

Cherwell District Council

Council

19 October 2020

Community Governance Review for Adderbury – Results of First Consultation and Draft Recommendations

Report of Chief Executive

This report is public

Purpose of report

To report the results of the first consultation stage of the Community Governance Review (CGR) for Adderbury.

To consider the draft recommendations of the CGR Working Group that will form the basis of the second consultation stage, which will run from 2 November 2020 to 4 January 2021.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the results of the first consultation stage of the Adderbury Community Governance Review
- 1.2 To approve the draft recommendation that no separation of Adderbury Parish Council take place, and that consideration be given to the number of parish councillors on the parish and creating two wards for Adderbury Parish Council.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 At the May 2020 Extraordinary Council meeting, Terms of Reference were approved for a Community Governance Review (CGR) to be carried out in Adderbury. This followed the receipt of a valid CGR petition in April 2020, which requested Cherwell District Council give consideration to separating Adderbury Parish into two separate Parish Councils.
- 2.2 A cross party member CGR Working group was established, which met in June to discuss the document for the first consultation stage.
- 2.3 The first consultation stage ran from Monday 29 June to Friday 28 August.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 A consultation document was produced (appendix 1) and posted to every address on the electoral register in Adderbury parish, a total of 1,387 properties, and was also published on the CGR page of the Council's website.
- 3.2 The document outlined the request that had been made in the petition submitted requesting the CGR, and gave information about some of the implications of separating the parish.
- 3.3 A reply slip with three questions and space to provide general comments was also included with the document. Responses could be completed using the reply slip and returning in the pre-paid envelope provided; submitted online through a Survey Monkey version of the reply slip; or by email.
- 3.4 739 responses were received, with the results breakdown as follows:
 - Those agreeing with the proposal to separate the parish council – 181 (24.7% of responses received). Of these responses, 165 agreed with the proposed location of the parish boundary along the Sor Brook. 8 disagreed with the proposed boundary, and suggested the A4260 road as an alternative boundary.
 - Those disagreeing with the proposal to separate the parish council – 553 (75.3% of responses received).
 - Five responses were marked as 'undecided'.
- 3.5 All responses received, including letters, hand annotated maps, newspaper cuttings and the West Adderbury Residents Association leaflet are available to view on the Council's [CGR webpage](#)
- 3.6 Responses submitted by West Adderbury Residents Association, who arranged and submitted the initial petition and Adderbury Parish Council, who oppose the proposal, are included at appendix 2 to the report.
- 3.7 Appendix 3 to the report details the recurring themes and queries raised in the consultation responses. Officers have provided responses to these themes and queries.
- 3.8 The CGR working group met during September to consider the consultation responses, and to agree draft recommendations to form the basis of the second consultation phase.
- 3.9 In considering the responses, the working group expressed disappointment with the tone, language and content of some of the responses that had been submitted, noting that comments of a personal nature had been made from both sides. The working group felt that these comments detracted from the key purpose of the consultation.

- 3.10 Whilst the working group does not intend, and has no power, to prevent respondents from expressing their personal opinion, they unanimously agreed that as part of the second consultation stage, the consultation document and CGR page of the website should include a note advising that comments of a personal nature should not be submitted. Any responses or parts of responses which it felt were inappropriate would not be published in the consultation log.
- 3.11 The working group noted the responses in favour of separating the parish highlighted the need for West Adderbury to have its own voice. Some respondents felt this was not currently the case with the existing parish council and it was under-represented due to a low number of residents from West Adderbury being elected or co-opted on to the current parish council.
- 3.12 The working group also noted that some of the reasoning given for supporting a separation of the parish council related to dissatisfaction with decisions made by the existing parish council.
- 3.13 Whilst recognising the points raised regarding West Adderbury being acknowledged and represented on the existing parish council, the working group felt that separating the existing parish into two separate parishes was not a viable solution and would not achieve the outcome that the petitioners desired.
- 3.14 The working group gave the following reasons for their decision
- Separation would be detrimental to the identity of Adderbury village
 - Concern over the sustainability of separate parishes
 - Disproportionate costs on residents in the event of a separation
 - Community services in the existing parish being well used by all residents, possibly making ongoing running of these services impractical if it were done across two parishes
- 3.15 With regard to the responses received that were not in favour of a separation, the working group noted that the common theme amongst them was a wish for community cohesion and unity, particularly against the backdrop of the current Covid-19 situation. A number of responses had made reference to communities coming together and becoming more integrated during the crises.
- 3.16 The working group also acknowledged that creating a new parish for West Adderbury would not automatically mean it would consist of residents solely from West Adderbury.
- 3.17 Criteria for prospective candidates at parish elections allows for people who live within 4.8km/3 miles of a parish to stand as a candidate. In the case of a separated Adderbury this would mean that residents living in 'East' Adderbury could stand for West Adderbury, and vice-versa.
- 3.18 In order to address the comments of residents of West Adderbury to have representation and a voice on the parish council, the working group have recommended that consideration be given to increasing the overall number of Councillors on the existing Parish Council, and making it a warded council.
- 3.19 There are several warded parish councils across Cherwell already, in large parishes such as Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington.

- 3.20 Whilst the candidate eligibility criteria would remain the same and it would still be possible for residents from the other ward in Adderbury to stand for the West ward and vice-versa, having a ward would give residents a number of elected representatives whose primary role would be to represent the views of their ward electorate on the wider parish council.
- 3.21 Government guidance on CGRs, which the working group has to adhere to, states that parish warding is something that can be considered as part of a CGR, and whilst there is likely to be a stronger case for warding of urban parishes, principal councils should consider each case on its merits having regard to information and evidence generated during the review.
- 3.22 The working group would therefore like the second consultation to proceed with views sought on creating two wards within Adderbury Parish Council, with the ward boundary following the Sor Brook as identified in the initial CGR petition from West Adderbury Residents Association.
- 3.23 The West Adderbury Ward would have 422 properties, with an approximate electorate of 690. 'East' Adderbury (name of ward yet to be agreed) would have 965 properties, and an approximate electorate of 1750.
- 3.24 The total number of seats for the Parish Council is currently 12. The working group will review this number following the second consultation and will use the responses submitted, as well as the projected electorates for each ward, to determine the proposed split of seats across the parish wards should consultation results indicate support for Parish wards.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 Council is requested to approve the recommendations as set out in section 1 of this report, as the CGR working group feel they are in the best interests of the parish of Adderbury.

5.0 Consultation

Residents of Adderbury
Responses as detailed on the [CGR page](#) of the CDC website.

CGR Working Group
Responses as set out in this report.

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: To recommend that Adderbury Parish be separated into two parishes. This is rejected for the reasons set out in paragraph 3.14 above

Option 2: To recommend that Adderbury Parish remain unchanged. This is rejected at this stage, as the views of the parish on warding have not been sought.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 Costs associated with the second consultation stage for the review will be met from existing Democratic and Elections budget.

Comments checked by: Michael Furness, Assistant Director of Finance. 01295 221845, michael.furness@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Legal Implications

- 7.2 Following receipt of a valid petition and Full Council agreeing to the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Community Governance Review, it is being run in accordance with these ToR and Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and will continue to do so.

Comments checked by: Christopher Mace, Solicitor. 01295 221808, Christopher.mace@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Risk Implications

- 7.3 The proposals in this report are in line with the powers of the council as set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and propose a pragmatic and proportionate way forward.

Comments checked by: Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes. 01295 221786, louise.tustian@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision N/A

Financial Threshold Met: N/A

Community Impact Threshold Met: N/A

Wards Affected

Adderbury, Bloxham and Bodicote.

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

N/A – statutory obligation to undertake a Community Governance Review following receipt of a valid petition.

Lead Councillor

N/A

Document Information

Appendix number and title

- 1 – First stage consultation document
- 2 – consultation responses from West Adderbury Residents Association and Adderbury Parish Council
- 3 – Recurring themes and queries raised in consultation responses, with answers

Background papers

None

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