

Community Governance Review of Thorp Arch Parish Council

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Context

Leeds City Council has resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review of Thorp Arch Parish Council.

Legal Framework

In undertaking the Review, the Council will be guided by

- Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
- the relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972
- Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued in accordance with section 100(4) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010

and the following regulations which guide consequential matters arising from the Review:

- Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008
- Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008

[The 2007 Act has transferred powers to the principal councils which previously, under the Local Government Act 1997, had been shared with the Electoral Commission's Boundary Committee for England.]

Section 81 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires the Council to publish its Terms of Reference in a Review.

Publication of terms of reference

This document is being published:

- At www.leeds.gov.uk/elections
- At the Electoral Services Office, Civic Hall, Leeds LS1 1UR
- A copy is being sent to Thorp Arch Parish Council for display on the parish noticeboard

What is a Community Governance Review?

A Community Governance Review is the process used to consider parish arrangements. It is a review of the whole or part of the district area 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.

In the case of this review, it is to consider the electoral arrangements, namely the number of Councillors.

Reason for the review

Why is the Council undertaking a Community Governance Review at this time?

The reason for the review is:

- A request from the Parish Council to increase the number of Parish Councillors from 5 to 6, due to a change in population resulting in a higher electorate within the Parish area.

Present structure of Thorp Arch Parish Council

Thorp Arch Parish Council is an unwarded parish. The current number of parish councillors is 5.

All parishes have elections every four years, the next being in May 2023.

Electorate forecasts

The Council has used the Register of Electors of September 2022, providing the existing electorate figures for Thorp Arch Parish Council. The number of registered electors for the parish on that register is 682.

An electorate forecast, following the development of additional housing within the parish council area within the next five years, predicts an electorate of 900.

What considerations cover the number of parish councillors?

Leeds City Council notes the number of parish councillors for each parish council shall not be less than five. There is no maximum number. There are no rules relating to the allocations of councillors.

The government's guidance is "each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and the pattern of communities," and therefore the Council is prepared to pay particular attention to:

- existing levels of representation,

- the broad pattern of existing council sizes which have stood the test of time and
- the take-up of seats at elections in its consideration of this matter.

The Aston Business School found the following levels of representation which may be used as a guide:

Electorate	Councillor Allocation
less than 500	5 – 8
501 – 2,500	6 – 12
2,501 – 10,000	9 – 16
10,001 – 20,000	13 – 27
greater than 20,000	13 – 31

In parishes where there has been a history of uncontested elections and/or the need to co-opt members to fill vacancies, the Council will consider whether the present levels of representation are appropriate or whether there is a “democratic surplus” in a parish.

By law, the principal council must have regard to the following factors when considering the number of councillors to be elected for the parish:

- the number of local government electors for the parish;
- any change in that number which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts.

Parish governance in our area

Leeds City Council believes parish councils play an important role in terms of community empowerment at local level.

The Council wants to ensure parish governance in our district continues to be robust, representative and enabled to meet the challenges that lie before it.

Furthermore, it wants to ensure there is clarity and transparency to the areas Parish Councils represent.

It wants to ensure that the electoral arrangements of parishes – the warding arrangements and the allocations of councillors – are appropriate, equitable and readily understood by their electorate.

Who undertakes the review?

Leeds City Council is statutorily responsible for carrying out the review.

The conduct of the review will be overseen by the Council's Electoral Working Group.

Formal decisions on the recommendations arising from the review will be made by General Purposes Committee and Full Council in accordance with the Council's constitution.

Officer contact details for the review are:

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Consultation

The Council has drawn up and now publishes this Terms of Reference document. This document lays out the aims of the review, the legislation that guides it and some of the policies the Council considers important in the review.

A timetable for the review can be found at Appendix A to this document.

The Council will consult by:

- Writing to Thorp Arch Parish Council
- Writing to all Parish Councils within and adjoining the Community Governance Review area
- Publicising the review at www.leeds.gov.uk/elections
- General press releases

In accordance with the Act, representations received in connection with the Review will be considered, and steps will be taken to notify consultees of the outcome of the Review. This will be done by:

- Online at www.leeds.gov.uk/elections
- General press releases
- Personal communication

Completion of the review

The Review will be completed when the Council adopts the Reorganisation of Community Governance Order.

Any financial and administrative provisions of the reorganisation order will be come into force on 1 April 2023.

The electoral arrangements for a new or existing parish council will come into force on 4 May 2023.

How to contact us

If you have any questions about the Community Governance Review, please contact:

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TIMETABLE

Date	Task
12 July 2022	Request Received by Chief Executive
19 October 2022	Report to General Purposes Committee Terms of Reference and Timetable for Review to be approved
20 October 2022	Council to publish Terms of Reference
21 October 2022	Consultation begins with representations invited
25 November 2022	Closing date for representations (five-week consultation period)
December 2022	Elections Working Group consider representations on proposals and recommend final proposals to General Purposes Committee
January 2023	General Purposes Committee consider recommendations from Elections Working Group and agree final recommendations for Full Council
February 2023	Full Council to approve final proposals and Reorganisation of Community Governance Order. Council publishes decision, reasons for decision, and informs persons interested.
4 May 2023	Election of new Parish councillor (if contested) (to coincide with Leeds City Council Elections and all-out Parish/Town Council elections)