

Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee



Report of Head of Legal and Democratic

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To: COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE AND ELECTORAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

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Community Governance Review – review of the size of Kidmore End Parish Council

Recommendation:

1. To reduce the number of parish councillors for Kidmore End Parish Council from 12 to 10.
2. To authorise the head of legal and democratic to make a reorganisation of community governance order to implement the changes agreed by the committee.

Purpose of Report

1. To invite the committee to make a final decision in respect of its community governance review of the number of parish councillors for Kidmore End Parish Council.

Strategic Objectives

2. Community governance reviews contribute to the council's strategic objective of building thriving communities.

Background

3. This report represents the final element of the community governance review that the committee commenced in 2017. The committee agreed, at its meeting on 6 March 2017, to undertake a community governance review (CGR) of Kidmore End Parish Council in response to a request from the parish council to reduce the

number of parish councillors from 12 to 10 to address the reduced electorate that had existed since 1977 when the boundary of the parish was changed as a result of the transfer of properties to Reading Borough Council. To date no governance review had been undertaken to address this change. The terms of reference for the review were published in April 2017.

4. At its meeting on 10 July 2017 the committee agreed to consult on a proposal to reduce the number of parish councillors from 12 to 10 on the grounds that this number better reflected the size of the electorate and the parish council had consistently attracted sufficient councillors to fill 10 seats.

Consultation

5. The first stage consultation sought views on the number of parish councillors for Kidmore End Parish Council. The consultation took place between April 2017 and 30 June 2017. Only one response was received from Kidmore End Parish Council which supported a reduction in the size of the parish council from 12 to 10 councillors.
6. The committee agreed draft proposals at its meeting on 10 July 2017 and initiated a second period of consultation until 30 November 2017. Details of the proposal were circulated via the parish newsletter, website and noticeboards. Kidmore End Parish Council, at its meeting on 20 September 2017, resolved “that the District Council be advised that it remains the wish of the Council that the number of parish councillors for the Parish be reduced to 10”. No other responses were received.

Final recommendations

7. The committee agreed to consult on a proposal to reduce the number of parish councillors for Kidmore End Parish Council from 12 to 10. No views have been expressed against this proposal and officers therefore recommend that the committee confirm this arrangement for the elections in May 2019.
8. Once the committee has taken a final decision, work will commence to make the necessary order to bring the change into effect in time for the 2019 parish council elections. Council is invited to authorise the head of legal and democratic to undertake this work.

Financial Implications

9. Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, local authorities have responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews. The process is prescribed and involves officer time and other associated costs, such as postage and printing. These costs have been met from within existing budgets as will the cost of making the legal order.

Legal Implications

10. The Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee has delegated authority to deal with all matters relating to parish community governance reviews.
11. The review was undertaken in accordance with the requirements laid down in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the joint

guidance on community governance reviews published by the Communities and Local Government Department and LGBCE in 2010.

12. The council will implement any changes by making a reorganisation of community governance order.

Risks

13. There is a risk that someone could challenge the outcome of the review through judicial review. Council officers have mitigated against this by ensuring that the council follows the requirements laid down in the 2007 Act and guidance.

Conclusion

14. The council has completed its community governance review of the size of Kidmore End Parish Council. The committee is recommended to reduce the allocation of parish councillors from 12 to 10, which is considered reasonable and sustainable for the size of the parish, and to authorise the head of legal and democratic to make the necessary order to implement the changes.

Background Papers

Reports (agenda item 7) to Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee on 6 March 2017 and 10 July 2017.