

LICENSING AND REGULATION COMMITTEE

10 November 2011

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR (GOVERNANCE) AND HEAD OF
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

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RECENT REFERENCES:

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 devolves the power to district councils to take decisions about the electoral arrangements for parish councils within their area. The process is known as a Community Governance Review (formerly known as parish reviews).

Three Parish Councils have long-standing requests to consider increasing the number of Councillors who serve on their respective Councils. There are also requests from Denmead and Southwick & Widely Parish Councils to have discussions about the future boundaries of their parishes, having regard to the impact of the West of Waterlooville residential development.

Also on file is a request from County Councillor Porter, supported by some local residents, to move the Abbots Worthy area of Kings Worthy Parish (and District Ward) into Itchen Valley Parish (and District Ward).

This report outlines the process for dealing with those requests.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Committee supports the undertaking of Community Governance Reviews of the electoral arrangements for the parishes of Bramdean & Hinton Ampner, Itchen Valley and Wonston, with regard to the size of Council in each case.
2. That officers hold a meeting with Denmead and Southwick & Widley Parish Councils to discuss future parish boundaries and related issues, in the light of the West of Waterlooville residential development.
3. That the additional procedures involved with the possible transfer of Abbots Worthy from Kings Worthy Parish to Itchen Valley Parish be noted and the officers be requested to liaise with all interested parties to establish the best way forward.

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DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Community Governance Review (CGR) process enables the City Council to consider requests to review the electoral arrangements of parishes.
- 1.2 The principal matters which can be considered as part of a CGR are as follows:-
 - the creation of a parish
 - the name of a parish
 - the establishment of a separate parish council for an existing parish
 - the abolition of a parish
 - the dissolution of a parish council
 - changes to other electoral arrangements (e.g. increase/decrease numbers of parish councillors)
 - grouping or de-grouping of parishes

2 Summary of Requests Received

- 2.1 **Bramdean & Hinton Ampner Parish Council** – currently consists of 6 Parish Councillors and the wish is to increase the number to 7, principally to generate a little more interest and involvement in the work of the Council by having this additional place.
- 2.2 **Itchen Valley Parish Council** – the Council area is warded, with Easton & Martyr Worthy ward having 6 Parish Councillors and Itchen Abbas & Avington having 4. The request is that the latter be increased to 5, to give more equal representation, having regard to the way the population has increased.
- 2.3 **Wonston Parish Council** – currently consists of 7 Parish Councillors and the wish is to increase the number to 8, partly to ensure they achieve a quorum more comfortably, because external business commitments (and not lack of enthusiasm) makes regular attendance difficult for some.

- 2.4 **Denmead and Southwick & Widley Parish Councils** - wish to discuss future parish boundaries and related issues, in the light of the West of Waterlooville residential development.
- 2.5 **County Councillor Porter and certain local residents** – wish to see the transfer of Abbots Worthy from Kings Worthy Parish to Itchen Valley Parish, because that area is separated from the remainder of Kings Worthy by the A33 and sits more naturally within Itchen Valley.

3 Process

- 3.1 If agreed, consultations would be carried out with local people and the views of parish councils would be particularly relevant. However, other bodies such as local businesses and voluntary organisations will also be consulted where appropriate. The County Council must be notified about the commencement of the Review and invited to make representations.
- 3.2 Ward Members will, of course, be part of the consultation exercise.
- 3.3 One important means of communication/consultation at parish level is through the local parish magazine and the co-operation of parish clerks will be sought to provide the necessary editorial contacts.

4 Comment

- 4.1 We are not aware of any other Parish Councils with similar issues, but if others did come forward with requests, they would have to await a future programme, because the list above is sufficient for the limited resources available for this work.
- 4.2 It is also important to clarify at the outset that these reviews will be principally 'desk-top' exercises. In other words, matters will be mainly progressed in the office, as there is not the capacity to attend parish council or public meetings and make presentations etc. The exception would be Denmead and Southwick & Widley, because the potential issues involved would make one or more meetings the best way to take matters forward.
- 4.3 The situation with regard to Abbots Worthy has a particular complication because it would also involve amending the District Ward electoral boundary. Therefore, timing issues with regard to elections is important. The advice of the Electoral Commission has been sought on the easiest way to approach this matter and this will be reported to the meeting.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 A CGR review will provide a good opportunity to deal with several long-standing requests regarding council size. It also gives the scope to progress the other issues referred to above.
- 5.2 The Committee is therefore requested to support the carrying out of these reviews.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

5 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND CHANGE PLANS (RELEVANCE TO):

- 5.1 The Committee will have regard to the Council's priorities as set out in its Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Business Plan, with particular reference to 'An Efficient and Effective Council'.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 Officer time will be involved in conducting the reviews and the level of work arising should be manageable. If a larger workload is generated, then it will be a case of the reviews taking longer, rather than finding extra resources to complete the work quickly.

7 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 7.1 There are no risk management issues provided the appropriate procedures are followed.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None.

APPENDICES:

None.