

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Electoral Cycle of Town and Parish Councils in Huntingdonshire

Meeting/Date: Council – 22 February 2017

Executive Portfolio: Councillor G J Bull, Deputy Leader

Report by: Elections and Democratic Services Manager

Ward(s) affected: All

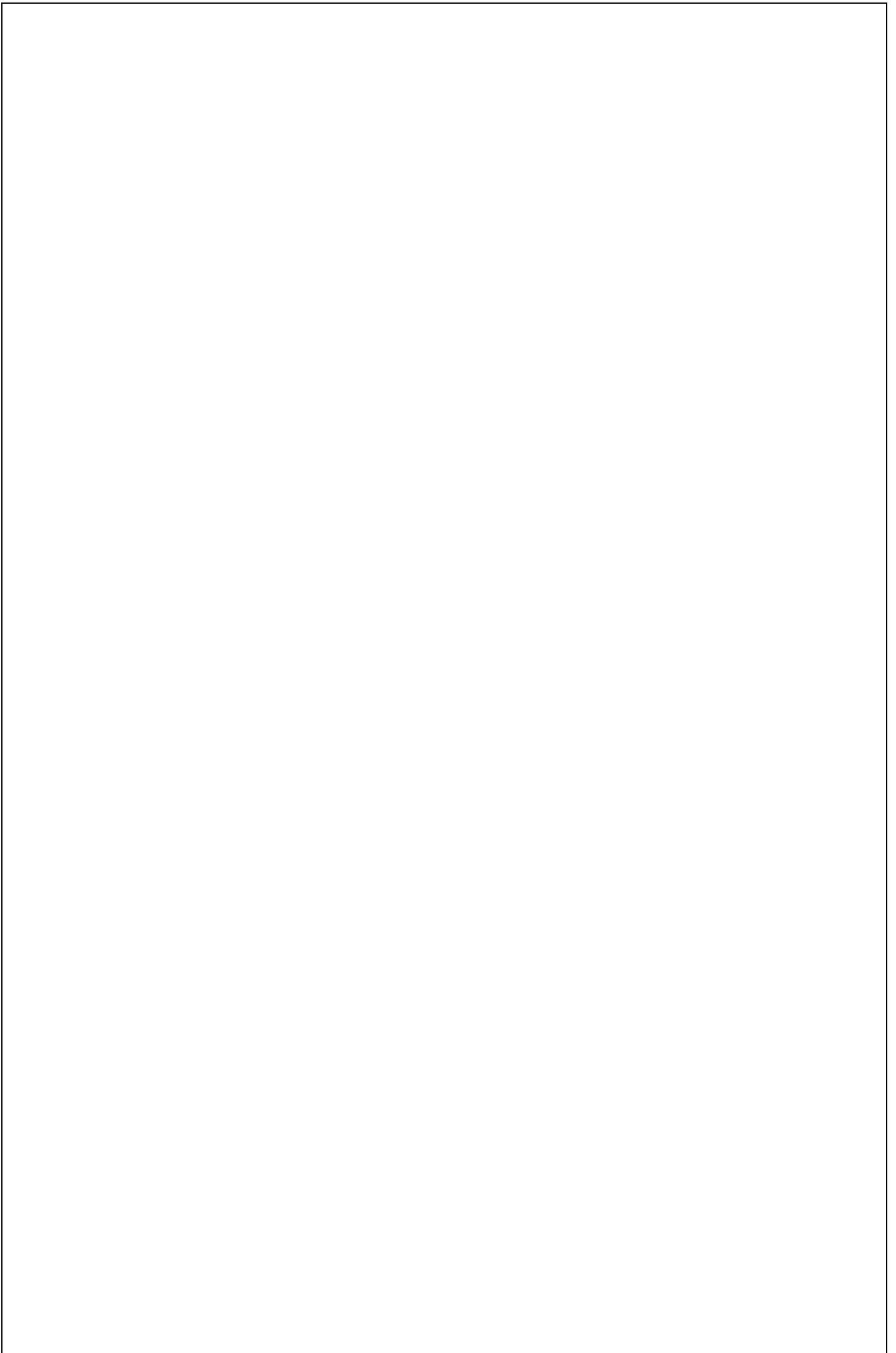
Executive Summary:

As a result of the Council's decision to move from elections by thirds to whole Council elections from May 2018, there would be implications for Town and Parish Councils insofar as some Town and Parish Councils will find that their electoral cycle no longer coincides with the District Council.

Consultation was undertaken with all Town and Parish Councils between October and December 2016 and the results are summarised in the report hereto.

Recommendations:

- (a) that an Order be made under section 53 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to set the date of ordinary elections for all Town and Parish Councils as 2018 and every four years thereafter, with the exception of St Ives Town Council, St Neots Town Council and Warboys Parish Council;**
- (b) that an Order be made for transitional provision to reduce to term of office of Town and Parish Councillors elected in 2015 and 2016 so that their term of office comes to an end in 2018, with the exception of St Ives Town Council, St Neots Town Council and Warboys Parish Council;**
- (c) that the current term of office for Town Councillors at St Ives Town Council elected in 2016 be retained so that it comes to an end in 2020 and Town Councillors be elected to serve a two year term in 2020 to coincide with the scheduled elections of the District Council in 2022;**
- (d) that the current term of office for Town Councillors at St Neots Town Council elected in 2015 be retained so that it comes to an end in 2019 and Town Councillors be elected to serve a three year term in 2019 to coincide with the scheduled elections of the District Council in 2022; and**
- (e) that the term of office for Parish Councillors at Warboys Parish Council elected in 2016 be extended by two years from 2020 to 2022 to coincide with the scheduled elections of the District Council in 2022.**



1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the outcome of consultation recently undertaken on potential changes to the electoral cycle of all Town and Parish Councils as a result of the District Council moving to whole Council elections from May 2018.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 16th December 2015, a Special Meeting of Huntingdonshire District Council resolved that the District Council should move from elections by thirds to whole Council elections from May 2018. Whole Council elections will see all 52 seats on the District Council elected in May 2018 and every four years thereafter.
- 2.2 The changes to the District Council's electoral arrangements have implications for Town and Parish Councils. Some Town and Parish Councils will find that their electoral cycle no longer coincides with the District Council. The implications of this may mean that such Councils will have to meet the full cost of their elections when, up until now, they have been able to share the costs with the District Council.
- 2.3 Under Section 53 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ("the Act"), the District Council has the power to change the dates of ordinary elections of parish councils if it has altered its own electoral cycle.
- 2.4 The table below shows the current cycle of Town and Parish Council elections –

Table: Town and Parish Council elections in Huntingdonshire

	2017*	2018	2019	2020
Abbotsley			✓	
Abbots Ripton			✓	
Alconbury		✓		
Alconbury Weston		✓		
Alwalton		✓		
Barham & Woolley			✓	
Bluntisham			✓	
Brampton				✓
Brington & Molesworth			✓	
Broughton				✓
Buckden		✓		
Buckworth			✓	
Bury		✓		
Bythorn & Keyston			✓	
Catworth			✓	
Colne			✓	
Conington				✓
Earith			✓	
Easton			✓	
Ellington			✓	
Elton		✓		
Farcet		✓		
Fenstanton			✓	
Folksworth & Washingley		✓		
Godmanchester				✓
Great & Little Gidding				✓

Glatton				✓
Grafham			✓	
Great Gransden			✓	
Great Paxton		✓		
Great Staughton			✓	
Hail Weston			✓	
Hemingford Abbots				✓
Hemingford Grey		✓		
Hilton				✓
Holme			✓	
Holywell-cum- Needingworth			✓	
Houghton & Wyton		✓		
Huntingdon				
<i>Huntingdon East</i>			✓	
<i>Huntingdon North</i>			✓	
<i>Huntingdon West</i>			✓	
Kimbolton & Stonely			✓	
Kings Ripton			✓	
Leighton Bromswold			✓	
Little Paxton				✓
Offord Cluny & Offord Darcy		✓		
Oldhurst				✓
Old Weston			✓	
Perry			✓	
Pidley-cum Fenton				✓
Ramsey			✓	
St Ives				
<i>St Ives East</i>				✓
<i>St Ives South</i>				✓
<i>St Ives West</i>				✓
St Neots				
<i>St Neots Eaton Ford</i>			✓	
<i>St Neots Eaton Socon</i>			✓	
<i>St Neots Eynesbury</i>			✓	
<i>St Neots Priory Park</i>			✓	
<i>St Neots East</i>			✓	
Sawtry				✓
Sibson-cum Stibbington		✓		
Somersham			✓	
Southoe & Midloe		✓		
Spaldwick			✓	
Stilton			✓	
Stow Longa			✓	
The Stukeleys		✓		
Tilbrook			✓	
Toseland		✓		
Upton & Coppingford		✓		
Upwood & The Raveleys			✓	
Warboys				✓
Waresley-cum-Tetworth		✓		
Wistow		✓		
Woodhurst				✓
Woodwalton			✓	

Wyton-on-the Hill			✓	
Yaxley			✓	
Yelling		✓		

* No Town and Parish Council elections – County Council elections only

- 2.5 It can be seen that 20 Parish Councils have elections in 2018 and would therefore be on the same cycle as the District Council. The remaining 51 Town and Parish Councils have elections on other cycles and would not currently align with the District Council elections after 2018.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 The powers in section 53 of the Act allow the District Council to change the years in which the ordinary elections of parish councillors for any parish situated in the Council's area are held and can make transitional provision for the retirement of existing parish councillors at times different from those otherwise applying.
- 3.2 Currently in 2019 there are scheduled to be elections to the European Parliament and in 2020 elections to the next UK Parliament. Town and Parish Councils facing elections in 2019 and 2020 may share their costs with another election although this is not certain.
- 3.3 If no changes are made to the current electoral cycle for Town and Parish Councils this would expose some Town and Parish Councils to higher costs for running an election. Implementing changes to coincide the Town and Parish Council elections with the District Council elections would mean that the costs would be reduced and increase the potential for a higher turnout at elections.
- 3.4 The proposals to change the dates of ordinary elections of Town and Parish Councils do not affect arrangements for by-elections if required. Unless a by-election coincides with another poll, the full costs of a by-election would be required to be met by the Town and Parish Council.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 On 18th October 2016 a consultation document seeking the views on potential changes to the electoral cycle of Town and Parish Councils in the District from May 2018 was published.
- 4.2 An analysis of the responses received has been set out at Appendix A. The majority of responses received from Town and Parish Councils supported the change to their electoral cycle so that they are held on the same date as the District Council elections in May 2018.
- 4.3 Of the nine Town and Parish Councils that responded to the consultation, St Ives Town Council argued for their electoral cycle to remain unchanged, which would see elections in 2020, 2024 etc. The reason for this request was to allow the local electorate to focus on the issues pertinent to the town. However they have acceded to make changes to their current cycle after 2020 to bring them in line with the District Council. St Neots Town Council have requested that they retain their current cycle until 2019 and then elect Town Councillors for a three year term to serve until 2022 to bring them in line with the District Council scheduled elections. Warboys Parish Council were reluctant to reduce their term of office and similarly have requested that the term of office for their existing parish councillors be extended until 2022, the next scheduled date of the District Council elections after 2018.

- 4.4 Holding all local elections on the same day reduces confusion for voters. All local elections use the same method of voting, whereas having St Ives Town Council's election at the same time as the next Police and Crime Commissioner scheduled election would mean voters in St Ives having to use two different methods of voting on the same day. It is preferable to retain the cycle of Town and Parish council elections on the same day to ensure that costs continue to be shared and turnout maintained.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As referred to in paragraph 2.3 under section 53 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the District Council has the power to change the dates of parish elections if it has altered its own cycle.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial implications for the District Council. The main reasons for Town and Parish Councils to align their elections with those of the District Council are around that the costs could continue to be shared.

7. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 7.1 As a result of the Council moving from elections by thirds to whole Council elections from May 2018, it has been proposed to alter the cycle of all Town and Parish Councils to bring them in line with the District Council elections. With alternative proposals for St Ives Town Council, St Neots Town Council and Warboys Parish Council, the Council set the date of ordinary elections for all Town and Parish Councils as 2018 and every four years thereafter.

8. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix A - Responses to Consultation from Town and Parish Councils

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Electoral Cycle of Town and Parish Councils in Huntingdonshire – Consultation Document October 2016

CONTACT OFFICER

Lisa Jablonska, Elections and Democratic Services Manager
Tel No: (01480) 388004
Email: lisa.jablonska@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX A - RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION FROM TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS

Town/Parish Council	Change to 2018	No Change	Alternative
St Ives		Remain on current cycle of elections until 2020	Request remain on current cycle until 2020 and councillors serve a 2 year term until 2022.
Warboys			Request extension of term of office until 2022
Earith	Support		
Holywell-cum-Needingworth	Support		
Somersham	Support		
Ramsey	Support		
St Neots			Request remain on current cycle until 2019 and councillors serve a 3 year term until 2022
Great Paxton	Support as scheduled in 2018 anyway		
Toseland	Support as scheduled in 2018 anyway		