

### North East Lincolnshire Council

#### Parish Council Community Governance Review

##### Analysis of Stage 1 Consultation Phase

### **1. Background to the Review**

- 1.1 On 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023, North East Lincolnshire Council resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review (CGR) covering all parish councils in North East Lincolnshire.
- 1.2 A CGR is a legal process whereby Principal Councils can create parish councils; review and change parish boundaries; and, in extreme cases, abolish parish councils. The Council must ensure that community governance in the area under review reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area and is effective and convenient. It is important that recommendations made through a CGR should bring about improved community engagement, more cohesive communities, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services. This means making sure that electors and other interested groups have a say in how local services are delivered in their area.
- 1.3 The Council is required to ensure that community governance and electoral arrangements within the area under review will:-
- Be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area.
  - Consider what community governance arrangements are effective and convenient to the community in that area.
  - Consider what other arrangements there could be for the purpose of community governance or engagement.
  - Consider the size, population and boundaries of the local community or parishes.

#### **Scope of the Review**

- 1.4 At Council on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023, Members agreed the following scope for the review:
- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes.
  - The naming of parishes and the style (i.e., whether to call it a town council or village council, etc.) of new parishes.
  - The electoral arrangements for parishes – the ordinary year of election, the size of the council, the number of councillors to be elected and parish warding.
  - Grouping parishes under a common parish council, or de-grouping parishes.

#### **Governance of a Community Governance Review**

- 1.5 Chapter 3 of Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 devolves the power to take decisions about matters such as the creation of parishes and their electoral arrangements from the Secretary of State to Principal Authorities in local government, such as North East Lincolnshire Council.
- 1.6 The review will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and have regard to [Guidance on Community Governance Reviews](#) issued by the Department of Communities and Local

Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010. Members are advised to read the guidance in its entirety.

- 1.7 This guidance supports the 2007 Act, requiring that local people are consulted, and that their views are taken into account during the CGR. Decisions made by the Council must be based on evidence submitted through the CGR consultation process. Some key parts of the guidance are set out below (numbers are paragraph number in the guidance):

58. It is clear that how people perceive where they live – their neighbourhoods – is significant in considering the identities and interests of local communities and depends on a range of circumstances, often best described by local residents. Some of the factors which help define neighbourhoods are the geography of an area, the make-up of the local community, sense of identity, and whether people live in a rural, suburban, or urban area.

59. Parishes in many cases may be able to meet the concept of neighbourhoods in an area. Parishes should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity. Like neighbourhoods, the feeling of local community and the wishes of local inhabitants are primary considerations.

- 1.8 It is important to recognise that North East Lincolnshire Council will decide community governance arrangements. Therefore, where difficult decisions must be made, consideration must be given to opposing and differing views in light of legislation, best practice and official guidance. Best practice guidance includes, for example, using identifiable markers for boundaries (e.g., rivers, roads, edge of properties, etc). Essentially, proposals for change should first identify the identities and interests of the communities, and then consider the governance arrangements for that area.
- 1.9 Members are invited to note that the course of appeal is by way of Judicial Review. This mechanism is open to local stakeholders if there is a perceived failure in the decision-making process, for example, a failure to consult properly, or a failure not to take into account relevant consideration, or conversely irrelevant issues are taken into account in reaching a decision. It is important to ensure that community governance decisions can be justified both evidentially and procedurally to avoid potential legal challenge, which would present significant financial and reputational risks.
- 1.10 It is also important to recognise that the number of responses received is not necessarily strong evidence on the strength of feeling either for or against any particular viewpoint. It is true that stakeholders preferring the status quo may not make representations until and unless there is a suggestion of significant change that they would otherwise oppose. Therefore, where little response has been received, it cannot be assumed that local people are in favour of supporting the change proposed by a few submissions; they may well currently be unaware of those suggestions and happy with no change. That is why the second round of formal consultation is important, and why targeted requests for responses are recommended in areas where changes are proposed.

### **Parish Council Boundaries**

- 1.11 The Council will consider any requests to amend current parish council boundaries, including creating/amending/removing parish Wards. Guidance recommends that parish boundaries use recognisable barriers (e.g., rivers, roads, etc) if they are being amended, wherever possible.

- 1.12 In reaching conclusions on boundaries between parishes, the Council will take into account community identity and interests in an area and will consider whether any particular ties or linkages might be broken by the drawing of particular boundaries. Equally, the Council, during its consultations will be mindful that proposals which are intended to reflect community identity, and local linkages should be justified in terms of sound and demonstrable evidence of those identities and linkages.
- 1.13 In any event, the Council will endeavour to select boundaries that are, and are likely to remain, easily identifiable as well as taking into account any local ties which might be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.

### **Parish Council Membership**

- 1.14 Legislation sets out the following limits for a parish council:
- Where the number of electors is 1,000 or more – a parish council must be created.
  - Where the number of electors is 151-999, a parish council may be created, with a parish meeting being an alternative form of governance.
  - Where the number of electors is 150 or fewer, a parish council should not generally be created.

### **What Considerations Cover the Number of Parish Councillors?**

- 1.15 Whilst the number of councillors for each parish council must not be less than five, there is no maximum number. By law, the Council must have regard to the following factors when considering the number of Councillors to be elected for each parish:
- The number of local government electors for the parish.
  - Any change in that number which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day the review starts.
  - The Council will also have regard to the National Association of Local Council recommendations set out in the table below.

<b>Electors</b>	<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Electors</b>	<b>Councillors</b>
Up to 900	<b>5-7</b>	Up to 10,400	<b>17</b>
Up to 1,400	<b>8</b>	Up to 11,900	<b>18</b>
Up to 2,000	<b>9</b>	Up to 13,500	<b>19</b>
Up to 2,700	<b>10</b>	Up to 15,200	<b>20</b>
Up to 3,500	<b>11</b>	Up to 17,000	<b>21</b>
Up to 4,400	<b>12</b>	Up to 18,900	<b>22</b>
Up to 5,400	<b>13</b>	Up to 20,900	<b>23</b>
Up to 6,500	<b>14</b>	Up to 23,000	<b>24</b>
Up to 7,700	<b>15</b>	Up to 45,000	<b>25</b>
Up to 9,000	<b>16</b>		

### **The Ordinary Year of Election**

- 1.16 The Local Government Act 1972 states that the ordinary election of parish councils shall take place in 1975 and every fourth year thereafter (i.e., 2023, 2027, etc.). The Government has indicated that it wants a parish council electoral cycle to coincide with the cycle for the Principal Council so that the costs can be shared.
- 1.17 If the review finds that it is appropriate to change the number of Parish Councillors, the proposed changes will come into effect at the next scheduled parish council elections in May 2027, unless the Council chooses to hold whole council elections. In that

eventuality, the parish council elections would be held on the same day at the North East Lincolnshire Council elections in May 2026 and every four years thereafter.

## **2. Consultation Process**

2.1 The initial consultation took place between 2<sup>nd</sup> June and 28<sup>th</sup> July 2023. The following methods of consultation were undertaken:

- Open consultation on the Council's website
- Article about review on the inside page of a NELC brochure sent to every household during early June.
- Various social media posts
- E-Mail to NELC Councillors inviting them to respond to the consultation
- E-Mail to Parish Clerks inviting a formal response on behalf of the parish council or from individual parish councillors. They were also offered a visit to talk about the review in public.
- Parish Clerks were also asked to publicise the review on their websites and notice boards.
- E-Mail to NELC consultation database
- Published in the Sector Support weekly email newsletters – sent to all voluntary and community sector organisations in North East Lincolnshire.
- E-Mail to key stakeholders including MPs inviting responses.
- E-Mail to ERNLLCA asking them to respond.
- Copy of documentation on deposit for public inspection in Municipal Offices.

2.2 Officers attending a public meeting at Immingham Town Council and Waltham Parish Council to talk about the review and answer questions from Parish Councillors and members of the public.

2.3 100 completed consultation responses were received, and these are set out in full in Appendices 2 and 3. It should be noted that multiple submissions raised issues regarding parish council business and/or other matters, which are outside the remit of this review. Any issues relating to parish council business will be forwarded to the relevant parish council for attention.

## **3. Feedback from Consultation and Officer Recommendations**

### **3.1 Ashby Cum Fenby Parish Council**

Electorate: 199 (1st August 2023 register)

Recommended Number of Parish Councillors: 5 to 7

Number of Parish Councillors: 6

Feedback from Consultation: Both responders were supportive of the parish council and felt no change was required.

**Scrutiny Panel Recommendation to Council:**

### **3.2 Barnoldby Le Beck Parish Council**

Electorate: 321 (1st August 2023 register)

Recommended Number of Parish Councillors: 5 to 7

Number of Parish Councillors: 6

Feedback from Consultation: None received. However, there has been a request in feedback regarding Waltham Parish Council to consider the boundary issue between Barnoldby Le Beck and Waltham Parish Councils.

**Scrutiny Panel Recommendation to Council:**

**3.3 Bradley Parish Council**

Electorate: 195 (1st August 2023 register)  
Recommended Number of Parish Councillors: 5 to 7  
Number of Parish Councillors: 6

Feedback from Consultation: All five responders felt that the parish council was operating very well and most felt the parish council should not be amalgamated with another parish council. Four out of the five responders recommended a change in the parish boundary. In view of extensive development at the Barnoldby end of Bradley Road, they felt it might be better to move the parish boundary to the Grimsby town side of Bradley Woods.

**Scrutiny Panel Recommendation to Council**

**3.4 Brigsley Parish Council**

Electorate: 307 (1st August 2023 register)  
Recommended Number of Parish Councillors: 5 to 7  
Number of Parish Councillors: 7

Feedback from Consultation: The only responder felt that the parish council boundary was satisfactory and that residents were updated about village plans through the parish council website. No adverse comments were raised about the performance of the parish council, albeit the responder stated that villagers are not consulted on matters relating to the village.

**Scrutiny Panel Recommendation to Council:**

**3.5 Great Coates Village Council**

Electorate: 1,103 (1st August 2023 register)  
Recommended Number of Parish Councillors: 8  
Number of Parish Councillors: 9

Feedback from Consultation: All three respondents expressed concern about the operation of the village council, with two suggesting that it should be abolished. A comment was made by one responder which suggested that Aylesby Park should not be included in the Great Coates boundary, just the village itself.

**Scrutiny Panel Recommendation to Council:**

**3.6 Habrough Parish Council**

Electorate: 497 (1st August 2023 register)  
Recommended Number of Parish Councillors: 5 to 7  
Number of Parish Councillors: 7

Feedback from Consultation: The major of respondents were happy with the operation of the parish council. Some issues relating to parish council business were raised, and these will be forwarded to the parish council for action. Everyone felt that the parish council boundary was fine.

**Scrutiny Panel Recommendation to Council:**

3.7 **Healing Parish Council**

Electorate: 2,515 (1st August 2023 register)  
Recommended Number of Parish Councillors: 10  
Number of Parish Councillors: 10

Feedback from Consultation: Four respondents felt that the Parish Council was doing a good job, albeit there were some issues regarding footpaths. These issues will be brought to the attention of the parish council. There were no requests to change the parish boundaries. The Parish Council was happy with the current arrangements and was hopeful of recruiting an additional Parish Councillor in September.

**Scrutiny Panel Recommendation to Council:**

3.8 **Humberston Village Council**

Electorate: 5,444 (1st August 2023 register)  
Recommended Number of Parish Councillors: 13  
Number of Parish Councillors: 12

Feedback from Consultation: A number of responders highlighted concerns regarding membership of the parish council. It is understood that the parish council currently only has 7 councillors. With the electorate, the National Association of Local Councils recommends 13 Parish Councillors. With considerable development in the parish, it is recommended that the number of parish councillors remains unchanged, given the current shortage of parish councillors. Whilst several people highlighted the positive work of the parish council, some governance issues were highlighted.

**Scrutiny Panel Recommendation to Council:**

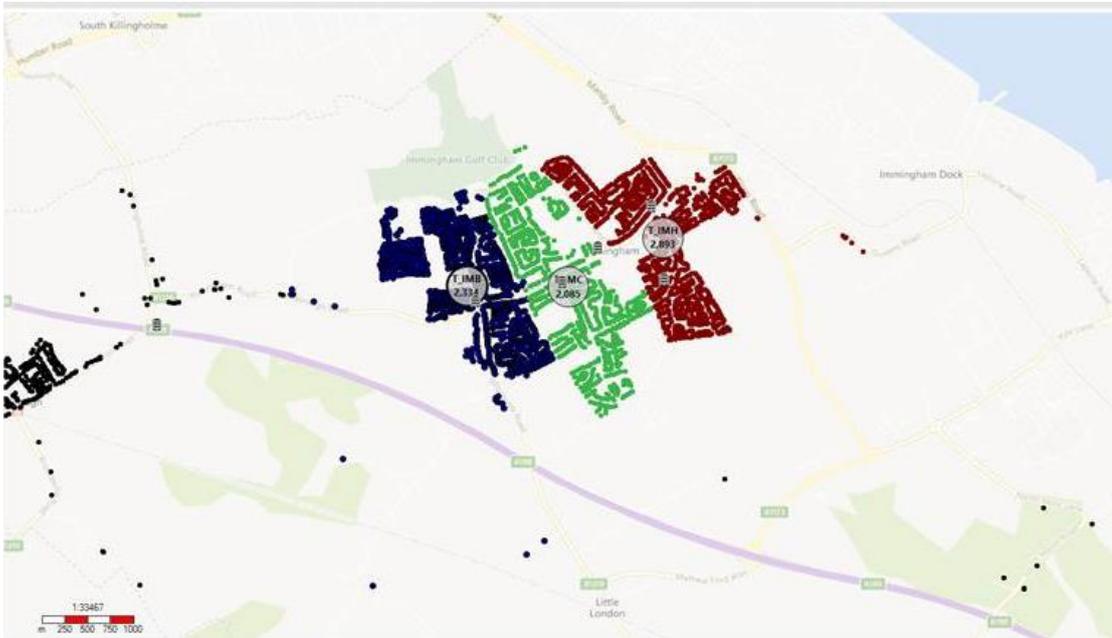
3.9 **Immingham Town Council**

Electorate: 7,321 (1st August 2023 register)  
Recommended Number of Town Councillors: 15  
Number of Town Councillors: 15 (split into 3 Town Wards: Bluestone Ward – 3 Councillors; Central Ward – 6; and Humber Ward – 6)

Feedback from Consultation: There is a mixture of views about the Town Council. Some respondents feel it is doing a good job, especially In Bloom. Others feel that it is not performing well, costing too much and should be abolished. Several respondents reported local matters which will be forwarded to the Town Clerk for attention. All but one respondent felt that the Town Council boundary was correct. The final respondent felt that there could be closer working, or a possible merger, with the two neighbouring parish councils.

Officer Comments: There is an electoral in-balance between the Town Wards:

	Bluestone	Central	Humber
Electorate: 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2023	2,338	2,088	2,895
No of Councillors	3	6	6
Average Number of Electors per Councillor	779	348	482



**Option 1: Change Number of Town Councillors in Town Wards**

	Bluestone	Central	Humber
Electorate: 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2023	2,338	2,088	2,895
No of Councillors	5	5	6
Average Number of Electors per Councillor	467	417	482

**Option 2: Change Town Wards**

The proposal is to remove the current Town Wards and replace them with two new Town Wards north and south of Pelham/Habrough Road. The figures for electorate below incorporate potential development in the town in the next five years:



	North	South
Electorate: 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2023	3769	4,108
No of Councillors	7	8
Average Number of Electors per Councillor	538	513

Immingham Town Council is supportive of option 2 and would like to attend the Scrutiny Panel meeting to present their case.

The view of the Councillors is that 2 wards, North & South using Pelham Road as the divide, would suit the Town better, evening up the number of voters, and Councillors, having more geographical relevance and taking into account the new/proposed developments. With regard to the number of councillors in the Parish, the Council decided that the current number of 15 the right amount and therefore do not suggest any change. This would be 7 Town Councillors in North Ward and 8 in South Ward.

**Scrutiny Panel Recommendation to Council:**

**3.10 Irby Parish Council**

Electorate: 102 (1st August 2023 register)  
 Recommended Number of Parish Councillors: 5 to 7  
 Number of Parish Councillors: 5

Feedback from Consultation: None received.

**Scrutiny Panel Recommendation to Council:**

3.11 **Laceby Parish Council**

Electorate: 2,687 (1st August 2023 register)  
Recommended Number of Parish Councillors: 10  
Number of Parish Councillors: 10

Feedback from Consultation: There are conflicting views with two respondents unhappy with the parish council and two others thinking it is effective. All respondents were happy with the current parish boundaries. A number of ideas and issues were raised through the consultation which should be forwarded on to the parish council for their attention.

**Scrutiny Panel Recommendation to Council:**

3.12 **New Waltham Parish Council**

Electorate: 4,542 (1st August 2023 register)  
Recommended Number of Parish Councillors: 13  
Number of Parish Councillors: 15

Feedback from Consultation: The six respondents are split equally regarding their views on the effectiveness of the parish council and also regarding changes to the parish boundaries. The local issues raised during the consultation will need to be sent to the Parish Council for their attention.

**Scrutiny Panel Recommendation to Council:**

3.13 **Stallingborough Parish Council**

Electorate: 1,069 (1st August 2023 register)  
Recommended Number of Parish Councillors: 8  
Number of Parish Councillors: 9

Feedback from Consultation: The two respondents were both very happy with the operation of the Parish Council. They felt that no changes should be made to the parish boundaries.

**Scrutiny Panel Recommendation to Council:**

3.14 **Waltham Parish Council**

Electorate: 5,089 (1st August 2023 register)  
Recommended Number of Parish Councillors: 14  
Number of Parish Councillors: 15

Feedback from Consultation: There was a slight majority of residents in favour of the parish council than against. Whilst most felt the parish boundaries should remain, there was a respondent who raised the boundary issue on Bradley Road where houses were split between Waltham and Barnoldby Le Beck. Another queried why there needed to be three parish councils is such close proximity.

**Scrutiny Panel Recommendation to Council:**

**3.15 Requests for New Parish Councils**

Feedback from Consultation: The requests for new parish councils and why the respondents feel these are needed are set out in Appendix 2.

**Scrutiny Panel Recommendation to Council:**

**3.16 General Feedback**

Feedback from Consultation: The general comments received are set out in Appendix 2.

**Scrutiny Panel Recommendation to Council:**

**GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

In addition to the above recommendations on each of the parish councils, Members are asked to make the following recommendations to Council on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

**That Council:**

- 1. Receives and notes the feedback received during the first consultation phase of the parish council community governance review as set out in Appendices 2 and 3.**
- 2. Instructs the Assistant Chief Executive to forward any parish council related issues raised during the review to the relevant Parish Clerk for their attention.**