

# The potential review of The sarratt and croxley green

9 June 2025

Report Originator	Head of Service sponsor	Date Originated
Lead Member Name: Leader of the Council	Area of Responsibility: Associate Director – Legal and Demoratic	
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<b>REASON FOR REPORT</b>		
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Request of the P&R committee		
Consultees consulted	Finance Yes/No Date:	Legal Yes/No Date:
Consultees to be consulted following CMT before report publication	Chief Executive	Shared Director of Finance
<b>PROPOSED ROUTE FOR FURTHER APPROVAL</b>		
	Date	
Committee	Policy and Resources Committee 9 June 2025	
Council (if required)		

• **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**PART I**

**The Potential review of the Sarratt and Croxley Green Boundary  
ADLDS**

**1 Summary**

- 1.1 This report seeks the views of members on whether to undertake a review of the Sarratt and Croxley Green Boundary, and if so, to agree the terms of reference for the review.

**2 Details**

- 2.1 In January, Croxley Green Parish Council resolved to request that Three Rivers District Council undertakes a review of the Parish boundary with Sarratt. In March, the Policy and Resources Committee considered a petition from Councillor Chris Mitchell, requesting the Council to consider undertaking a Community Governance Review of the boundary between the two parishes.

- 2.2 In discussion, the Policy and Resources Committee considered it was not appropriate at that stage to initiate the review, given that the view of Sarratt Parish Council was not clear. Instead, the Committee requested that a report be brought to this meeting considering whether to undertake the review, and potential terms of reference if a review was undertaken.
- 2.2.1 Parish boundaries are usually formed based on historic conventions or natural boundaries such as fields or rivers. Over time, development of the natural or built environment can mean that the previous boundary no longer reflects the immediate community.
- 2.2.2 It is understood that one of the driving forces behind the request from Croxley Green is the potential for a new development site that is within Sarratt Parish, but adjacent to, and accessed through settlements within Croxley Green. It is felt that this new settlement would more naturally look to the Croxley Green community, rather than the main settlements within Sarratt.
- 2.2.3 Through the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, district councils were given the power to amend parish council boundaries within their area. This is known as a “community governance review” (CGR). There are two situations where this may occur: because the Council decides to do so, or it receives a petition with sufficient public support (as the two areas affected total more than 2,500 electors, a petition would need to have the support of at least 7.5% electors of the parishes affected, which at the time of producing this report would be 874 electors)
- 2.2.4 If the District Council does elect to undertake a CGR, the first step is to agree a terms of reference, which sets out how the review may be undertaken. A phase of consultation follows, after which the Council decides what to do. It could decide to make no changes; make changes to a parish boundary; create a new parish or change warding arrangements in a parish.
- 2.2.5 If changes are proposed, consideration then needs to be given to any consequential matters; this depends on the nature of the changes but can include matters such as division of assets, the number of councillors in each Parish and when the changes shall come into effect.
- 2.2.6 If it elects to undertake the review, the Council is required to have regard to the guidance issued by Secretary of State and Local Government Boundary Commission for England. This requires the Council to undertake consultation with local government electors in the area, and any other parties we consider interested in it.
- 2.2.7 Inevitably, “other considerations” factor into peoples thinking about the review – for residents, it may be whether they feel they will get a better service or lower rate of council tax. However, if the council did commit to a review, the primary focus has to be on whether community governance is:
- Reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area
  - Effective and convenient
- 2.2.8 The guidance, although primarily focused on the creation of new parishes, sets out the type of factors that should be taken into account in determining these factors.

2.2.9 The timeframes involved in reviews can vary significantly. If the review is very straightforward, it can be concluded within a year; more complex reviews, usually those involving the division of existing parishes or creation of new parishes, can take upwards of two years. The process works as follows:

- The District Council publishes terms of reference setting out how the review will occur and commences a period of consultation
- Once the consultation concludes, the District Council makes recommendations – this is often followed by a secondary consultation if the Council believes changes are required.
- The District Council meets to make final recommendations and agree the reorganisation order (as the reorganisation order includes consequential amendments, in some cases this will come at a later date than the final recommendations).

2.3 Only the Full Council can agree the final recommendations.

2.3.1 In the event that the Policy and Resources Committee agrees to commence a review, potential terms of reference are included at appendix A for approval. These have been developed in line with terms used by other councils, helping the public to understand what the review is and why it's being undertaken.

2.3.2 The timetable in the terms of reference envisage that if it was decided to make changes to the boundary the proposals would not come into effect until 1 April 2027, for the following reasons:

- The parishes will have already set their precept and anticipated their council tax levels based on their council tax base for 2026/27
- Following the final recommendations being made, time needs to be allocated to sort any matters for the reorganisation order
- This date nicely aligns with the next Parish Council elections in May 2027, and enables the District Council to deal with any electoral matters – such as re-establishing polling districts – for those elections.

2.3.3 If required, the reorganisation order would deal with any matters that need to be resolved between the Parishes. This could include financial matters but also residents' rights – for example, some residents may be concerned that they would lose their right to an allotment in one parish and that parish may, or may not be willing to preserve those rights.

2.3.4 Sarratt Parish Council have offered their views on the review and have stated the following:

2.3.4.1 The boundary change should only be implemented if the development goes ahead. This should be when construction of the new homes commences and certainly no sooner than the granting of full planning permission.

2.3.4.2 The process to initiate the boundary change should therefore not commence until the point in time stated above and must include a break-point that enables the boundary change process to be cancelled if the development does not proceed.

- 2.3.4.3 If implemented the new boundary must align with the edge of the new development and not encroach further into Sarratt Parish.

### **3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 There are two options available to the Policy and Resources Committee at this stage: to not undertake the review, or to undertake the review.
- 3.2 If it does undertake a review, then the Committee will need to agree terms of reference.
- 3.2.1 At its last meeting, the committee were concerned that the views of Sarratt Parish Council were not understood at that time. The terms of reference as proposed are designed to provide sufficient time and scope to engage with a wide range of parties and enable all potentially affected to have their say before any recommendations are made.

### **4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications**

- 4.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets.

**Financial, Equal Opportunities, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Communications & Website, Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications**

None specific.

### **Legal Implications**

- 4.2 Section 82 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the Act) gave District Councils the power to undertake Community Governance Reviews of its area. At this stage, the Council is not obliged to undertake a review, but may elect to do so; if it does, it must comply with both the law and the statutory guidance.
- 4.3 The proposed terms of reference have been developed in line with the guidance. Section 81 of the Act states it is for the Council to decide the terms of reference of any community governance review which the council is to undertake and it must then publish them.

### **5 Recommendation**

- 5.1 That:
- 5.2 The policy and resources committee determines whether to undertake a community governance review of the Croxley Green and Sarratt boundary;
- 5.3 If it does, to agree the terms of reference attached at Appendix A.

Report prepared by Leah Mickleborough, Interim Committee and Elections Manager

### **Data Quality**

Data sources: Maps within Appendix A have been produced by the Council's GIS officer from its mapping system

Data checked by: GIS officer

Data rating: Sufficient

## **APPENDICES**

Draft Terms of Reference for a Community Governance Review of the Sarratt and Croxley Green boundary

