

South Northamptonshire Council

Council

28 February 2018

Community Governance Review – results of second consultation and final recommendations

Report of Chief Executive

This report is public

Purpose of report

To consider the final recommendations from the Community Governance Review (CGR) Working group, following the second consultation phase.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended to approve the following:

- 1.1 The boundary between Towcester and Paulerspury, (southern urban extension development) being moved as shown by the area marked A in appendix 1.
- 1.2 The boundary between Towcester and Paulerspury (Towcester Racecourse) being moved as shown by the area marked B in appendix 1.
- 1.3 The boundary between Brackley and Evenley being moved as shown in appendix 2.
- 1.4 The creation of a Brackley North ward at Town Council level, with four elected representatives, as shown in appendix 3.
- 1.5 The name of Greatworth Parish Council being changed to Greatworth and Halse Parish Council.
- 1.6 The number of Parish Councillors for King's Sutton Parish Council being reduced by four, from 15 to 11.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 In December 2016, Council approved a timetable for a Community Governance Review (CGR) to be carried out.
- 2.2 South Northamptonshire Council has not carried out a CGR since the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 gave powers to local

authorities to make Parish alterations. Prior to this act, changes to parish arrangements were made by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 At its meeting in October 2017, Council approved recommendations to form the basis of the second consultation phase.
- 3.2 Three consultation documents were produced, one relating specifically to the Paulerspury/Towcester boundary (**appendix 4**), one regarding the boundary between Brackley and Evenley (**appendix 5**), and the third covering the creation of Brackley North Town Ward, the name of Greatworth Parish Council and the number of Parish Councillors at King's Sutton (**appendix 6**).
- 3.3 The consultation period ran from 31 October to 8 December 2017. All documents were available via the Council's website, with the option of completing an electronic survey. Paper copies of the Paulerspury/Towcester consultation document were also posted to all 479 properties in Paulerspury, as had happened at the request of Paulerspury Parish Council during the stage one consultation. Towcester properties were not sent individual paper copies as no such request was received from Towcester Town Council.
- 3.4 Both the paper and online versions of the surveys asked for respondents to provide address details, so that the areas responding could be monitored. It was stated on the survey that respondents could just provide the name of their village if they didn't want to provide their full address.
- 3.5 A summary of the information gathered has been included with the breakdown of results for each consultation area.
- 3.6 All affected parish councils were provided with an electronic version of the relevant consultation document, as well as the opportunity to request paper copies. A dozen paper copies were supplied to King's Sutton Parish Council, that were held in the parish office.
- 3.7 Democratic and Elections Officers also attended the Parish Clerk forum in October 2017 to give an update, and offered to attend meetings of all affected parish councils, to answer questions or queries on the review.

Paulerspury/Towcester

- 3.8 175 responses were received, and results were as follows:

Question – do you agree with the recommendation to move the boundary?
5 respondents (2.9%) agreed
170 respondents (97.1%) didn't agree

- 3.9 The breakdown of responses received by location was as follows:

97 individual households (20.3% of the total in the parish);

12 from outside of the parish;
3 on behalf of parish councils/meetings

46 of the responses received just stated a road name or the village name of Paulerspury, so it is not known how many properties these responses represent.

- 3.10 Respondents were asked to give a reason for their answer to the question, as well as being given the opportunity to give any further views regarding the consultation.
- 3.11 A number of issues and concerns were recurring in the consultation responses. **Appendix 7** to the report lists the most common, as well as the response of the working group.
- 3.12 Paulerspury Parish Council did not take up the offer of having Democratic and Elections Officers attend a meeting.
- 3.13 The CGR Working Group were disappointed that officers weren't able to attend a meeting to discuss the review and consultation, as they believe that many of the queries and concerns raised could have been addressed.
- 3.14 The main issue for the CGR Working Group relates to the Southern Urban Extension (SUE) of Towcester, and which parish the new houses will be in.
- 3.15 **Appendix 8** shows the existing parish boundary, with the extent of the SUE plotted on the same map.
- 3.16 As the map shows, the bottom of the SUE site crosses over into Paulerspury parish. This area of the development will have approximately 250 houses in it, as well as employment areas, sports pitches and some mixed use areas, which could include retail.
- 3.17 If the parish boundary remained unchanged, residents moving into the highlighted area are likely to consider themselves residents of Towcester, and access services such as shops, schools and medical facilities within Towcester. However, technically the residents would be part of Paulerspury parish, and would pay the Paulerspury rate of precept included in the Council Tax.
- 3.18 In the interests of community cohesion and good governance, the CGR working group feel that it would be sensible to move the parish boundary so that it runs along the length of the Whittlebury Road, known locally as Cow Pastures. This would mean all properties on the SUE would fall into the Towcester parish.
- 3.19 As detailed in Appendix 7, a number of the consultation responses made reference to the new Towcester Relief Road being used as the location of the new parish boundary, in the event that a change were made.
- 3.20 The CGR Working group agree that this could be a logical step, however as the road does not currently exist it is not possible to use it as a boundary yet. Guidance on reviews 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'

- 3.21 Therefore, the recommendation is to move the boundary as indicated on the map at appendix 1, with effect from the next scheduled parish elections in May 2019, with a commitment to reviewing this after the construction and opening of the new road.
- 3.22 Several properties along the A5, between the Whittlebury Road and Jenkinson Road are currently within Paulerspury, and would be affected by a change in boundary.
- 3.23 Due to different levels of the parish precept portion of the Council Tax bill, there would be a slight increase in the amount of Council Tax paid by these properties, as a result of moving in to the parish of Towcester. The voting location for these properties would also change.
- 3.24 No changes to Council Tax will take place before 1 April 2019. All affected properties (approximately 7) will be written to and advised of the change in Council Tax, district and parish representation.
- 3.25 Regarding Towcester Racecourse, the CGR working group again feel that it would be sensible to move the boundary as shown on appendix 1, so that it sits in Towcester rather than Paulerspury.
- 3.26 The CGR working group feel that as the racecourse is called Towcester Racecourse, there is likely to be a public perception that the facility is in Towcester. Therefore moving the boundary is a logical step.
- 3.27 In addition to the name of the racecourse, the entrance to the SUE is in the process of being constructed opposite the racecourse. From a consistency and continuity perspective, it would be logical to move the boundary on the racecourse side of the A5 so that both sides of the road are in the same parish.

Brackley and Evenley

- 3.28 9 responses were received, and the results were as follows:

Question – Do you agree with the recommendation to move the boundary?

2 respondents agreed

7 respondents didn't agree

- 3.29 The breakdown of responses received by location was as follows:

4 individual households from Evenley (1.5% of the 268 in the parish);

2 individual households from Brackley (less than 1% of the 9538 in the parish)

3 responses just stated the village name of Evenley, so it is not known how many properties these responses represent.

- 3.30 As with the Paulerspury and Towcester consultation, respondents were asked to give a reason for their answer to the question, as well as being given the opportunity to give any further views regarding the consultation.

- 3.31 Evenley Parish Council did take up the offer from the Democratic and Elections team to have officers attend a meeting of the parish council. Two officers attended the meeting on 6 November 2017, and answered questions from those in attendance.
- 3.32 Responses to the consultation made reference to a what was considered a 'poor swap' in terms of the quality of the land moving between parishes, and a concern that Evenley could miss out on potential precept or New Homes Bonus money if the land that moved to Brackley was developed in future.
- 3.33 Comments were also made about why the boundary between Brackley and Hinton-in-the-Hedges had not been included in the review, to continue the 'tidying up' element.
- 3.34 With regards to the possibility of missed funding, the CGR working group are not aware of any proposals for either areas of land to be developed, therefore this is not something that has formed part of their considerations.
- 3.35 The CGR working group feel that the A43 acts as a distinct boundary between Brackley and Evenley, and it is therefore sensible to change the boundary as shown on appendix 2.
- 3.36 The CGR working group have not seen anything during the second consultation that has persuaded them not to change the boundary.
- 3.37 The CGR working group accept that it would have been logical to continue the review of the boundary with Hinton-in-the-Hedges along the A422. The group therefore propose to include consultation on the principle of further amending the boundary between Brackley and Hinton-in-the-Hedges during the next Community Governance Review, as and when it is scheduled.

Creation of a Brackley North Town Ward

- 3.38 No consultation responses were received regarding the recommendation to create a Brackley North Ward at Town Council level.
- 3.39 The CGR working group therefore recommend that a North Ward be created at Town Council level, as shown on appendix 3, to take effect from May 2019.
- 3.40 The newly created North ward will have four elected representatives, increasing the overall number of Town Councillors by one.

Greatworth and Halse

- 3.41 No consultation responses were received regarding the recommendation to change the name of Greatworth Parish Council to Greatworth and Halse Parish Council.
- 3.42 Greatworth Parish Council did not take up the offer of having Democratic and Elections Officers attend a meeting.

- 3.43 The CGR working group therefore recommend that the name of the parish council be changed to Greatworth and Halse, to take effect as soon as the required CGR Order has been completed.

Reduction in the number of Parish Councillors at King's Sutton

- 3.44 Three consultation responses were received regarding the recommendation to reduce the number of parish councillors for King's Sutton Parish Council.

- 3.45 The breakdown of responses received by location was as follows:

2 individual households (0.2% of the 1014 in the parish);
1 on behalf of the parish council

- 3.46 All three responses agreed with the recommendation.

- 3.47 King's Sutton Parish Council did not take up the offer of having Democratic and Elections Officers attend a meeting.

- 3.48 The CGR working group therefore recommend that the number of parish councillors for King's Sutton be reduced from 15 to 11, to take effect from the next scheduled parish elections in May 2019.

Next steps

- 3.49 Recommendations approved by full Council will be incorporated into a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order, which will confirm implementation dates for each of the changes.

- 3.50 All affected parishes will be contacted and advised of the changes agreed, and their implementation date.

- 3.51 Properties changing parish from Paulerspury to Towcester will be written to individually, notifying them of the changes to Council Tax and voting location.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 South Northamptonshire Council has not undertaken a CGR since the regulations changed.

- 4.2 The working group feel that the recommendations made are logical, and in the best interests of the parishes involved.

5.0 Consultation

With parishes as detailed in section 3 of the 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 – Not to make any changes. This is rejected, as the CGR Working Group consider the recommendations to be in the best interest of the parishes involved.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications for the Council in relation to these recommendations. As highlighted in paragraph 3.20, a small number of properties would change parish in terms of Council Tax in the event the boundary change for Towcester goes ahead.

Comments checked by:

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Legal Implications

- 7.2 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 (the Act). In carrying out the CGR the Council has complied with the terms of reference which were established to govern the conduct of the review and the Council has complied with the duties placed on it in carrying out the review under the Act. On creation of the Order detailed in paragraph 3.49 above, the Council will be obliged to comply with the publication criteria for that order as laid out in section 96 of the Act and must send copies of that order to the Secretary of State and the Boundary Commission in accordance with section 98 of the Act,

Comments checked by:

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8.0 Decision Information

Wards Affected

Brackley East, Brackley West, Brackley South, King's Sutton, Little Brook, Steane, Towcester Mill, Towcester Brook, Tove.

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Not linked directly to any corporate priorities, however the Council has a statutory duty to carry out Community Governance Reviews as per the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

Lead Councillor

Councillor Phil Bignell, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for ICT, HR and Governance

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Map with proposed Paulerspury/Towcester boundary changes
Appendix 2	Map with proposed Brackley/Evenley boundary changes
Appendix 3	Map with proposed Brackley North Town Ward
Appendix 4	Consultation document – Paulerspury/Towcester
Appendix 5	Consultation document – Brackley/Evenley
Appendix 6	Consultation document – Brackley North, Greatworth and King's Sutton
Appendix 7	Detailed comments and responses regarding Paulerspury/Towcester
Appendix 8	Map showing extent of Towcester SUE with existing parish boundary with Paulerspury
Background Papers	
None	
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