

Cherwell District Council

Council

17 July 2017

Community Governance Review Update

Report of Assistant Director – Transformational Governance

This report is public

Purpose of report

To consider the draft recommendations from the Community Governance Review (CGR) Working group, ahead of the second consultation phase which will start on 31 July 2017.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended to approve the following for consultation:

- 1.1 The separation of the existing Upper Heyford Parish into two, as shown on the map at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The parishes being named Upper Heyford and Heyford Park.
- 1.3 Upper Heyford Parish retaining six parish councillors, and Heyford Park having seven parish councillors.
- 1.4 The number of Parish Councillors for Fritwell being increased by one, from six to seven.
- 1.5 The number of Parish Councillors for Stratton Audley being increased by two, from five to seven.
- 1.6 The number of Parish Councillors for Tadmarton remaining at seven.
- 1.7 The number of Parish Councillors for Weston-on-the-Green being increased by one, from seven to eight.
- 1.8 The number of Parish Councillors for Yarnton being increased by one, from nine to 10.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 In December 2016, Council approved a timetable for a limited scope Community Governance Review (CGR) to be carried out, focussing on a possible split of Upper Heyford Parish and requests from five parish councils for a review of their number of Parish Councillors.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 A consultation document was produced regarding the request to split Upper Heyford, and delivered to every address in the existing parish (approximately 1000 households). The consultation ran from 16 January to 17 March 2017, and residents were able to respond on paper or online.
- 3.2 The results of the consultation were reported to Council at the annual meeting on [16 May 2017](#)
- 3.3 The CGR working group have now met and considered the consultation responses, which have informed the recommendations to Council.
- 3.4 The recommendations, if approved, will form the basis of the second consultation stage, which is scheduled to start at the end of July. For Upper Heyford a specific document will again be produced and delivered to each household in the existing parish, asking residents to respond to the recommendations.

Upper Heyford

- 3.5 Regarding Upper Heyford, the responses received during the first consultation indicated clear support for the separation of the parish.
- 3.6 The working group therefore recommend that that the separation of the parish go ahead, on the following basis:

The existing parish of Upper Heyford being split into two parishes
The 'village' parish retaining the name Upper Heyford, with six Parish Councillors
The 'park' parish being named Heyford Park, and a parish council being established with seven Parish Councillors

- 3.7 With regards to boundaries, it is necessary for the Council to consider a new boundary for the proposed Heyford Park parish, as the existing boundary through the middle of the airbase is no longer suitable.
- 3.8 CGR guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government states that "as far as boundaries between parishes are concerned, these should reflect the 'no-man's land' between communities represented by areas of low population or barriers such as rivers, roads or railways. They need to be, and be likely to remain, easily identifiable"
- 3.9 Having considered the guidance, the working group feel that the logical position for the boundary of the new Heyford Park parish is the outer perimeter of the airfield, as indicated on the map attached at Appendix 1.

- 3.10 The western edge of the airfield still has the security fencing in place, providing a clear visual reference as to the position of the boundary. The northern edge of the airfield carries a well-established tree line, that is clearly visible from the Somerton Road, providing a further strong visible boundary.
- 3.11 With regards to the position of the boundary between the village and park parishes, it is proposed to follow the route of the historic 'Portway' public footpath, which runs alongside the airfield. Whilst it is currently overgrown, it offers a clear route between the parishes, with the airfield fence on one side and field boundary on the other.
- 3.12 The working group have considered the concerns raised by the Parish Council and residents of Somerton who responded to the first consultation stage, due to being immediate neighbours of the parish.
- 3.13 The concerns from Somerton regard the implication of the boundary being moved to the outer edge of the airfield. The feeling is that this change would reduce the buffer area between Heyford Park and Somerton parish, and give the Dorchester group too much control of the Heyford Park parish area.
- 3.14 The working group feel that as the airfield is already in the complete ownership of the Dorchester Group, a change in the position of the parish boundary will not make any difference to the future plans of the group.
- 3.15 Part 1 of the [Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031](#) (paras C.284 – C.293) specifically discusses Upper Heyford and the former airbase. Page 258 of the document states that "In order to avoid development on the most historically significant and sensitive parts of the site, new development is to be focused to the south of the flying field and on limited greenfield land to the south of Camp Road (and one greenfield area to the north of Camp Road, east of Larsen Road)"
- 3.16 This, along with various legal agreements that are in place to prevent access to the site from anywhere other than the existing Camp Road entrances, mean that the working group are content that changing the boundary will not adversely impact on either Somerton or Ardley.

Review of Parish Councillor numbers – Fritwell Parish

- 3.17 Fritwell Parish Council contacted officers and requested that consideration be given to increasing the number of councillors for the parish from six to seven.
- 3.18 The justification for the request is the increase in electorate during the 1990s, when significant development took place within the parish.
- 3.19 The last parish election for Fritwell was held in 2015, and there were seven candidates for the six seats.
- 3.20 The electorate for Fritwell on 1 December 2016 (annual publication of the new Electoral Register) was 548. Guidance from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) recommends a parish council of seven where the electorate is up to 900.
- 3.21 On this basis, the working group recommend that the increase of one be approved for consultation.

Review of Parish Councillor numbers – Stratton Audley

- 3.22 Stratton Audley Parish Council contacted officers and requested that consideration be given to increasing the number of councillors for the parish from five to seven.
- 3.23 The justification for the request is the increasing amount of work that the parish undertake, and a larger council would also provide resilience in the event of holidays or sickness.
- 3.24 The last parish election for Stratton Audley was held in 2014, and there were five candidates for the five seats.
- 3.25 The electorate for Stratton Audley on 1 December 2016 was 349. Guidance from NALC recommends a parish council of seven where the electorate is up to 900.
- 3.26 On this basis, the working group recommend that the increase of two be approved for consultation.

Review of Parish Councillor numbers – Tadmarton

- 3.27 Tadmarton Parish Council contacted officers and requested that consideration be given to reducing the number of councillors for the parish from seven to six.
- 3.28 No justification has been provided for the request.
- 3.29 The last parish election for Tadmarton was held in 2014, and there were six candidates for the seven seats.
- 3.30 The electorate for Tadmarton on 1 December 2016 was 484. Guidance from NALC recommends a parish council of seven where the electorate is up to 900.
- 3.31 The working group feel that reducing the number of councillors could potentially cause issues with the quorum, in the event of holiday or sickness absence.
- 3.32 They would therefore recommend that the number of parish councillors for Tadmarton remain seven.

Review of Parish Councillor numbers – Weston-on-the-Green

- 3.33 Weston-on-the-Green Parish Council contacted officers and requested that consideration be given to increasing the number of councillors for the parish from seven to eight or nine.
- 3.34 The justification for the request is the Neighbourhood Plan neiging completion, and the additional work that would be required to implement it as and when it was approved.
- 3.35 The last parish election for Weston-on-the-Green was held in 2014, and there were six candidates for the seven seats.
- 3.36 The electorate for Weston-on-the-Green on 1 December 2016 was 446. Guidance from NALC recommends a parish council of seven where the electorate is up to 900.

3.37 On this basis, the working group recommend that an increase of one be approved for consultation.

Review of Parish Councillor numbers – Yarnton

3.38 Yarnton Parish Council contacted officers and requested that consideration be given to increasing the number of councillors for the parish from nine to 10.

3.39 The justification for the request is the considerable increase in dwellings in Yarnton over the last 30 years, with no subsequent increase to the size of the parish council.

3.40 The last parish election for Yarnton was held in 2015, and there were seven candidates for the nine seats.

3.41 The electorate for Yarnton on 1 December 2016 was 2491. Guidance from NALC recommends a parish council of 10 where the electorate is between 2,001 and 2,700.

3.42 On this basis, the working group recommend that an increase of one be approved for consultation.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

4.1 Cherwell District Council committed to undertake a further CGR relating to Upper Heyford at the conclusion of the previous review in 2013. The draft recommendations are considered to be in the best interests of all parishes concerned.

5.0 Consultation

CGR Working Group – Councillors Andrew Beere, Hugo Brown, Nick Cotter, Kieron Mallon, Les Sibley and Sean Woodcock.

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

6.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not to approve the draft recommendations. This is rejected, as recommendations have been drafted based on requests and responses received from relevant parishes.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Comments checked by: Paul Sutton, Chief Finance Officer, 03000 030106,
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Legal Implications

- 7.2 The Council is empowered to undertake a Community Governance Review by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. In undertaking the review it must take steps to ensure that the outcome of the review reflects the identities and interests of the area being reviewed and the need to ensure effective and convenient community governance. Statutory guidance on the process can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-governance-reviews-guidance>

Comments checked by: Richard Hawtin, Team Leader - Non-contentious, telephone 01295 221695, email richard.hawtin@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

N/A

Lead Councillor

None

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Map of proposed Upper Heyford boundary
Background Papers	
None	
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