

Public
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Community Governance Review – Holme Parish Council

Meeting/Date: Council – 26th February 2020

Executive Portfolio: Councillor R Fuller, Executive Leader

Report by: Elections and Democratic Services Manager

Ward(s) affected: Stilton, Folksworth and Washingley

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Community Governance Review of Holme following the request from the Parish Council to increase the size from 7 to 9 parish councillors.

The recommendations within the report have been endorsed by the Corporate Governance Committee at their meeting on 22nd January 2020.

The Council is

RECOMMENDED

to approve the drafting of a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order to be made in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 for Holme Parish Council.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 A request had been received from Holme Parish Council to increase the council size from 7 to 9 parish councillors.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (“the 2007 Act”) provides for a Principal Council to conduct a review of the community governance arrangements for the whole or part of its area for the purpose of considering whether or not to make changes to parish boundaries or size and/or the creation of new parishes; and the review of the electoral arrangements for new and/or existing parishes.
- 2.2 Section 93 of the 2007 Act allows principal councils to decide how to undertake such a review, provided they comply with the duties in the Act which apply to council’s undertaking reviews. If, following a review, the Council decides that changes should be made to the electoral arrangements they may make an Order giving effect to these changes.
- 2.3 Section 95 of the Act provides, among other things, that when considering the number of councillors to be elected for the parish as a whole, the authority must have regard to the number of electors for the parish and any change in that number likely to occur in the next five years.
- 2.4 The Terms of Reference of the Community Governance Review were agreed at the meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee on 2nd October 2019 and were published on 3rd October 2019.
- 2.5 Submissions were invited between 3rd October and 14th November 2019.

3. CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The current electorate of Holme is 526 (December 2019) and the existing number of parish councillors is 7.
- 3.2 When considering electoral arrangements of the parish, the District Council is required to consider any changes in the number of electors that is likely to occur in the next five years. The electorate is not forecast to significantly increase or decrease over the next five years with no planned housing allocations, but ‘organic growth’ has occurred and the Parish Council have indicated that 44 new homes have either been recently built or with planning permission, that represented almost an increase of 20% of population.
- 3.3 The Council notes that the number of parish councillors for each parish council shall not be less than five. In practice there is a wide variation of council size between parish councils.
- 3.4 The Council must have regard to the following factors when considering the number of councillors to be elected for a parish –

- the number of local government electors for the parish;
- any change in the number which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts.

4. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 4.1 The consultation was open for submissions for a period of six weeks. Three responses were received in total and all supported the increase in councillors. The responses have been anonymised and are outlined at Appendix A.
- 4.2 Taking into account the results of the consultation exercises and the increase in electorate as supplied by the Parish Council, the recommendation is to increase the number of Parish Councillors for the Parish by two councillors, from 7 to 9.
- 4.3 The Parish Council has requested that this comes into force at the first opportunity. If an election is held before the scheduled date of retirement of the parish councillors, then sitting councillors' terms of office would be reduced and all councillors will serve a shortened term to bring the parish elections back into schedule alongside District Council elections in 2022.
- 4.4 Ordinary parish elections are held once every four years with all councillors being elected at the same time. The last scheduled elections were held in May 2018. The Clerk of Holme Parish Council has indicated that the Parish Council has discussed the implementation date, and should the Committee agree an increase in the number of parish councillors their preference would be for implementation in the current year, i.e. 7th May 2020. A Reorganisation of Community Governance Order will also need to be made by the Council.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The request for a community governance review would only warrant a 'light touch' as the request has been made by the Parish Council and the proposal will incur no direct cost to the electorate.
- 5.2 Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 devolved power from the Secretary of State to principal councils to carry out community governance reviews and put in place or make changes to local governance arrangements. The Community Governance Review was undertaken in accordance with this Act.
- 5.3 To implement the outcome of the review, the Council will be required to make a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order.

6. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 6.1 To enable a community governance review to be undertaken to consider increasing the size of Holme Parish Council

7. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix A – Responses from Public Consultation

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
Communities and Local Government Guidance on Community
Governance Reviews March 2010](#)

Minutes of Holme Parish Council dated 16th July 2019 and request from
Holme Parish Council dated 18th July 2019

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APPENDIX A**RESPONSES FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATION – HOLME**

RESPONDENT	ADDRESS	COMMENTS
Mr and Mrs M	Residents of Holme	Fully support the increase in parish councillors from 7 to 9.
Mr K	Resident of Holme	Support request to increase from 7 to 9 councillors and will enable there to be sufficient councillors at all meetings to give a more representative view when one or more councillors are unable to attend meetings due to other commitments.
Mrs K	Resident of Holme	Support request to increase from 7 to 9 councillors to allow the workload to be shared among a greater number of people particularly when they have other commitments. As village lifestyles have changed from a mainly agricultural to one with more people from a variety of backgrounds the larger number of councillors would be able to reflect this