

LICENSING AND REGULATION COMMITTEE

11 October 2012

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS - PROPOSALS

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

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RECENT REFERENCES:

LR373 – Community Governance Reviews (10/11/11)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

At its meeting held on 10 November 2011, the Committee agreed that Community Governance Reviews should be undertaken in response to two requests from Parish Councils to alter their electoral arrangements, namely Bramdean & Hinton Ampner and Wonston, who both wanted to increase their size by one councillor. The Committee also considered requests from certain parties in the Itchen Valley, to alter the Parish Council boundary by taking in Abbots Worthy (currently within Kings Worthy Parish).

This report also updates Members on the local arrangements which have been established regarding the West of Waterlooville development.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That, having regard to the factors set out in the report and the representations received, the recommendations arising from the review be:-
 - (a) the size of Bramdean & Hinton Ampner Parish Council be increased from 6 to 7 Councillors.

(b) the size of Wonston Parish Council be increased from 7 to 8 Councillors

both vacancies to be filled through the by-election process and with the term of office expiring along with the Councillors on the next ordinary election.

2. That the final decision to make the necessary Statutory Order and undertake such other administrative arrangements as may be necessary be delegated to the Corporate Director (Governance), provided no new material representations against the recommendations are received.
3. That the current administrative arrangements for the liaison between Denmead and Southwick & Widley Parish Councils, regarding future parish boundaries and other issues related to the West of Waterlooville residential development, be noted.
4. That, with regard to the possible transfer of Abbots Worthy from Kings Worthy Parish to Itchen Valley Parish, the Committee determines whether it wishes further informal community consultations to be undertaken, or to retain the status quo for the time being.

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DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 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).
- 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 Increase in Parish Councillors - Results of Consultation

- 2.1 The Committee authorised a formal Community Governance Review to be undertaken for the two Parishes as set out below (Report LR373 refers). Consultation on the two requested increases was undertaken by writing to each Parish Council, arranging for notices to be displayed on Parish noticeboards and asking editors of local newsletters/parish magazines to include a short article. The responses are set out below. The County Council was also consulted and had no comments on any of the proposals.
- 2.2 **Bramdean & Hinton Ampner Parish Council** – currently consists of 6 Parish Councillors and the request is to increase that number to 7, principally to generate a little more interest and involvement in the work of the Council by having this additional place.

- 2.3 The response from the Parish Council, in support of the proposal, is attached as Appendix A. There were three other responses to the consultation, from the local branch of the WI and the two local Church Wardens, either supporting or raising no objection to the proposal. No other comments were received.
- 2.4 As Ward Member, Councillor Verney supports the proposed increase.
- 2.5 **Wonston Parish Council** – currently consists of 7 Parish Councillors and the wish is to increase that 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 Councillors.
- 2.6 The response from the Parish Council, in support of the proposal, is attached as Appendix B. There were four other responses to the consultation, from the Gratton Trust, Gratton Surgery, Victoria Hall Trustees and the Sutton Manor Nursing Home, all either supporting or raising no objection to the proposal. No other comments were received.
- 2.7 As Ward Members, Councillors Godfrey, Lipscomb and Wright all support the proposed increase.

3 Increase in Parish Councillors – Next Steps

- 3.1 Section 88 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the 2007 Act) requires the Council to consider whether:-
- a) the Parish should continue and whether its area should not be altered and
 - b) the Parish should continue to have a Council but whether any changes in electoral arrangements are needed.
- 3.2 Section 93 of the 2007 Act requires the Council to take into account all representations received when considering its recommendations on the outcome of a Community Governance Review. No representations suggest any changes, other than for the number of Parish Councillors.
- 3.3 The Council needs to have regard to the need to secure that the community governance within the area:-
- a) reflects the needs and interests of the community in that area and
 - b) it is effective and convenient

3.4 The 2007 Act also requires that the Council takes into account any other arrangements (apart from those relations to Parishes and their institutions):-

- a) that have already been made, or
- b) could be made

for the purposes of community representation or engagement. No suggestions have come forward as a part of the consultation to suggest other arrangements are appropriate, other than continuing with the existing Parish Councils.

3.5 Section 93 (7) of the 2007 Act states that the Council must publish the outcome of the recommendations of its review.

3.6 In considering electoral arrangements, Section 95 of the 2007 Act says the Council must consider whether a parish should be divided into wards and:-

- a) whether the number and distribution of Councillors on the parish makes a single election of councillors (i.e. no wards) impractical or inconvenient or
- b) whether any areas should be represented on the Council.

3.7 In arriving at this decision the number of electors in each parish has to be considered in both 2011 and 2016.

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2016</u>
Bramdean and Hinton Ampner	464	425
Wonston	1162	1149

3.8 However, given the geographical nature of both parishes and number of electors involved, it is recommended that both Parishes continue to be not divided into wards.

3.9 If the Committee is agreeable to the two requested increases, then the City Council is able to make the necessary Statutory Order and stipulate the date of what would be, in effect, by elections, without having to wait for the next scheduled ordinary elections (2014 for Bramdean & Hinton Ampner and 2015 for Wonston).

3.10 If there was no demand for a contest, the Parish Council(s) could then co-opt in the usual way.

3.11 The next stage is to publish the recommendations arising from the Committee's consideration of the review.

- 3.12 The final decision to make the necessary Statutory Order could be delegated to the Corporate Director (Governance) provided no new material representations against the proposals are received.

4 Other Issues

- 4.1 **Denmead and Southwick & Widley Parish Councils** – both Parishes wished to see some form of consultative body created, at which future parish boundaries and related issues could be considered, in the light of the West of Waterlooville residential development. Therefore, a joint meeting between the two Parish Councils and City Council officers was held on 26 January 2012, to consider the best way forward.
- 4.2 Following positive discussions, a West of Waterlooville Advisory Group was established and the Group's membership includes representation from both Parish Councils, City and County Councillors and the local community. The Group has now met and is already proving a useful forum for monitoring the issues presented by the housing growth in this area.
- 4.3 **Possible transfer of Abbots Worthy from Kings Worthy Parish to Itchen Valley Parish** – following a request that this should be considered, the informal views of both Parish Council's were sought and their replies are attached as Appendices C and D. From those replies, it can be seen that Itchen Valley PC does not consider that a full consultation is justified and Kings Worthy PC would not welcome the loss of Abbots Worthy. In other words, both Parish Councils appear to be favouring the status quo.
- 4.4 As Ward Members, Councillors Johnston and Rutter have noted the current position and Councillor Gottlieb does not support any change. County Councillor Jackie Porter, who represents the Itchen Valley County Division (which covers both Itchen Valley and Kings Worthy) is also content to keep boundaries as they are, as there appears no great local pressure for change.
- 4.5 In summary, the main argument in favour of making the change is that Abbots Worthy is separated from the remainder of Kings Worthy by the A33 and sits more naturally within Itchen Valley. It would also add a degree of consistency with the boundaries of the South Downs National Park. The alternative view is that the M3 could be regarded as a more obvious boundary than the A33, which would mean no change. Also, in built environment terms, the residential edge of Kings Worthy is far closer to Abbots Worthy than the first properties in Itchen Valley.
- 4.6 A key procedural point is that any change would affect the District Ward Boundary between Kings Worthy and Itchen Valley Wards and so would require an investigation by the Boundary Commission, unless the change was unanimously supported, in which case they may only undertake a 'light-touch' review. The timing of future elections also needs to be considered as that would affect the date of introducing any change.

- 4.7 With both Parish Councils and all three Ward Members not actively supporting a change, the Committee could still decide to embark on an informal consultation exercise to seek the views of all the residents in the 48 properties in Abbots Worthy, if it considered it appropriate. The result of that exercise would not be binding and a further report on the outcome would be submitted to the Committee. The Committee authorised the informal process (which resulted in the above comments) when the matter was last considered (Report LR373 refers) and a formal Community Governance Review has not been undertaken.
- 4.8 The Committee is therefore requested to indicate how it wishes this matter to be taken forward.

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 concluding the reviews and making any Orders etc, but the level of work arising should be manageable. If a larger workload is generated, then it will be a case of matters taking longer, because this is not a high priority task.

7 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

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

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Letter from Bramdean & Hinton Ampner Council (30/11/11)

Appendix B – Letter from Wonston Parish Council (8/12/11)

Appendix C – Letter from Itchen Valley Parish Council (6/4/12)

Appendix D – Letter from Kings Worthy Parish Council (28/3/12)