Review of Community Governance arrangements within Priors Hall (Weldon Parish)

SYNOPSIS BOX
A review under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

1. Relevant Background Details
Corby Borough Council has received a valid petition from registered electors in the area known as “Priors Hall” requesting the creation of a new parish. In summary, the request would require the existing Weldon Parish to be sub-divided using the A43 Stamford Road as the boundary.

The process and procedure for the creation, amendment or deletion of a parish is known as conducting a Community Governance Review. The Review process is prescribed by legislation (see Legal Implications below). Corby Borough Council has recently completed a Community Governance Review in relation to Little Stanion.

2. Report
Section 81 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires the Council to publish a Terms of Reference document for a Community Governance Review (Appendix A). This sets out:

- How the Review will be conducted
- Expected timescales
- What the Review will focus on
- What the key considerations should be
- Factual electoral and parish information

What is a Community Governance Review (CGR)?
A Review is a review of the whole or part of the district to consider one or more of the following:

- Parish areas – 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 elections; council size; the number of electors to be elected to the council; parish warding)
- Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes
- Consequential matters – e.g. the effect on existing parishes; dealing with parish assets; resolving issues relating to employees of existing parishes; setting a precept for a new Council; setting a date for the first elections and the subsequent electoral cycle.

The Review will look at all options for future parish governance arrangements. These will include:

- Creating a new parish with the boundaries as defined in Appendix C;
- Creating a new parish with the boundaries based on a variation of Appendix C;
- Keeping the status quo and keeping the current parish boundary; and
- Any other arrangements which come out of the consultation process.
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 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.

Why are we undertaking a Community Governance Review?

There are two ways that a Community Governance Review can be triggered. The principal authority i.e. Corby Borough Council can determine to undertake a Review of all or part of its area OR the principal authority receives a valid petition. For a petition to be valid it must meet certain conditions:-

- The petition must be signed by the requisite number of local electors;
- The petition should define the area to which the review relates; and
- The petition must specify one or more recommendations for review.

Corby Borough Council received a petition submitted by Mr C Gardner a resident of Priors Hall on 13th September 2017. This was received by the Democratic Services Manager on behalf of the Council.

Following the validation process, the Democratic Services Manager confirmed that the petition was valid for purpose, in that for an area with between 500 and 2,500 local electors, the petition had to be signed by at least 250 registered electors. The petition included 314 valid signatures.

Who will undertake the Community Governance Review?

The Democratic Services Manager on behalf of the Council, and under the direction of the Chief Executive, will undertake the Review with the assistance of colleagues as required.

This will include:

- Formulation of a draft timetable for the Review (see Appendix A);
- Formulation of a Terms of Reference (included within this report) for Full Council approval;
- Liaison with the lead petitioners;
- Liaison with all statutory bodies as required;
- Compilation and execution of a Consultation Plan and development of a Communications Strategy;
- Ensuring that all statutory requirements under the relevant legislation are adhered to;
- Compile and assess responses to consultation;
- Prepare and publish draft proposals (once agreed by Council through One Corby Policy Committee);
- Prepare and publish final proposals (once agreed by Council through One Corby Policy Committee);
- Prepare a final report and draft Reorganisation Order (if required) to be determined by Full Council.

How the Council proposes to conduct consultations during the Review?

Before making any recommendations or publishing final proposals, the Council will take full account of the views of local people. The Council will comply with the statutory consultative requirements by:
• Consulting local government electors for the area under review; it is the Council’s intention to include Attainers (16 & 17 year olds) who are on the Electoral Roll within any consultation;
• Consulting any other person or body which appears to the Council to have an interest in the review; this will include Weldon Parish Council and neighbouring parish councils (inc. Deene and Deenethorpe PC), elected representatives e.g. MEP, MP, County Councillor(s), Borough Councillor(s);
• Notifying and consulting the County Council and East Northamptonshire District Council;
• Taking into account any representations received in connection with the review.

Information relating to the Review will be available on the Council’s website (Electoral Services pages) and key documents will be available for inspection at The Cube, George Street, Corby and sent to Weldon Parish Council and the residents group in Priors Hall.

When taking account of written representations the Council is bound to have regard to the need to secure that community governance within the area under review reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area and is effective and convenient.

The Council will publish its recommendations as soon as practicable and take such steps as it considers sufficient to ensure that persons who may be interested in the Review are informed of the recommendations and the reasons behind them.

**Electorate Forecasts**

In considering the electoral arrangements of the area within the terms of reference the Council 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 commences.

The Council has used the September Register of Electors 2017 to provide existing local electorate figures. The Annual Canvass of Electors is currently underway. Electorate forecasts will be prepared using all available information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polling District</th>
<th>Registered Electorate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weldon Parish – Weldon Village only</td>
<td>1,622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weldon Parish – “Priors Hall” only</td>
<td>1,222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The current total electorate for Weldon Parish is 2,844. There are 9 parish councillors elected on a 4-year cycle (to coincide with Borough elections).

**Options to be considered (if any)**

As a valid petition has been received the Council is required to undertake a Review in line with the request received. Under statute the Council is required to have completed the Review within a period of 12 months from commencement.

The Council does have the ability to consider undertaking a review of other areas as part of this project. Officers are not recommending this at this time.

4. **Issues to be taken into account:-**

   **Policy Priorities**

   None specific.
Financial
There will be ancillary costs associated with the Review process. These will namely cover the consultation process, stationary, postage etc. These costs are chargeable to Corby Borough Council and will be met in the first part by Democratic Services. Whilst there is no current budget provision for this exercise it is hoped that costs will be met from existing budgets. Any overspend would be reported to Members as part of the cyclical budget monitoring process. All costs should be contained within the 2017/2018 financial year.

Risk
None specific at this time. The Council needs to have completed the Review process within a 12-month period. Whilst there will be some financial implication for the Council this will be minimal and hopefully be contained within existing budget provision.

Legal
In undertaking the Review, the Council will be proceeding under 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 Electoral Commission in April 2008.

The Council is required to have regard to Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. Updated guidance was published in March 2010 and has been considered when drawing up the Terms of Reference (TOR).

Performance Information, Best Value, Sustainability, Community Safety
None specific to this matter.

Human Rights & Equalities
The process to be followed is laid down in statute and guidance issued by the Government. This will be followed. Every attempt will be taken to engage all registered electors in the process through a Consultation Strategy to be developed by officers.

5. Conclusion
Full Council are requested to approve the Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Review of the area known as “Priors Hall” within Weldon Parish.

6. Recommendation
That Full Council:

i) Approve the timetable and terms of reference for the Community Governance Review included within the report;

ii) Approve delegation to the Democratic Services Manager to undertake the Review subject to statutory requirements;

iii) Approve delegation to the One Corby Policy Committee authority to act on behalf of Full Council where an elected member decision is required, excluding determination of the final report and draft Reorganisation Order if required; and

iv) Request that the Democratic Services Manager keep all elected members updated on the progress of the Review.
Background Papers
Legislation & guidance as detailed within the report.

External Consultations
None.

List of Appendices
Appendix A – draft Terms of Reference.
Appendix B – Flowchart illustrating process to be followed.
Appendix C – Petitioner’s submission – narrative
Appendix D – Petitioner’s submission – map extract

Officer to Contact
Paul Goult (Democratic Services Manager) ext 4013
Review of Community Governance Arrangements within Weldon Parish, specifically the area known as “Priors Hall”

Request for a Review

Corby Borough Council has received a request from residents of the area known as “Priors Hall”, supported by a petition, requesting the creation of an independent parish council for the said area, which currently is part of Weldon Parish.

The Legal Framework

In undertaking the Review, the Council will be proceeding under 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 Electoral Commission in April 2008. Also relevant are the following regulations which govern, in particular, consequential matters arising from the Review: Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 (SI2008/625); Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008 (SI2008/626).

The Council is required to have regard to Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. Updated guidance was published in March 2010 and has been considered when drawing up the Terms of Reference (TOR).

The Terms of Reference Document

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How the Council proposes to conduct consultations during the Review?

Before making any recommendations or publishing final proposals, the Council will take full account of the views of local people. The Council will comply with the statutory consultative requirements by:

• Consulting local government electors for the area under review; it is the Council’s intention to include Attainers who are on the Electoral Roll within any consultation;
• Consulting any other person or body which appears to the Council to have an interest in the review; this will include Weldon Parish Council and neighbouring parish councils, elected representatives e.g. MEP, MP, County Councillor(s), Borough Councillor(s);
• Notifying and consulting the County Council;
• Taking into account any representations received in connection with the review.

Information relating to the Review will be available on the Council’s website (Electoral Services pages) and key documents will be available for inspection at The Cube, George Street, Corby and sent to Weldon Parish Council and the Priors Hall resident’s group.

When taking account of written representations the Council is bound to have regard to the need to secure that community governance within the area under review reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area and is effective and convenient.

The Council will publish its recommendations as soon as practicable and take such steps as it considers sufficient to ensure that persons who may be interested in the Review are informed of the recommendations and the reasons behind them.

A timetable for the Community Governance Review (CGR)

A Review must, by statute, be concluded within a 12-month period from the day on which the Community Governance Review starts. A Review starts when the Council publishes its Terms of Reference (TOR) and concludes when the Council publishes the recommendations made in the Review.
The following is the review timetable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Timetable</th>
<th>Outline of Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terms of Reference (TOR) are published</td>
<td>Start Date 26th October 2017</td>
<td>Council publishes TOR and notifies stakeholders, clearly defining extent of Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Stage – submissions are invited</td>
<td>January – February 2018</td>
<td>Council invites proposals from stakeholders on future arrangements under TOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft Proposals are prepared</td>
<td>Mid-March 2018</td>
<td>Draft Proposals to be considered by One Corby Policy Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft Proposals are published</td>
<td>Late March 2018</td>
<td>Council publishes Draft Proposals and notifies stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>April &amp; May 2018</td>
<td>Consultation with stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Proposals are prepared</td>
<td>June 2018</td>
<td>Result of consultation considered and Final Proposals published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Recommendations are published and decision by Full Council</td>
<td>July/August 2018</td>
<td>Full Council consider Final Recommendations and decide on the extent to which the Council will give effect to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council publishes the reorganisation order</td>
<td>Thereafter</td>
<td>Council publishes a reorganisation order and requests The Electoral Commission to approve any consequential changes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PLEASE NOTE this is an estimated timeframe and whilst the Council will endeavour to keep to the dates any changes will be published on the Council’s website.

There are two consultation periods included within the proposed timetable. Dependent upon the responses received, officers may determine to extend the consultation period(s) in order to maximise public engagement with the process.

Electorate Forecasts

In considering the electoral arrangements of the area within the terms of reference the Council 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 commences.

The Council has used the September Register of Electors 2017 to provide existing local electorate figures. Electorate forecasts will be prepared using all available information.
The present structure of Weldon Parish Council and their Electoral Arrangements.

Justification for Review – a valid petition was received on 13th September 2017 requesting a new parish council be created covering the area known as “Priors Hall” from part of the existing Weldon Parish.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polling District</th>
<th>Houses</th>
<th>Electors</th>
<th>Parish Wards</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>UKPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weldon</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>1,622</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Weldon &amp; Gretton</td>
<td>Corby Rural</td>
<td>Corby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priors Hall</td>
<td>781</td>
<td>1,222</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Weldon &amp; Gretton</td>
<td>Corby Rural</td>
<td>Corby</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The current total electorate for Weldon Parish is 2,844. There are 9 parish councillors elected on a 4-year cycle (to coincide with Borough elections). The last elections were held in May 2015.

Parishes

The Council wishes to ensure that electors should be able to identify clearly with the parish in which they are resident. It considers that this sense of identity and community lends strength and legitimacy to the parish structure, creates a common interest in parish affairs, encourages participation in elections to the parish council, leads to representatives and accountable government, engenders visionary leadership and generates a strong, inclusive community with a sense of civic values, responsibility and pride.

The Council considers that parishes should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity; the feeling of local community and the wishes of local inhabitants are primary considerations in this Review.

The Council is anxious to balance carefully the considerations of changes that have happened over time, through population shifts or additional development for example, and that have lead to a different community identity with historic traditions in its area.

The Council notes the government’s Guidance that community cohesion should be taken into account in this Review.

Electoral Arrangements

What does “Electoral Arrangements” mean?

An important part of our Review will comprise giving consideration to “Electoral Arrangements”. The term covers the way in which a council is constituted for the parish. It covers:

- The ordinary year in which elections are held;
- The number of councillors to be elected to the council;
- The division (or not) of the parish into wards for the purpose of electing councillors;
- The number and boundaries of any such wards;
- The number of councillors to be elected for any such ward; and
The name of any such ward.

**Ordinary year of election**

The Local Government Act 1972 states that ordinary election of parish councils shall take place in 1976 and every fourth year thereafter (i.e. 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019 etc). However, the government has indicated that it would want the parish electoral cycle to coincide with the cycle for the district council, so the costs of elections can be shared.

If the Review finds that it is appropriate to create posts for parish councillors then these will come into effect no later than at the next ordinary day of election on the 2nd May 2019.

What considerations cover the number of parish councillors?

**Number of Parish Council Guidelines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electors</th>
<th>Councillors</th>
<th>Electors</th>
<th>Councillors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 900</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10,400</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11,900</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13,500</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,700</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15,200</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,400</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18,900</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,400</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20,900</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,700</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

The government’s guidance is that “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.

By law, the 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; and
- 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 Warding**

There is a requirement that in considering whether a parish should be divided into wards for the purposes of elections of the parish council the Council should consider the following:

- Whether the number, or distribution, of the local government electors for the parish would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
- Whether it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the parish council.
The government's guidance is that “the warding of parishes in largely rural areas that are based predominately on a single centrally-located village may not be justified. Conversely, warding may be appropriate where the parish encompasses a number of villages with separate identities, a village with a large rural hinterland or where, on the edges of towns, there has been some overspill into the parish”.

The Council will be mindful of all this guidance, noting further that “each case should be considered on its merits and on the basis of the information and evidence provided during the course of the review.”

The Council notes that warding arrangements should be clearly and readily understood by and should have relevance for the electorate of the parish; they should reflect clear physical and social differences within a parish; one parish but comprising different parts.

The Council recognises that ward elections should have merit; not only should they meet the two tests laid down above, but they should also be in the interests of effective and convenient local government. They should not be wasteful of a parish’s resources.

**District Warding and County Division Boundaries**

Normally the issues arising from a Review would not require any alterations to the boundaries of District Wards or County Divisions.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is responsible for deciding whether boundary changes of this nature should be made and will require that the Council has consulted on any such recommendations. If the need for changes becomes apparent during the course of this review the Council will endeavour to incorporate them within the consultation at the earliest opportunity.

Nothing submitted by the petitioners would impact on the current County Division of Corby Rural or the UK Parliamentary Constituency of Corby.

**Reorganisation of Community Governance Order and Commencement**

The Review will be completed when Full Council adopt the Reorganisation of Community Governance Order. Copies of the Order, the map(s) that show the effects of the Order in detail, and the document(s) which set out the reason for the decisions that the Council has taken (including where it has decided to make no change following a Review) will be deposited at:

Corby Borough Council Offices  
The Cube  
George Street  
Corby, Northamptonshire  
NN17 1QG

The information will be uploaded onto the Council’s website [www.corby.gov](http://www.corby.gov) and provided to statutory stakeholders as required.
It is proposed that the Order will take effect for financial and administrative purposes on 1st April 2019.

The electoral arrangements for a new or existing parish council will come into force at the next elections to the parish council, which will be on 2nd May 2019.

Consequential Matters

General Principles

The Council notes that a Reorganisation Order may cover any consequential matters that appear to the Council to be necessary or proper to give effect to the Order. These may include:

- The transfer and management or custody of property;
- The setting of precepts for new parishes;
- Provision with respect to the transfer of any functions, property, rights and liabilities; or
- Provisions for the transfer of staff, compensation for loss of office, pensions and other staffing matters.

In these matters, the Council will follow all appropriate regulations and statutory provisions.

How to contact us

Should you wish to submit a written representation regarding this Review please address to:

Paul Goult
Democratic Services
Corby Borough Council
The Cube
George Street, Corby. Northamptonshire. NN171QG

Alternatively your submission may be emailed to: paul.goult@corby.gov.uk

Date of Publication

26th October 2017
COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS - FLOWCHART

Other Requests – Parish Council, Local Member, etc

Principal council decides whether to Review

No – no further action

A Local Petition is received

Check validity of the petition

Principal council draws up and publishes terms of reference and a timetable for the review

Initial submissions are invited

Prepare and publish the Draft Proposals

Prepare and publish the Final Proposals

Principal Council publishes the Recommendations

Reorganisation Order is made
PROPOSAL TO
CREATE A NEW
PARISH COUNCIL
FOR
PRIORS HALL
Proposal To Create A New Parish Council

After informal conversations and as an agenda point at the Priors Hall Residents Association bi-monthly meeting, the issue of the recent precept by Weldon Parish Council and what we as Priors Hall actually get out of it. There was sufficient support to try and separate Priors Hall away from Weldon Parish Council and create its own parish council. To that end please find enclosed a listing of 362 signatures and a map of the proposed parish boundary that will trigger a community review, to consider creating a new parish council within Priors Hall. A review that should be completed within 12 months of having been received by Corby Borough Council.

Background

Priors Hall is an expanding purpose-built estate, built under the Bela Development Frame Plan. The estate has clearly determined boundaries that shows it to be totally separate from Weldon, Gretton or Deene.

The area has become a close knit community that is expanding quickly and will have 4360 residencies within Zone 1 & 2 once completed (as far as I am aware at this time no new development work is planned to the east of Priors Hall Zone 2).

Residents take the time to look out for each other, share information and offer help and assistance to others whenever the occasion requires. The area also has a new community centre that is now open to residents and booking are starting to come in offering fitness, a weight watchers programme is due to start soon. There is a Priors Hall Facebook page that is popular providing an easy media outlet and more residents.

Under the guidance of Mike Haddock, his predecessor and support team, there is a Priors Hall Residents Association that has taken on the burden of looking after issues that occur within the estate as it has grown and has been very active in pushing to get building contractors to provide facilities that were promised and most of them have come into fruition such as the kiddies play area and the Community Centre. We, as a Parish would look to take over this load and allow the Association to focus more on social issues.
Parish Boundary

The proposed boundary for Priors Hall follows the boundary lines with East Northampton in the North from where the disused rail line crosses the Gretton Road until the border meets up with the A43 on in the East. The Southern boundary would follow the A43 over the Weldon roundabout to the point where the public footpath crosses the A43 to the North West of Weldon Village The western boundary would then follow the footpath North and then following Gretton Road up to the point where the disused railway crossing meets Gretton Road on the North boundary.

A map with proposed boundaries is attached.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.