council** is engaging more widely with local people.

As the Council is committed to undertaking a further advisory poll to test public opinion on the future of Britwell Parish Council and has reserved the right to test public opinion by way of an advisory poll in Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council and Wexham Court Parish Council as outlined above it has agreed to take the opportunity to commence a further CGR.

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 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 are appropriate, equitable and readily understood by their electorate.

Areas to be reviewed

Britwell

Wexham Court

Colnbrook with Poyle

*unparished areas

*The review will focus on the parished areas of the Borough but will also consider other forms of community representation which local people may have set up in the Borough and which help make a distinct contribution to the community such as residents' associations, community forums, neighbourhood working groups, tenant management organisations etc.

Who will undertake the Review

The Borough Council is responsible for conducting the review. The Council has established a working group which will be responsible for making both draft and final recommendations during the process. The Council will be required to approve the final recommendations prior to a Community Governance Order being made. A full consultation process will form part of the Review to take account of the views of local people.

Timetable for the review

A timetable for the review is attached as an Annexe. The programme and timeline may be adjusted after representations have been received by 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.

Electorate forecasts for the Borough

This Review will be conducted using electoral data taken from the 1 December 2017 electoral register.

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, the Local Plan / the Local Development Framework to project the five-year electorate forecast.

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.

Representations

The Borough Council wants to know what local people and other stakeholders think about community governance arrangements for the whole of the Borough area or for specific local areas within the Borough. The 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 should be addressed to; The Review Manager Slough Borough Council, St Martin's Place, 51 Bath Road, Slough SL13UF. Representations may be sent by email to Catherine.meek@slough.gov.uk or via the Council's website at slough.gov.uk. All initial representations must be made by 3rd August 2018.

The Council will consult with 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 take the representations that are received into account by judging

them against the criteria in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

All representation 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. Information relating to the Review will be available on the Borough Council's website.

Local electors may also petition the Council making one or more specific recommendations for consideration as part of the Review. If any valid petitions are received during the consultation stages of the Review the Council will respond to them even though it is not legally required to do so where it is currently conducting a review for the whole or a significant part of its area. (Sections 39 - 43 of the Act set out the criteria which a petition must meet in order to be legally valid.)

How will the results be disseminated?

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 libraries and council buildings.

This Review is deemed to have commenced on the date of this Notice
Dated

Catherine Meek
Head of Democratic Services

Community Governance Review 2018 Programme and Timeline

Stage	Action	Timeline	Outline of Action
1	Report to full Council	17 th May 2018	Council approves Review and establishment of Working Group.
2	Report to full Council	7 th June 2018	Council approves terms of reference and timetable for the Review.
3	Launch	11 th June 2018	Terms of Reference and timetable for the Review published and stakeholders notified of the commencement of the Review.
3	Invite initial submissions Consultation period 1	11 th June to 3 rd August 2018 (8 weeks)	Initial submissions invited <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with Parish Councils • Consultations with Parish and Borough councillors • Local groups and interested parties to be consulted • Information pack to be sent as requested Representations/proposals to be sent to Slough Borough Council.
4	Consider submissions.	w/c 6 August 2018	Working Group to meet to consider submissions and prepare draft recommendations for report to Council (27 th September)
5	Publish draft recommendations Consultation period 2	1 st October to 9 th November 2018 (6 weeks)	Publish draft recommendations for further consultation. Conduct Postal Parish Poll (Britwell) and others if evidence suggests Poll is appropriate .
6	Consider submissions and	w/c 12 November 2018	Consider further submissions and prepare final recommendations for

	make final recommendations		report to Council (27th November 2018).
7	Publish final recommendations	December 2018	Publish final recommendations and make Order if required.

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SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Council

DATE: 27th September 2018

CONTACT OFFICER: Community Governance Review Group
Catherine Meek, Head of Democratic Services

(For all enquiries) (01753) 875011

WARD(S): All

PART 1 **FOR DECISION**

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF PARISH COUNCIL ARRANGEMENTS **WITHIN THE BOROUGH OF SLOUGH**

1. Purpose of Report

At its meeting on 24th April 2018 the Council agreed to carry out a Community Governance Review within the Borough. The Terms of Reference of the Review were agreed on 17th May 2018 and a Member Review Panel was established to consider the review and make recommendations to the Council.

This report considers the responses to the first stage of the public consultation carried out as part of Review having regard to the law and the guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the (then) Department for Communities and Local Government.

2. Recommendations

The Council is requested to consider the recommendations of the Community Governance Review Group and determine whether to Resolve:

- (a) That in the light of the response to the first stage of the consultation a further consultation be undertaken, in accordance with the guidance on Community Governance Reviews, with the electors and other interested parties to gauge views on the future of Britwell, Colnbrook with Poyle and Wexham Court Parishes and their Councils as set out in the report.
- (b) That electors and other interested parties be consulted on proposed changes to the area and name of Wexham Court Parish Council and its electoral arrangements as set out in paragraph 7.23 and map attached at Appendix 2.
- (c) That a case for a new parish council in Slough has not been made.

If the Council agrees resolution (a) to (c) above, that the Council Resolve:

- (a) That the 2nd stage of the consultation process comprise the measures set out in section 4 (a) - Financial Implications, of the report, with the formal advisory

poll taking the form of all postal poll; and that the costs be met from within existing budgets.

- (b) That the Returning Officer be authorised to determine all matters in relation to undertaking the consultation following consultation with the Chair of the Review Group and other members of the Review Group if time permits including amending the timetable for the review if required.

3. **The Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

Effective governance arrangements are central to a successful modernised and transformational council and the Community Governance Review process is an essential part of those arrangements

4. **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There will be a financial cost in conducting the next stage of the Community Governance Review particularly in respect of the consultation process. Costs to date for the Review have been accommodated within existing budgets.

Estimated costs for the Stage 2 consultation process are dependant on the nature and extent of the consultation undertaken and options are set out at Paragraph 8.4. It is anticipated that the consultation will comprise:

- A formal postal advisory poll in each of the three Parish areas
- A letter explaining the stage 2 consultation delivered to all residents in the parishes, interested groups and parties seeking comments and
- A letter to Parish Councils seeking views and
- Public notice of the consultation in local newspapers, council offices and the website.

Depending on the nature of the consultation, costs would range from £12,500 to £45,000. There is no specific budget provision for these additional costs, as far as possible, they will be contained within existing budgets.

Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal Risk of legal challenge to decisions	Seek legal advice at all stages of the Review	Proposals must bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and more effective and convenient delivery of local services
Property	N/A	N/A
Human Rights	None at this stage	

Health and Safety	N/A	
Employment Issues	None at this stage	
Equalities Issues	EIA prepared	
Community Support	Ensure consultation is appropriate and engages all interested parties so that community support for the way forward is effectively sought	Community engagement improved as a result of the recommendations of the review
Communications	Consultation is appropriate and engages all interested parties	Residents given the opportunity to influence how their local area is governed
Community Safety	N/A	N/A

Financial See above – No financial provision exists for this review and costs to date have been absorbed within existing budget provision. Budget to carry out extensive consultation needs to be identified. There will be additional costs associated with on-going legal advice and any subsequent challenge to recommendations could involve additional legal costs	Ensure Statutory Guidance on Reviews is followed and recommendations are evidence based.	
Timetable for delivery	The Review must be completed within one year of commencement.	
Project capacity	Head of Democratic Services is the Review Manager currently supporting the Review with Project Officer support. ERS would be commissioned to administer any advisory poll.	
Reputation	Ensure Statutory Guidance on Reviews is followed and recommendations are evidence based	

(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The conduct of a CGR is governed by Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ("the Act"). Slough Borough Council as a principal council must comply with both Part 4, Chapter 3 (Sections 79 to 102) of the Act and the Terms of

Reference adopted by the Council for the purpose of carrying out the review. Section 100 of the Act states that a principal council must have regard to the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews the relevant sections of which are set out in full in Paragraph 8 of this report.

With regard to the dissolution of a Parish Council, the Council needs to be satisfied on the following points in each case:

- (a) Whether there is clear evidence of local support for the abolition of the parish and the dissolution of the parish council;
- (b) Whether such support has been maintained over a sufficient length of time (i.e. that the case for abolition has not been generated in the short term by an unpopular decision of the council, or a particular year's parish precept etc);
- (c) Whether the support is sufficiently informed (i.e. that a properly constituted parish council has had an opportunity to exercise parish functions and that local people therefore have had an opportunity to assess whether the parish council can contribute positively to local quality of life); and
- (d) Whether it can be demonstrated that suitable alternative arrangements are in place for engaging the local community.

(c) Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was completed at the start of the Community Governance Review.

5. Supporting Information

- 5.1 At its meeting held on 24th April 2018 the Council agreed to carry out a Community Governance Review within the Borough area including the parishes and their electoral arrangements. The Council in May approved terms of reference for the review and a timetable, and appointed a Review Group comprising the Commissioner for Transformation and Performance, three further Labour Group Members and two Members of the opposition to consider the review and make recommendations to the Council.
- 5.2 The aim of the review is to consider and bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and more effective and convenient delivery of local services, and to ensure that electors across the whole Borough are treated equitably and fairly.

6. Background

- 6.1 There are currently three parish councils within the Borough.
- 6.2 The Council must as part of the review consult with local people and take into account any representations made in connection with the review. The review must ensure that the proposed community governance reflects the interests and identities of the community. It must also make certain that the arrangements are effective and convenient for the electors of that community. The Review Group has now completed the evidence gathering first stage of the Review.

- 6.3 As agreed by the Council the review is focused primarily on the parished areas of the Borough but may also consider other forms of community representation which local people may have set up in the Borough and which help make a distinct contribution to the community such as residents' associations, community forums, neighbourhood working groups, tenant management organisations etc.
- 6.4 As Members will know, there are active residents and community groups in various parts of the Borough and it is clearly important that the review should also take these into account, especially if specific proposals are put forward by local people during the consultation stages of the review.
- 6.5 The review may consider the creation, abolition, merging or altering of parish councils and any subsequent electoral arrangements. New parishes may be created as a result of the geography of an area, the make-up of the local community, or sense of identity. All parishes must fall within the existing borough boundary. The timetable for the Review is set out at Appendix 1.

7. Results of Public Consultation

- 7.1 The Review was launched on 11th June 2018 with a Council webpage, public notices posted at St Martins Place, libraries and community centres and notification by letter and email to local community and leisure organisations, housing associations, business organisations, the police, the health authority and local schools. Parish Councils were also formally notified together with the National Association of Local Councils, Berkshire Association of Local Councils, the Slough District Association of Local Councils and the Slough Council for Voluntary Service.
- 7.2 Parish council chairs were invited to make submissions to the Review Group and meetings were held with each of them in July and drop-in sessions arranged in each of the parish areas. Each Parish Council was asked to provide the following information (in advance of their meeting with the Review Group):
- a profile of the Parish Council;
 - an assessment of how the Council is doing;
 - what they think they do best, and the Council's plans and ambitions for the future;
 - an outline of the specific services the Parish Council provides;
 - a breakdown of the council's costs of providing public services;
 - an assessment of levels of take up and use of the services provided, and the income received from fees and charges etc;
 - Financial/budget information for the year 2017/2018 and 2018/19.
 - The attendance record of Parish Councillors at Parish council meetings;
 - A breakdown of staff employed by the Parish council;
 - Information on what methods the Parish Council currently uses to communicate with residents;
 - Their view of Parish arrangements and how they have operated and are perceived since the last review;
 - Any advice/training/support the Parish council has received since the last review.
- 7.3 Submissions have been made to the Review Group by the parish councils and 10 letters and emails have been received in response to the review, one of which

relates to Chalvey, five relate to Colnbrook with Poyle, none to Britwell, three to Wexham Court and one to the Langley area. In addition, 73 responses have been received to a survey carried out by the Slough Labour Party in the Wexham Court parish area. These responses are discussed in the following paragraphs. The Review Group noted that there had not been a large volume of responses to the first stage of consultation and took this into account in making their recommendations.

(a) Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council

- 7.4 On 23rd July 2018 the Review Group met Councillor Pooja Bedi, Chair of the Parish Council together with Councillor Dexter Smith, (Chair of Policy and Finance Committee) who made a submission as part of their response to the public consultation. The submission and the notes of the meeting will be published on the Council's website together with the other views, comments and submissions received. The Review Group was advised that the Parish Council had been founded in 1995 at the request of the local community and played a significant role in looking out for and protecting the interests of those in the Parish. The Parish Council advised that it was undertaking sustained work in building a cohesive community that residents could take pride in and that Parish Councillors devoted a great deal of time and commitment to helping make the parish a better place in which to live and work.. They advised that there were several key matters affecting the area that the Parish Council was involved in including Heathrow expansion, cargo distribution and the Western Rail Link to Heathrow.
- 7.5 Five of the written submissions received in response to the review related to Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council. A response received on behalf of several local businesses was positive and supportive of the Parish Council and another felt that the work of the Parish Council was important to the residents as it was the driving force to effect change and improvements. However others indicated a view that the Parish Council did nothing to benefit Colnbrook, that the current parish council was unviable and that, if it was to continue, needed to be more cohesive, functional and engaged with the local community.
- 7.6 Several residents attended a drop in session n Colnbrook on 19th July 2018. The notes of the meeting will be published on the Council's website. Views expressed at the drop in included concerns that the Parish Council did not communicate effectively or engage openly with residents and were not viewed as being open and accessible in terms of the information provided on the website and notice boards and that politics got in the way of business. Others were unclear as to the role and value of the Parish Council.
- 7.7 The Group acknowledged that the submissions with regard to the Parish contained conflicting views about the value of the services that the Parish provided and whether it benefitted, or was representative of, Colnbrook. The 2013 review had had concerns about the Parish Council's engagement with local people and the Borough Council had reserved the right to test public opinion in an advisory poll at or after the parish council elections in 2015. The Review Group did not consider it had been provided with substantial evidence that the parish council was engaging more widely with local people and had received views where the value of the Parish council was queried. The Working Group noted that the Parish Council had been established relatively recently (1995) at the request of local people and since that

time public opinion on the effectiveness of the Parish Council had never been gauged.

- 7.8 The Group agreed that electors and other interested parties should be consulted on whether the Parish is providing effective services and engaging with local people and that an advisory poll of Parish electors be conducted as part of the second stage of consultation.

Review Group Recommendation – Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council

- 7.9 **The Review Group believes based on the evidence provided that there is a case for formally consulting on whether the Parish is providing effective services and engages effectively with local people and is therefore recommending that current Parish Council electors and other interested parties are formally consulted on this.**

(b) Britwell Parish Council

- 7.10 In July 2018 the Review Group met Councillor Ollie Isernia Chair of the Parish Council together with Parish Councillor Sean Wright and Jonathan Holder, clerk of Britwell Parish Council as part of the process of gathering evidence for the review. The Parish Council had provided information in advance of the meeting, as requested. During that meeting Councillor Isernia and Wright drew attention to the work and operation of the Parish since it had been reduced in size both geographically and in the numbers of Councillors as part of the 2013 Community Governance Review and outlined their future plans and ideas. Following an initial period where the Parish Council had to deal with a serious fraud matter the Chair confirmed that the parish Council had been able to focus increasingly on delivering value to those within the Parish.
- 7.11 The notes of the meeting will be published on the Council's website together with additional submissions received from the Parish Council following the meeting.
- 7.12 None of the written submissions received in response to the review relate to Britwell Parish Council. One resident attended the drop in session on 10th April - The notes of the drop in session will be published on the Council's website. The view expressed was that the Parish Council needed to be more transparent/accountable and that there was not enough engagement with residents. It should however be borne in mind that this view expressed was from one resident.
- 7.13 At their meeting with the Review Group held on 25th July 2018 the Parish drew particular attention to the fact that the Council had set up a Strategy Working Party in July 2017 which was meeting monthly and the Council was open to new ways to utilise the Community Centre and grounds to local people. The Parish advised that it wished to broaden ways in which residents can access its facilities and receive greater benefit than those from outside the Parish by developing a 'resident advantage' card. The Parish advised what methods it used to communicate with residents and that it was intending to canvass residents' views on proposed utilisation of Council services. In their presentation to the Review Group they drew attention to the good progress that had been made in strengthening the audit processes of the Parish and they also outlined future plans and new ideas.

- 7.14 However the Review Group in considering the information provided were not convinced that the Parish Council has made any significant improvements in the way it works, other than removing its direct involvement in running the bar, or that it was succeeding in bringing the community together despite it being a smaller Parish Council which the Borough Council had hoped would enable it to operate in a more strategic and focussed way and bring about improved community engagement and more effective and convenient delivery of local services. The Review Group also have concerns about the Parish Council's ability to operate effectively and transparently and, whilst some of its services are valued by local people, the Group believe that these and other services could be provided more efficiently and effectively for local residents by other means.
- 7.15 As part of the 2013 Community Governance Review the Borough Council formally consulted Parish electors on the abolition of the Parish Council and the outcome of the Postal Poll that was carried out was in favour of abolition. The Borough Council resolved that it would test public opinion again in four years time.

Review Group Recommendation – Britwell Parish Council

- 7.16 **The Review Group believes based on the evidence provided that there is a continuing case for abolition of the parish and dissolution of Britwell Parish Council and is therefore recommending that current Parish Council electors and other interested parties are formally consulted on this option.**
- 7.17 The Review Group have considered what arrangements might be put in place to engage with communities in the area if the parish were to be abolished. The existing parish council building could continue to be used, linked with its outdoor recreation space, as a centre for local young people and sport. Members noted that the Britwell Hub provides a venue for recreational and social activities as well as learning and the local library. Parties and events could be supported by a temporary bar. A local Neighbourhood Action Group was established as part of the estate regeneration and residents have played a big part in supporting regeneration. A Northern Neighbourhood Forum has been established as part of the joint partnership between Osbornes and the Borough Council and it is intended that the Forum will be developed to have a wider remit focused on improving the area to meet local people's needs and engage with wider Council services.

Wexham Court Parish Council

- 7.18 On 25th July 2018 the Review Group met Councillors Raja Fayyaz, the Chair of the Parish Council, Shaida Akbar (Vice Chair), Sarfraz Khan (Head of Finance) and Parish Councillor Paul Sohal as part of the process of gathering evidence for the review. The notes of the meeting will be published on the Council's website together with the other views, comments and submissions received.
- 7.19 At the meeting with the Review Group the Parish Council advised of its main activities and methods of communication with residents. The Parish advised that the two halls and Board Room were always in use and offered best value to the Parish residents and others at attractive rates. The Parish outlined other activities it was involved in and future projects. The Parish had provided some budget information and advised that accounts information was currently with the Parish

Council auditors. The Working Group requested sight of the financial records for the previous twelve months.

7.20 Three of the written submissions received in response to the review relate to Wexham Court Parish Council. 73 responses have been received to a survey of Wexham Court residents carried out by the Slough Labour Party, the majority of which appear to be dissatisfied with the Parish Council judging by respondents' answers to the questions posed in the survey and their written comments. A summary of the response to the survey will be published on the Council's website.

7.21 The Review Group were advised that as part of a rolling series of audits of the Parish Councils an audit of Wexham Court Parish Councils governance arrangements was undertaken as part of the approved plan for 2018/19. The objective of the audit was to ensure that the money being received by the Wexham Court Parish Council via precept payment was being spent in line with delegated authority. The Council's Internal Auditors (RSM) reviewed the governance arrangements in place to provide assurance to the Council that the precept collected for parish was being used as intended.

The internal audit report is still in draft form, and therefore cannot be published at this time. However, it does appear that the control framework in place at the Parish requires significant improvement. The Internal Auditors also identified a number of issues where it was felt immediate management action was necessary to strengthen both financial and governance procedures.

The Review Group was advised that once the report is finalised, the Council will discuss with the Parish Council the most suitable mechanism for overseeing the implementation of the actions.

7.22 In the light of the evidence received the Review Group continues to seriously doubt that the Parish Council is working in the best interests of local residents or that its governance arrangements are sound. The Review Group's attention has been drawn to a number of concerns, one being relationships between parish councillors and staff, and others relating to the appointment and management of staff, financial management, procurement arrangements, and its lettings policies. In one way or another, these matters are all fundamental to the good management of a parish council, its reputation and efficiency. Wexham Court Parish Council was urged to review and resolve these matters, and if necessary to seek professional advice on employment matters as part of the Community Governance Review in 2013. The Working Group has concluded that there is a case for abolition of the parish and dissolution of the Parish Council and is recommending that parish electors and other interested parties are formally consulted on the option to abolish the Parish Council;

Wexham Court Parish Boundary, number of Councillors and Name Boundary

7.23 It continues to appear to the Review Group that there is little public awareness of what the Parish Council does and an impression that its main focus and activities serve only a small part of the parish area. The Council wishes to ensure its review leads to parishes that are based on areas which reflect community identity and interest and which are viable as an administrative unit. Members of the Review Group noted the new housing at Wexham Green and the recent housing

development at William Hartley Yard. If the option to abolish the Parish Council was not supported the Group proposed that the Parish boundary be redrawn along the existing Polling District boundary along the middle of the road in Knolton way. This would result in a smaller parish area that was in close proximity to the Parish Hall and allow the Parish Council to work more collegiately and develop communication with both electors in the new housing development and employees residing in the accommodation blocks at Wexham Park hospital, which are poorly served with facilities/poorly connected. A smaller Parish Council would enable the focus to be on communication with the new emerging residential communities and in an area less well connected to services in the main urban area of Slough. The revised area would be coterminous with the current WLA polling district (see attached map at Appendix 2) and comprise 1027 properties - 1325 electors (5 year forecast to 2022 – 1461 electors).

Number of Councillors

With a reduction in geographical area a consequent reduction in the number of Councillors from 11 to 7 is recommended with effect from May 2019.

Name

The Group also proposed that the Parish be renamed Wexham Green to more accurately reflect the revised parish area.

Review Group Recommendation – Wexham Court Parish Council

- 7.24 As part of the 2013 Community Governance Review the Borough Council formally consulted Parish electors on the abolition of the Parish Council and the advisory Poll that was carried out returned a majority in favour of retention of the Parish Council. The Council resolved that it would test public opinion again in four years time if it still had concerns about the Parish Council's governance arrangements.
- 7.25 **The Review Group seriously doubts that the Parish Council is working in the best interests of local residents or, based on comments made by parish councillors and others, that its governance arrangements are sound. It has therefore concluded that there is a case for abolition of the parish and dissolution of the Parish Council and is recommending that parish electors and other interested parties are formally consulted on:**
- The option to abolish the Parish Council;
 - If that is not supported, a change to the Parish Boundary and name.
- 7.26 The Review Group have considered what arrangements might be put in place to engage with communities in the area if the parish were to be abolished. Members noted that the parish facilities could equally well be run by the borough council. The parish hall could be developed to provide a community hub operating on the same principles as the one in Chalvey, opening up to the wider local community and encouraging its use for community functions.
- (c) New Parish Council
- 7.27 One comment was received setting out the view that a Parish Council for Langley should be considered. The comment was a personal one and not made by, or on behalf of, the Langley Neighbourhood Forum. The Working Group welcomed the

submission but did not consider that it provided enough evidence that the establishment of a Parish Council was warranted. There was no information on local support for such a proposal or on questions such as what services a new parish council might provide, the level of parish precept that would be needed to fund a new parish council of this size, and what the parish boundary might be.

- 7.28 The resident identified a number concerns about consultation with Langley residents about major issues and raised a perceived disadvantage that, unlike Iver and Datchet, there was no Parish Council to formally consult. The Working Group felt that the Langley Neighbourhood Forum should work closely with the Borough Council and Ward Councillors to ensure that Langley views were represented.

Review Group Recommendation – New Parish Council

- 7.29 **That a case for a new parish council had not been made.**

8 Draft Proposals

- 8.1 Section 100 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 provides for guidance to be issued regarding community governance reviews and for local authorities to have regard to that guidance. The key paragraphs relating to abolition of parishes and the dissolution of parish councils, are set out in full as follows:

117. While the Government expects to see a trend in the creation, rather than the abolition, of parishes, there are circumstances where the principal council may conclude that the provision of effective and convenient local government and/or the reflection of community identity and interests may be best met, for example, by the abolition of a number of small parishes and the creation of a larger parish covering the same area. If, following a review, a principal council believes that this would provide the most appropriate community governance arrangements, then it will wish to make this recommendation; the same procedures apply to any recommendation to abolish a parish and/or parish council as to other recommendations (see paragraph 90 -97). Regulations provide for the transfer of property, rights and liabilities of a parish council to the new successor parish council, or where none is proposed to the principal council itself.

118. Section 88 of the 2007 Act provides for a community governance review to recommend the alteration of the area of, or the abolition of, an existing parish as a result of a review. The area of abolished parishes does not have to be redistributed to other parishes, an area can become unparished. However, it is the Government's view that it would be undesirable to see existing parishes abolished with the area becoming unparished with no community governance arrangements in place.

119. The abolition of parishes should not be undertaken unless clearly justified. Any decision a principal council may make on whether to abolish a parish should not be taken lightly. Under the previous parish review legislation, the Local Government and Rating Act 1997, the Secretary of State considered very carefully recommendations made by principal councils for the abolition of any parish (without replacement) given that to abolish parish areas

removes a tier of local government. Between 1997 and 2008, the Government rarely received proposals to abolish parish councils, it received only four cases seeking abolition and of these only one was approved for abolition by the Secretary of State.

- 120.** Exceptionally, there may be circumstances where abolition may be the most appropriate way forward. Under the 2007 Act provisions, the principal council would need to consider local opinion, including that of parish councillors and local electors. It would need to find evidence that the abolition of a parish council was justified, and that there was clear and sustained local support for such action. A factor taken into account by the Government in deciding abolition cases, was that local support for abolition needed to have been demonstrated over at least a period equivalent to two terms of office of the parish councillors (i.e. 8 years), and that such support was sufficiently informed. This means a properly constituted parish council should have had an opportunity to exercise its functions so that local people can judge its ability to contribute to local quality of life.
- 121.** Where a community governance review is considering abolishing a parish council we would expect the review to consider what arrangements will be in place to engage with the communities in those areas once the parish is abolished. These arrangements might be an alternative forum run by or for the local community, or perhaps a residents' association. It is doubtful however, that abolition of a parish and its council could ever be justified as the most appropriate action in response to a particular contentious issue in the area or decision of the parish council.
- 122.** In future, principal councils will wish to consider the sort of principles identified above in arriving at their decisions on whether or not to abolish a parish council. In doing so, they will be aware that decisions about community governance arrangements, including decisions for the abolition of a parish council, may attract a challenge by way of judicial review.

- 8.2 The legislation provides that recommendations can be made for the continued existence of a parish, the alteration of a parish, the alteration of the area of a parish, or the abolition of a parish.
- 8.3 One way of testing local support for or against the abolition of a Parish Council would be to consult local government electors for each of the parish areas by way of a poll and, in order to meet statutory requirements, also to consult the Parish Councils and other persons or bodies which appear to the Council to have an interest in the review. The Council conducted postal advisory polls to test support for or against the abolition of Britwell and Wexham Court Parish Councils as part of the 2013 Community Governance Review.
- 8.4 The consultation could be organised as a conventional poll with local electors having the option to vote at a polling station or apply for a postal vote in the usual way, if they are registered for a postal vote. The poll could be carried out on an all-postal basis or alternatively the Council could commission an independent door step survey comprising a statistically sound sample of the population. The outcome of the poll or survey cannot be binding on the Council as it is required by law to consult widely and consider representations from parish councils and other persons or bodies which

appear to have an interest in the review. The poll/survey would therefore be advisory. There are pros and cons associated with the different types of polls/survey as set out below.

Type of Poll/ Survey	Pros	Cons	Costs (estimate)	Other Council's
All postal poll	All electors receive voting slip Turnout may be greater than with a conventional poll Mechanism used by others and Slough as part of CGR	More costly than a conventional poll	£10 – 12 k total	Slough undertook an all postal parish poll in 2013 in two Parishes
Conventional Poll	Electors understand the process Existing postal voters receive a postal vote	Turnout may be low	£7k per Poll	Portsmouth City Council commissioned a conventional poll in July 2009 for operational and cost reasons.
Door step survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guaranteed response from statistically sound sample of population • Meet market research professional standards • Independent in asking the question and analysing 	Costly Difficult to deliver the consultation and results quickly	Cost will be affected by the time in which the survey must be carried out and the report presented – a shorter time period would mean the researchers would need to put more field staff in increasing their costs. Costs could be in the region of £40,000 Actual costs would depend on specification and timing.	

The Working Group have recommended that the consultation include all postal polls in line with the polls undertaken as part of the 2013 consultation.

- 8.5 The Council's recommendations, whatever form they take, must bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in the more effective and convenient delivery of local services. Without appearing to predetermine the outcome of a poll the Council must be seen to have considered how it proposes to support local communities if either or both of the parish councils

were to be abolished and how it would arrange the delivery of existing and new services either directly or through other local agencies or voluntary groups. The Council's plans in this regard would reassure local residents that those services that they enjoy locally would continue in some form and indeed that other services would be provided and that their needs would be met in what might otherwise appear to be an uncertain future.

9 Timetable

- 9.1 The timetable for the Review is as set out at Appendix 1. The timetable may need to be adjusted to take into account preparation, receipt and consideration of consultation materials and a special Council meeting will be convened if necessary.

10 Appendices

Appendix 1 Timetable for Community Governance Review

Appendix 2 Map of proposed alteration to area of Wexham Court Parish Council

11 Background Papers

Consultation responses.

Community Governance Review 2018 Programme and Timeline

Stage	Action	Timeline	Outline of Action
1	Report to full Council	17th May 2018	Council approves Review and establishment of Working Group.
2	Report to full Council	7th June 2018	Council approves terms of reference and timetable for the Review.
3	Launch	11 th June 2018	Terms of Reference and timetable for the Review published and stakeholders notified of the commencement of the Review.
3	Invite initial submissions Consultation period 1	11 th June to 3 rd August 2018 (8 weeks)	Initial submissions invited <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with Parish Councils • Consultations with Parish and Borough councillors • Local groups and interested parties to be consulted • Information pack to be sent as requested Representations/proposals to be sent to Slough Borough Council.
4	Consider submissions.	w/c 6 August 2018	Working Group to meet to consider submissions and prepare draft recommendations for report to Council (27 th September)
5	Publish draft recommendations Consultation period 2	1 st October to 9 th November 2018 (6 weeks)	Publish draft recommendations for further consultation. Conduct Postal Parish Polls
6	Consider submissions and make final recommendations	w/c 12 November 2018	Consider further submissions and prepare final recommendations for report to Council (27th November 2018).

7	Publish final recommendations	December 2018	Publish final recommendations and make Order if required.
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The timetable is subject to alteration although the Review must be completed within 12 months of the publication of the Terms of Reference.

WEXHAM COURT PARISH COUNCIL – EXISTING BOUNDARY

LEGEND

— Borough Boundary

— Wexham Lea Ward

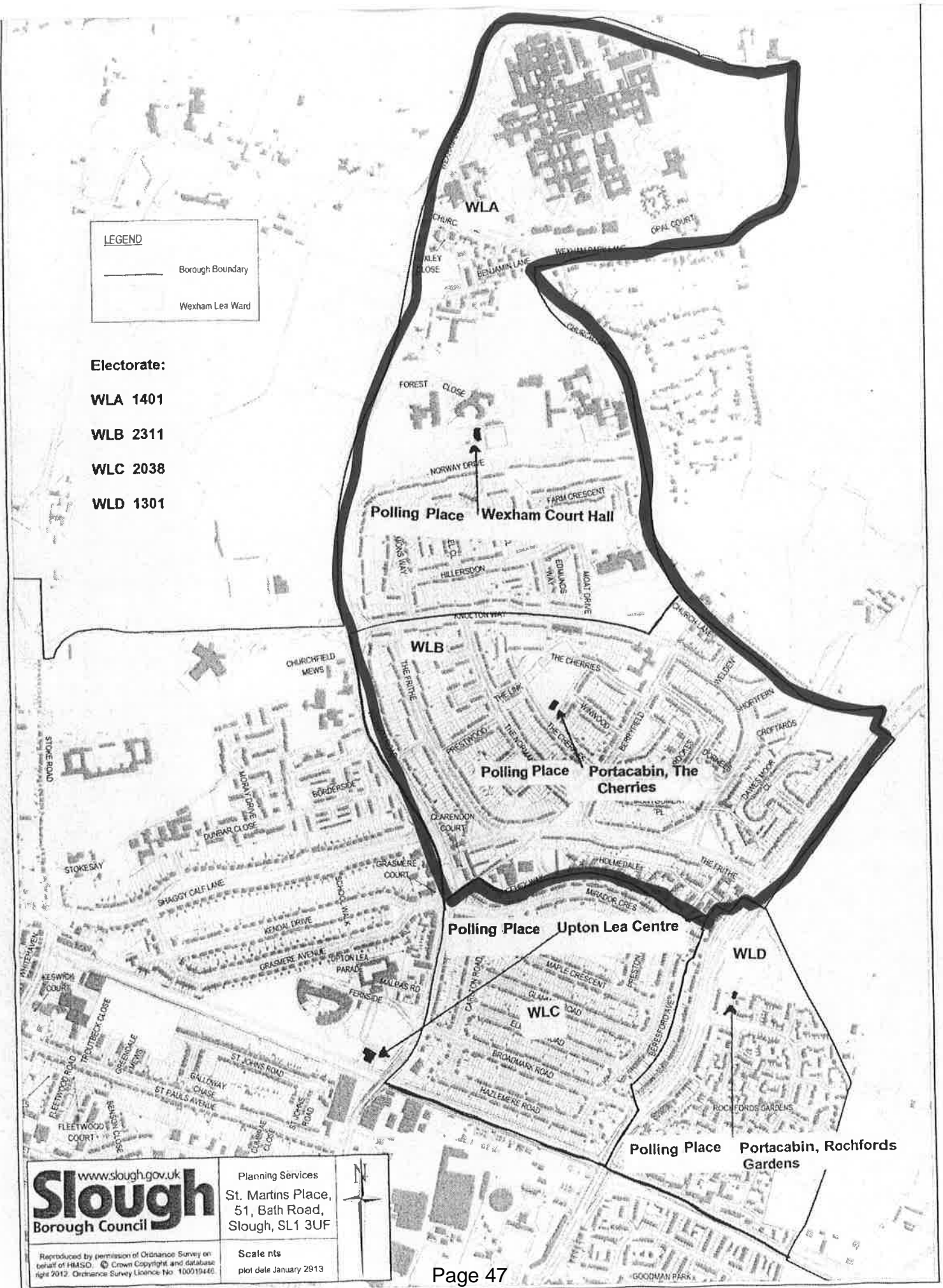
Electorate:

WLA 1401

WLB 2311

WLC 2038

WLD 1301



www.slough.gov.uk
Slough
 Borough Council

Planning Services
 St. Martins Place,
 51, Bath Road,
 Slough, SL1 3UF



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Scale nts
 plot date January 2913

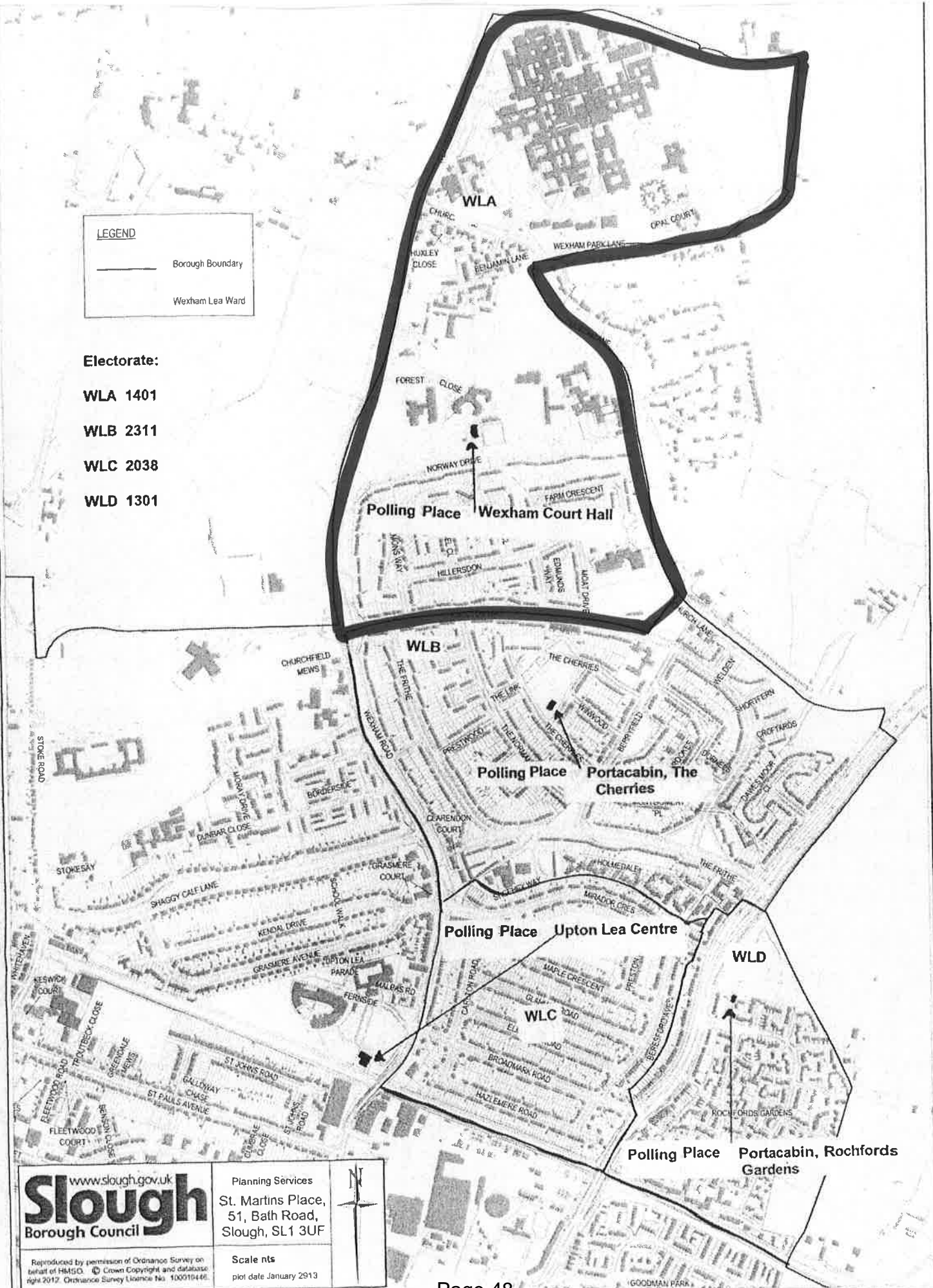
WEXHAM COURT PARISH COUNCIL – PROPOSED BOUNDARY

LEGEND

— Borough Boundary

— Wexham Lea Ward

- Electorate:**
- WLA 1401**
 - WLB 2311**
 - WLC 2038**
 - WLD 1301**



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	<p>Scale nts</p> <p>plot date January 2913</p>	

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Council **DATE:** 27th November, 2018

CONTACT OFFICER: Community Governance Review Group
Catherine Meek, Head of Democratic Services

(For all enquiries) (01753) 875011

WARDS: All

PART 1

FOR DECISION

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF PARISH COUNCIL ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN THE BOROUGH OF SLOUGH

1. Purpose of Report

This report outlines the responses to the 2nd stage of the public consultation carried out as part of the community governance review of the Borough Council area and the recommendations of the Community Governance Review Group.

2. Recommendations

The Council is requested to consider the recommendations of the Community Governance Review Group and determine whether to Resolve:

Britwell Parish Council

1. That the results of the advisory postal poll, the representations made by Britwell Parish Council and the written responses received during the consultation be noted.
2. That in light of the response to the consultation and findings of the Review as set out at paragraph 5.14 of this report, an extraordinary meeting of the Council be called on 18th December, 2018 to determine the abolition of Britwell Parish Council with effect from 1st April, 2019.
3. That, in the event recommendations 1 and 2 above are approved, the Director of Finance and Resources be requested to prepare:
 - a report to include how the facilities and services provided or supported by Britwell Parish Council will be supported and developed in the event of their abolition;
 - a draft order for the abolition of the Britwell Parish Council and the Civil Parish to take effect on 1st April, 2019, and
 - a timetable of consequential actions.

Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council

1. That the written responses received in relation to Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council be noted.
2. That the results of the advisory postal poll on whether the parish council is effective and engages effectively with local people be noted.
3. That the parish council be urged to give consideration to the views expressed via the poll and improve its engagement with local people with an emphasis on the Westfield/Brands Hill area (PD CPA), where the poll demonstrated lower levels of public support.
4. That the borough council will review the parish's performance again toward the end of its next term of office and reserves the right to test public opinion in a further advisory postal poll if it is not satisfied that it is engaging widely with local people.

Wexham Court Parish Council

1. That the results of the advisory postal poll, the written responses received during the consultation and the audit report of the governance arrangements of the Parish be noted.
2. That in light of the response to the consultation and findings of the Review as set out at paragraph 5.31 of this report, an extraordinary meeting of the Council be called on 18th December, 2018 to determine the abolition of Wexham Court Parish Council with effect from 1st April, 2019.
3. That, in the event recommendations 1 and 2 above are approved, the Director of Finance and Resources be requested to prepare:
 - a report to include how the facilities and services provided or supported by Wexham Court Parish Council will be supported and developed in the event of their abolition;
 - a draft order for the abolition of the Wexham Court Parish Council and the Civil Parish to take effect on 1st April, 2019, and
 - a timetable of consequential actions.

3. The Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

Effective governance arrangements are central to a successful modernised and transformational council and the Community Governance Review process is an important part of those arrangements.-

1. Other Implications

(a) Financial

If Council decides to abolish a parish council the Borough Council will have to 'wind up' its the assets and existing liabilities. A further report will be submitted setting out more detailed financial implications that may arise from a decision to abolish at a meeting to approve the abolition order.

Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal challenge to decisions	Seek legal advice at all stages of the Review	The aim of the review is to bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and more effective and convenient delivery of local services
Human Rights	None at this stage	
Employment Issues	None at this stage	
Equalities Issues	EIA prepared	
Community Support	Ensure consultation is appropriate and engages all interested parties so that community support for the way forward is effectively sought	Community engagement improved as a result of the recommendations of the review
Communications	Consultation is appropriate and engages all interested parties	Residents given the opportunity to influence how their local area is governed
Community Safety	N/A	N/A

Financial No financial provision exists for this review and costs to date have been absorbed within existing budget provision. There may be additional costs associated with on-going legal advice and any subsequent challenge to recommendations could involve additional legal costs	Ensure Statutory Guidance on Reviews is followed and recommendations are evidence based.	
Timetable for delivery	The Review must be completed within one year of commencement.	
Project capacity	Head of Democratic Services is the Review Manager currently supporting the Review with Project Officer support. ERS were commissioned to administer the advisory polls.	
Reputation	Ensure Statutory Guidance on Reviews is followed and recommendations are	The outcomes of the review may address longstanding concerns

	evidence based	about governance and probity in the borough
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(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The conduct of a CGR is governed by Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ("the Act"). Slough Borough Council as a principal council must comply with both Part 4, Chapter 3 (Sections 79 to 102) of the Act and the Terms of Reference adopted by the Council for the purpose of carrying out the review. The council must have regard to the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews the relevant sections of which are set out in full at Appendix 1 to this report.

With regard to the dissolution of a Parish Council, the Council needs to be satisfied on the following points in each case:

- a) Whether there is clear evidence of local support for the abolition of the parish and the dissolution of the parish council;
- b) Whether such support has been maintained over a sufficient length of time (i.e. that the case for abolition has not been generated in the short term by an unpopular decision of the council, or a particular year's parish precept etc);
- c) Whether the support is sufficiently informed (i.e. that a properly constituted parish council has had an opportunity to exercise parish functions and that local people therefore have had an opportunity to assess whether the parish council can contribute positively to local quality of life); and
- d) Whether it can be demonstrated that suitable alternative arrangements are in place for engaging the local community.

(c) Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was completed at the start of the Community Governance Review to ensure those with protected characteristics were not disadvantaged during the consultation. Should the recommendations in this report be adopted, a further assessment will be undertaken to inform decision-making on 18th December.

4. Background

- 4.1 At its meeting on 24th April 2018 the Council agreed to carry out a Community Governance Review within the Borough area including the parishes and their electoral arrangements. The Council approved terms of reference and timetable for the review and appointed a Review Group comprising Councillors Hussain Swindlehurst, Cheema, Mann, Wright and Strutton to undertake the task and make recommendations to the Council.
- 4.2 The aim of the review is to consider and bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and more effective and convenient delivery of local services, and to ensure that electors across the whole Borough are treated equitably and fairly.
- 4.3 The review should ensure that electors are consulted, that local arrangements are effective and convenient, and that the interests and identities of the community are reflected in local governance arrangements.
- 4.4 It is focused primarily on the parished areas of the Borough but may also consider other forms of community representation which help make a distinct contribution to the

community such as residents' associations, community forums, neighbourhood working groups etc.

- 4.5 The review may consider the creation, abolition, merging or altering of parish councils and any subsequent electoral arrangements. New parishes may be created to reflect the geography of an area, the make-up of the local community, or sense of identity. All parishes must fall within the existing borough boundary.
- 4.6 Details of the current Parish Band D Precept, number of Parish Councillors, electorate sizes and 5 year forecast of the electorate for the three parished areas of the Borough are set out below.

Parish population and precepts

Parish	Number of councillors	Electorate 2017	Electorate 5 year forecast to 2022	Precept (Band D) £
Britwell	7	1,735	1,740	66.10
Colnbrook with Poyle	12	4,228	4,388	49.40
Wexham Court	11	3,531	3,771	36.72

5. Results of Public Consultation

- 5.1 The 2nd stage of the public consultation was approved by the Council at its meeting on 27th September, 2018 and was launched on 1st October.
- 5.2 Consultation comprised an updated Council webpage, public notices posted at St Martins Place, libraries and community centres, and letters and emails to local community and leisure organisations, housing associations, business organisations, the police, the health authority and local schools.
- 5.3 Consultation also included an advisory postal poll of voters in all three parish areas on the following questions:
Britwell – Should the parish council be abolished
Wexham Court – Should the parish council be abolished, or if not should it have its boundary and size changed?
Colnbrook with Poyle – Does the parish council provide effective services and engage effectively with local people?
- 5.4 Slough's 3 parish councils were also notified together with the National Association of Local Councils, Berkshire Association of Local Councils, the Slough District Association of Local Councils and the Slough Council for Voluntary Services. All those consulted were invited to submit their views on the Council's proposals by 9th November, 2018.
- 5.5 In response to the above, 27 letters, and emails were received, 4 in relation to Wexham Court, 16 to Britwell and 7 to Colnbrook with Poyle. In addition, a response has been received from Britwell Parish Council.
- 5.6 Copies of all of the written comments received are at appendix 2.

Review Group Deliberations

5.7 The review group considered each parish council in turn, taking into account its history, concerns noted earlier in the review, the results of the postal poll, and the specific responses received. It also took into account the public funding of the councils and the extent to which each delivered tangible benefits to its residents.

Britwell Parish Council

5.8 The review group noted that in 2013 the Borough Council was sufficiently concerned about the effectiveness of the parish that it consulted parish electors on its abolition. The majority of voters supported abolition, whereupon the Borough Council resolved to test public opinion again in four years' time, and in the meantime reduced its size and number of councillors and simplified its boundaries to enable better performance. The postal poll had a turnout of 27% and the poll result was 566 (57%) in favour of abolition and 424 (43%) against.

5.9 In 2018 the review group was concerned that the parish had not made any significant improvements in the way it worked, other than removing its direct involvement in running the Chicken Ranch bar, or that it has succeeded in bringing the community together despite it being a smaller parish council.

5.10 In response to the recent consultation, 16 comments were received. Of the 9 in favour of abolition, amongst other things responders said that there appeared to be little point in having the parish council and that the precept was not value for money. 7 responses favoured retention of the parish, specifically retaining the grounds for community use. There was also support for the community activities provided on the grounds and the cohesion these promoted and provided.

5.11 A response was also received from the parish council, responding to each of the points in the Borough Council leaflet accompanying the postal ballot papers. The response emphasised the local activities taking place in the community centre and surrounding grounds, its recent focus on strategy and its close working with the Neighbourhood Action Group.

5.12 Noting its work with others to provide services and a lack of clarity about how the Borough taking over parish activities would improve services for residents, the parish argued that its abolition would result in a democratic deficit.

5.13 The advisory postal poll was held between 20th October and 9th November when the following question was put to voters – 'Do you support the abolition of Britwell Parish Council?'

Number of eligible voters:	1805
Total number of votes cast:	544
Turnout:	30.14%
Number of votes found to be invalid:	5
Total number of valid votes counted:	539

Result

Number voting	YES259. (48.0% of the valid vote)
Number voting	NO280 (51.9 % of the valid vote)
	TOTAL 539 (100% of the valid vote)

Consideration by the Review Group

5.14 The review group considered all the above at its meeting on 13th November and made the following observations:

- Some people may have voted in the postal poll as well as submitting an on line comment; it could equally be that a number of the responses were additional votes to the poll and the table in 5.13;
- The poll results indicated support for the retention of the parish, but taken alongside the general comments received, the outcome was balanced with more or less equal support for abolition and retention. Turnout for the Poll at 30.14 % was low and there had only been 16 other submissions on the Council's recommendations indicating an overall general lack of interest in the future of the parish;
- The electorate of the parish had, since 2014, consisted only of those people living in close proximity to the parish council buildings and community grounds and these people were therefore more likely to use the facilities than had been the case when the council was larger. Despite this, the poll results did not demonstrate overwhelming support for the parish council – there was still significant continuing support from the electorate for its abolition;
- Significant support for abolition has been evident since 2013, when the first poll was undertaken;
- A reduction in hiring charges for the hall appeared to be the only benefit that parish residents received for their precept making it questionable value for money for the majority of residents. A resident would have to hire the hall on several occasions per annum to be better off than a non-precept payer;
- One of the respondents indicated particularly that the parish precept of £66 per annum for a Band D property did not represent good value for money. Many residents of the Britwell estate are on low incomes and costs to householders are therefore a particular concern;
- In 2013 the parish council advised the review group that it planned to reduce the precept, but this has not happened;
- No evidence was provided that the parish council was likely to make and sustain any significant improvements in the way it works or succeed in bringing the community together. The majority of the activity and events detailed in the parish council's submission as reasons for its continued existence were provided by community groups themselves or the Borough Council;
- The parish council had used information fliers in the past to communicate with residents, but now mainly relied on word of mouth, question time at (poorly attended) council meetings and the website. However the website was out of date and the council had no immediate plans to update it;
- The parish council had ceased its direct involvement in running the Chicken Ranch bar, but no other improvements in the way it worked;
- There was no evidence that the reduction in size of the parish council had resulted in

it operating in a more strategic, effective or focused way or delivering improved community engagement, better local democracy and more effective and convenient local services. It was noted that a serious fraud had consumed much of the council's attention immediately after the last elections, but there was no evidence that during the significant period of time which has elapsed since then any improvement has been made;

- The fraud by parish staff resulted in a loss of public money;
- Should the parish council be abolished, its property, rights and liabilities transfer to, and vest in, the borough council. In this event the borough council could provide support to former parish council staff to secure other employment or redeployment opportunities;
- Concerns had been expressed about development of parish land in the event that the parish was abolished. All of the parish council land is currently designated as public open space and as such is protected from development by Core Policy 2 (Green Belt and Open Spaces) which states: 'existing private and public open spaces will be preserved and enhanced. Where, exceptionally, it is agreed that an open space may be lost a new one, or suitable compensatory provision will be required to be provided elsewhere';
- In the event of abolition, the borough council has no plans to change the status of the community centre and the borough council would work with the Neighbourhood Forum and other relevant groups to that end. The existing parish council building could continue to be used, linked with its outdoor recreation space, as a centre for local young people and sport. The nearby Britwell Hub on Wentworth Avenue provides a further local venue for recreational and social activities as well as learning and the local library. A Northern Neighbourhood Forum has been established as part of the joint partnership between Osborne and the borough council and it is intended the forum will be developed to have a wider remit focused on improving the area to meet local people's needs and engage with wider borough council services;
- In the event of abolition it was noted that the borough council currently offers concessionary rates to voluntary and charitable organisations at all its community centres and these charges are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they adequately support local groups. The borough council's 'Five Year Plan' makes it clear that it will work to build on the strengths of communities, including supporting local community groups and seeks a flexible approach to achieve the widest benefit to the local community. Between the Britwell Hub, the facilities on the parish site and elsewhere in Britwell, the capacity exists to accommodate all the various groups currently using the community building;

Having carefully considered all the above, the review group made the following recommendations:

1. That the results of the advisory postal poll, the representations made by Britwell Parish Council and the written responses received during the consultation be noted.
2. That in light of the response to the consultation and findings of the Review as set out at paragraph 5.14 of this report, an extraordinary meeting of the Council be called on 18th December, 2018 to determine the abolition of Britwell Parish Council with effect from 1st April, 2019.
3. That, in the event recommendations 1 and 2 above are approved, the Director of

Finance and Resources be requested to prepare:

- a report to include how the facilities and services provided or supported by Britwell Parish Council will be supported and developed in the event of their abolition;
- a draft order for the abolition of the Britwell Parish Council and the Civil Parish to take effect on 1st April, 2019, and
- a timetable of consequential actions

Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council

- 5.15 As part of the 2013 Community Governance Review the Council had concerns about Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council's engagement with local people and the borough council reserved the right to test public opinion in an advisory postal poll at or after the next parish council elections in 2015 if it was not satisfied that the Parish Council was engaging more widely with local people.
- 5.16 At its meeting in September the Council acknowledged that submissions received at Stage one of the 2018 Review contained conflicting views about the value of the services the parish provides and whether it benefits, or was representative of, Colnbrook.
- 5.17 The borough council did not consider it had been provided with substantial evidence that the parish council was engaging more widely with local people and had received views where the value of the parish council was queried. As the views of local people had not been formally sought since the parish council's establishment in 1995, the borough council agreed that public opinion on its effectiveness should be tested.
- 5.18 The borough council therefore agreed that electors and other interested parties be formally consulted on whether the parish council is providing effective services and engaging effectively with local people, this consultation included an advisory postal poll of electors in the parish.
- 5.19 Seven written comments have been received in response to the 2nd stage consultation. Six of the views expressed are in support of the parish council whilst acknowledging that there was room for improvement. It should be noted that three of the submissions are from the same individual, two of which are supportive and one indicating a view that the poll question was unclear and could be classed as two separate questions. One comment indicated that they were unaware of what the Parish council did and would be happy to see it go.
- 5.20 The advisory postal Poll was held between 20th October and 9th November, 2018. The following question was put to voters: - Do you consider that Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council is providing effective services and engages effectively with local people?

Number of eligible voters:	4313
Total number of votes cast:	1197
Turnout:%	27.75
Number of votes found to be invalid:	4
Total number of valid votes counted:	1193

Result

Number voting YES	640 (53.6% of the valid vote)
Number voting NO	553 (46.4% of the valid vote)
	TOTAL 1193 (100% of the valid vote)

The result was further broken down by Polling District as follows:

Polling District CPA (Westfield)	YES	229	NO	227
Polling District CPB (Village)	YES	192	NO	150
Polling District CPC (Pippins)	YES	211	NO	162

- 5.21 The consultation responses in support of the Parish Council recognise that there was room for improvement and that according to some views, if it was to be truly representative, the Parish Council needed to be more open and inclusive. It needed to reach out more and be more receptive to new ideas and more responsive to local views.
- 5.22 Evidence submitted from local businesses, voluntary groups etc demonstrated that the Parish Council had the support of, and was valued by, local businesses, the police and community groups.
- 5.23 The Working Group noted that the outcome of the Poll broken down into Polling Districts had demonstrated that the Parish Council needed to engage more with people in Westfield. The Parish council had maintained a narrow level of support. There had been no Brands Hill previous poll to enable a comparison of sustained or reducing levels of support.
- 5.24 The Working Group considered that the Parish Council had demonstrated that it had a clear aim of making Colnbrook with Poyle a better place to live and the Council had a clear role in representing residents views and resolving concerns specifically given public consultation relating to the new runway at Heathrow and the Western Rail Link.
- 5.25 The consultation responses coupled with the outcome of the Poll led the Working Group to recommend to Council that Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council be advised of the need to consider and address the feedback from the Review about the Parish's effectiveness and engagement with local people and that the Council would reserve the right to test public opinion in the future if it was not satisfied that the Parish Council was providing effective services and engaging more effectively with local people.

Review Group Recommendation:

- 1 That the written responses received in relation to Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council be noted.
- 2 That the results of the advisory postal poll on whether the parish council is effective and engages effectively with local people be noted.
- 3 That the parish council be urged to give consideration to the views expressed via the poll and improve its engagement with local people with an emphasis on the Westfield/Brands Hill area (PD CPA), where the poll demonstrated lower levels of public support.

- 4 That the borough council will review the parish’s performance again toward the end of its next term of office and reserves the right to test public opinion in a further advisory postal poll if it is not satisfied that it is engaging widely with local people.

Wexham Court Parish Council

- 5.26 The review group noted that in 2013 the borough council was sufficiently concerned about the effectiveness of the parish that it consulted parish electors on its abolition. The postal poll had a turnout of 26.5% and the poll result was 426 (45%) in favour of abolition and 522 (55%) against. The majority of voters supported its retention but the borough council reserved the right to test public opinion again in the future if concerns continued about governance. The parish council was specifically urged to address the identified governance issues and seek professional advice on employment matters.
- 5.27 In 2018 the review group identified continuing concerns about the parish’s governance and agreed to consult again with local electors and other interested parties on possible abolition as well as changes to the parish council boundary, number of councillors and name of the parish if there was support for its retention.
- 5.28 In response to this consultation 4 written comments were received, 2 of which express support for the parish, 1 saying the parish councillors understood the needs of the local area, 1 seeks the removal of Norway Drive from Slough and its relocation in a separate town of Wexham, and 1 expressing sadness should the parish council go. There was a suggestion that some improvements are necessary, eg parish councillors should be from the area and that greater support was needed from the borough.
- 5.29 The review group was advised in September that, as part of a rolling series of audits of the parish councils in Slough, an audit of the parish’s governance arrangements had been undertaken. The review group noted that the report was in draft, but it identified that the control framework required significant improvement. In November the review group considered the finalized report, which is attached at appendix three to this report.
- 5.30 The advisory postal poll was held between 20th October and 9th November, 2018. Two questions were put to voters:

Q1 Do you support the abolition of Wexham Court Parish Council?

Number of eligible voters:	3686
Total number of votes cast:	952
Turnout:%	25.83
Number of votes found to be invalid:	26
Total number of valid votes to be counted:	926

Result:

Number voting YES 404 (43.6% of the valid vote) Number voting
 Number voting NO . 522 (56.4 % of the valid vote)
 TOTAL 926 (100% of the valid vote)

If you answered NO to Q1 above

Q2 Do you support changing the Council boundary, reducing the number of Councillors and changing the name?

Total number of votes cast:	522
Number of votes found to be invalid:	25
Total number of valid votes to be counted:	497

Result:

Number voting YES 100.(20 % of the valid vote) Number voting
 Number voting NO 397 (80 % of the valid vote)
 TOTAL 497 (100% of the valid vote)

Consideration by the Review Group

5.31 The review group considered all the above at its meeting on 13th November and made the following observations:

- the audit of the governance arrangements was intended to ensure that the money received via the precept was being spent in line with delegated authority and to give an assurance that the precept collected for the parish was being used as intended;
- the Auditor’s conclusion was that the control framework in place at the parish requires significant improvement and issues have been identified where immediate management action was necessary. Particular concerns were highlighted over the pre-signing of cheques, uploading of confidential meeting minutes to the internet, the need for a clear audit trail to identify decisions being made by the parish council, lack of policies and procedures to support investment decisions and the use of purchase orders; the parish council had been urged in 2013 to address the identified governance issues but significant control weaknesses remain;
- the parish council had also been urged in 2013 to seek professional advice on employment matters. Whilst it had sought advice from an HR consultant from the Berkshire Association of Local Councils and was waiting for a review of job roles and structure to be completed, no formal contracts or job roles for staff were in place and the Auditor been unable to confirm that employees were being paid the correct remuneration or sufficient overtime rates, which puts the council at significant risk;
- the Working Group felt strongly that based on the Audit report that the Parish Council’s governance arrangements were not sound and that it had failed to address these failings over a number of years. The Parish Council had not been able to demonstrate efficient and robust use of public funds.
- the poll results indicated support for the retention of the parish council, but the turnout was low at 25% and there had only been four other responses to the consultation indicating an overall general lack of interest in it. Of the 25% of people who did vote over 400 supported its abolition;
- there was little support for changes to the parish boundary, size or name;
- concerns had been identified about relationships between parish councillors and staff, the appointment and management of staff, financial management, procurement arrangements and lettings policies. All these suggested poor governance and inefficiency;

- in the event of abolition the parish facilities could be run equally well by the borough council. The parish hall could be developed to provide a community hub, opening up to the wider local community and encouraging its use for community functions;
- Should the parish council be abolished, its property, rights and liabilities transfer to, and vest in, the borough council. In this event the borough council could provide support to former parish council staff to secure other employment or redeployment opportunities.

Having carefully considered all the above, the review group made the following recommendations:

- 1 That the results of the advisory postal poll and the written responses received during the consultation be noted.

That in light of the response to the consultation and findings of the Review as set out at paragraph 5.31 of this report, an extraordinary meeting of the Council be called on 18th December, 2018 to determine the abolition of Wexham Court Parish Council with effect from 1st April, 2019.

That, in the event recommendations 1 and 2 above are approved, the Director of Finance and Resources be requested to prepare:

- a report to include how the facilities and services provided or supported by Wexham Court Parish Council will be supported and developed in the event of their abolition;
- a draft order for the abolition of the Wexham Court Parish Council and the Civil Parish to take effect on 1st April, 2019, and
- a timetable of consequential actions.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The review group was concerned to ensure that local government in Slough embodies the highest standards of governance and probity. It was very concerned by the shortcomings identified above, which it felt reflected badly on the whole sector.
- 6.2 Prior to formal orders being made, the group has asked that the Director of Finance & Resources bring to Council a report to include how the facilities and services provided or supported by Britwell & Wexham Parish Councils will be supported and developed in the event of their abolition.
- 6.3 This will enable members to judge the review group's recommendations against its aim of bringing about improved community engagement, better local democracy, more effective and convenient local services and equitable treatment of electors across the whole Borough.
- 6.4 Parish councils can play an important role in terms of community empowerment but need both robust governance and to be able to demonstrate value for money to their residents.
- 6.5 Whilst Government's guidance states 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 review group considers that the

recommendations to abolish Britwell and Wexham Court Parish Councils are clearly justified for the reasons set out in the body of this report.

- 6.6 The review group has given careful consideration to the responses to the consultation undertaken as part of the Review and the recommendations it has made in respect of the existing three parish councils are based on the evidence received.

7 Next Steps

- 7.1 If the Council is minded to agree the recommendations of the review group as set out at paragraph 2 of this report, work will commence on drawing up an Order to give effect to the decisions for report to an extraordinary Council meeting in December 2018.
- 7.2 In addition officers will prepare a report to include how the facilities and services provided or supported by Britwell & Wexham Parish Councils will be supported and developed in the event of their abolition.
- 7.3 It is envisaged that a full list of property, rights and liabilities of the Parish Council will be reported to the Council along with a timetable / timeline of actions/considerations.

8 Background Papers

Written submissions received in response to the public consultation.

Electoral Reform Services reports dated 12th November, 2018 on the results of the advisory polls in Britwell, Colnbrook with Poyle and Wexham Court parish areas.

Guidance on Community Governance Reviews – Extract

Section 100 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 provides for guidance to be issued regarding community governance reviews and for local authorities to have regard to that guidance. The key paragraphs relating to abolition of parishes and the dissolution of parish councils, are set out in full as follows:

- 117.** While the Government expects to see a trend in the creation, rather than the abolition, of parishes, there are circumstances where the principal council may conclude that the provision of effective and convenient local government and/or the reflection of community identity and interests may be best met, for example, by the abolition of a number of small parishes and the creation of a larger parish covering the same area. If, following a review, a principal council believes that this would provide the most appropriate community governance arrangements, then it will wish to make this recommendation; the same procedures apply to any recommendation to abolish a parish and/or parish council as to other recommendations (see paragraph 90 -97). Regulations provide for the transfer of property, rights and liabilities of a parish council to the new successor parish council, or where none is proposed to the principal council itself.
- 118.** Section 88 of the 2007 Act provides for a community governance review to recommend the alteration of the area of, or the abolition of, an existing parish as a result of a review. The area of abolished parishes does not have to be redistributed to other parishes, an area can become unparished. However, it is the Government's view that it would be undesirable to see existing parishes abolished with the area becoming unparished with no community governance arrangements in place.
- 119.** The abolition of parishes should not be undertaken unless clearly justified. Any decision a principal council may make on whether to abolish a parish should not be taken lightly. Under the previous parish review legislation, the Local Government and Rating Act 1997 , the Secretary of State considered very carefully recommendations made by principal councils for the abolition of any parish (without replacement) given that to abolish parish areas removes a tier of local government. Between 1997 and 2008, the Government rarely received proposals to abolish parish councils, it received only four cases seeking abolition and of these only one was approved for abolition by the Secretary of State.
- 120.** Exceptionally, there may be circumstances where abolition may be the most appropriate way forward. Under the 2007 Act provisions, the principal council would need to consider local opinion, including that of parish councillors and local electors. It would need to find evidence that the abolition of a parish council was justified, and that there was clear and sustained local support for such action. A factor taken into account by the Government in deciding abolition cases, was that local support for abolition needed to have been demonstrated over at least a period equivalent to two terms of office of the parish councillors (i.e. 8 years), and that such support was sufficiently informed. This means a properly constituted parish council should have had

an opportunity to exercise its functions so that local people can judge its ability to contribute to local quality of life.

- 121.** Where a community governance review is considering abolishing a parish council we would expect the review to consider what arrangements will be in place to engage with the communities in those areas once the parish is abolished. These arrangements might be an alternative forum run by or for the local community, or perhaps a residents' association. It is doubtful however, that abolition of a parish and its council could ever be justified as the most appropriate action in response to a particular contentious issue in the area or decision of the parish council.
- 122.** In future, principal councils will wish to consider the sort of principles identified above in arriving at their decisions on whether or not to abolish a parish council. In doing so, they will be aware that decisions about community governance arrangements, including decisions for the abolition of a parish council, may attract a challenge by way of judicial review.

Ref	Name/source	Date of letter/e mail	Subject
1	Member of the Public	21/10/18	Britwell
2	Member of the Public	21/10/18	Britwell
3	Member of the Public	21/10/18	Britwell
4	Member of the Public	21/10/18	Britwell
5	Member of the Public	24/10/18	Britwell
6	Member of the Public	23/10/18	Britwell
7	Member of the Public	26/10/18	Britwell
8	Member of the Public	28/10/18	Britwell
9	Member of the Public	29/10/18	Britwell
10	Minister of Britwell Baptist Church	29/10/18	Britwell
11	Member of the Public	30/10/18	Britwell

12	Member of the Public	31/10/18	Britwell
13	Member of the Public	31/10/18	Britwell
14	Member of the Public	31/10/18	Britwell
15	Britwell Parish Council	/10/18	Britwell
16	Member of the Public	08/11/2018	Britwell
17	Member of the public	09/11/2018	Britwell
18	Member of the Public	25/10/18	Colnbrook with Poyle
19	Member of the Public	06/11/2018	Colnbrook with Poyle
20	Colnbrook Village Resident and Secretary of the Colnbrook Residents Association	06/11/2018	Colnbrook with Poyle
21	Member of the Public	06/11/2018	Colnbrook with Poyle
22	Member of the Public	09/11/2018	Colnbrook with Poyle
23	Trustee Colnbrook Community Partnership	09/11/2018	Colnbrook with Poyle
24	Thames Valley Police	09/11/2018	Colnbrook with Poyle
25	Member of the Public	9/10/18	Wexham Court
26	Member of the Public	20/10/18	Wexham Court
27	Mr Brian Edwards Hon. Treasurer Parish Church of St Mary Wexham	25/10/18	Wexham Court
28	Member of the Public	30/10/18	Wexham Court

1. **Member of the Public - Britwell**

I hereby vote YES to abolish the Britwell Parish Council.

2. **Member of the Public - Britwell**

I hereby vote Yes to abolishing the Britwell Parish Council

3. **Member of the Public - Britwell**

I hereby vote YES to abolish the Britwell Parsish Council.

4. **Member of the Public - Britwell**

I hereby vote YES to abolish the Britwell Parish Council.

5. **Member of the Public - Britwell**

My mum and I have discussed the abolition of the council and believe it should be abolished.

6. **Member of the Public - Britwell**

In a nutshell I think the Britwell Parish Council needs to be abolished. I purchased a new build house on Kennedy Park 4yrs or so ago and felt we had a fantastic spot albeit with the community centre opposite on Long Furlong Drive. Within 6 months, the Chicken Ranch opened and thus our home ownership has become a nightmare. Drug dealing, Anti Social Behaviour, daily Drink Driving from the venue all of which has been reported to numerous bodies over the years. When it first opened I contacted Britwell Parish Council asking why the Chicken Ranch failed to appear on our property search paperwork prior to buying and that we should have all been told yet I was totally ignored. I contacted them a few times about the same issue and the fact that they had ignored me and still got no response leading me to believe they were closing ranks and effectively being corrupt as I then had the belief that they opened the chicken ranch with back handers. When we complained about noise issues every single weekend they got a Security Guard to work there to take noise readings... To highlight how dodgy this was, whenever he went to take a reading, the music would be turned down and the door shut to lower the reading. Additionally that security guard was there drinking anyway so he effectively wore a badge to tick a box for the parish council to hush the residents around the chicken ranch. The chicken ranch needs to be closed. The drug dealing from there is absolutely rife (again, it has been reported in numerous different ways).

We have also complained about the sheer amount of drug dealing in the area, and anti social behaviour in Kennedy Park, and Kennedy Parade shops. Nothing gets done about that either. We have pleaded for the benches in Kennedy Park to be removed as they were the worst thing they could have put in there yet they still exist. We asked for more litter bins to make it 'easier' for the dog walkers who fail to pick up their dog mess, or the feral teenagers getting served booze from the off license on the Parade smashing the bottles all over the field making it hazardous for dogs yet were turned down. We have additionally reported these to SBC and at least had a response yet Britwell Parish Council just ignore us (I know my neighbours have complained to them too about issues). Frankly we pay the Britwell Precept for absolutely nothing. They are not transparent. They do not respond to genuine concerns from their residents/electorate and just ignore them as if they are a problem themselves or might make them face the issues they created in the first place. They do nothing good for the area, and those voting to keep it are only clinging on to the past. Continue building in Britwell, demolish the Chicken Ranch and build there if you must. Britwell Parish Council needs to be abolished.

7. Member of the Public - Britwell

The parish council have always supported local people within our community and small preschool's like ours, without their support we not be able to provide the dedicated service we offer our families within our Britwell community. The parish council grounds provide football for all ages of children, they put on free events for the children at Christmas for families who would not usually be able to attend a pantomime financially. They represent our parish at council meetings and let ordinary peoples voices be heard over crime, policing and housing issues on our estate. These are just a few of the many items covered at the parish meetings. Please do not close our parish council down, how will our voices be heard or represented otherwise.

8. Member of the Public - Britwell

I am in favour of the the Britwell Parish to remain for the reasons, 1. It provides a platform for the community to come to together during the carnival period which will disconnect us from one another if taking away. 2. Our young Lad's enjoy the use of the ground for their football games. 3. Over crowding the communtiy with more properties will in the long run creat opportunities for crimes evolving among the youths that will go out of control in years to come.

9. Member of the Public - Britwell

It should be abolished.

10. **Minister of Britwell Baptist Church - Britwell**

I am the minister of Britwell Baptist Church and wish to submit that the Parish grounds should be maintained for the use of people living on the estate. This is the place where we hold most of our community events on a regular basis. As churches together we support the work Britwell Parish does for the community here is Britwell. I am in favour of the parish ground NOT to be taken over by the council. Britwell community needs these grounds to help integration of people in this community.

11. **Member of the Public - Britwell**

The park is significant for so many way, brings together evryone within the family during carnival

12. **Member of the Public - Britwell**

Please use my vote to SAVE (KEEP IT) our local BRITWELL PARISH COUNCIL.

13 . **Member of the Public - Britwell**

1. The whole residents will lose out community facilities.
2. Local democratic representation will be lost.
- 3.The community enjoys cohesion among each other and much more.

14 . **Member of the Public - Britwell**

1. The community will be better served by having local democracy and local community centre.
2. The oneness and cohesion existence requires the parish to continue.
3. Without the centre the community will facilities and much more.

15 **Britwell Parish Council -Attached at annex**

16. **Member of the public – Britwell**

I would like to raise my concern about Chicken Ranch Pub. The problem with ongoing noise and parties was reported by us many times with no result. the place attracts drug dealers and suspicious people later at night.

17. **Member of the Public – Britwell**

I was unsure about the choice on abolishing the Parish Council until I looked at their official website. The last 'news' item was from November 2017, if the Parish Council has no news to share in the last year, what is the point in them even being here? Disband the Parish Council.

18. **Member of the Public – Colnbrook with Poyle**

Question Q1 of your Ballot appears to be loaded against the Parish Council. In fact it contains two separate questions. One is about the provision of effective services and the other about engagement. If one considers that the Parish Council are providing very effective services but that there is certainly some room for improvement in engagement with local people that don't take an interest in local affairs and are somewhat apathetic towards community life then the ballot is worthless and could be dangerously misleading. In this instance should one vote yes or no. Most people will wrongly decide that they need to say "No". The Ballot form instructions seeking that it is completed and returned immediately gives no time for the voters' proper reflection or research. Some people who don't really care will not know or be that interested in what services the Parish Council as opposed the District Council provide. You will therefore receive uninformed and unconsidered votes.

19. **Member of the Public – Colnbrook with Poyle**

Very much support the existence of our Parish Council. However I accept that there is room for improvement. Slough Borough Council should strongly and without political pressure consider revising the qualifications required in terms of candidates standing for election (if this is within their gift).

Candidates should be permanent residents in the Parish at the time of election. Further to this the Parish should be warded into three areas divided along the lines of the pre 1995 county borders. Each ward should have four representatives (ideally each living in that ward). Political parties have increased their efforts to take control of our parish and currently we have four Cllrs that do not live in the Parish. Three of these are sponsored and supported by political parties. The other has significant business interests in the area. I believe that such people, bringing with them their own agendas dilute the representation of the local resident population. Colnbrook is significantly different from the rest of Slough. Visitors often comment on this, as did last year's Mayor when she met some of the community at just two of our very many successful community social events. It is the people that actually live in Colnbrook and go about their lives here that suffer the highs and lows of having good community spirit whilst living right next door to one of the busiest airports in the world. We are also the location for a huge incinerator that handles all the waste from Slough and a much wider area. In the last decade Slough's planning policies have brought Heathrow Airport even further into our front rooms with the Poyle Industrial Estate changing from light engineering, laboratories and offices into an extension of Heathrow's Freight Handling Facility. Lorries are now destroying our street furniture and pumping pollution into one of our local schools. Despite lobbying by residents and the Parish no mitigations have been carried out. Also and alarmingly without any consultation or proper engagement with Colnbrook residents SBC decided to support Heathrow expansion with a third runway to be built in our parish. Shame on you SBC. Our resident Parish councillors either meet the community at the school gates, in local streets, at community gatherings and events. Most are members of local clubs, associations, societies, churches. Amongst them we have school governors, Neighbourhood action group members, Flood Action Group members, Village Hall trustees, Wives Group members, Whist Club supporters, Heathrow Local Focus Forum members, Colnbrook Community Association members, active Colnbrook Residents' Association members. They have always been and remain a real physical part of our community before and without the direct aid of the internet. It is appreciated that there now is another world out there were people living in other countries can post their views on what's happening in Colnbrook and probably this is somewhere that the Parish Council should look to raise their profile and improve the content on the website. However, the Parish Council continue to host public sessions at their monthly meetings. They also hold monthly surgeries or drop in sessions for people to raise issues. They publish newsletters and they do their best to provide useful information on notice boards. They are available, approachable people and very willing to be part of two way engagement with the community. The Parish Council's community engagement compares very favourably with that of the District Council which have no Public meetings in Colnbrook, Borough Councillors hold no surgeries and to the best of my knowledge Colnbrook no longer receives the Citizen newsletter. Also, SBC's recreation ground lost its Green Flag Status last year. This can be compared with the Parish Council's longer and continuous success. I understand that of late that the District council has reduced the frequency of meetings with the Parish Council and suggested a more cumbersome method of communication with responsible officers. SBC should use the intelligence of the Parish Council to directly assist departments where there are issues that need attention. With an inadequate highways monitoring team SBC should welcome the Parish Council's involvement. I trust that whilst being critical you find my comments constructive.

20. Brenda Pettit, Colnbrook Village Resident and Secretary of the Colnbrook Residents Association – Colnbrook with Poyle

I am writing as a Colnbrook Village Resident and also as Secretary of the Colnbrook Residents Association. I strongly support the retention of Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council. This Council having been requested by the residents in 1995 is to the best of my knowledge and belief still very much needed, supported, wanted and required by the overall majority of residents in Colnbrook. I have always found the Parish Council to be wholly supportive of all the activities promoted by the Colnbrook Residents Association as well as the Community as a whole. It is at the door step of the residents when most needed and so valuable in enhancing good Community Relations and harmony. It would be so very sad to lose this service which the Colnbrook Residents Association feel is such an integral and important part of our village. I speak for all our members in confirming how important the Parish Council is to our community. It must not be lost under any circumstances.

21. Member of the Public – Colnbrook with Poyle

Slough borough Council should be more engaging with the Parish. It seems we are too remote and the wrong side of the M4 to be of much interest other than the site for an incinerator, a proliferation of freight forwarding depots and now a new airport runway. The people of Colnbrook with Poyle want you to value them not just the land assets. SBC needs to review its own governance as well. We have two district councillors in Colnbrook only one has any significant contact with a wide range of residents, attends social and community events as an equal, is a governor at one of our schools and a member of Colnbrook societies and associations. The other is distinctly different and somewhat anonymous to parish residents although now a civic personality who apparently does much good work in other parts of Slough.. This person and a close relative backed by a political party both stood at the last Parish Election and won sufficient votes to take up office but failed to accept it in the prescribed manner. This put residents to a cost of circa £7000 for a by-election.. However this person sought to blame others. It concerns me to hear that this person is a member of the Governance review team. If this is true I trust any prejudicial views will be guarded against by the rest of the committee.

22. Member of the Public – Colnbrook with Poyle

I have lived in Colnbrook for 11 years and do not know what the parish really do. I found out a few years ago that they arrange a Christmas dinner but not sure how you find out where or when it is. Would be happy not to have them.

23. **Mr M Nye, Trustee – Colnbrook Community Partnership – attached at annex**

24. **Thames Valley Police – Colnbrook with Poyle**

I am the neighbourhood Sgt that covers Colnbrook. I have been a neighbourhood Officer for over 10 years. I have recently moved to the East Slough neighbourhood team which covers Colnbrook. Since starting on the team I have been impressed with Colnbrook Parish Councils passion for trying to improve the parish. When I have attended the meetings there have been residents present which is always good to see, giving their view points and asking questions. The Parish Council have assisted me in trying and resolve some of the issues that are of concern to the community. I hope we will be able to continue working together in the future.

25. **Member of Public – Wexham Court**

I believe the Parish Council should continue operation, however changes are required. Councillors should be from the parish they are representing to ensure a vested interest in the work that they are doing. There is need for a greater awareness within the Parish to the work that the PC do within the community, as well as the councillors being more present in the local area at regular intervals to understand the needs of the constituents. Measures should be put in place to review the attendance of councillors to PC meetings, notably a minimum percentage of meeting attendance should be set as current levels for some councillors is unsatisfactory. Greater support is needed from the borough council to ensure the PC runs correctly and is offered training where necessary.

26. **Member of Public – Wexham Court**

It is immensely sad to lose this parish after many generations due to the very recent infiltration of a group of racist Labour councillors who have no interest in the parish, only their personal gain. I only hope this level of corruption is not at borough level, but I have little hope of that, and I hope the recent investigations revealed in the newspapers are continued at all levels of our supposed elected officials

27. **Mr Brian Edwards Hon. Treasurer Parish Church of St Mary Wexham**

In response to your communication dated 1st October which was received a few days ago, we at St Mary's Church Wexham Reject the closing down of the Wexham Court Parish Council on the grounds that the representatives on that Council understand the needs of the local area.

The recommended changes to the boundary of the Wexham Court Estate is absurd. The estate was built as it should be recognised as a well knit community from all religions and walks of life and it has been for some fifty years.

We point out that the website stated in the fourth paragraph is conveniently not recognised and cannot be visited. You should make sure it works before you publicise to the 'outside world'.

Wexham Court Parish Council should remain as it is currently formed.

On behalf of the Parochial Church Council.

28. Member of the Public – Wexham Court

Would like to see Norway Drive removed from Slough and be in separate town of Wexham. The area is big enough. Otherwise if you are twisting my arm, create parish of ward of Wexham Court (not Wexham lea) to include Wexham Green and remove Upton Lea.

Parish Community Centre
Long Furlong Drive
BRITWELL
Slough, Berks
SL2 2PH.

T: 01753 570109
E: britwellparish@btconnect.com

Catherine Meek
Head of Democratic Services
Slough Borough Council

by email
22 October 2018

Dear Ms Meek

Re: Community Governance Review 2018

Britwell Parish Council notes the recommendations made by the Slough Borough Council Review team in favour of the abolition of Britwell Parish Council .

Further to your request for a further submission, Britwell PC notes the arguments you have put forward to residents in the leaflet which you are issuing and responds as follows: _

What Slough Borough Council Says

The borough council had hoped a reduction in size would enable the parish council to operate in a more strategic and focused way and bring about improved community engagement and more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

Britwell Parish Council Says

- As a result of the 2013 Review, the Borough Council reduced the size and scope of Britwell Parish Council. The local services it can provide relate to the Community Centre and the surrounding grounds.
- Since Summer 2017, Strategy has been an ongoing Agenda item at the monthly Full Council meetings.
- Focus on Strategy led the Parish Council to work closely with the Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) and Borough Council Events to run the Summer Celebration in June 2018.
- The Council is committed to ongoing partnership with NAG and Borough Council Events on future events, and is open to other partnerships which would benefit the local community.

What Slough Borough Council Says

The borough council .. is not convinced the parish council has made any significant improvements in the way it works, other than removing its direct involvement in running the Chicken Ranch bar,

Britwell Parish Council Says

There has been a major change in the way in which the Council works, moving from direct control to working increasingly in co-operation with others, including:-

- Working with Berkshire Active and also participating in “Active Slough”, organised by the Borough Council in 2018, by allowing the Community Centre and grounds to be used for:-
 - Wildcat Girls Football for 5-7 year olds and for 8-11 year olds;
 - Teen Boxing
 - Pilates
 - Rugby for children and young people.
- Working party meetings with the Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) and Borough Council Events to plan the Summer Celebration in June 2018;
- Bringing in Tenants to run and take the commercial risk on the Bar, and in the process free the Parish Council from all the workload involved in running a Bar.

What Slough Borough Council Says

The borough council .. is not convinced the parish council ... has succeeded in bringing the community together despite it being a smaller parish council

Britwell Parish Council Says

- The only Bar now open in Britwell is the Chicken Ranch – the Borough Council would plan to close it;
- After a gap of two years, in June 2018, the community came together again at the Summer Celebration, a bigger and more inclusive event than previously held.
- Questionnaires were produced to seek Residents’ views on the Summer Celebration - 66 completed questionnaires were returned ,with 100% stating their support for the Summer Celebration as a good use of Council resources.
- The Hall is used by a variety of groups including Over 50’s Arts & Crafts; Britwell Come Dancing; Britwell Drama Group at reduced or subsidised rates as well as commercial users which benefits residents , such as Slimming World .
- New initiatives which are seen as benefitting and bringing together the community are considered and approved by the Parish Council at reduced or subsidised rates eg The Job Club.

What Slough Borough Council Says

The borough council also has concerns about the parish council's ability to operate effectively and transparently and, whilst some of its services are valued by local people, the borough council believes these and other services could be provided more efficiently and effectively for local residents by other means.

Britwell Parish Council Says

- The Parish Council meets monthly (other than August & December) and its meetings at the Community Centre are open . Does the Borough Council really believe that there will be more transparency for residents if Britwell issues are considered, amongst many other issues, in Slough by the Borough Council ?
- Neighbourhood police attend Parish Council meetings – where they are able to hear and be asked to respond to local issues.
- The Parish Council is able to offer residents and local groups a reduced or subsidised rate to hire the Hall – would the Borough Council continue to do so? The charges at the Britwell Centre (run by Slough Borough Council) are substantially higher than those charged to use the Parish Community Centre.
- Parish Council members live in the community – they hear of issues affecting local people and then bring to attention of those responsible – be it anti social behaviour (Monksfield Way & Twist Way), drug dealing (Monksfield Way & Upper Lees), dog fouling (Goodwin Road), or cars illegally parked (Long Readings Lane).
- The Borough Council gives no indications as to what costs savings if any it believes direct control would provide .

What Slough Borough Council Says

The review group has considered what arrangements might be put in place to engage with communities in the area if the parish were to be abolished. The existing parish council building could continue to be used, linked with its outdoor recreation space, as a centre for local young people and sport. Members noted the Britwell Hub provides a venue for recreational and social activities as well as learning and the local library. Parties and events could be supported by a temporary bar.

Britwell Parish Council Says

- The Parish Council consists of local people, who are able to hear and express Residents' concerns – be it to Neighbourhood Police who attend Council meetings or on local planning applications . That local democratic voice will disappear with the Borough Council's proposals;
- The Parish Council – being accountable to local Britwell people - is better placed to decide how best to use the Community Centre and grounds – hire out the car park

to a car wash business (No) or allow hire of Hall for Diabetic Screening at reduced rate (Yes) ;

- Having Tenants to run the only remaining Bar in Britwell – the Borough Council only plans to have a temporary bar for parties and events.
- It is not clear that the Britwell Hub could accommodate the non Youth groups which currently use the Parish Community Centre and if it did, it can only be assumed that they would be charged the rates publicised for the Britwell Hub – which for some might mean closing down their group.

In sum, the Borough Council's Review Team, as expressed in their leaflet to Britwell residents, is proposing a democratic deficit, in removing the presence of the Parish Council, but providing no real substance as to how and to what extent its direct administration would result in a material improvement for residents.

In view of the public interest, this letter will be copied to the media.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Holder
Locum Clerk

**The Community Governance Review Officer
Democratic Services
Slough Borough Council
St Martins Place
51 Bath Road
Slough, Berkshire
SL1 3UF**

For the attention of:- Fiona Ahern

8th November 2018
Ref: CCP/2018/03

Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council

Dear Madam,

On behalf of the Colnbrook Community Partnership (CCP) I submit a firm positive response in favour of the retention of the Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council. The Parish Council offers a great deal of support to other Colnbrook community groups, acting in the capacity of an 'umbrella organisation' without their specific support, the future of our community groups would certainly be compromised.

The Parish Council are the first tier of local government, being made up from individuals who live or work within the Parish Boundary, and as such are both the closest and have the greater knowledge of the community and the problems that beset this community.

A strong community bond has evolved between most of the Colnbrook groups who work with the Parish Council in order to organise and structure community events throughout the year. The Parish Council are represented as a Partner with the Colnbrook Community Partnership, as is SBC, within the charity. The Parish Council have representation on the Colnbrook Residents' Association, Colnbrook Village Hall Trust, Colnbrook NAG and Colnbrook FAG. Their involvement in other issues including HGV traffic through our residential areas, Fly-tipping, highway and neglected footpath complaints are well documented and are issues to which the Parish Council have no direct responsibility for but nevertheless advocate strongly to find solutions to these problems.

If the Parish Council were to be disbanded, then I fear much of our community spirit and cohesion would be lost. It must be remembered that it was the Colnbrook Residents' Association who in 1947 brought together the three separate districts of

Colnbrook, Poyle and Brands Hill. From this in 1994 when Colnbrook with Poyle ward was the outcome of the Boundaries Commission decision to move our community into Slough Borough Council that the CRA successfully petitioned for a Parish Council. That situation has worked well for the community and it still has the potential to work. There may be some valid criticisms of the Parish Council no organisation can ever please everyone all of the time, but without that “buffer” between Community and Local authority is a situation that ultimately would not be of benefit to anyone.

I therefore strongly advocate that the future of the Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council be assured.

Yours sincerely,

Michael J. Nye
Trustee
Colnbrook Community Partnership.



SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Parish Council Governance Review – Wexham Court Parish Council

FINAL

Internal audit report: 9.18/19

7 November 2018

This report is solely for the use of the persons to whom it is addressed.
To the fullest extent permitted by law, RSM Risk Assurance Services LLP will accept no responsibility or liability in respect of this report to any other party.



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Debrief held	26 July 2018	Internal audit team	Daniel Harris - Head of Internal Audit Chris Rising - Senior Manager Amir Kapasi - Assistant Manager Jay Desai – Assistant Manager
Draft report issued	3 August 2018		
Revised draft report issued	8 October 2018		
Responses received	7 November 2018		
Final report issued	7 November 2018	Client sponsor	Neil Wilcox - Director of Finance and Performance
		Distribution	Neil Wilcox - Director of Finance and Performance

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The matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during the course of our review and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all improvements that might be made. Management actions raised for improvements should be assessed by you for their full impact before they are implemented. This report, or our work, should not be taken as a substitute for management's responsibilities for the application of sound commercial practices. We emphasise that the responsibility for a sound system of internal controls rests with management and our work should not be relied upon to identify all strengths and weaknesses that may exist. Neither should our work be relied upon to identify all circumstances of fraud and irregularity should there be any.

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RSM Risk Assurance Services LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales no. OC389499 at 6th floor, 25 Farringdon Street, London EC4A 4AB.

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Background

As part of a rolling series of audits of the Parish Councils an advisory audit of Wexham Court Parish Councils governance arrangements was undertaken on behalf of Slough Borough Council as part of the approved plan for 2018/19. The objective of the audit was to ensure that the money being received by the Wexham Court Parish Council (hereafter referred to as the Parish Council) via precept payment is being spent in line with delegated authority. To do this, we reviewed the governance arrangements in place to provide assurance to the Council that the precept collected for parishes was being used as intended.

Wexham Court Parish Council have Standing Orders in place which were adopted by the Council in March 2004 which were last reviewed and updated in April 2011.

Wexham Court Parish Council receives an annual Precept of around £55k and other income for Parish Hall hire which is of around £52k. In addition, the Parish Council employs four employees including; the Clerk, the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO), Booking Clerk and the Caretaker.

Wexham Court Parish Council held £321,540 within its bank account as at the 2017/18 financial year end.

1.2 Conclusion

Our review identified that the control framework in place at for the Parish required significant improvement and we identified issues where immediate management action is necessary in relation to the pre-signing of cheques and uploading of confidential meeting minutes to the internet.

Further management actions were identified in relation to the retention of a clear audit trail to demonstrate the decisions being made by the Parish Council, lack of policies and procedures to support the Parish Council in making investment decisions and the use of purchase orders.

1.3 Key findings

The key findings from this review have resulted in the identification of three **high priority** and ten **medium priority** management actions, we have ordered these by priority:

Pre-signing of cheques

Meeting minutes between May 2017 and December 2017 confirmed that 25 blank cheques were being signed at each meeting with one signature during each of the meetings to allow for expenditure to be incurred and paid for by one person, the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) without appropriate segregation of duties. Although, cheques required dual signatory, the Council had been agreeing to cheques being signed off with one signature at the Parish Council meetings without the knowledge of what they would be used for, this would then allow payments to be made sooner with only one further signature on each cheque but the Parish Council would be unaware of the commitment until the next Parish Council meeting.

We were informed by _____ that this had stopped taking place from the February 2018 meeting and noted the signing of 25 cheques was not included within meeting minutes from February 2018 onwards. Without the correct segregation of duties, the Parish Council face a significant risk of fraudulent expenditure or activity occurring without the knowledge of the Parish Council. **(High)**

Parish Council Website

We reviewed the Parish Council website and tested to confirm whether the most up to date meeting minutes had been uploaded and found that in several instances private meeting minutes (Part two discussions) had been uploaded to the public website which included employee health issues, complaints and other confidential items. The Parish Council is breaching employee privacy and potentially General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) as it has published meeting minutes with confidential items discussed and these have not been anonymised or excluded. **(Medium)**

Employment Contracts

No formal contracts of employment for staff employed at the Parish Council are in place. We were informed by [redacted] that the job roles and structure were being reviewed by a HR Consultant from Berkshire Association of Local Councils (BALC). [redacted] informed us that once the review by BALC is fully completed a new structure would be defined, job roles and descriptors would be re-developed and contracts of employment for all staff will be developed.

As there were no formal employment contracts in place at the time of our review, we were unable to confirm that the Parish Council was paying its employees the correct remuneration or sufficient overtime rates, as you would expect in a terms and conditions section of an employment contract. Therefore, there is a risk that the Parish Council may be under/overpaying its employees. **(High)**

Delegated Powers

The Parish Council meet on a monthly basis with the exception of August and January however, there is no scheme of delegation in place for this group. We therefore noted that the Parish Council was unable to demonstrate the powers of the Parish Council and what falls within their remit. In addition, we noted that there was lack of documentation which identified the powers delegated to the Clerk and the RFO. Without a scheme of delegation, there is an increased risk of inappropriate expenditure being incurred which could financially impact the Parish Councils finances. **(High)**

Policies and Procedures

The Parish Council does not have a list of all Policies in place at the council and key policies were absent such as Treasury Management or a Reserves Policy. Therefore, there was no guidance available to the Council, Clerk or the RFO in relation to how to manage the funds held within the Councils bank account which was in excess of £320k at the end of the 2017/18 financial year as established through discussions with [redacted] in June 2018.

There is a risk that the Council may face challenge in relation to the sum of funds held within its bank account and question the protection of these funds with reference to the FSCS (Financial Services Compensation Scheme) limit of £85,000. **(Medium)**

Key Deadlines Timetable

The Parish Council meeting discussions revolved around nine agenda items at each meeting. The Standing Orders identified some key items which were required to be discussed or approved by the Council including the agreement of the precept however, we noted that this was not captured within the meeting minutes between September 2017 and April 2018. Through review of meeting minutes, we were unable to obtain evidence to confirm that the 2018/19 annual budget was reviewed by the Parish Council. Furthermore, we were unable to evidence the discussion around the precept payment for 2018/19 which was required by the Standing Orders to take place prior to February 2018.

There is a risk that without a clear and formally agreed terms of reference, the Parish Council risk not discussing key areas such as approval of the budget and agreement of the precept. This may result in decisions being made in relation to the matters noted above without the appropriate authority and within the appropriate timescales. **(Medium)**

Approval of Payments

Following review of the minutes between May 2017 and April 2018, we noted that the minutes in a majority of months documented that 'payments were approved' or 'accounts were approved' or 'approved' however, the papers for the meeting did not highlight the value of expenditure, which therefore did not correspond to the value of the payments approved in the Parish Council meeting minutes. There is a risk that the amounts presented within papers could differ from the agreed payment amounts and adjustments and variations could be approved without the appropriate authority. **(Medium)**

Risk Register

Through review of the meeting minutes between May 2017 and April 2018, we were unable to evidence review of the risks faced by the Parish Council. Therefore, it was noted that the Parish Council have not approved and documented a Risk Register for 2017/18. There is a risk that the Parish Council is not identifying and regularly reviewing the risks it faces as a Council and this could impact the Parish Council both financially and reputationally if a risk materialises. **(Medium)**

Declarations of Interests

We were informed that there was no central log of all conflicts for the Councillors which confirmed all interests for each of the Councillors and the agreed actions for the individual where relevant. At each Parish Council meeting, we were able to confirm that an opportunity to declare interests was provided and one Councillor had repeatedly declared an interest however, there was no further information or evidence available which confirmed the action taken or the requirement to take any actions for this declaration of interest, although review of the minutes confirmed that there were no items which would be affected by the declaration.

If the actions following declaration of interest are not sufficiently detailed within meeting minutes, there is a risk of the interest not being managed in the appropriate manner, which could affect the objectivity of decisions made and the reputation of the Parish Council. **(Medium)**

Finance and General-Purpose Committee

The Parish Council have in place a Finance and General-Purpose Committee for which there is no Terms of Reference or documented responsibilities or meeting requirements. Without a Terms of Reference there is a risk that the committee may not be discharging its duties in line with what is expected of them by the Parish Council. **(Medium)**

Purchase Orders

We were informed by _____ that there was no process in place for the use of purchase orders however, where required quotations or estimates would be obtained to seek the best value for money. Without the use of purchase orders there is an increased risk of queries, disputed and legal consequences should an order for goods or services be processed incorrectly. There is also a financial risk if purchases are committed without appropriate budget / funds being available. **(Medium)**

Procurement

We requested evidence to confirm that the procurement requirements were complied with in accordance with the finance regulations for four items: heating expenditure, insurance and appointment of both internal and external auditors. We identified that the meeting minutes for the Parish Council included the requirement for approval of items however, there was lack of clarity as to the decisions being made in relation to procuring for goods or services. For heating expenditure, we noted that an initial amount of work was agreed by the Parish Council with a price, and a further amount of work was also agreed but without a price. The meeting minutes did not note whether a further approval was required once the further work had been quoted or whether the Council provided delegated power to the Clerk or the RFO to make the decision. Furthermore, we were informed that the insurance was agreed to be renewed by the Parish Councillors without confirming value for money however, there was no audit trail documented within meeting minutes for this.

Without complete transparency, appropriate use of purchase orders and clearly documented meeting minutes, the Parish Council may not effectively control their expenditure, and this may result in commitment to expenditure which has not been fully agreed. **(Medium)**

Capital Expenditure Plan

The Capital and General Funds Spend Forecast section within the 2018/19 budget papers was incomplete. We noted that as there was no capital expenditure plan in place for the Parish Council, this may prompt questions regarding the best use of the funds for the local community and may lead to reputational damage in relation to the Parish collecting precept money but not matching the funds collected with the expenditure of the Council. **(Medium)**

In addition, we have also agreed **two low** priority management actions, which are detailed in section two of this report.

1.4 Additional information to support our conclusion

The following table highlights the number and categories of management actions made. The detailed findings section lists the specific actions agreed with management to implement.

Area	Control design not effective*		Non Compliance with controls*		Agreed actions		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	
Wexham Court Parish Council	8	(9)	1	(9)	2	10	3
Total	2	10	3				

* Shows the number of controls not adequately designed or not complied with. The number in brackets represents the total number of controls reviewed in this area.

2 DETAILED FINDINGS

Categorisation of internal audit findings

Priority	Definition
Low	There is scope for enhancing control or improving efficiency and quality.
Medium	Timely management attention is necessary. This is an internal control risk management issue that could lead to: Financial losses which could affect the effective function of a department, loss of controls or process being audited or possible regulatory scrutiny/reputational damage, negative publicity in local or regional media.
High	Immediate management attention is necessary. This is a serious internal control or risk management issue that may lead to: Substantial losses, violation of corporate strategies, policies or values, regulatory scrutiny, reputational damage, negative publicity in national or international media or adverse regulatory impact, such as loss of operating licences or material fines.

This report has been prepared by exception. Therefore, we have included in this section, only those areas of weakness in control or examples of lapses in control identified from our testing and not the outcome of all internal audit testing undertaken.

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Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
1.1	Wexham Court Parish Council have Standing Orders in place which were adopted by the Council in March 2004. The Standing Orders document outlines the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting frequency and statutory annual meeting; Chairman of the meeting; Notice of meetings; Attendance and quorum requirements; Order of business; Expenditure; 	No	N/A	<p>WCPC Standing Orders</p> <p>We obtained the Wexham Court Parish Council Standing Orders and were able to identify through review of the document that it had been last reviewed, amended and approved at the Meeting of Full Council held on 12 April 2011. We obtained the meeting minutes for the meeting held in April 2011 and were able to evidence the approval at this meeting.</p> <p>We noted that the orders were last updated over seven years ago and the document did not outline a regular review requirement or include version control identifying when it had been updated.</p> <p>Without regular review of the standing orders, there is a risk that the Parish</p>	Low	Slough Borough Council will advise Wexham Court Parish Council to update its current standing orders to include version control. In addition, Slough Borough Council will advise the Parish Council to introduce a cyclical review process for its Standing Orders.	31 st Oct 2019	Sushil Thobhani – Service Lead – Governance
					High	Slough Borough Council will advise the Parish Council to develop a scheme of delegation which outlines key information such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirements for approval of expenditure 	31 st Jan 2019	Sushil Thobhani – Service Lead – Governance

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committees and Sub-Committees; • Annual and Financial Statement; • Interests; • Financial Matters; • Banking Arrangements; and • Standing Orders to be Given to Members. <p>The Standing Orders do not include version control or outline a next review date.</p>			<p>Council's practices may have evolved and no longer match the standing orders documented and do not comply with the Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England March 2018. This may result in incorrect procedures being followed as a result of guidance not reflecting current practice.</p> <p>Delegated Powers</p> <p>We noted that there was lack of documentation which identified the powers given to the Clerk and the RFO. We noted that the Standing Orders identified that the Council approved all payments which exceed £1,000 however, there was no clarification as to the expenditure below this amount.</p> <p>We were advised through discussion with that all payments below £1,000 can be authorised by the Clerk at the time of expenditure however, upon receipt of the invoice, this must be presented to the Council for review. Therefore, this meant that transactions of up to £1,000 can be made without notification to the Council however, identified that issues with hazards within the parish, which could lead to health and safety implications for residents such as holes in pavements need to be resolved as soon as possible and therefore this delegated authority is used in these scenarios but had not been formally documented.</p> <p>Without a delegated powers document, there is an increased risk of inappropriate</p>		<p>(minimum number of members required);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenditure limits • Documented powers delegated to the clerk and RFO for the daily running of the Parish Council; • Review requirement to ensure that the terms of reference and powers are subject to regular review. 		

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
				expenditure being incurred which could financially impact the Parish Councils finances.				
1.2	The Parish Council does not have a list of all Policies in place at the council and key policies were absent such as Treasury Management or a Reserves Policy.	No	N/A	<p>Policies and Procedures</p> <p>During our review, we were informed by that there was no central list of all policies for the Parish Council and subsequently noted that policies such as Treasury Management Policy or Reserves were not in place.</p> <p>We noted that this had therefore meant that there was no guidance available to the Parish Council, Clerk or the RFO in relation to the management of the funds held within the Parish Councils bank account, which was in excess of £320k at the end of the 2017/18 financial year as established through discussions with in June 2018.</p> <p>There is a risk that the Council may face challenge in relation to the sum of funds held within its bank account and question the protection of these funds with reference to the FSCS (Financial Services Compensation Scheme) limit of £85,000 which is covered in the event of a bank collapse. There is a risk that the Council could lose a significant sum of money should the financial services firm where the money is held fail.</p>	Medium	<p>SBC will advise the Parish Council to undertake a review of the policies and procedures in place at the Council and identify where there are gaps within its policies and procedures.</p> <p>The Parish Council will be advised to develop and agree a policy on Treasury Management as soon as possible to support the current situation with its reserves.</p> <p>All policies will be made available to the public through the Parish Council website.</p>	31 st May 2019	Sushil Thobhani – Service Lead – Governance
1.3	The Parish Council do not have a Terms of	No	N/A	We were informed by the Parish Council Clerk that there were no terms of reference	Medium	Slough Borough council will advise the Parish Council to	31sy May 2019	Sushil Thobhani –

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
	Reference in place which identifies the purpose and core duties of the Parish Council meetings. The common agenda items include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declaration of Interests • Dispensation applications relating to Code of Conduct; • Approval of previous meeting minutes; • Police Liaison; • Public Question Time; • Information reports from Members and Councillors; • Finance and General-Purpose Committee meeting minutes approval; • Report of RFO and Finance Statements; and • Report of Clerk. 			in place for the Parish Council meeting which takes place monthly with the exclusion of January and August. We did however note there were standing orders which were adopted by the Parish Council identifying the core meeting requirements such as the requirement to hold an annual meeting, public notice of meetings and quoracy requirements. Through review of meeting minutes and agendas between September 2017 and April 2018, we were able to confirm that the Parish Council meeting discussions revolved mainly around nine agenda items. The Standing Orders identified some key items which were required to be discussed or approved by the Parish Council including the agreement of the precept however, noted that this was not captured within the meeting minutes between September 2017 and April 2018. Through review of meeting minutes noted above, we were unable to obtain evidence to confirm that the 2018/19 annual budget was reviewed by the Parish Council. Furthermore, we were unable to evidence the discussion around the precept payment for 2018/19 which was required by the Standing Orders to take place prior to February 2018. We did however confirm that this was discussed and approved during the Finance and General Purpose committee however, noted that there was no delegated authority recorded to do this and		develop a timetable which outlines key target dates, meeting schedules and the items to be presented at each meeting. This will allow for them to pro-actively plan for deadlines, papers and items which are required to be delivered at each meeting. Slough Borough Council will advise the Parish Council to request their bank to provide a report of all cheque numbers which have been transacted, and those which have not been deposited will be cancelled. The Parish Council will be advised that going forward, the Parish Council should stop all cheques being pre-signed and for each cheque a purchase order, and backing documentation is provided when sign off is required by two individuals.		Service Lead – Governance
	The Standing Orders of the Parish Council identified the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting frequency and statutory annual meeting; 				High		31 st Jan 2019	Barry Stratfull – Service Lead Finance
					Medium	Slough Borough Council will advise the Parish Council to ensure the meeting minutes for the Parish Council are taken in more detail to ensure there is sufficient audit trail to match the minutes to the papers. More	31 st Mat 2019	Sushil Thobhani – Service Lead – Governance

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chairman of the meeting; Notice of meetings; and Attendance and quorum requirements. <p>The Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England guidance outlines that Members should review the risk register not less than annually. This could be achieved by risk management being a standing item at authority or committee meetings.</p>			<p>the Standing Orders noted that the Council shall approve written estimates of the precept.</p> <p>There is a risk that without a clear and formally agreed terms of reference, the Parish Council risk not discussing key areas such as approval of the budget and agreement of the precept. This may result in decisions being made in relation to the matters noted above without the appropriate authority and within the appropriate timescales.</p> <p>Pre-signing of cheques</p> <p>Meeting minutes between May 2017 and December 2017 confirmed that 25 blank cheques were being signed at each meeting with one signature (the other to be provided by the RFO when payments were due) during each of the meetings to allow for expenditure to be incurred and paid for by one person without appropriate use of a segregation of duties.</p> <p>However, we were informed by that this had stopped taking place from the February 2018 meeting and noted the signing of 25 blank cheques was not included within meeting minutes from February 2018.</p> <p>We have still made a note of this as there may be pre-signed cheques available to the staff of the Parish Council which were signed in advance of the change.</p> <p>Without the correct use of a segregation of duties the Parish Council face a significant</p>	Medium	<p>specifically, where payments are authorised the total approved amount will be captured within the meeting minutes.</p> <p>Slough Borough Council will advise the Parish Council to ensure that a risk register is reviewed and approved on an annual basis by the Parish Council. This will be added to the timetable as outlined above.</p>	13st May 2019	Phil Brown – Risk & Insurance Officer

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
				<p>risk of fraudulent expenditure or activity occurring without the knowledge of the Parish Council.</p> <p>Approval of Payments</p> <p>Following review of the minutes between May 2017 and April 2018, we noted that the minutes in a majority of months stated that 'payments were approved' or 'accounts were approved' or 'approved' however we confirmed through review of the papers presented to the meeting that a schedule of payments was not included.</p> <p>While we noted that payments made by cheque were listed in the monthly financial statements, there was no information within the minutes to confirm the total of payments that had been approved.</p> <p>There is a risk that the amounts presented within papers could differ from the agreed payment amounts and adjustments and variations could be approved without the appropriate authority.</p> <p>Risk Register</p> <p>Through review of the meeting minutes between April 2017 and April 2018, we were unable to evidence that the Council had either documented or reviewed the risks faced by the Parish Council. Therefore, it was noted that the Parish Council have not approved and documented the review of the Risk Register for 2017/2018.</p>				

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
				There is a risk that the Parish Council is not identifying and regularly reviewing the risks it faces as a Council and this could impact the Parish Council both financially and reputationally if a risk materialises.				
1.4	<p>At each Parish Council meeting, Councillors are asked to confirm whether they have any conflicted interests with matters to be discussed within the meeting.</p> <p>The Parish Council do not have a central register of all Councillor and employee interests.</p>	No	N/A	<p>Declarations of Interests</p> <p>We were informed during our discussion with [redacted] that one of the Councillors was a Slough Borough Council Councillor and therefore declared this interest in each meeting. During inspection of the meeting minutes between September 2017 and April 2018, we were able to confirm that this was noted as a declaration of interest however, there was no further information or evidence available which confirmed the action taken or the requirement to take any actions for this declaration of interest.</p> <p>While we confirmed through review of the Parish Council minutes that no decisions were taken which would have been affected by the declared interest, if the actions following declaration of interest are not detailed within meeting minutes, there is a risk of the interest not being managed in the appropriate manner, which could affect the objectivity of decisions made and the reputation of the Parish Council.</p> <p>Furthermore, we were informed that there was no central log of all conflicts for the Councillors which confirmed all interests for</p>	Medium	<p>Slough Borough Council will advise the Parish Council to develop a conflict of interest register and an annual declaration of interest form which is collated and recorded within the register.</p> <p>The Parish Council will also be advised that this register should be made available to all staff at each of the Parish Council Meetings for review.</p>	31 st May 2019	<p>Sushil Thobhani</p> <p>- Service Lead Governance</p>

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
				<p>each of the Councillors and the agreed actions for the individual where relevant.</p> <p>There is a risk that without a central document of all conflicts of interests for members, interests may be missed which could impact and influence the independence of decisions being made at the Parish Council meetings.</p>				
1.5	The Parish Council have in place a Finance and General-Purpose Committee for which there is no Terms of Reference or documented responsibilities or meeting requirements.	No	N/A	<p>We were informed by [redacted] that there was no Terms of Reference in place for the Finance and General-Purpose Committee.</p> <p>We confirmed through review of the Standing Orders that no reference to the Finance and General-Purpose Committee meeting requirements or its responsibilities were made.</p> <p>Through review of the December 2017 meeting minutes of the Finance and General-Purpose Committee, we were able to identify that they had reviewed and agreed the precept and the budget for 2018/19 however we noted that the membership of both committees were different, highlighting a need to ensure the precept was agreed with all Parish Council members.</p> <p>The December 2017 meeting was attended by four of the eleven councillors and the Clerk with apologies from two further councillors.</p> <p>If Terms of reference are not developed, there is a risk that the committee may not be discharging its duties in line with what is</p>	Medium	<p>Slough Borough Council will advise the Parish Council to develop and agree a Terms of Reference for the Finance and General-Purpose Committee which outlines the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of the group; • Membership requirements; • Quoracy requirements; • Attendance requirements; • Meeting frequency; and • Objectives. 	31 st May 2019	Sushil Thobhani – Service Lead - Governance

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
				expected of them by the Parish Council. This may also lead to difficulty of the Council holding the committee to account if accurate requirements and expectations of the group are not documented.				
1.6	<p>The Standing Orders adopted by the Parish Council outline that the public and press shall be admitted to all meetings of the Council and its committees however, may temporarily exclude the public and press whereby the nature of the business to be discussed is deemed as confidential.</p> <p>The Standing Orders require a three clear days' notice of a meeting to Councillors and the Public.</p> <p>The agenda for meetings are displayed within the notice board outside the building in advance of the meetings.</p> <p>A record of a public participation session at a meeting shall be included in the minutes of that meeting.</p>	Yes	No	<p>Public Notice Board</p> <p>During discussions, identified that there was a varying level of public participation at all meetings of the Parish Council and any matters which are deemed to be confidential were discussed in a meeting after the public meeting.</p> <p>We were able to confirm through viewing of the public notice board outside the building that there was an agenda for the forthcoming meeting printed and displayed for view by the public on two occasions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday 17th April 2018; and • Thursday 21st June 2018. <p>Through review of meeting minutes between September 2017 and April 2018, we noted that the meeting minutes did not clearly capture the public attendance. The meeting minutes included notes under the agenda item 'public question time' which identified the discussions between the Parish Council and the public however, we were unable to identify whether the number of public attendees within each meeting.</p> <p>There is a risk that the Parish Council are not complying with their adopted Standing Orders should meeting minutes not</p>	Low	<p>Slough Borough Council will advise the Parish Council to ensure that meeting minutes capture public attendance levels to allow for the evidencing of effective public question time matters.</p> <p>Medium Slough Borough Council will advise the Parish Council to review the contents of its website to confirm that the correct meeting minutes are uploaded for view by the public and this excludes all part 2 discussions (private and confidential items).</p>	31 st Oct 2019	Sushil Thobhani – Service Lead - Governance

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
	Meeting minutes for meetings are published on the internet for access by the public after the finalisation and agreement of meeting minutes has been confirmed.			<p>effectively capture the level of public participation by not recording the number of individuals involved in discussions or attending meetings.</p> <p>Parish Council Website</p> <p>We reviewed the Parish Council website and tested to confirm whether the most up to date meeting minutes had been uploaded and found the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2017 meeting had been cancelled due to failure to meeting quorum; • May 2017 meeting minutes had been uploaded but included the private meeting notes 'Part 2' of the meeting and the document was titled April 2017 meeting minutes; • July 2017, February 2018, March 2018 and April 2018 meeting minutes had been correctly uploaded but also included the private meeting notes under 'Part 2' of the meeting notes; and • The meeting minutes under the title May 2018 were meeting minutes for November 2017 and required updating with the correct set of meeting minutes. <p>Items discussed under part 2 of the meeting included Parish Council employee health issues, complaints and other confidential items.</p> <p>The Parish Council is currently breaching employee privacy as it has published meeting minutes with confidential items discussed and these have not been anonymised or excluded.</p>				

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
1.7	<p>No official purchase orders are raised for the purchase of goods or services to ensure that the appropriate authorisation has been obtained prior to the commitment of expenditure by the Parish Council.</p> <p>At each meeting a finance statement is presented to the Parish Council for review and approval. This statement details the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income; Expenditure (including staff costs); and Summary and Bank. <p>Each element is presented with the actual of the month, actual year to date, budget year to date and variance year to date.</p>	No	N/A	<p>Use of Purchase Orders</p> <p>We obtained meeting minutes for all meetings between September 2017 and April 2018 and were able to confirm that in each meeting, report of the RFO and Finance Statements were presented.</p> <p>We were informed by [redacted] that there was no process in place for the use of purchase orders however, where required quotations or estimates would be obtained to seek the best value for money.</p> <p>Without the use of purchase orders there is an increased risk of queries, disputed and legal consequences should an order for goods or services be processed incorrectly.</p> <p>The use of purchase orders will allow the Parish Council to ensure that there is a clear audit trail available to confirm what goods or services are being purchased, the agreed cost and clarity on the payment terms.</p>	Medium	<p>Slough Borough Council will advise the Parish Council to implement the use of official purchase orders to approve the purchase of goods and services and this should be coded to an appropriate code in the budget.</p> <p>The Parish Council will also be advised that these will then need to be initialled to agree the details are correctly matched when goods or services have been invoiced to the Parish Council.</p>	31 st Mat 2019	Barry Stratfull – Service Lead Finance
1.7b	The Financial Regulations adopted by the Parish Council dated 2006 outlines the following in relation to	Yes	No	We requested evidence to confirm that the procurement requirements were complied with in accordance with the finance regulations for four items: heating expenditure, insurance and appointment of internal and external auditors.	Medium	Slough Borough Council will advise the Parish Council that where meeting minutes are due for approval, the Clerk will note whether they have been formally	31 st May 2019	Sushil Thobhani – Service Lead - Governance

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
	<p>expenditure and entering into contracts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenditure which is intended to exceed £60,000 the Clerk must invite tenders from at least three firms; Expenditure which is expected to be within £60,000, the Clerk or RFO must obtain three quotations; and Where the expenditure is below £3,000 and above £100 the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain three estimates. <p>The Financial Regulations outline that all members and Officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An Officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or</p>			<p>Heating Expenditure</p> <p>Through review of the 2017/18 budget, we were able to confirm that there was planned capital expenditure of £60,000 for the hall heating, hot water and pumps.</p> <p>We obtained evidence of quotes retained for three different suppliers however, noted in one instance the quote did not identify who the supplier was.</p> <p>The chosen supplier was cheapest for the original quote request at £11,427.69+VAT compared to the second cheapest of £15,362+VAT.</p> <p>The actual expenditure invoiced exceeded that of the initially quoted amount due to the decision to replace convection heaters as agreed within the meeting minutes of the Parish Council of September 2017, but this did not include a price for the replacement of the additional works.</p> <p>We noted that the full invoice amount of £18,152+VAT was challenged during the meeting of December 2017.</p> <p>Without the proper use of purchase orders, the Parish Council will not be able to adequately control the approval of the expenditure in relation to items such as the above.</p> <p>Whilst we note that there was no record of approval of a value for the additional works to be carried out by Tencer LTD, there was no challenge documented within the initial</p>		approved. Instances where there is disagreement relating to the content of the meeting minutes, sufficient detail will be captured as to the changes required.		

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
	estimates from appropriate suppliers.			<p>agreement to require a quote prior to the commitment of the order.</p> <p>Without complete transparency, appropriate use of purchase orders and clearly documented meeting minutes, the Parish Council may not effectively control their expenditure, and this may result in commitment to expenditure which has not been fully agreed.</p> <p>Through review of meeting minutes for October 2017, we were unable to confirm that the meeting minutes for September 2017 had been confirmed, the meeting minutes for October identified that the July 2017 meeting minutes were approved, but not September 2017 where the decision was made. We reviewed the November 2017 meeting minutes and identified that the October 2017 meeting minutes required re-writing however, it did not include why this was required.</p> <p>There was insufficient audit trail available to confirm that the meeting minutes for September 2017 Parish Council meeting had been formally reviewed and approved. Therefore, we were unable to confirm whether the meeting minutes published for September 2017 provided a true and fair view of the discussions held within the September 2017 Parish Council meeting in relation to the commitment of additional works without a formally agreed quotation.</p> <p>Insurance 2018/19</p>				

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
				<p>We were able to evidence within the July meeting minutes for the Parish Council that insurance expenditure was paid however, were unable to obtain evidence of challenge of the price offered by the supplier of insurance.</p> <p>Through discussion with _____, we identified that it was agreed by the Parish Council that they would accept the quote provided for the year and consider the market in 2018/19. We reviewed meeting minutes between December 2016 and July 2017 to confirm whether this was documented, and we were unable to obtain documented meeting evidence to confirm this was agreed.</p> <p>As noted above, there is insufficient audit trail maintained through meeting minutes due to the level of detail captured within meeting minutes.</p> <p>Appointment of Internal Auditors</p> <p>The RFO confirmed that the appointment of the Internal Auditors was initially agreed however, due to the medical circumstances of the auditor this did not match the council's timeline due to the deadline for preparation of the annual return.</p> <p>The Parish Council therefore appointed the auditors with the most expensive quote however, the quality of the service to be provided was also taken into consideration as well as the requirement for the completion of the internal audit within a</p>				

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
				<p>small timescale due to the requirement to complete the annual return.</p> <p>Appointment of External Auditors</p> <p>Through discussions with _____, we were able to confirm that external auditors are assigned to the Parish Council by the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments is the sector led company appointed by the then Department of Communities and Local Government (now Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) as the 'specified person' to procure and appoint external auditors to smaller authorities, perform the functions set out in the relevant legislation, and to manage the ongoing audit contracts awarded for the 5 year period commencing 1 April 2017.</p> <p>Furthermore, the RFO provided us with an introductory email confirming that PKF Littlejohn LLP had been appointed as External Auditors for the Parish Council.</p>				
1.8	No formal contracts of employment for staff employed at the Parish Council are in place. The Parish Council did however have procedural guides to the working practices of the following staff members:	No	N/A	<p>The Parish Council does not have formal contracts of employment in place for its current employees. We were informed by _____ that the job roles, structure were being reviewed by a HR Consultant from Berkshire Association of Local Councils (BALC).</p> <p>We noted that the current procedural guides for working practices were dated between 2006 and 2008 and included outdated information in relation to the</p>	High	Once the review by BALC has been completed, Slough Borough Council will advise the Parish Council to implement new Contracts of Employment for all staff at the Parish Council. These will then be subject to regular review and update to ensure they remain fit for purpose.	31 st Jan 2019	Surjit Nagra – Service Lead - People

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistant Clerk (Responsible Finance Officer); and Booking Clerk. <p>The procedural guides outlined the key duties of the individuals in relation to day to day operations.</p>			<p>Parish Council and required significant levels of updating.</p> <p>We were however, informed by that once the review by BALC is fully completed a new structure would be defined, job roles and descriptors would be re-developed and contracts of employment for all staff will be developed.</p> <p>We were informed that employees of the Parish Council were being paid as per their agreed salaries however, noted that there was additional overtime being added to the financial statements presented each month to the Parish Council for approval.</p> <p>As there were no formal employment contracts in place at the time of our review, we were unable to confirm that the Parish Council was paying its employees the correct remuneration or sufficient overtime rates. Therefore, there is a risk that the Parish Council may be under/overpaying its employees.</p>		The Clerk will also be advised to re-develop the role descriptors and structure of the Parish Council employees following the receipt of advice from the BALC review.		
1.9	<p>The Parish Council budget papers outlined the planned income and expenditure for 2018/19.</p> <p>The Parish Council also outline the forecasted capital expenditure for the year which may include community projects, improvement of current land or buildings</p>	No	N/A	<p>We obtained the 2018/19 budget papers and identified that the Capital and General Funds Spend Forecast was incomplete.</p> <p>Through discussion with , we identified that the balance in the Parish Councils bank account had a significant surge due to an amendment to the lease of the land where the Parish Council Hall and fields are located. We were informed that Slough Borough Council had reclaimed this</p>	Medium	Slough Borough Council will advise the Parish Council to develop and agree a Capital Expenditure Plan for 2018-2021 identifying where it intends to make capital investments to improve the facilities, services or infrastructure within the local community.	31 st May 2019	Barry Stratfull – Service Lead - Finance

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
	<p>and a general fund for which expenditure is identified as and when required.</p> <p>The Parish Council held in excess of £300k within one bank account at the end of the 2017/18 Financial Year.</p> <p>The Parish Council did not have a long-term Capital Expenditure Plan.</p>			<p>land from the Parish Council for a fee, in order to build new homes.</p> <p>We were informed by [redacted] that the Parish Council hold all of its monies in a single bank account and noted that the account held £321,540 at the end of the financial year 2017/2018.</p> <p>We noted that the FSCS as mentioned above have a claim limit of £85,000. Therefore, there is a risk that the Council may face challenge in relation to the sum of funds held within its bank account and question the protection of these funds with reference to the FSCS (Financial Services Compensation Scheme) limit of £85,000. There is a risk that the Council could lose a significant sum of money should the financial services firm where the money is held fail.</p> <p>Furthermore, we noted that as there was no capital expenditure plan in place for the Parish Council, this may prompt questions regarding the best use of the funds for the local community and may lead to reputational damage in relation to the Parish collecting precept money but not matching the funds collected with the expenditure of the Council.</p>				

APPENDIX A: SCOPE

The scope below is a copy of the original document issued.

Scope of the review

The scope was planned to provide assurance on the controls and mitigations in place relating to the following areas:

Objectives of the area under review

To ensure that the money received via the Precept payment is spent in line with the authority delegated.

When planning the audit, the following areas for consideration and limitations were agreed:

Areas for consideration:

As part of a rolling series of audits of the Parish Councils, we will review the Governance arrangements in place to provide assurance to the Council that the precept collected for parishes is being used as intended. This will include review of:

- Whether the statutory duties, powers, and subsequent legal obligations of the Parish Council have been documented and are subject to regular review;
- Whether there is any alignment between Council policies and procedures and Parish documents.
- Whether Parish Councils efficiently prioritise and undertake activities arising from statutory duties, powers, and subsequent legal obligations;
- Whether there is evidence of engagement with local residents and other key stakeholders to deliver the services and facilities required;
- Whether a process is in place for taking informed, transparent decisions and managing risk; and
- Whether expenditure is appropriately monitored, recorded, and reported. This will include review of the process for the appointment of auditors to sign off annual accounts.

Limitations to the scope of the audit assignment:

The scope of the work will be limited to those areas examined and reported upon in the areas for consideration in the context of the objectives set out in for this review.

- The review has been undertaken on an advisory basis and as such, no opinion has been provided.
- Any testing undertaken as part of this audit will be compliance based and sample testing only.
- The review will not provide assurance of all areas of compliance as it will be undertaken on a sample basis.
- We will not guarantee the accuracy of financial statements but will review the governance around decision making in line with their statutory responsibilities.
- Our work does not provide absolute assurance that material errors, loss or fraud do not exist.
- The review does not aim to cover all aspects of the Parish Council as this would be impractical for the resources allocated to the review. It aims to provide assurance that the key arrangements outlined above are in place and complied with. As such this review should not be considered to provide assurance over the whole Parish Councils arrangements.

MINUTES OF COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS - Extract

At a Meeting of the Council for the Borough of Slough held at The Curve, William Street, Slough, SL1 1XY on Tuesday, 27th November, 2018 at 7.00 pm

Present:- The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Sohal), in the chair; Councillors Anderson, B Bains, R Bains, Bedi, Brooker, Carter, Chaudhry, Cheema, Dar, Davis, Amarpreet Dhaliwal, Arvind Dhaliwal, M Holledge, N Holledge, Hussain (until 8.46pm), Kelly, Mann, Matloob, Nazir, Pantelic, D Parmar, S Parmar, Plenty, Qaseem, Rasib, Sabah, Sadiq, A Sandhu, R Sandhu, Sharif, Smith, Sohal, Strutton, Swindlehurst and Wright.

Apologies for Absence:- Councillors Ali, Minhas, Rana and Usmani.

38. Declarations of Interest

Agenda Item 6: Community Governance Review

- Councillor Smith declared he was a Parish Councillor on Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council
- Councillors Anderson and Carter declared that they were Parish Councillors on Britwell Parish Council.
- Councillor Sohal declared that he was a Parish Councillor on Wexham Parish Council.

43. Community Governance Review of Parish Council Arrangements within the Borough of Slough

The Mayor advised that since the publication of the agenda, additional information had been received from Britwell Parish Council, Wexham Court Parish Council and Berkshire Association of Local Councils, which had been tabled for Members consideration.

Mr Isernia speaking on behalf of Britwell Parish Council, Councillor Fayyaz and Mr Jabble representing Wexham Court Parish Council were given an opportunity to address the meeting for a maximum of five minutes each.

It was moved by Councillor Hussain,
Seconded by Councillor Swindlehurst,

“Britwell Parish Council

1. That the results of the advisory postal poll, the representations made by Britwell Parish Council and the written responses received during the

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consultation be noted.

2. That in light of the response to the consultation and findings of the Review as set out at paragraph 5.14 of this report, an extraordinary meeting of the Council be called on 18th December, 2018 to determine the abolition of Britwell Parish Council with effect from 1st April, 2019.
3. That, in the event recommendations 1 and 2 above are approved, the Director of Finance and Resources be requested to prepare:
 - a report to include how the facilities and services provided or supported by Britwell Parish Council will be supported and developed in the event of their abolition;
 - a draft order for the abolition of the Britwell Parish Council and the Civil Parish to take effect on 1st April, 2019, and
 - a timetable of consequential actions.

Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council

1. That the written responses received in relation to Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council be noted.
2. That the results of the advisory postal poll on whether the parish council is effective and engages effectively with local people be noted.
3. That the parish council be urged to give consideration to the views expressed via the poll and improve its engagement with local people with an emphasis on the Westfield/Brands Hill area (PD CPA), where the poll demonstrated lower levels of public support.
4. That the borough council will review the parish's performance again toward the end of its next term of office and reserves the right to test public opinion in a further advisory postal poll if it is not satisfied that it is engaging widely with local people.

Wexham Court Parish Council

1. That the results of the advisory postal poll, the written responses received during the consultation and the audit report of the governance arrangements of the Parish be noted.
2. That in light of the response to the consultation and findings of the Review as set out at paragraph 5.31 of this report, an extraordinary meeting of the Council be called on 18th December, 2018 to determine the abolition of Wexham Court Parish Council with effect from 1st April, 2019.
3. That, in the event recommendations 1 and 2 above are approved, the Director of Finance and Resources be requested to prepare:
 - a report to include how the facilities and services provided or supported by Wexham Court Parish Council will be supported and developed in the event of their abolition;
 - a draft order for the abolition of the Wexham Court Parish Council and the Civil Parish to take effect on 1st April, 2019, and

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- a timetable of consequential actions.”

Britwell Parish Council

The recommendations were put to the vote and carried by 29 votes for, 4 votes against and 2 abstentions.

Resolved -

1. That the results of the advisory postal poll, the representations made by Britwell Parish Council and the written responses received during the consultation be noted.
2. That in light of the response to the consultation and findings of the Review as set out at paragraph 5.14 of this report, an extraordinary meeting of the Council be called on 18th December, 2018 to determine the abolition of Britwell Parish Council with effect from 1st April, 2019.
3. That the Director of Finance and Resources be requested to prepare:
 - a report to include how the facilities and services provided or supported by Britwell Parish Council will be supported and developed in the event of their abolition;
 - a draft order for the abolition of the Britwell Parish Council and the Civil Parish to take effect on 1st April, 2019, and
 - a timetable of consequential actions.

Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council

The recommendations were put to the vote and carried by 30 votes for and 5 abstentions.

Resolved –

1. That the written responses received in relation to Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council be noted.
2. That the results of the advisory postal poll on whether the parish council is effective and engages effectively with local people be noted.
3. That the parish council be urged to give consideration to the views expressed via the poll and improve its engagement with local people with an emphasis on the Westfield/Brands Hill area (PD CPA), where the poll demonstrated lower levels of public support.
4. That the borough council will review the parish's performance again toward the end of its next term of office and reserves the right to test public opinion in a further advisory postal poll if it is not satisfied that it is engaging widely with local people.

Wexham Court Parish Council

Council - 27.11.18

The recommendations were put to the vote and carried by 30 votes for, 1 against and 3 abstentions.

Resolved –

1. That the results of the advisory postal poll, the written responses received during the consultation and the audit report of the governance arrangements of the Parish be noted.
2. That in light of the response to the consultation and findings of the Review as set out at paragraph 5.31 of this report, an extraordinary meeting of the Council be called on 18th December, 2018 to determine the abolition of Wexham Court Parish Council with effect from 1st April, 2019.
3. That the Director of Finance and Resources be requested to prepare:
 - a report to include how the facilities and services provided or supported by Wexham Court Parish Council will be supported and developed in the event of their abolition;
 - a draft order for the abolition of the Wexham Court Parish Council and the Civil Parish to take effect on 1st April, 2019, and
 - a timetable of consequential actions.



Parish Community Centre
Long Furlong Drive
BRITWELL
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SL2 2PH.

T: 01753 570109
E: britwellparish@btconnect.com

27.11.18

Catherine Meek
Head of Democratic Services
Slough Borough Council

By Email

Dear Ms Meek

Community Governance Review of 19 November 2018 /Council Meeting of 27 November 2018

Britwell Parish Council notes the Report on the Community Governance Review ("Review Report") for consideration by Slough Borough Council on 27 November 2018. Britwell Parish Council in making this Response reserves all legal rights, including the right to seek judicial review and include within such legal process additional matter. In the short time available to it from declaration on 19 November of the recommendation by the Community Governance Review Group that Britwell Parish Council be abolished and the requirement to submit a response on this to Slough Borough Council by 27 November, this Response shall not be deemed to include all points that Britwell Parish Council hereafter may wish to use.

Using the Review Report's paragraph numbering, Britwell Parish Council makes the following comments:-

5.2 Britwell Parish Council ("BPC") requested that its Response to the arguments raised by Slough Borough Council ("SBC") in the leaflet which SBC planned to issue to voters in the parish area should also be included within the material being sent to voters. This request was refused by SBC. The effect was to give a one-sided position to electors which made the process unfair. BPC subsequently had to arrange for its own distribution of its leaflet response but its effect would have been limited as delivered later and separate from the main SBC communication.

5.14 / bullet point 2 – The Report states "*The poll results indicated support for the retention of the parish, but taken alongside the general comments received, the outcome was balanced with more or less equal support for abolition and retention.*" The natural understanding of electors taking part in the referendum was that a decision would be taken on the basis of the majority decision of the voters. As noted in para 5.13, the result was 51.9% against abolition and 48% for it. It is well known that only a small minority of people are moved to write specific comments and to give such people's involvement a greater weight is unfair on those expressing their view through the popular vote. It is also worth observing that the 51.9%/48% almost mirrors the popular vote in the 2016 Brexit Referendum and both major parties nationally confirmed they respected the popular vote.

5.14 / bullet point 2 – The Report states “Turnout for the Poll at 30.14 % was low and there had only been 16 other submissions on the Council’s recommendations indicating an overall general lack of interest in the future of the parish”. Why should the level of turnout be an important factor in rejecting the outcome of a popular vote in this particular referendum. In the 2018 Council elections for SBC (see <http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/voting-and-elections/borough-elections-2018---results.aspx>), the SBC’s own website noted that the overall turnout for the 14 seats was 31.5% , with the specific turnout for Britwell & Northborough just 30.28% - almost exactly the same as the turnout for this referendum.

5.14 / bullet point 3 – The Report states “ The electorate of the parish had, since 2014, consisted only of those people living in close proximity to the parish council buildings and community grounds and these people were therefore more likely to use the facilities than had been the case when the council was larger. Despite this, the poll results did not demonstrate overwhelming support for the parish council – there was still significant continuing support from the electorate for its abolition.” The issue of proximity is misleading and irrelevant. There is little in distance between those who still live in the Parish and those since 2014 outside the Parish in accessing the Council premises. It is however a one-sided and partial observation to state simply that “there was still significant continuing support from the electorate for its abolition.” As noted in para 5.8, the popular vote in 2013, the popular vote was 57% in favour of abolition which had fallen in the recent referendum to 48%.

In its submission to SBC, BPC was open in noting the impact which a fraud by then parish staff had on BPC. Due to the gravity of the event, it focussed much Council attention on it up to the time of the convictions. BPC’s more strategic focus since July 2017 could have taken place earlier but for this attention on dealing with the consequences of the crime. However the movement of direction was clear and is reflected in the 25% swing away from abolition in just that short period.

5.14 / bullet point 5 – The Report states “A reduction in hiring charges for the hall appeared to be the only benefit that parish residents received for their precept making it questionable value for money for the majority of residents.” Compared to the prices charged by Slough BC for hire of the Britwell Hub, the reduced hire charges for residents is a benefit. However from submissions already made, this is a one sided misrepresentation and attention can be drawn to:-

- there is an admin price to be paid for local democracy. BPC reviewed and commented on the Slough Local Plan in 2017; comments on planning matters; Neighbourhood police have an office in the Community Centre grounds and attend Parish Council meetings to hear and respond to local concerns which councillors raise. BPC Councillors live in the community – they hear and act on issues affecting local people– eg anti social behaviour (Monksfield Way & Twist Way), drug dealing (Monksfield Way & Upper Lees), dog fouling (Goodwin Road), or cars illegally parked (Long Readings Lane);

- BPC has been seeking to broaden its reach by increasing co-operation with others includes participating with bodies such as “Active Slough” and Berkshire Active, allowing the Community Centre and grounds to be used for:-

- Wildcat Girls Football for 5-7 year olds and for 8-11 year olds;
- Teen Boxing;
- Rugby for children and young people;
- Pilates;
- Local Football teams.

- SBC has said it will only commit to using the Community Centre for the youth. Currently the Community Centre is used by young people and a variety of groups including Over 50's Arts & Crafts, Britwell Come Dancing and Britwell Drama Group. If these groups have to move to the Britwell Hub their charges are likely to be substantially increased - if they can be accommodated at all.
- BPC worked closely with the Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) and Borough Council Events to run the Summer Celebration in June 2018. Following a consultation with 66 completed questionnaires returned, 100% who responded stated their support for the Summer Celebration (June 2018) as a good use of Parish Council resources.
- A Job Club run (at no charge) one morning a week from January - Easter 2018 to help local jobless ; although this has been discontinued by the organiser (a local church) due to the poor take-up rate ,it illustrates another way in which BPC strives to give benefit to residents.
- the presence of the BPC secures benefit to local people not just through the precept but voluntary effort. The Community Centre and surrounding grounds and sports fields have been managed by volunteer parish councillors – some have done so for over 30 years - completely free of charge, including being called out in the middle of the night. This service would disappear with abolition.

5.14 / bullet point 7 – The Report states “ *In 2013 the parish council advised the review group that it planned to reduce the precept, but this has not happened*”. The point is irrelevant and partial. Since 2014, a different parish council has been elected.

5.14 / bullet point 8 – The Report states “ *No evidence was provided that the parish council was likely to make and sustain any significant improvements in the way it works or succeed in bringing the community together.*” Whilst it is open to the Review Group to have an opinion on the effectiveness of any BPC action, it is wrong and therefore partial in stating that no evidence of this was provided. Particular attention is drawn to:-

- the decision to move from BPC running the Chicken Ranch bar itself to one where the Bar is run by a tenant on a commercial basis, has enabled BPC to focus more on other areas;
- as noted above, BPC has been seeking to broaden its reach by increasing co-operation with others such as “Active Slough” and Berkshire Active and in events such as the Summer Celebration

5.14 / bullet point 9 – BPC recognises the need to update the website.

5.14 / bullet point 11– BPC repeats the responses it has made above .

5.14 / bullet point 12 - The Report states “ *The fraud by parish staff resulted in a loss of public money*” . This is correct but in giving no context , it is essentially intended to be negative. The context is that a fraud was committed which both the internal and the external auditor failed to spot in two audits and which was only brought to light by a BPC councillor. The loss is subject of a current insurance claim.

5.14 / bullet points 15 & 16 – References made to Britwell Hub do not make clear that their charges are substantially higher than those charged by BPC currently nor is it clear that existing regular users of the BPC Community Centre would be able to find space or be able to transfer to the Britwell Hub.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Holder
Locum Clerk

Berkshire Association of Local Councils



Address: BALC, Wyvols Court, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield, Reading, Berkshire RG7 1WY
Tel: 01189 880226

Ms Catherine Meek,
Slough Borough Council

November 27th2018,

Dear Ms Meek,

I was dismayed to read that it is proposed to abolish Wexham Court Parish Council, firstly, against the wishes of the local electorate, secondly, before the target dates for improvements in the action plan, (the majority of which are for May 2019) and thirdly, in the light of the fact that improvements have already been made and are continuing to be made.

Through BALC a review of HR has taken place. Job descriptions have been drawn up and contracts for employees prepared for approval at a forthcoming Parish Council meeting. Three councillors have recently undertaken Councillor and Code of conduct training organised by BALC. The Parish Clerk has recently attended "What you need to know training" arranged by Hampshire ALC and is currently undertaking CiLCA training run by BALC. Wexham Court Parish Council is working to complete the action plan drawn up earlier this month. I will be recommending to the next executive meeting on December 5th that BALC offers mentoring to the council to assist in its endeavours.

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) is concerned that decisions like these can be taken against local opinion and without any recourse to independent appeal. The government has agreed to look into the CGR process and this provides further evidence in support of a major overhaul.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Ruth Cottingham,
Chair BALC.



**WEXHAM COURT
PARISH COUNCIL**
Norway Drive, Slough SL2 5QW
Website: wexhamcourt.org.uk

Item 1.3 Pre-Signing of Cheques – I joined Wexham Court Parish Council (WCPC) on 15/08/2005 the pre-signing of cheques with one signatory was already in place when I joined and is part of the Standing Orders that remain in place. I raised some concerns but it was explained to me that it was sometimes difficult for the Clerk to obtain two signatures. The procedure covering this demands that one signature may be a councillor but the other signature must be the Chairman or in his absence the Head of Finance. In the first instance preference is for the Chairman and Head of Finance to sign cheques. ALL cheques are raised with supporting documentation and has been checked by the RFO that it is either a budgeted expense or a capital/approved expense that has been recorded in the minutes.

I have never raised a payment that is not in line with our procedures. If I am instructed by the Clerk to raise a payment that I do not deem has been properly authorized I raise the matter to full council, as was the case with the capital expenditure for the replacement heating and the HR Consultant.

Pre-Signed cheques actually stopped in January 2017, the Clerk has made an error in reporting this in the minutes, the cheque book is kept with me at all times and I was unable to attend meetings throughout 2017 and onwards.

Delegated Powers – neither the Clerk or RFO are allowed to make purchases outside of the budgeted expenditure without following proper procedure for approval through full council. Budgeted expenditure covers the daily running costs, mostly attributed to the Parish Hall and Allotments, for example, Gas, Electric, Waste removal, Cleaning products, Stationery etc.

Precept - The precept was discussed at a Finance and General Purpose Meeting see copy of email below

On 22 Nov 2017, at 14:09, Tina Kellett

The Clerk has asked me to send out the summons to the Finance & General Purpose Meeting for Tuesday 28th November 2017 at 7pm.

If you are unable to attend please let the Clerk know in advance.

This is a very important meeting for the F&GP Committee (but all members are invited) as the Budget for 2018 -2019 will be reviewed, the capital reserves expenditure will be decided and the Precept Set for 2018-2019. The minutes from this meeting will then be presented to Full Council in the December meeting for approval and Slough Borough Council will be notified of the Precept.

Members of Public are excluded from this meeting.

*Tina Kellett
Responsible Finance Officer
Wexham Court Parish Council*

<WCPC Finance Letter to Councillors Nov 2017.docx>

<budget 2018 2019.pdf>

<staff hall and allotment rates 2017.pdf>

This meeting was moved to the 05/12/17 wherein the precept and budget were approved. These minutes were then presented at the Full Council Meeting on 12/12/2017 and approved. However, the Clerk failed to detail that it covered the budget and approval of the precept and I have not been provided with the minutes for the December F&GP meeting.

Approval of payments - Council is provided with a list of cheques drawn, the procedure in place when I joined in 2005 is to produce a set of accounts monthly of a Cash Book nature on a spreadsheet that directly reconciles to the monthly bank statement, this forms part of the Standing Orders. It is not always possible to produce the cheques at the meeting as it must include salary payments that have yet to be calculated or hall hires that have taken place during the month. However, if council wish to put this change in place F&GP Committee needs to discuss how this may be effectively implemented and put before full council for approval with clear instructions to the RFO on how this is to be managed.

Procurement – Insurance, we are committed to using Aviva and receive a loyalty discount for doing so. Providing the quotation for renewal is within budget it may be taken up without requiring approval by council. However, as a courtesy council are always pre-advised of the renewal and the amount. We have attempted to obtain competitive quotes which is a long process and failed at the last attempt to be cheaper than the current insurers Aviva. I believe that Council are allowed to use their long time suppliers of services for continuity of supply providing they remain competitive. If council wish to explore other suppliers it must instruct the Clerk with ample time to do so and not at time of renewal which places the council at risk of not being insured.

Capital Expenditure - Council were in limbo for some time with the funds in the bank, as under the agreement of the first £150k received from Slough Borough Council for the Rescinding of Leased Land there was a clause that if Planning Permission was not given to SBC the money would have to be refunded. Therefore the money could not be spent or earmarked. I understand this restriction has now expired. However, I as the RFO has always warned council that it was not spending enough in the community for three years or more despite having sufficient funds to do so and requesting a supporting precept to enable the expenditure. The last budget produced in December 2017 clearly showed in red that council must discuss and earmark reserves for Capital Expenditure.

Final comment: I have not been instructed or authorized to respond to you but I cannot allow misconceptions to be reported that reflect on my professionalism and ability to carry out my role as RFO. Any Councilor or Member of Public or any other official body may scrutinize the accounts and question any item and require me to show supporting documentation and authorization to prove its authenticity and appropriateness.

Tina Kellett
RFO
Wexham Court Parish Council
25/11/2018

WEXHAM COURT PARISH COUNCIL

I would like to thank Mr Mayor for allowing me the opportunity to say a few words regarding the Wexham Court Parish

PARISH HISTORY

The parish originally covered a relatively small 748 acres (3.0 km²) (1.2 square miles) according to the 1881 and 1891 censuses.

Wexham civil parish was divided under the Local Government Act 1972, with the southern part becoming part of Slough and the northern part becoming part of the present district. The northern part now constitutes the civil parish of Wexham, with the southern part being a parish called Wexham Court .

Wexham Court has a parish council with 11 members

COMMUNICATION

Councillor regularly do Walkabouts in the Parish to hear and address local issues

Councillors also Visit Elderly at Elderly Centers form time to time

Councillors answer and address Public Questions. At every Parish meeting the public has the right to ask questions of the Parish Councillors, Borough Councillors and the Police

All information is uploaded to the Parish Website:

Parish Open Days are held to promote community cohesion. These are well attended by residents

Councillors Work with the Elderly at the Care Home

Councillors Attend Police Forum, Parish Forum to raise local issues

Activities

Two Halls and the Board Room are always in use offering the best value to the Parish residents and Others at attractive rates

Regular Activities include the following;

Lunch and dance classes for Age Concern, Slimming advice, Boxing, Bhangra dances, Tuition and Prayers on Thursday, Friday and Sundays

In addition the Halls are kept extremely busy with Birthdays, Weddings, Mehndi Parties etc. on weekends

Parish also OFFER the following activities;

Three Free Tennis Courts

Children Play area at Norway Drive

Play area for all ages at The Cherries Playground

**From 2013 to 2018 there is a clear trend AGAINST
ABOLUTION**

55% Against Abolition in 2013

56.4% Against Abolition in 2018

- **THERE IS INCREASE IN SUPPORT OF KEEPING THE
PARISH**

CONCLUSION

**Mr Mayor we are living in a democratic society and it is
CLEAR from the Consultation that the RESIDENTS have**

stated that Parish Council MUST be RETAINED. *we should
Respect the mandate of the People .*

- **Wish AND WILL of the people MUST be ACCEPTED,
Democracy MUST win**
- **Third tier of Government must be MAINTAINED**
- **There is demand for more Parish`s in the Country, and
NOT to demolish the existing ones**

**I URGE THE COUNCILLORS TO VOTE IN FAVOUR OF RETAINING
THE PARISH IN RESPECTING THEIR WISHS**

YOU WILL BE VOTING FOR DEMOCRACY

THANK YOU

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Britwell Parish Council - Hall Useage

There are both regular and occasional users of the hall. Occasional users are for birthday parties etc

Monday	2.30 – 4.00 pm	Over 50's arts and crafts (no charge)
	6.00	Britwell Drama Group first Monday of month
Tuesday	9.30 – 11.00	Slimming world
	2.00 – 5.00	Britwell come dancing (no charge)
	5.30 – 9.00	Slimming world
Wednesday	-	
Thursday	6.00 – 8.00	Glad Tiding Church
Friday	-	
Saturday	-	
Sunday	9.00 – 2.00	Glad Tidings Church

Grounds -Two football pitches – football teams at weekends

Wexham Court Parish Council- Hall Useage

There are both regular and occasional users of the hall. Occasional users are for birthday parties etc

Monday	9.30 – 2.00	Age Concern
	3.00 – 9.00 pm	Slimming world
Tuesday	9.30 – 2.00	Age Concern
	9.00 – 11.00	Slimming world
	5.00 – 7.00	Tuition
	6.30 – 8.30 pm	Boxing
Wednesday	9.30 – 2.00	Age Concern
	7.00 – 8.00 pm	Bollywood Group
Thursday	5.00 – 7.00	Tuition
	6.30 – 8.30 pm	Boxing
	6.00 – 8.30 pm	Sai Baba
Friday	1.00 – 2.00	Muslim Prayers
Saturday		
Sunday	10.00 – 1.30 pm	Wesleyan Church
	10.30 am – 1.30 pm	Church Group

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Guidance on Community Governance Reviews – Extract

Criteria for undertaking a community governance review

52. Section 93 of the 2007 Act requires principal councils to ensure that community governance within the area under review will be:
53. When considering the criteria identified in the 2007 Act, principal councils should take into account a number of influential factors, including:
54. In considering this guidance, the impact on community cohesion is linked specifically to the identities and interests of local communities. Size, population and boundaries are linked to both but perhaps more specifically to community governance being effective and convenient.

The identities and interests of local communities

55. Parish councils have an important role to play in the development of their local communities. Local communities range in size, as well as in a variety of other ways. Communities and Local Government is working to help people and local agencies create cohesive, attractive and economically vibrant local communities. The aim for communities across the country is for them to be capable of fulfilling their own potential and overcoming their own difficulties, including community conflict, extremism, deprivation and disadvantage. Communities need to be empowered to respond to challenging economic, social, and cultural trends, and to demographic change.
56. Parish councils can contribute to the creation of successful communities by influencing the quality of planning and design of public spaces and the built environment, as well as improving the management and maintenance of such amenities. Neighbourhood renewal is an important factor to improve the quality of life for those living in the most disadvantaged areas. Parish councils can be well placed to judge what is needed to build cohesion. Other factors such as social exclusion and deprivation may be specific issues in certain areas, and respect is fundamental to the functioning of all places and communities. The Government remains committed to civil renewal, and empowering citizens to work with public bodies, including parish councils, to influence public decisions.
57. 'Place' matters in considering community governance and is a factor in deciding whether or not to set up a parish. Communities and Local Government's vision is of prosperous and cohesive communities which offer a safe, healthy and sustainable environment. One aspect of that is strong and accountable local government and leadership. Parish councils can perform a central role in community leadership. Depending on the issue, sometimes they will want to take the lead locally, while at other times they may act as an important stakeholder or in partnership with others. In either case, parish councils will want to work effectively with partners to undertake the role of 'place-shaping', and be responsive to the challenges and opportunities of their area in a co-ordinated way.

58. It is clear that how people perceive where they live - their neighbourhoods - is significant in considering the identities and interests of local communities and depends on a range of circumstances, often best defined by local residents. Some of the factors which help define neighbourhoods are: the geography of an area, the make-up of the local community, sense of identity, and whether people live in a rural, suburban, or urban area.

59. Parishes in many cases may be able to meet the concept of neighbourhoods in an area. Parishes should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity. Like neighbourhoods, the feeling of local community and the wishes of local inhabitants are the primary considerations.

60. Today, there may well be a variety of different communities of interest within a parish; for example, representing age, gender, ethnicity, faith or life-style groups. There are other communities with say specific interests in schools, hospitals or in leisure pursuits. Any number of communities of interest may flourish in a parish but they do not necessarily centre on a specific area or help to define it.

61. Building a sense of local identity may make an important contribution to cohesion where a local area is facing challenges arising from rapid demographic change. In considering the criteria, community governance reviews need to home in on communities as offering a sense of place and of local identity for all residents.

Effective and convenient local government

62. The Government believes that the effectiveness and convenience of local government is best understood in the context of a local authority's ability to deliver quality services economically and efficiently, and give users of services a democratic voice in the decisions that affect them.

63. Local communities should have access to good quality local services, ideally in one place. A parish council may be well placed to do this. With local parish and town councils in mind, effective and convenient local government essentially means that such councils should be viable in terms of providing at least some local services, and if they are to be convenient they need to be easy to reach and accessible to local people.

64. In responding to the requirement for effective and convenient local government, some parish councils are keen, and have the capacity to take on more in the provision of services. However, it is recognised that not all are in position to do so. The 2007 Act provides a power of well-being to those parish councils who want to take on more, giving them additional powers to enable them to promote the social, economic and environmental well being of their

areas. Nevertheless, certain conditions must be met by individual parish councils before this power is extended to them.

65. Wider initiatives such as the Quality Parish Scheme and charters agreed between parish councils and principal councils also help to give a greater understanding of securing effective and convenient local government. In such cases, parish and town councils which are well managed and good at representing local views will be in a better position to work closely with partner authorities to take more responsibility for shaping their area's development and running its services.

Factors for consideration

66. When reviewing community governance arrangements, principal councils may wish to take into account a number of factors, to help inform their judgement against the statutory criteria.

The impact on community cohesion of community governance arrangements

67. Setting up parishes and parish councils clearly offers the opportunity to strengthen community engagement and participation, and generate a positive impact on community cohesion. In conducting community governance reviews (whether initiated by itself or triggered by a valid petition), the principal council should consider the impact on community cohesion when deciding whether or not to set up a parish council.

68. Britain is a more diverse society – ethnically, religiously and culturally – than ever before. Today's challenge is how best to draw on the benefits that migration and diversity bring while addressing the potential problems and risks to cohesion. Community cohesion is about recognising the impact of change and responding to it. This is a fundamental part of the place-shaping agenda and puts local authorities at the heart of community building.

69. In its response to the recommendations of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion the Government has defined community cohesion as what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to community cohesion is integration which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another.

70. The Government's vision of an integrated and cohesive community is based on three foundations:

- People trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly

71. And three key ways of living together:

- A shared future vision and sense of belonging

- A focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of diversity
- Strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

72. The Commission on Integration and Cohesion's report, *Our Shared Future*, is clear that communities have expert knowledge about their own circumstances and that actions at the local level contribute to achieving integration and cohesion, with local authorities well placed to identify any pressures. The Commission reports that policy makers and practitioners see civic participation as a key way of building integration and cohesion – from ensuring people have a stake in the community, to facilitating mixing and engendering a common sense of purpose through shared activities. The 2006 White Paper's proposals for stronger local leadership, greater resident participation in decisions and an enhanced role for community groups contribute to promoting cohesion.

73. Community cohesion is about local communities where people should feel they have a stake in the society, and in the local area where they live by having the opportunity to influence decisions affecting their lives. This may include what type of community governance arrangements they want in their local area.

74. The 2007 Act requires principal councils to have regard to the need to secure that community governance reflects the identity and interests of local communities; the impact on community cohesion is linked strongly to it. Cohesion issues are connected to the way people perceive how their local community is composed and what it represents, and the creation of parishes and parish councils may contribute to improving community cohesion. Community governance arrangements should reflect, and be sufficiently representative of, people living across the whole community and not just a discrete cross-section or small part of it. It would be difficult to think of a situation in which a principal council could make a decision to create a parish and a parish council which reflects community identities and interests in the area and at the same time threatens community cohesion. Principal councils should be able to decline to set up such community governance arrangements where they judged that to do so would not be in the interests of either the local community or surrounding communities, and where the effect would be likely to damage community cohesion.

75. As part of a community governance review a principal council should consider whether a recommendation made by petitioners will undermine community cohesion in any part of its area.

76. Challenges to community cohesion are often very local in nature and because of their knowledge of local communities, local authorities are in a good position to assess these challenges. As for the other considerations set out in this guidance, principal councils will wish to reach a balanced judgement in taking community cohesion into account in community governance arrangements.

Size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish

77. Size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish are linked to aspects of both principal criteria as identified in the 2007 Act, but perhaps more specifically to community governance being effective and convenient. Often it is factors such as the size, population and boundaries which influence whether or not it is going to be viable to create a parish council. Parishes must fall within the boundaries of a single principal council's area.

78. The Local Government Commission for England in its 1993 Report *Renewing Local Government in the English Shires* makes the point that there is a long history of attempts to identify ideal minimum and maximum sizes for local authorities. Instead its preference was for authorities to be based on natural communities and reflecting people's expressed choices. This is even truer today, particularly at the most local level of government. Nevertheless, the size of communities and parishes remains difficult to define.

79. Parish councils in England currently vary greatly in size from those with a handful of electors with some representing hamlets of around 50 people to those in towns with well over 40,000 electors. Geography and natural boundaries; population size; and to an extent 'council size' (the term used by the LG BCE to describe the number of councillors who are elected to a local authority) may influence how small or large a parish council can be.

80. The general rule should be that the parish is based on an area which reflects community identity and interest and which is of a size which is viable as an administrative unit of local government. This is generally because of the representative nature of parish councils and the need for them to reflect closely the identity of their communities. It is desirable that any recommendations should be for parishes or groups of parishes with a population of a sufficient size to adequately represent their communities and to justify the establishment of a parish council in each. Nevertheless as previously noted, it is recognised that there are enormous variations in the size of parishes, although most parishes are below 12,000 in population.

81. A parish council should be in a position to provide some basic services and many larger parishes will be able to offer much more to their local communities. However, it would not be practical or desirable to set a rigid limit for the size of a parish whether it is in a rural or urban area, although higher population figures are generally more likely to occur in urban areas. Equally, a parish could be based on a small but discrete housing estate rather than on the town within which the estate lies.

82. There may be cases where larger parishes would best suit the needs of the area. These might include places where the division of a cohesive area, such as a Charter Trustee town (see paragraphs 133 to 134), would not reflect the sense of community that needs to lie behind all parishes; or places where there were no recognisable smaller communities.

83. As far as boundaries between parishes are concerned, these should reflect the “no-man’s land” between communities represented by areas of low population or barriers such as rivers, roads or railways. They need to be, and be likely to remain, easily identifiable. For instance, factors to consider include parks and recreation grounds which sometimes provide natural breaks between communities but they can equally act as focal points. A single community would be unlikely to straddle a river where there are no crossing points, or a large area of moor land or marshland. Another example might be where a community appeared to be divided by a motorway (unless connected by walkways at each end). Whatever boundaries are selected they need to be, and be likely to remain, easily identifiable.

84. In many cases a boundary change between existing parishes, or parishes and unparished areas, rather than the creation of an entirely new parish, will be sufficient to ensure that parish arrangements reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government. For example, over time, communities may expand with new housing developments. This can often lead to existing parish boundaries becoming anomalous as new houses are built across them resulting in people being in different parishes from their neighbours.

85. A review of parish boundaries is an opportunity to put in place strong boundaries, tied to firm ground detail, and remove anomalous parish boundaries. Since the new boundaries are likely to be used to provide the building blocks for district ward, London borough ward, county division and parliamentary constituency boundaries in future reviews for such councils, it is important that principal councils seek to address parish boundary issues at regular intervals.

Parish meetings and parish councils

86. Under the Local Government Act 1972 all parishes, whether or not they have a parish council, must have a parish meeting. In many parishes the requirement to have a parish meeting takes the form of at least one annual meeting, or more often several meetings during each year, organised (where one exists) by the parish council or if not by the parish meeting itself. The parish meeting of a parish consists of the local government electors for the parish, and as such local electors are invited to attend these meetings. Parish meetings have a number of functions, powers and rights of notification and consultation. The trustees of a parish meeting hold property and act on its behalf. Depending on the number of local government electors in the parish, there are different rules about whether or not a parish council must be created for the parish, or whether it is discretionary.

87. Where principal councils are creating new parishes, the 2007 Act requires them to make recommendations about whether or not a new parish should be constituted in their area. New parishes can be constituted in a number of different ways, including by creating a parish in an area that is not currently parished, amalgamating two or more parishes and separating part of a parish, with or without aggregating it with parts of other parishes.

88. Section 94 of the 2007 Act applies in relation to these recommendations. It places principal councils under a duty to recommend that a parish should have a council in parishes which have 1000 electors or more. In parishes with 151 to 999 electors the principal council may recommend the creation of either a parish council or a parish meeting. In parishes with 150 or fewer electors principal councils are unable to recommend that a parish council should be created and therefore only a parish meeting can be created. The aim of these thresholds is to extend the more direct participatory form of governance provided by parish meetings to a larger numbers of electors. Equally, the thresholds help to ensure that both the population of a new parish for which a council is to be established is of sufficient size to justify its establishment and also that local people are adequately represented.

89. One of the reasons for these differing thresholds is that the Government recognises the difficulty which sometimes exists in small parishes, in particular, in managing to get sufficient numbers to stand for election to the parish council. However, the thresholds identified above do not apply to existing parish councils. If the community governance review concludes that the existence of the parish council reflects community identities and provides effective and convenient local government, despite the small number of electors, then it can recommend that the parish council should continue in existence. So, where an existing parish of 150 or less electors already has a parish council with the minimum number of five parish councillors it can continue to have a parish council.

90. If a principal council chooses to establish a parish council, or if an existing parish whose boundaries are being changed has a parish council, the principal authority must consult on, and put in place the necessary electoral arrangements for that parish.
(See Chapter 5 Electoral Arrangements.)

Recommendations and decisions on the outcome of community governance reviews

91. Community governance reviews will make recommendations on those matters they have considered, as defined by the terms of reference set at the start of the review.

92. A principal council must make recommendations as to:

- a) whether a new parish or any new parishes should be constituted;
- b) whether existing parishes should or should not be abolished or whether the area of existing parishes should be altered; or
- c) what the electoral arrangements for new or existing parishes, which are to have parish councils, should be.

93. It may also make recommendations about:

- a) the grouping or degrouping of parishes;

- b) adding parishes to an existing group of parishes; or
- c) making related alterations to the boundaries of a principal councils' electoral areas.

94. In deciding what recommendations to make the principal council must have regard to the need to secure that community governance reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area and is effective and convenient. The 2007 Act provides that it must also take into account any other arrangements (apart from those relating to parishes and their institutions) that have already been made, or that could be made, for the purposes of community representation or community engagement.

95. The recommendations must take account of any representations received and should be supported by evidence which demonstrates that the recommended community governance arrangements would meet the criteria set out in the 2007 Act. Where a principal council has conducted a review following the receipt of a petition, it will remain open to the council to make a recommendation which is different to the recommendation the petitioners wished the review to make. This will particularly be the case where the recommendation is not in the interests of the wider local community, such as where giving effect to it would be likely to damage community relations by dividing communities along ethnic, religious or cultural lines.

96. In making its recommendations, the review should consider the information it has received in the form of expressions of local opinion on the matters considered by the review, representations made by local people and other interested persons, and also use its own knowledge of the local area. It may be that much of this information can be gained through the consultation which the council will have held with local people and also the council's wider engagement with local people on other matters. In taking this evidence into account and judging the criteria in the 2007 Act against it, a principal council may reasonably conclude that a recommendation set out in a petition should not be made. For example, a recommendation to abolish or establish a parish council, may negatively impact on community cohesion, either within the proposed parish area, or in the wider community within which it would be located, and therefore should not be made.

97. The aim of the 2007 Act is to open up a wider choice of governance to communities at the most local level. However, the Government considers that there is sufficient flexibility for principal councils not to feel 'forced' to recommend that the matters included in every petition must be implemented.

98. Under the 2007 Act the principal council must both publish its recommendations and ensure that those who may have an interest are informed of them. In taking a decision as to whether or not to give effect to a recommendation, the principal council must have regard to the statutory criteria (see paragraph 51). After taking a decision on the extent to which the council will

give effect to the recommendations made in a community governance review, the council must publish its decision and its reasons for taking that decision. It must also take sufficient steps to ensure that persons who may be interested in the review are informed of the decision and the reasons for it. Who should be informed will depend on local circumstances. Publicising the outcome of reviews is dealt with in the next section on implementation.

Implementation of community governance reviews by order

99. There are a number of steps that a principal council must take to publicise the outcome of any review it has conducted, and to provide information about that outcome to the bodies it must notify following any reorganisation order it makes to implement the review. Community governance reviews should be conducted transparently so that local people and other local stakeholders who may have an interest are made aware of the outcome of the decisions taken on them and the reasons behind these decisions.

100. If the council implements the recommendations made in its review, there are other steps it is required to undertake. These include depositing copies of the reorganisation order⁵ which the principal council will need to draw up to give effect to its decisions. Besides depositing at its main office a copy of the reorganisation order, it should also deposit a map showing the effects of the order in detail which should be available for inspection by the public at all reasonable times (i.e. during normal working hours). The 2007 Act also requires the council to make available a document setting out the reasons for the decisions it has taken (including where it has decided to make no change following a community governance review) and to publicise these reasons.

101. The principal council must publicise how the council has given effect to the review, and that the order and map are available for public inspection as set above. Other means of publicity it may wish to consider are through publication on the council's website, in local newspapers, on notice boards in public places, and in local libraries, town halls or other local offices. In addition, after a principal council has made a reorganisation order, as soon as practicable, it must inform the following organisations that the order has been made:

- a) the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
- b) the LGBCE
- c) the Office of National Statistics
- d) the Director General of the Ordnance Survey
- e) any other principal council (e.g. a county council) whose area the order relates to.

102. The Audit Commission has statutory responsibility for appointing external auditors to all local councils in England. For the purposes of its audit appointment functions the Commission needs to be aware of changes emerging from community governance reviews. Therefore, principal councils should inform

the Audit Commission of any reorganisation orders made to implement the recommendations of community governance reviews.

103. Section 97 of the 2007 Act provides for regulations to make incidental, consequential, transitional or supplementary provision for the purposes of, or in consequence of, reorganisation orders. Two sets of regulations have been made under the 2007 Act, which apply to reorganisation orders - both came into force on 8 April 2008. The first of these, the Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 No.625 make provisions in relation to matters such as the distribution of property and the rights and liabilities of parish councils affected by a reorganisation order. The second set, the Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008 No.626 deal with the setting of precepts for new parishes.

⁵ A copy of a model reorganisation order with different examples of recommendations can be viewed on the Communities and Local Government website. It may help principal councils to draw up reorganisation orders which could be adapted to their own needs and circumstances. Principal councils are not obliged to follow this example. It is offered on an advisory basis and principal councils will want to seek their own legal advice that any orders they produce meet the necessary legal requirements.

104. Section 99 of the 2007 Act provides for public bodies affected by reorganisation following a community governance review to make agreements about incidental matters and what those agreements may provide for. So as to ensure that a reorganisation order has effect subject to the terms of any such agreement, principal councils should make provision for this in the reorganisation order. An example provision has been included in the model reorganisation order which can be found on the Communities and Local Government website (see footnote 2).

Maps of parish changes and mapping conventions

105. To assist those who will have an interest in any recommendations made by the principal council when conducting a community governance review and to accompany the reorganisation order, clear high quality maps should be produced to a standard equivalent to using Ordnance Survey large scale data as a base. Maps can be graphically presented at a reduced scale for convenience but preferably no smaller than 1:10,000 scale. Each recommendation and order should be depicted on a map or maps. The mapping should clearly show the existing parish ward, parish, district or London borough boundaries and all proposed parish ward and parish boundaries in the area(s) affected, or given effect to in a reorganisation order.

106. It can be useful to include some positional information to identify the location of the area(s) in relation to the complete area of the principal council. A colour key can be included to clearly identify each boundary type. Where there are only proposed changes to an existing parish boundary alignment it can be helpful to show in translucent colour any areas to be transferred from one parish to another. This indicates clearly the extent of the proposed change. It can also be beneficial to add unique references to all areas of transfer to create a cross reference to the re-organisation order document. Applying a reference to each

order map should also be considered so that a link is created with the re-organisation order.

Abolishing parishes, and dissolving parish councils

- 117 While the Government expects to see a trend in the creation, rather than the abolition, of parishes, there are circumstances where the principal council may conclude that the provision of effective and convenient local government and/or the reflection of community identity and interests may be best met, for example, by the abolition of a number of small parishes and the creation of a larger parish covering the same area. If, following a review, a principal council believes that this would provide the most appropriate community governance arrangements, then it will wish to make this recommendation; the same procedures apply to any recommendation to abolish a parish and/or parish council as to other recommendations (see paragraph 90 -97). Regulations⁷ provide for the transfer of property, rights and liabilities of a parish council to the new successor parish council, or where none is proposed to the principal council itself.
- 118 Section 88 of the 2007 Act provides for a community governance review to recommend the alteration of the area of, or the abolition of, an existing parish as a result of a review. The area of abolished parishes does not have to be redistributed to other parishes, an area can become unparished. However, it is the Government's view that it would be undesirable to see existing parishes abolished with the area becoming unparished with no community governance arrangements in place.
- 119 The abolition of parishes should not be undertaken unless clearly justified. Any decision a principal council may make on whether to abolish a parish should not be taken lightly. Under the previous parish review legislation, the Local Government and Rating Act 1997 , the Secretary of State considered very carefully recommendations made by principal councils for the abolition of any parish (without replacement) given that to abolish parish areas removes a tier of local government. Between 1997 and 2008, the Government rarely received proposals to abolish parish councils, it received only four cases seeking abolition and of these only one was approved for abolition by the Secretary of State.
- 120 Exceptionally, there may be circumstances where abolition may be the most appropriate way forward. Under the 2007 Act provisions, the principal council would need to consider local opinion, including that of parish councillors and local electors. It would need to find evidence that the abolition of a parish council was justified, and that there was clear and sustained local support for such action. A factor taken into account by the Government in deciding abolition cases, was that local support for abolition needed to have been demonstrated over at least a period equivalent to two terms of office of the parish councillors (i.e. 8 years), and that such support was sufficiently informed. This means a properly constituted parish council should have had an opportunity to exercise its functions so that local people can judge its ability to contribute to local quality of life.
- 121 Where a community governance review is considering abolishing a parish council we would expect the review to consider what arrangements will be in place to engage with the communities in those areas once the parish is abolished. These arrangements might be an alternative forum run by or for the local community, or perhaps a residents' association. It is doubtful however, that abolition of a parish and its council could ever be justified as the most

appropriate action in response to a particular contentious issue in the area or decision of the parish council.

- 122 In future, principal councils will wish to consider the sort of principles identified above in arriving at their decisions on whether or not to abolish a parish council. In doing so, they will be aware that decisions about community governance arrangements, including decisions for the abolition of a parish council, may attract a challenge by way of judicial review.
- 123 The 2006 White Paper underlined the Government's commitment to parish councils as an established and valued form of neighbourhood democracy with an important role to play in both rural, and increasingly urban, areas.
- 124 Section 10 of the Local Government Act 1972 makes provision for the dissolution of parish councils in parishes with very low populations, but not for the de-parishing of the area. Recommendations for the dissolution of a parish council which is not in this position are undesirable, unless associated either with boundary changes which amalgamate parishes or divide a parish or with plans for a parish to be grouped with others under a common parish council (see paragraphs 112 to 115). Recommendations for changing a parish area (or part of a parish area) into an unparished area are also undesirable unless that a