

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting1st December 2016

1. Title of Item/Report

Community Governance Review - Grindon Parish

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report on the Community Governance Review - Grindon Parish.

Following receipt of a community governance petition which called for the splitting of Grindon into two separate parishes, the report invited consideration of the proposed approach to a community governance review in response to the petition.

A community governance review enabled a principal council to review and put in place new arrangements, making changes to current community governance systems and structures, for example by creating, merging, abolishing or changing parish or town councils in the review area.

The Government had emphasized that the aim of a review should be to bring about improved community engagement, more cohesive communities, better local democracy, and result in more effective and convenient delivery of services.

All principal councils had a legal duty to carry out a community governance review if they received a valid petition. For a community governance petition to be valid in an area of less than 2500 electors, as is the case with Grindon (electors), it must be signed by 187 local government electors, define the area to which the review relates and specify one or more recommendations. The petition called for the splitting of Grindon into two separate parishes along the boundaries of the parish wards of Grindon East and Grindon West.

The petition stated:

“Thorpe Thewles village is part of Grindon Parish Council. The Parish Council works for you and your community influencing planning, fly tipping, environmental issues and local matters. It is also a link to

Stockton Borough Council Departments. From the maps attached you can see Grindon Parish Council is in two areas, Grindon East and is mainly Wynyard Park and Grindon West which consists of Thorpe Thewles and The Elms near Junction Road. Over the years the demands and needs of these communities in Grindon West and Grindon East have become more and more diverse due to the number of houses in each area. There are approximately 800 houses in Wynyard and another 400 planned making a total of 1200 whilst in Grindon West there are approximately 200 homes. There is a strong feeling among some residents that Grindon Parish Council should be split into separate areas and manage their own affairs.”

Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 a principal council had the power to undertake a community governance review, and must set terms of reference that allow for the petition to be considered. The petition received contains in excess of 187 valid signatures and it was therefore valid.

The DCLG had produced guidance for Principal Councils on undertaking community governance reviews and it had been duly considered in the proposed approach. The guidance highlighted the legislative requirements that a review must have regard to, namely that it:-

- reflected the identified and interests of the community in the area under review, and
- was effective and convenient

Influencing factors that should also be considered were:-

- the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion, and
- the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish

The proposed approach to undertaking a community governance review would commence with Council approving a terms of reference for the review, this must clearly identify the matter/s on which the review was to focus and would therefore include the aims of the review, reference to the legislation that guides it, how the Council proposes to consult, and a timetable that recognises that the review must conclude within 12 months from receipt of a valid petition (received 2016). Terms of reference were attached to the report.

Following Cabinet consideration of the terms of reference on the 1 December and recommendation to Council to approve, Council on the 15 December would be asked to agree and to publish the Terms of Reference and notify key stakeholders. Views would be sought from

Local Government electors and key stakeholders from 9 January 2017 until 28 February 2017.

The key stages of the review were as follows:-

Consultation with all Local Government Electors in the area 9 January 2017 – 28 February 2017
Consideration of the wider forms of Community Governance in the area 9 January 2017 – 28 February 2017
Initial findings are considered and draft proposals presented for consideration by SMT 13 March 2017
Cabinet meeting 20 April 2017 would consider findings.
Draft recommendations to Council 3 May 2017
Consult on draft proposals 8 May 2017 to 31 May 2017
Final recommendation to Cabinet 15 June 2017
Final recommendation to 21 Council June 2017
Final Recommendations and reasons for the decision published and stakeholders informed on 22 June 2017
Recommendations implemented from 1 December 2017 (if changes are required to Parish Boundaries)
Implementation will be dependent upon publication of a re-organisation order

An integral part of the review was to consult with the local government electors for the area under review and any other person or body, including a local authority (i.e. the Parish Council) who appeared to have an interest in it.

A range of consultation mechanisms were proposed including:-

- A letter to every local government elector explaining the issue with a consultation reply slip attached that asking for views. A business reply envelope would be provided
- Review Notices will be placed on the web, in Municipal Buildings, Billingham Customer Services, and displayed within the Parish
- An item will be placed on the Parish Council agenda meeting to raise awareness
- Awareness raising with Ward Members via letters and a Member drop in session.
- A letter to the Locality Forum advising the review is ongoing
- Press releases at each key stage
- Stockton News Article

Key Stakeholders would include:-

- Lead Petitioner

- Residents' Groups
- Ward Councillors
- Grindon Parish Council
- MP

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

1. A Community Governance Review of Grindon Parish commences following the receipt of the valid petition from residents.

2. The Terms of Reference for the Review, timetable and consultation programme be agreed.

3. Reasons for the Decision

A valid petition has been received in relation to Grindon Parish therefore a Community Governance Review is required by law to be carried out.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

N/A

Proper Officer
05 June 2016