

# Communities Scrutiny Panel

<b>DATE</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> August 2023
<b>REPORT OF</b>	Helen Isaacs – Assistant Chief Executive
<b>SUBJECT</b>	Parish Council Community Governance Review
<b>STATUS</b>	Open with the exception of <b>Appendix 3</b> which is exempt under paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972

## CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The Council has two strategic priorities – Stronger Economy and Stronger Communities. Within that second priority, the parish council community governance review will have potential impacts on local democracy for the thirteen parish councils and town council in North East Lincolnshire as set out in the report.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report advises the Panel of the submissions received during the first phase of public consultation on the Parish Council Community Governance Review. Each of the submissions are set out in full in Appendices 2 and 3.

## MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

The Panel is asked to make recommendations to Council on which, if any, of the matters raised in the submissions should be a draft recommendation for change to parish council governance and/or electoral arrangements and included in a second round of public consultation. Guidance on conducting the review and a brief summary of the evidence submitted is contained in Appendix 1.

These recommendations will be considered at a special meeting of Council on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

### 1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1 At Council on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023, Members resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review covering all parishes in North East Lincolnshire. The report set out the scope for the review, terms of reference, proposed method of consultation and proposed timetable.
- 1.2 Initial submissions on the current parish councils, together with any general comments and/or requests for new parish councils were invited between 2<sup>nd</sup> June and 28<sup>th</sup> July 2023. The methods used for the consultation are set out in Appendix 1.
- 1.3 Appendices 2 and 3 set out in full the responses received for each parish council. Officers have briefly summarised the evidence in Appendix 1. Members are asked to consider any potential changes to their name of the parish council, boundaries, council size, groupings and/or electoral/governance arrangements. The only change that will definitely need to be made is to the Town Ward

Boundaries of Immingham Town Council as there is an in-balance in the number of Town Councillors in each Ward compared to the electorate. Immingham Town Council has identified a potential solution to the problem, which is set out in Appendix 1.

1.4 The Communities Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider the feedback in Appendix 1 and make recommendations for any changes to parish council governance and/or electoral arrangements. These will be considered at a special meeting of Council on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

1.5 Any proposed changes agreed by Council on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023 will be subject to a second period of public consultation from 8<sup>th</sup> September to 3<sup>rd</sup> November. The feedback will be reported back to this Panel at a meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023. The Panel will be asked to consider this feedback and make recommendations to Council on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023 on any final changes to the parish council governance and/or electoral arrangements.

## **2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

2.1 There is a risk that someone could challenge the outcome of the community governance review through judicial review. Council officers will mitigate against this by ensuring that at all times the council follows the requirements laid down in the 2007 Act and guidance.

2.2 The main risk is that the council fails to meet the statutory requirement to complete the review within twelve months. The terms of reference for the review set out the timetable for the review – well within twelve months even allowing for a third period of consultation (if required).

## **3. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS**

3.1 Before any decision is reached on any changes to parish council governance and/or electoral arrangements, the Council is required to consult and should show regard to the responses in coming to any proposed changes in the electoral arrangements and/or governance of parish councils in North East Lincolnshire.

3.2 All households and parish councils were asked for their views on the current arrangements, as well as other stakeholders, at the beginning of June 2023, as set out in Appendix 1.

## **4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

4.1 There will be some financial costs involved in undertaking the review, which will include postage costs and stationery. These costs will be met from within existing budgets.

## **5. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no children and young people implications arising from this report.

## **6. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no implications to climate change or the environment arising from the matters contained in this report.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 As outlined above, the minimal costs from this exercise will be met from within existing service budgets.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 In carrying out the parish council community governance review, the Council must follow the requirements laid down in the Local Government and Involvement in Public Health Act 2007. It must also pay heed to the joint guidance on community governance reviews published by the Department of Communities and Local Government and Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

- 8.2 The Council will implement any changes by making a reorganisation of community governance order.

## **9. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no human resource implications arising from the decisions in this report.

## **10. WARD IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The report impacts on all Wards that contain parish councils. In addition, as part of the consultation, parish councils have been proposed for other areas of North East Lincolnshire.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Council – 25 May 2023 [Council – Special Meeting | Democracy \(nelincs.gov.uk\)](#)

Legislation:

- The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
- Guidance published by the Secretary of State and Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/8312/1527635.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/8312/1527635.pdf)

## **12. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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