



**WARRINGTON**  
Borough Council

**COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

**POULTON WITH FEARNHEAD PARISH COUNCIL  
AND  
WINWICK PARISH COUNCIL**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Warrington Borough Council has resolved to carry out a Community Governance Review of the Parish of Poulton with Fearnhead and the Parish of Winwick under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (“the 2017 Act”)
- 1.2 The Council is required to have regard for the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England; this is to ensure that the review reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area and is effective and convenient. The guidance has been considered in drawing up these terms of reference.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 The Terms of Reference is a prompt for local consideration, initial discussions and the exchange of ideas in a Review, which will in turn assist Warrington Borough Council to prepare draft proposals.

### **What is a Community Governance Review?**

- 1.5 Community Governance Review (CGR) provide the opportunity for Councils to review and make changes to community governance within their areas. The Review considers one or more of the following:
  - Creating, merging, altering or abolishing of town or parish councils;
  - The naming of and the style of new town or parish councils;
  - The electoral arrangements for town or parish councils (the ordinary year of election; the council size; the number of councillors to be elected to the council and warding);
  - Grouping or de-grouping town or parish councils.
- 1.6 A CGR must reflect the identities and interests of communities and should take account the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.

### **Why is the Council undertaking the Review?**

## **2.0 POULTON WITH FEARNHEAD PARISH COUNCIL**

Warrington Borough Council has received a request from Poulton with Fearnhead Parish Council to review its parish ward boundaries and electoral arrangements under the 2007 Act, to more accurately reflect the communities within the area, as detailed below:

“Houghton Green Ward (polling districts NTE and NTE/1) to be removed from the Winwick Parish Council area and placed into Poulton with Fearnhead Parish Council area.

Longbarn, Fearnhead and Cinnamon Brow Ward to be split and polling districts NTA, NTE and NTE/1 to become Cinnamon Brow Ward

Polling Districts NTB, NTC, NTC/1 and NTD to become Fearnhead and Longbarn Ward”

- 2.1 This review will also consider the electoral arrangements of Poulton with Fearnhead Parish Council to determine possible changes to the number of parish councillors representing each parish ward. The overall number of parish councillors will remain the same.
- 2.2 The existing arrangements are:

| Parish Ward                         | Electorate | No. Of Parish Councillors |
|-------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| Blackbrook                          | 1602       | 2                         |
| Bruche                              | 3814       | 5                         |
| Longbarn, Fearnhead & Cinnamon Brow | 7151       | 7                         |
| Paddington                          | 312        | 1                         |
| Total                               | 12879      | 15                        |

**\*Based on electorate per parish councillor = 859 electors per councillor**

### 3.0 WINWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Warrington Borough Council has received a request from Winwick Parish Council to review its electoral arrangements under the 2007 Act, to determine possible changes to the number of parish councillors representing each parish ward. The overall number of parish councillors will remain the same.

- 3.1 The existing arrangements are:

| Parish Ward    | Electorate | No. Of Parish Councillors |
|----------------|------------|---------------------------|
| Houghton Green | 686        | 4                         |
| Peel Hall      | 1203       | 3                         |
| Winwick        | 1916       | 3                         |
| Total          | 3805       | 10                        |

- **Based on electorate per parish councillor = 380 per councillor**

- 3.2 Winwick Parish Council do not feel that this current split is proportionate to the number of households and electors and have requested to amend their membership be split as indicated in the table below:

| Parish Ward    | Electorate | Requested No of Parish Councillors |
|----------------|------------|------------------------------------|
| Houghton Green | 686        | 2                                  |
| Peel Hall      | 1203       | 3                                  |
| Winwick        | 1916       | 5                                  |
| Total          | 3805       | 10                                 |

- 3.3 Based on the request submitted by Poulton with Fearnhead Parish Council for Houghton Green Ward being moved out of Winwick Parish Council which if agreed would have a knock on effect on the Parish Council electorate. It is not considered appropriate to provide an actual breakdown of numbers at this stage but would seek to determine if the level of members should remain at 10 parish Councillors and request suggested numbers of councillors per parish ward.
- 3.4 In addition the review is required to take account of electorate forecasts based on projected increases in housing provision as outlined in Section 6.

#### **4.0 CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 Before making any recommendation or publishing final proposals the Council will take into account of the reviews and suggestions of local people and organisations and will comply with the statutory consultation requirements by:
- Consulting local government electors and other persons or bodies who appear to have an interest in the review;
  - Taking into account any representation received in connect with the review;
  - Notifying consultees of the outcome of the review; and publicising all decision taken and the reasons for such decisions.
- 4.2 In particular, the Council will consult:
- Local government electors/residents in the parishes of Poulton with Fearnhead and Winwick;
  - The Parish Councils of Poulton with Fearnhead and Winwick;
  - The Ward members of the areas affected;
  - The Member of Parliament for Warrington North; and
  - Cheshire Association of Locals Councils
- 4.3 How the Council will consult:
- Publish these terms of reference and take submissions via its website;
  - Promote the process via the website and on social media; and within the Parishes
  - ½ page notices in local newspaper;
  - Publish relevant statutory notices on the Councils website and Parish council websites and Parish notice boards;

- Posters will be displayed in community areas/buildings within the Parish areas

4.4 In addition paper copies of the documentation will be issued upon request. The Borough Council will ensure that the consultation process is cost effective and that only reasonable costs are incurred.

#### **How to submit your views**

4.5.1 Complete an online survey via - <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/wbcgovernancereviewpoultonfearnheadandwinwick/>

Scan the QR code below:



Email comments to – [elections@warrington.gov.uk](mailto:elections@warrington.gov.uk)

Write to:

Electoral Services  
Warrington Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Sankey Street  
Warrington  
WA1 1UH

Tel: 01925 442184

#### **5.0 TIMETABLE FOR THE REVIEW**

5.1 Publication of these Terms of Reference formally begins the Review, which must be completed within twelve months.

5.2 The timetable for the Review is as follows:

| <b>Action</b>                                | <b>Timetable</b>             | <b>Indicative Date</b>   |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Publication of Terms of Reference            |                              | 23 March 2023            |
| Introductory Stage – submissions are invited | 4 weeks                      | 24 March – 21 April 2023 |
| Preparation of draft proposals               | One month                    | 9 May -12 June 2023      |
| Publication of draft proposals               |                              | 29 June 2023             |
| Consultation on draft proposals              | One month                    | 30 June – 28 July 2023   |
| Preparation of final proposals               | One month                    | September 2023           |
| Publication of final proposals               | Audit & Corporate Governance | 16 November 2023         |
| Publication of Recommendations               | Full Council                 | 4 December 2023          |
| Publication of any Reorganisation Order      |                              | January 2024             |

## **6.0 ELECTORATE FORECASTS**

- 6.1 The Council has used the Register of Electors as at 1 January 2023 in providing the existing parish electorate figures.
- 6.2 The existing parish electorate for Poulton with Fearnhead Parish Council is 12879 and broken down by Parish Ward as follows:

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Blackbrook Ward                          |             |
| NSH                                      | 804         |
| NSJ                                      | 798         |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>1602</b> |
| Bruche Ward                              |             |
| NUA                                      | 1587        |
| NUB                                      | 1738        |
| NUC                                      | 489         |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>3814</b> |
| Longbarn, Fearnhead & Cinnamon Brow Ward |             |
| NTA                                      | 2373        |
| NTB                                      | 2366        |
| NTC                                      | 1180        |
| NTC/1                                    | 218         |
| NTD                                      | 1014        |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>7151</b> |

|                 |            |
|-----------------|------------|
| Paddington Ward |            |
| NVF             | <b>312</b> |

6.3 The electorate is due to increase in polling district NTC as there is planning permission for 31 homes which based on forecasts is an increase of 50 electors. There is no further sites for development for the Poulton with Fearnhead Parish Council with planning approval.

6.4 The existing parish electorate for Winwick Parish Council is 3805 and broken down by Parish Ward as follows:

|                     |             |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Houghton Green Ward |             |
| NTE                 | 649         |
| NTE/1               | 37          |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>686</b>  |
| Peel Hall Ward      |             |
| NSE                 | 999         |
| NSF                 | 109         |
| NSG                 | 95          |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>1203</b> |
| Winwick Ward        |             |
| NDC                 | <b>1916</b> |

6.5 There is anticipated large scale housing development of 1200 units anticipated in the Peel Hall Ward of Winwick Parish Council which would increase the electorate by approximately 1800 electors. In addition there is a smaller development planned one for 27 units off Mill Lane in polling district NSF in the same parish ward which would create approximately 41 electors.

6.6 There is also a small development of 17 units planned for Delph Farm in polling district NDC – Winwick Ward which will equate to approximately 26 electors.

## **7. ORDER AND COMMENCEMENT**

7.1 The Review will be completed when the Council resolves to accept the final recommendations.

7.2 In the event of a Reorganisation of Community Governance order being required the provisions of such an order would take effect as soon as possible in accordance with the relevant legislation. The electoral arrangements for any parish council would normally come into force at the time of the next local and town council elections.

## **8. DATE OF PUBLICATION**

8.1 These terms of reference were published on Thursday 23 March 2023.





## Considerations

Legislation requires that the Council must ensure that community governance within the area:

- reflects the identities and interests of the communities in the area,
- is effective and convenient and takes into account any other arrangements for the purpose of community representation or engagement in the area.

In considering proposals for change, the Council will take the following into account:

### Parish status (council or meeting)

Electorate – existing and forecast growth.

The review aims to ensure that parishes reflect community identity and interest and that they are viable administrative and democratic units.

Parishes with 150 or fewer local government electors cannot have a council and can only be a parish meeting (unless the parish already has a council). Between 151 and 999 local government electors the review can recommend that the parish should have a council (optional) and where the parish 1000 or more local government electors the review must recommend that the parish has a council.

### Parish boundaries

The Council will consider the effect of new and forecast development activity on existing parish boundaries. Parish boundaries should be easily identifiable and reflect the separation of settlements recognised locally as having their own identity. These boundaries should generally reflect the areas between communities with low populations or physical barriers such as rivers or man-made features such as railways or motorways.

### Council size (number of councillors)

The minimum number of parish councillors that a council can have is five. A quorum for a parish council is three or a third, whichever is the greater number.

National research guidance suggests the following levels of representation for parish councils:

| Electorate         | Councillor Allocation |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Less than 500      | 5-8                   |
| 501-2500           | 6-12                  |
| 2501-10000         | 9-16                  |
| 10001 – 20000      | 13-27                 |
| Greater than 20000 | 13-31                 |

Government guidance is that each area should be considered on its own merits having regard to population, geography and the pattern of communities. The Council will pay particular attention to existing levels of representation and existing council sizes which have stood the test of time.

In considering requests to change the number of councillors on any individual parish council the Council will review the electoral history for the parish including the number of contested elections that have been held, the number of vacant seats following normal parish elections (every 4 years) and the history of co-options (i.e. has the council been able to fill vacancies).

### Parish Warding

The Council is required to consider the following points when deliberating whether a parish should be divided into wards for the purposes of elections:

- whether the number or distribution of the local government electors for the parish would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient,
- whether it is desirable that any area, or areas, of the parish should be separately represented on the council.

The Government's guidance is that warding of parishes may not be justified for largely rural areas based predominantly on a single centrally located village. Conversely, warding may be appropriate where a parish encompasses a number of villages with separate identities or where there has been urban overspill at the edge of a town into a parish.

In considering parish wards the Council will ensure that electoral equality is retained (the principle that each person's vote should be of equal weight so far as is possible). This will be achieved by keeping the councillor/elector ration similar across any warded areas.

### Parish names and alternative styles for parishes

The Council will endeavour to reflect existing or historic place names and will consider any ward names proposed any local interested parties. The Council will be mindful of Section 75 of the Local Government Act 1972 with regards to changing the name of a parish and subsequent notification and to Sections 87 and 88 of the 2007 Act and related guidance.

Alternative styles for parishes were introduced by the 2007 Act which could replace the 'parish' style – community, neighbourhood or village. Town status continues to be available to a parish (S247 of the Local Government Act 1972) but for as long as a parish has an alternative style it will not be able to have the status of a town and vice versa.

At the request of a parish the District Council as principal authority can change the name of a parish to reflect the style adopted. If an existing parish is under review the Council will make recommendations as to whether the geographical name of the parish should change but it will be for the parish council or meeting to resolve whether the parish should have one of the alternative styles or retain the 'parish' style.

#### Grouping of parishes

Under Section 91 of the 2007 Act a CGR can recommend the grouping or de-grouping of parishes. In some instances it may be appropriate to group parishes to allow a common parish council to be formed. De-grouping may also offer the reverse possibility where local communities have expanded.

Any grouping or de-grouping needs to be compatible with the retention of community interests and it would be inappropriate to use it to build artificially large units under single parish councils. However, it could offer a possibility for parishes with less than 150 electors to be grouped with other parishes under an elected parish council despite being unable to form a parish council in their own right.

#### Ordinary year of election

As the Borough Council is elected every four years on an 'all out' basis it is proposed to keep any changes in line with the ordinary year of election for parish councils on the same date.