

Dunstable Town Council
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DUNSTABLE
TOWN COUNCIL

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David Ashlee Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Our Ref: DARGS/C1

Date: 12 January 2018

Dear Councillor

You are summoned to attend a special meeting of Dunstable Town Council to be held in the Council Chamber, Grove House, 76 High Street North, Dunstable on **Monday 22 January 2018** at **6.30 pm** when the following business will be transacted.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Specific Declarations of Interest.
3. Central Bedfordshire Community Governance Review (see page 1).

Yours faithfully

David Ashlee
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

To: All Members of Dunstable Town Council
Copies to: Central Bedfordshire Councillors for Dunstable for information

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

SPECIAL MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL

22 JANUARY 2018

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Purpose of Report:	The purpose of this report is to present to members information regarding Central Bedfordshire Council's current Community Governance Review consultation and for members of this Council to formulate their response to this consultation accordingly.
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1. ACTION RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 That members agree their response to Central Bedfordshire Council's Community Governance Review consultation with particular regard to views on:
- Councillor numbers from the May 2019 elections
 - The Dunstable Parish boundary
 - Potential formal merger with neighbouring parish council's
 - Any other issues relating to section 4 of the guidance document submitted at appendix 1

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Local authorities are required, by Central Government, to undertake a review of local governance arrangements every 10-15 years; as a result, Central Bedfordshire Council is carrying out a review of Town and Parish Council arrangements. Since Central Bedfordshire Council has been formed this will be its first full Governance review. It needs to be completed by November 2018, which is before the next Town and Parish Council elections.
- 2.2 The review is a two stage exercise. The first stage involves consulting directly with town and parishes (hence this report) and the second stage involves consulting with the public once town and parish responses have been considered by CBC's General Purposes Committee.
- 2.3 The aim of the review is to ensure that local governance arrangements remain relevant and effective for the local electorate.

3. THE LOCAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Councillor numbers

- 3.1 Some members have already indicated that they might like to see a reduction in the number of councillors elected to the Council. This is the opportunity to recommend this to Central Bedfordshire Council.
- 3.2 Members have suggested that having 18 elected representatives could prove to be more effective for the Council and would still ensure good governance arrangements remain in place.
- 3.3 If this were to be agreed it is suggested that the committee membership would be as illustrated at appendix 2.

- 3.4 Please note that members do not have to agree this and can also suggest other variations.

Dunstable Parish Boundary

- 3.5 The Governance Review also gives members the opportunity to suggest changes to the parish boundary.

- 3.6 The current parish boundary contains a number of anomalies, mainly to the south of the town. For instance a third of the Council's Downside Recreation Ground is actually in Caddington, and similarly a section of Norfolk Road and the new extension to the Downside Estate is in Caddington.

- 3.7 This is the opportunity for members to make suggestions to extend the current parish boundary and submitted at appendix 3 are maps showing the existing parish boundary and suggestions for extensions to the north and south of Dunstable.

- 3.8 Members are asked to comment on these suggestions and indeed make any further suggestions for the alteration of the parish boundary (within reason).

Potential Merger with other parish council's

- 3.9 The Governance Review also gives members the opportunity to make more fundamental suggestions for future local governance arrangements.

- 3.10 A number of members have often considered the viability of a merger between Dunstable Town Council and Houghton Regis Town Council. Both Council's govern a single urban mass and with the proposed growth anticipated in Houghton Regis, a merger of the two Council's would create a larger, more effective body that would have more local power and would benefit from economies of scale.

- 3.11 A merger such as this would require considerable consideration and discussion, but the Governance Review provides the opportunity for members to have the issue considered by the wider public as well as the potential to enter into preliminary discussions with Houghton Regis Town Council.

Further considerations

- 3.12 The Governance Review also provides members with the opportunity to comment upon the following issues as outlines in the document given at appendix 1:

- Creating new parishes
- Grouping parishes to work together
- Changing the name of a parish council
- Sub dividing parishes into smaller parish wards
- Changing the parish ward boundaries in parishes that are already subdivided into parish wards

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no immediate financial implications resulting from the issues raised above.

5. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None

6. **HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS AND HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 None

7. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Any recommendations made to CBC from the Council will first have to be considered by their General Purposes Committee and then be subjected to public consultation.

8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 CBC consultation document – Community Governance Arrangements

9. **APPENDICES**

9.1 Appendix 1 - CBC consultation document – Community Governance Arrangements

Appendix 2 – Potential Council Committee structure

Appendix 3 – Parish boundary maps

10. **AUTHOR**

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have
your
say...

...on community governance arrangements

Find out more about making changes to your
local Town or Parish Council...

Find Central Bedfordshire Council online at

 www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations

**Central
Bedfordshire**

1. Overview

Local authorities are required, by Central Government, to undertake a review of local governance arrangements every 10-15 years; this is a review of Town and Parish Council arrangements. Since Central Bedfordshire Council has been formed this will be its first full Governance review. It needs to be completed by November 2018, which is before the next Town and Parish Council elections.

2. Process

This is your chance to have your say on how your local community is represented as part of the democratic process.

There will be two stages of consultation to the review; this is the first consultation stage.

At this stage, we are seeking your thoughts and feedback on the current arrangements. A report of the feedback will then be compiled and presented to the General Purposes Committee for its consideration. The second stage is a public consultation on the proposals for change.

3. Current governance arrangements

Wherever you live in Central Bedfordshire you will have two councils providing services; Central Bedfordshire Council and a parish council.

Central Bedfordshire Council covers the whole of Central Bedfordshire and provides services such as social care, bin collections, road maintenance and planning.

The area is also divided up into 71 parish council and 8 parish meeting areas. A parish council serving a town may be called a town council but they have the same powers, duties and status as a parish council.

The role played by parish councils varies. Smaller parish councils have only limited resources and generally play only a minor role, while some larger parish councils have a role similar to that of a small district council. Typically, a parish or town council looks after certain local facilities such as allotments, bus shelters, parks, playgrounds, public seats, public toilets, public clocks, village or town halls, maintenance of footpaths, cemeteries, village greens and various leisure and recreation facilities. However, the exact responsibilities vary between councils. Find out more about the role of town and parish councils at: <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council/councillors/town-parish.aspx>

Everyone in Central Bedfordshire pays the same council tax for Central Bedfordshire Council, Police and Fire and Rescue Services but the amount you pay for your local parish council can vary. Each parish council sets its own council tax (called a precept). Should changes in boundaries occur as a result of this review, please be aware that there could be a financial implication as the council tax for a different parish may not be the same.

Parish and town councils vary enormously in size, representing populations ranging from fewer than 100 (small rural hamlets) to 41,000 (Leighton-Linslade Town Council). Parishes

with fewer than 150 electors are usually deemed too small to have a parish council, and instead will only have a parish meeting; there are eight areas with parish meetings in Central Bedfordshire. You can see a map and a list of parish councils and meetings in appendices A and B.

Councillors are elected to town and parish councils by the local community every four years.

Some of the larger town council areas and parishes have been divided into wards, each having their own elected representative on the parish council. This helps to ensure that the views from the whole parish are represented on the council. There are nine parishes in Central Bedfordshire that have been divided into wards, these are shown in the list of parishes in appendix B.

4. What can be changed?

Through this review you can suggest changes to parish councils. If you think your town or parish council could represent your community better, then this is your opportunity to change it to be more reflective of the identity and interests of the community.

Like most areas, Central Bedfordshire has a growing population with more new housing being built. This will continue in the future and as such, some parishes will need to change in response to this.

As part of this review, you can suggest:

- Changing the boundaries of existing parishes
- Creating new parishes
- Merging parishes
- Grouping parishes to work together
- Changing the name of a parish council
- Changing how many councillors the parish has
- Sub dividing parishes into smaller parish wards
- Changing the parish ward boundaries in parishes that are already subdivided into parish wards.

The boundaries of most parishes make sense; they represent clear community or geographical boundaries. However, there are some areas that have some strange boundaries. For example, residents who live in the same street may belong to different parishes and therefore pay different amounts of council tax, as parishes can set their own council tax.

Creating new parishes might help to better reflect an area that has grown. Some parishes may believe it appropriate to merge with another parish or parishes. The merged parishes would then have a joint parish council but retain their existing parish boundaries with a specific number of councillors from each parish.

It might be sensible for very small parishes to group together to share resources. For example, parishes where there are fewer than 150 electors are too small to form a single

parish council. However, grouping with others could add up to 150 electors or more and therefore form a collective parish council.

In some instances, the review may also present the opportunity to reduce or increase the number of councillors, to better reflect the local population. In some parishes, particularly smaller ones, where they have not been able to attract sufficient candidates to stand for election this has led to uncontested elections and/or a need to co-opt members to fill vacancies.

It might be that a name change is seen as an important issue. There are various titles for local councils; Town, Community, Neighbourhood, and Village Council. All are ostensibly the same but it might be felt that a new name better reflects the area.

There may be a need to split boundaries into parish wards where an area is large and /or diverse. Warding a parish would enable better representation of the varied communities in the parish as each ward would have its own elected representatives.

5. Have your say

At this stage, we are asking if you think your town or parish council properly represents your community, do you feel it is reflective of the identity and interests of your parish, ward, village or town? If not, now is your opportunity to suggest a change.

The consultation is open from 1 November 2017 until 1 February 2018. You can have your say by answering a questionnaire on our website at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations or you can pick up a paper copy from your local library or Central Bedfordshire Council offices at Chicksands or Dunstable.

The feedback from this consultation will be considered at the General Purposes meeting in June 2018. A further consultation on the resulting proposals for change will take place in the summer 2018.

A final decision about changes will be made in the autumn 2018 and changes implemented in time for the next elections for town and parish councils in May 2019.

Appendix A: A map of Central Bedfordshire showing town/parish areas and a list of parishes which are sub-divided into wards



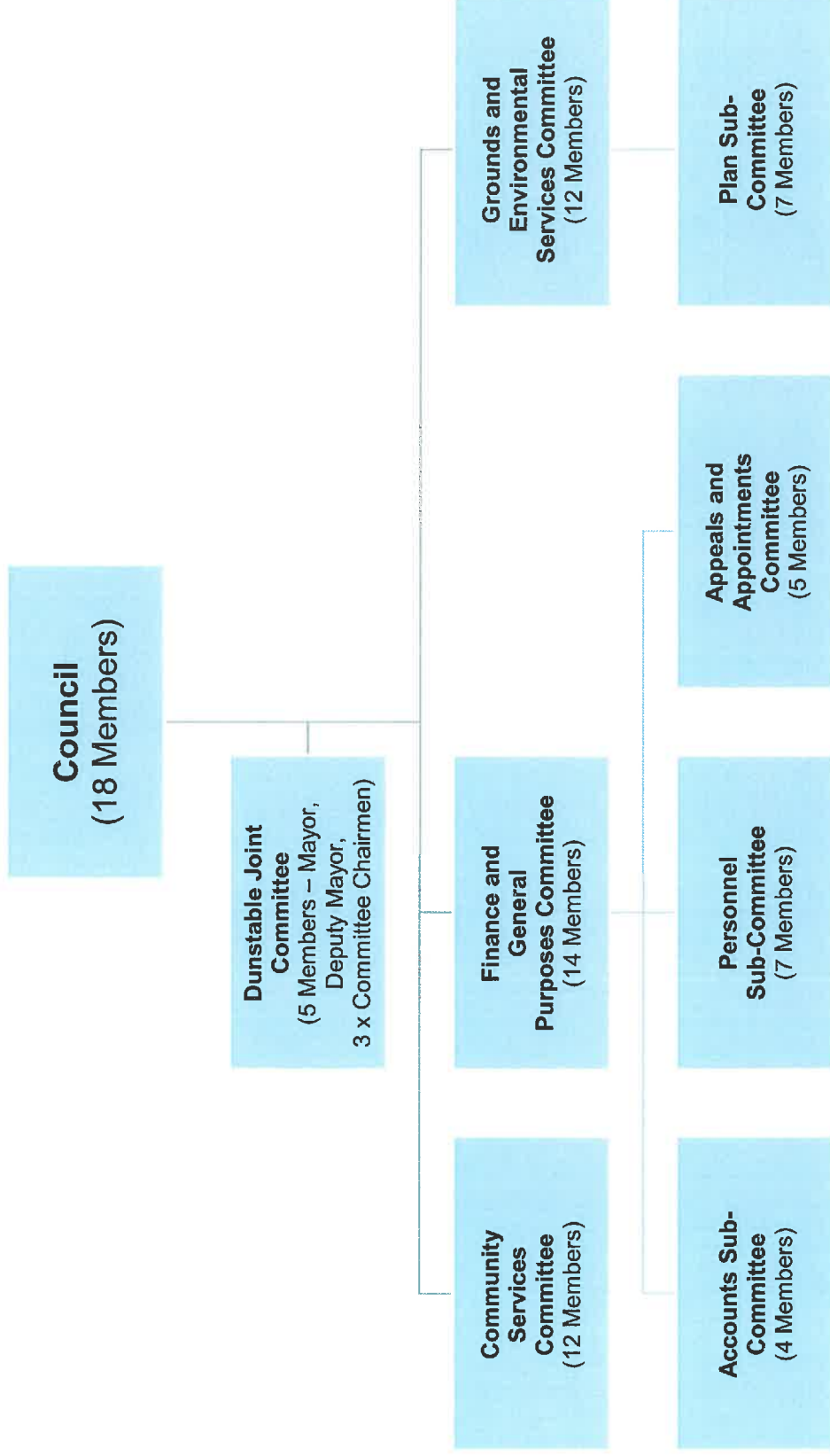
Appendix B: A list of parishes in Central Bedfordshire, showing parishes which are sub-divided into wards.

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL	PARISH WARD	PARISH SEATS/ CLRS	PARISH/WARD ELECTORATE (Sep 2017)	RATIO ELECTORS TO SEATS	2015 Elections (2011 in brackets)	
					Contested?	Co-opted Seats
Main text						
AMPTHILL TOWN	N/A	12	6,250	521	Y(N)	0(1)
ARLESEY TOWN	N/A	15	4,424	295	Y(N)	0(1)
ASPLEY GUISE	N/A	12	1,818	152	N(N)	8(0)
ASPLEY HEATH	N/A	9	521	58	N(N)	0(3)
ASTWICK(MEETING)	N/A	N/A	24	N/A	-	-
BARTON-LE-CLAY	N/A	13	4,081	314	N(N)	3(3)
BATTLEDEN (MEETING)	N/A	N/A	28	N/A	-	-
BIGGLESWADE TOWN	Holme	3	1,834	611	N(Y)	0(0)
	Ivel	7	6,769	967	Y(Y)	0(0)
	Stratton	5	6,801	1,360	N(Y)	0(0)
	Overall	15	15,404	1,027		
BLUNHAM	N/A	10	827	83	N(N)	1(6)
BROGBOROUGH	N/A	7	276	39	N(N)	4(2)
CADDINGTON	N/A	10	3,209	320	N(Y)	3(0)
CAMPTON & CHICKSANDS	N/A	7	1,204	172	N(N)	4(3)
CHALGRAVE	N/A	7	397	57	N(N)	1(1)
CHALTON	N/A	7	464	66	N(N)	1(4)
CLIFTON	N/A	12	2,595	216	N(N)	1(1)
CLOPHILL	N/A	10	1,420	142	Y(N)	0(0)
CRANFIELD	Wharley End	2	145	73	N(N)	2(0)
	Cranfield	13	3,673	283	N(N)	3(3)
	Overall	15	3,818	255		
DUNSTABLE TOWN	Central	3	3,775	1,258	Y(Y)	0(0)
	Icknield	5	6,344	1,268	Y(Y)	0(0)
	Manshead	3	3,883	1,294	Y(Y)	0(0)
	Northfields	5	7,451	1,490	Y(Y)	0(0)
	Watling	5	7,739	1,548	Y(Y)	0(0)
	Overall	21	29,192	1,390		
DUNTON	N/A	7	560	80	N(N)	0(3)
EATON BRAY	N/A	9	2,129	237	N(N)	2(5)
EDWORTH (MEETING)	N/A	N/A	57	N/A	-	-
EGGINGTON	N/A	7	245	35	N(N)	0(5)
EVERSHOLT	N/A	7	352	50	N(N)	0(2)
EVERTON	N/A	7	402	57	Y(N)	0(1)
EYEWORTH (MEETING)	N/A	N/A	69	N/A	-	-
FAIRFIELD	N/A	7	1,915	274	Y(-)	0(-)
FLITTON & GREENFIELD	Flitton	5	555	111	N(Y)	0(0)
	Greenfield	5	596	119	N(N)	1(0)
	Overall	10	1,151	115		
FLITWICK TOWN	East	7	4,539	648	Y(N)	0(0)
	West	10	5,788	579	N(Y)	0(0)
	Overall	17	10,327	607		

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL	PARISH WARD	PARISH SEATS/ CLLRs	PARISH/WARD ELECTORATE (Sep 2017)	RATIO ELECTORS TO SEATS	2015 Elections (2011 in brackets)	
					Contested?	Co-opted Seats
GRAVENHURST	N/A	7	462	66	N(N)	0(1)
GREAT BILLINGTON	N/A	7	280	40	N(N)	2(4)
HARLINGTON	N/A	12	1,832	153	N(N)	4(3)
HAYNES	N/A	10	995	100	N(Y)	1(0)
HEATH AND REACH	N/A	9	1,168	130	N(N)	4(6)
HENLOW	Camp	2	1,017	509	N(N)	1(0)
	Village	10	1,819	182	N(N)	2(1)
	Overall	12	2,836	231		
HOCKLIFFE	N/A	7	787	112	N(Y)	3(0)
H'TON CONQUEST	N/A	10	1,286	129	N(N)	1(4)
HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN	Houghton Hall	6	6,291	1,049	Y(Y)	0(0)
	Parkside	4	3,533	883	Y(Y)	0(0)
	Tithe Farm	4	3,294	824	Y(Y)	0(0)
	Overall	14	13,118	937		
HULCOTE & SALFORD	N/A	7	179	26	Y(N)	0(0)
HUSBORNE CRAWLEY	N/A	7	183	26	N(N)	0(2)
HYDE	N/A	7	317	45	N(N)	1(3)
KENSWORTH	N/A	9	1,168	130	N(N)	0(0)
LANGFORD	N/A	13	2,590	199	N(N)	6(4)
LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN	Barnabas	3	4,260	1,420	Y(Y)	0(0)
	Brooklands	2	2,751	1,376	Y(Y)	0(0)
	Grovebury	4	6,231	1,558	Y(Y)	0(0)
	Leston	1	1,401	1,401	Y(Y)	0(0)
	Planets	2	3,493	1,747	Y(Y)	0(0)
	Plantation	3	4,573	1,524	Y(Y)	0(0)
	Southcott	4	5,270	1,318	Y(Y)	0(0)
	St George's	2	3,355	1,678	Y(Y)	0(0)
	Overall	21	31,334	1,492		
LIDLINGTON	N/A	9	1,071	119	N(N)	1(2)
MARSTON MORETAINE	N/A	12	4,442	370	N(Y)	3(0)
MAULDEN	N/A	12	2,498	208	Y(N)	0(0)
MEPPERSHALL	N/A	10	1,415	142	N(N)	1(2)
MILLBROOK (MEETING)	N/A	N/A	122	N/A	-	-
MILTON BRYAN (MEETING)	N/A	N/A	141	N/A	-	-
MOGGERHANGER	N/A	9	516	57	N(N)	0(1)
NORTHILL	N/A	12	1,882	157	Y(Y)	0(0)
OLD WARDEN	N/A	7	233	33	Y(N)	0(1)
POTSGROVE (MEETING)	N/A	N/A	37	N/A	-	-
POTTON TOWN	N/A	15	3,948	263	Y(N)	0(4)
PULLOXHILL	N/A	7	835	120	N(N)	4(0)
RIDGMONT	N/A	9	359	40	N(Y)	4(0)
SANDY	Beeston	1	679	679	N(N)	0(0)
	Fallowfield	3	1,534	511	N(Y)	0(0)
	Ivel	5	2,962	592	N(Y)	1(0)
	Pinnacle	6	4,124	687	N(N)	3(1)

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL	PARISH WARD	PARISH SEATS/ CLLRS	PARISH/WARD ELECTORATE (Sep 2017)	RATIO ELECTORS TO SEATS	2015 Elections (2011 in brackets)	
					Contested?	Co-opted Seats
	Overall	15	9,299	620		
SHEFFORD	N/A	15	5,076	338	N(N)	0(2)
SHILLINGTON	N/A	10	1,619	162	Y(N)	0(0)
SILSOE	N/A	10	2,296	230	N(N)	2(1)
SLIP END	N/A	7	1,511	216	N(Y)	0(0)
SOUTHILL	Broom	6	490	82	N(N)	3(1)
	Southill	3	268	89	N(N)	1(0)
	Stanford	3	212	68	N(N)	0(1)
	Overall	12	970	78		
STANBRIDGE	N/A	7	615	88	N(N)	2(5)
STEPPINGLEY	N/A	7	172	25	N(Y)	1(0)
STONDON	N/A	10	2,125	213	N(Y)	1(0)
STOTFOLD	N/A	15	6,787	452	N(N)	2(1)
STREATLEY	N/A	7	1,384	198	N(N)	2(1)
STUDHAM	N/A	7	1,002	143	N(N)	0(2)
SUNDON	N/A	7	371	53	N(N)	3(1)
SUTTON	N/A	7	234	34	N(Y)	0(0)
TEMPSFORD	N/A	7	486	69	Y(N)	0(1)
TILSWORTH	N/A	7	336	48	N(N)	4(1)
TINGRITH (MEETING)	N/A	N/A	131	N/A	-	-
TODDINGTON	N/A	11	3,648	332	N(N)	0(2)
TOTTERNHOE	N/A	9	983	109	N(N)	2(3)
WESTONING	N/A	10	1,700	170	N(N)	2(1)
WHIPSNAD	N/A	7	387	55	N(N)	1(1)
WOBURN	N/A	9	781	87	N(N)	0(1)
WRESTLINGWORTH & COCKAYNE HATLEY	N/A	7	642	92	N(N)	0(1)
TOTAL			211,748			

Potential Council Committee Structure





Dunstable

- Existing Boundary
- Proposed Boundary



North Dunstable

- Existing Boundary
- Proposed Boundary



South Dunstable

- Existing Boundary
- Proposed Boundary