



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 28th September 2023

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL

15th August 2023 at 10.00 am

Present:

Councillor Westcott (in the Chair)
Councillors Astbury, Farren, Sandford, Shutt and K. Swinburn.

Officers in attendance:

- Laura Cowie (Elections Manager)
- Stephen McGrath (Strategic Special Projects Lead – Communities)
- Jo Paterson (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Sophie Pickerden (Scrutiny and Committee Support Officer)
- Eve Richardson Smith (Service Manager Consultancy and Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Also in attendance:

- Councillor Ron Shepherd (Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities)
- Councillor Stewart Swinburn, (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport)
- Tom Clay (Chief Executive of ERNLLCA (East Riding and Northern Lincolnshire Local Councils Association))
- Andy Hopkins (Town Clerk Immingham Town Council)

There were no members of the press present.

SPC.15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from this meeting were received from Councillor Batson.

SPC.16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in relation to any items on the agenda for this meeting.

SPC.17 PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The panel considered a report from the Assistant Chief Executive which advised the panel of the submissions received during the first phase of public consultation on the Parish Council Community Governance Review.

Mr. McGrath set out the background to the report and stated that at Council on 25th May 2023, members had resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review covering all parishes in North East Lincolnshire. This report now outlined the feedback received from the consultation. The panel were now being asked to consider the consultation feedback and determine if any changes were required.

The Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities asked whether consideration to the new Local Plan had been factored into the review. It was confirmed that where planning consent had already been given, this had been taken into account.

Further discussion ensued around housing allocations and boundary changes.

The Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities highlighted the difficulties with quoracy with those smaller parish councils and asked if this had been considered. Mr. McGrath responded that the report set out the parish council membership requirements.

The Chair queried whether there was anything the Council could do to support those parish councils that were struggling with membership i.e. supporting them to become more user friendly. Mr. McGrath advised members to contact the Democratic and Scrutiny Team Manager or alternatively ERNLLCA regarding support to the parish councils.

Mr. Clay advised the panel of how budgets for parish councils were set and how they could be utilised. It was also noted that some parish councils did not have a budget.

Mr. McGrath took members through each individual parish council and the feedback from the consultation.

Ashby Cum Fenby Parish Council

Mr. McGrath outlined the feedback from the consultation. The panel considered there were no known issues with the parish council and both respondents felt no change was required.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That no changes to existing governance or electoral arrangements be made to Ashby Cum Fenby Parish Council.

Barnoldby Le Beck Parish Council

Mr. McGrath outlined the feedback from the consultation and highlighted that there had been a request in the feedback regarding Waltham Parish Council to consider the boundary issue between Barnoldby Le Beck and Waltham Parish Councils. Mr McGrath displayed on the presentation slides the boundary between Barnoldby Le Beck and Waltham.

The Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities noted that a further comment in Bradley Parish Council had been made regarding a change in the parish boundary, in view of extensive development at the Barnoldby end of Bradley Road. He further highlighted the need to consider housing development in Bradley which as a result affected Waltham.

The Chair suggested reviewing Barnoldby Le Beck, Bradley and Waltham Parish Councils boundaries together given their close proximity and the current issues. Mr McGrath advised that, if members were minded to propose any change to the boundaries, members would need to specify where the boundary would be before it was consulted on.

The Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities further warned of the issue of future development and considered there was an imbalance within this electoral boundary.

Members considered that there had been no responses received to the consultation regarding this parish council and that there were no known issues with the parish council.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That no changes be made to existing governance or electoral arrangements for Barnoldby Le Beck Parish Council.

Bradley Parish Council

Mr McGrath outlined the feedback from the consultation noting that four out of five respondents had recommended a change in the parish boundary.

Members explored the options for a change in the parish boundary, however they felt it was not necessary at this point in time, although it was requested that this be kept under review.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That no changes be made to existing governance or electoral arrangements for Bradley Parish Council.

Brigsley Parish Council

Mr McGrath outlined the feedback from the consultation.

Members considered there were no known issues with the parish council.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That no changes be made to existing governance or electoral arrangements for Brigsley Parish Council.

Great Coates Village Council

Mr. McGrath outlined the feedback from the consultation.

Mr McGrath noted there had been a history of resident dissatisfaction with the governance of the village council since the Great Coates Community Governance Review was undertaken in 2012.

Members considered the request to change the parish council boundary but given this related to one comment only and none from the parish council members, they were minded to leave the boundary unchanged.

A discussion took place around budgets and parish precepts.

In response to concerns, Mr Clay advised of options available if residents were not happy with how a particular parish council was run, such as external audits and standing for election to get change.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That no changes be made to existing governance or electoral arrangements for Great Coates Village Council.

Habrough Parish council

Mr McGrath outlined the feedback from the consultation noting that concerns had been raised around heavy traffic due to a ban on heavy vehicles in nearby Ulceby.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport advised that in terms of traffic issues in Habrough, various measures had been put in place to mitigate the traffic problems due to its close proximity to the oil refineries.

Members considered there were no known issues with this parish council and that feedback showed that the parish council was valued by the respondents and the boundary was considered satisfactory.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That no changes be made to existing governance or electoral arrangements for Habrough Parish Council.

Healing Parish Council

Mr McGrath outlined the feedback from the consultation.

Members considered there was no known issues with this parish council.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That no changes be made to existing governance or electoral arrangements for Healing Parish Council.

Humberston Village Council

Mr McGrath outlined the feedback from the consultation.

Members discussed the number of parish councillors, it was noted that the National Association of Local Councils recommended 13 Parish Councillors. The considerable development underway in Humberston was noted but members recommended that the number of parish councillors remain unchanged given the current shortage of parish councillors.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That no changes be made to the existing governance or electoral arrangements for Humberston Parish Council.

Immingham Town Council

Mr. McGrath outlined the feedback from the consultation noting the need to address electoral imbalance between the Town Wards. Members were referred to page 17 within the report that highlighted the current position with the three wards in Immingham.

Mr. Hopkins was invited to make his representations to the panel.

Mr. Hopkins considered there was a definite need to change the number of councillors within the Bluestone Ward to deal with the matter. Alternatively, the town of Immingham could be split into two wards defining the North and South using Pelham Road as a divide and evening up the number of voters and Town Councillors, having more geographical relevance and taking into account the new/proposed developments. With regard to the number of councillors in the town, the Council had decided that the current number of 15 was the right amount and therefore did not suggest any change. This would be 7 Town Councillors in North Ward and 8 in South Ward.

A short debate ensued with members considering that the proposal from Immingham Town Council to change the Town Ward made sense and it was easier for electors to understand which Town Councillors represented them.

Members supported the idea of having 2 wards north and south using Pelham Road as the divide.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That no change be made to the existing governance and electoral arrangements for Immingham Town Council; except that the Town Wards be changed to a North and South split, as per option 2 of the report now submitted, with 7 Town Councillors representing the North Town Ward and 8 Town Councillors representing the South Town Ward. These changes would be implemented with effect from the next full Town Council elections.

Irby Parish Council

Mr McGrath outlined the feedback from the consultation.

A member considered it would be useful to have the details of the budget allowance for each parish council. Mr McGrath advised that parish council precept figures could be included within the report that was submitted to Council in September.

Mr Clay explained how parish council precepts were set by individual parish councils and how the money could be spent. Mr Hopkins added that transparency and sharing information was key to those decisions. In terms of sharing information, the best forum for this would be the Town and Parish Council Liaison Committee administered by the Council.

Members also noted that Irby had not been administratively operational for a couple of years. However more recently four individuals had joined the parish council and a meeting would be taking place shortly assisted by ERNLLCA.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That no changes be made to the governance or electoral arrangements for Irby Parish Council.

Laceby Parish Council

Mr. McGrath outlined the feedback from the consultation.

Members debated the various views about the parish council but considered some of the negative comments could be resolved by improved communication with local residents. The panel further asked that the views be shared with the parish council.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That no changes be made to existing governance or electoral arrangements for Laceby Parish Council.

New Waltham Parish Council

Mr. McGrath outlined the feedback from the consultation.

Members noted the differing views about the parish council and felt that some of the negative comments related to the lack of candidates at nominations rather than concerns regarding governance. Members also noted the urban sprawl, considerable development and loss of the village identity within New Waltham. The panel therefore decided not to consider reducing the membership of the parish council at present given that more people may choose to stand for election as the size of the community developed. It was noted this would be monitored.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That no change to existing governance or electoral arrangements be made to New Waltham Parish Council.

Stallingborough Parish Council

Mr. McGrath outlined the feedback from the consultation.

The panel noted that both respondents were happy with the operation of the parish council. In particular, one member commented that Stallingborough Parish Council was doing an excellent job.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That no changes be made to existing governance or electoral arrangements for Stallingborough Parish Council.

Waltham Parish Council

Mr. McGrath outlined the feedback from the consultation.

Members were advised that there had been one respondent within Barnoldby le Beck that considered they were part of Waltham. Mr McGrath outlined on the map where this resident was located and the boundaries.

Members discussed whether the boundary should be moved and the various factors that would need to be considered.

The panel further noted responses for and against the parish council. With regard to the request to change the boundary, only one household had requested the change. The panel were referred to the map on the presentation slides and given that no other households or the parish council had requested the change then the existing boundary should remain unchanged.

The Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities raised concerns around eroding the strategic gap between Barnoldby Le Beck and Waltham, noting that the same was occurring between Scartho and Waltham and he warned of the urban spread of houses.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That no changes be made to existing governance or electoral arrangements for Waltham Parish Council.

Requests for New Parish Councils

Mr. McGrath outlined the feedback from the consultation and referred members to Appendix 2 within the report that highlighted requests for new parish councils.

Members considered the various requests for new parish councils. It was noted that four individuals had requested a parish council for Scartho Ward and some individuals had requested a parish council for Cleethorpes.

Members debated whether Scartho should have a parish council and the Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities gave some further background to the matter. A further discussion ensued with some members considering that forming a parish council for Scartho was just

adding another layer of bureaucracy to things. It was considered that the request for Scartho to form a parish was too late as Scartho had now already become a suburb of Grimsby. In terms of Cleethorpes, members did not consider any action be taken given that only 3 respondents had requested this out of a population of nearly 30,000 people.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That based on the feedback, no new parish councils be set up at present.

General Feedback

Mr. McGrath outlined the feedback from the consultation and referred members to general comments received at Appendix 2 of the report.

Members discussed the general feedback provided, noting that there were no issues raised that had not already been considered.

In concluding, Mr McGrath set out the general recommendations within the report.

It was proposed and seconded the general recommendations be supported.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

1. That Council receives and notes the feedback received during the first consultation phase of the parish council community governance review as set out in Appendix 2 and 3 of the report now submitted.
2. That Council instructs the Assistant Chief Executive to forward any parish council related issues raised during the review to the relevant parish clerk for their attention.
3. That the Monitoring Officer be asked to raise any governance issues highlighted during the first consultation phase with those parish councils affected.

SPC.18 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED - That the press and public be excluded for the following item on the grounds that discussion of the following business was likely to disclose exempt information within paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

SPC.19 PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The panel considered Appendix 3 to the report considered at SPC.17.

RESOLVED - That the content of the appendix be noted.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 11.43 a.m.