

Council Report

Ward(s) affected: Clandon & Horsley

Report of Strategic Services Director

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Community Governance Review: Parish of West Horsley

Executive Summary

A Community Governance Review (CGR) is a process to provide an opportunity to review and make changes to governance arrangements for town and parish councils and parish areas. This is to ensure that they continue to reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government. CGRs are undertaken by the principal council for the area (i.e. this Council) under powers set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

On 15 December 2021, West Horsley Parish Council submitted a written request for the Council to conduct a CGR, with the suggested terms of reference including the proposal to increase the maximum number of councillors to be elected to the West Horsley Parish Council from nine councillors to eleven councillors.

Draft terms of reference were approved by Full Council on 9 February 2022 and the Democratic Services and Elections Manager was authorised to conduct the CGR on the Council's behalf and to take all necessary action to comply with the Council's statutory obligations in that regard.

This report sets out the responses the Council has received following a six-week public consultation in regard to the proposal to increase the number of seats on West Horsley Parish Council from nine to eleven and seeks approval to issue a Community Governance Reorganisation Order confirming that

increase, which would be effective at the next parish council elections in May 2023. Those responses are set out in **Appendix 1** to this report.

Recommendation to Council:

- (1) To determine whether, taking account of the statutory considerations:
 - (a) the number of seats on West Horsley Parish Council should be increased from nine to eleven with effect from the next scheduled parish council elections in May 2023; and
 - (b) any other changes should be made to the electoral arrangements for West Horsley Parish Council
- (2) Subject to approval of (1) above, to agree that the Democratic Services and Elections Manager be authorised to make a community governance reorganisation order under Section 86 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to give effect to any of the approved proposals referred to in paragraph (1) above, together with all necessary incidental, consequential, transitional or supplementary provisions as may be required to give full effect to the order.

Reason for Recommendation:

To address the community governance request received in respect of this matter with a view to ensuring that community governance within the area under review is:

- reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and
- is effective and convenient.

Is the report (or part of it) exempt from publication? No

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Following the agreement by Full Council to undertake a community governance review of West Horsley Parish Council on 9 February 2022, this report sets out the responses received during the consultation period and the procedure should the Council agree to make a Community Governance Reorganisation Order in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (“the 2007 Act”) and associated government guidance.

2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 To undertake the review would be consistent with our mission and values within the new Corporate Plan to be a transparent Council that listens and

responds quickly to the needs of our community, putting the interests of our community first, and working constructively with other councils.

3. Background

3.1 The 2007 Act amended the responsibility for parish area reviews from what is now the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to principal councils, subject to adherence to regulations and directions issued by the former Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Electoral Commission. Principal councils in this context include district councils in England. The process for considering a change is via a Community Governance Review (CGR).

3.2 A CGR is a review of one or more areas of the borough to look at one or more of the following:

- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
- The naming of a parish and the style of a new parish (i.e. whether to call it a “village”, “community” or “neighbourhood” with the council similarly named as a “village council”, “community council” or “neighbourhood council”);
- The electoral arrangements for parishes (including council size, the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding), and
- Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes

3.3 A CGR may not change parliamentary, borough ward or county division boundaries, although it might lead to recommendations to the LGBCE to make consequential changes to ward or division boundaries.

4. Community Governance Review Request

4.1 On 15 December 2021, the Council received a formal request from West Horsley Parish Council for a CGR. In summary, the parish council is seeking to secure, by way of a CGR, an increase in the maximum number of councillors to be elected to the West Horsley Parish Council from nine councillors to eleven councillors.

4.2 The reasons cited by the parish council for making the request to increase the number of parish councillors, were as follows:

- To reduce the workload on individual councillors that has grown considerably over the past 24 months and is expected to continue.
- To address the substantial increase in population as a result of windfall and major housing developments underway in the Village as a consequence of implementing GBC’s Local Plan.

- To seek to improve diversity on the parish council.
- 4.3 On 9 February 2022, Full Council agreed to undertake a community governance review in respect of increasing the number of councillors to be elected to West Horsley Parish Council and approved the terms of reference for the review.

5. Consultations

- 5.1 The 2007 Act requires the Council to consult the local government electors for the area under review and any other person or body who appears to have an interest in it. A six-week consultation began on 28 February and ran until 5 April 2022. The consultation included:

- A poster was placed on all five of the parish council noticeboards.
- The parish council created a new webpage for the review which included the poster and terms of reference.
- A link was posted to Nextdoor which is very popular in West Horsley.
- A Mailchimp to local subscribers.
- Added to the agenda for the parish council March meeting
- Featured on the Guildford Borough Council consultation website
- Social media via Guildford Borough Council

- 5.2 The consultation received 106 responses and the results are summarised below. It should be noted that not all respondents answered question 2.

Question 1 – Do you think there should be 2 more parish councillors?

5 said 'No'
1 said 'Not sure'
100 said 'Yes'

Question 2 - Do you agree with our proposal to make no other changes to the electoral arrangements for West Horsley Parish Council?

1 said 'No'
7 said 'Not sure'
55 said 'Yes'

- 5.3 From the results of the consultation there was a clear consensus in favour of an increase in the number of elected parish councillors and in favour of no other changes to the parish council's electoral arrangements.
- 5.4 Two of the local ward councillors responded during the consultation in full support of the proposed increase in the number of parish councillors and agreeing that no other changes to the electoral arrangements were required.

5.5 Consultees were also invited to submit their own comments, and these are set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

6. Equality and Diversity Implications

6.1 Public authorities are required to have due regard to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) when making decisions and setting policies.

6.2 The process followed in conducting the CGR has been set out in the 2007 Act and the associated Government guidance. Every attempt has been made to engage with electors and interested parties through the consultation process that has been led by officers.

6.3 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

7. Financial Implications

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

8. Legal Implications

8.1 The Council has conducted the CGR in accordance with the requirements set out in Chapter 3 of Part 4 of the 2007 Act and guidance issued by the Secretary of State under Section 100(4) of the 2007 Act.

8.2 In particular, the Council is required when undertaking a CGR to have regard to the need to secure that community governance within the area under review:

- (a) reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area, and
- (b) is effective and convenient

8.3 The Council is also required to complete a CGR within a period of 12 months from the date it publishes the terms of reference.

9. Human Resource Implications

9.1 There are no significant human resource implications arising from this report.

10. Options

10.1 The Council must determine, taking account of the statutory considerations including the outcome of the local consultation, whether any change in the number of parish councillors to be elected to West Horsley Parish Council or any other change in its electoral arrangements, would facilitate effective and convenient local government for the parish.

11. Conclusion

- 11.1 Following the request from West Horsley Parish Council, and taking into account the representations received, the Council must now consider the following questions in relation to whether West Horsley Parish Council should, or should not,
- a) increase the number of parish councillors on West Horsley Parish Council from 9 to 11, and
 - b) to make no other changes to the electoral arrangements in respect of West Horsley Parish Council
- 11.2 Should the Council support a) and b) above, a Community Governance Reorganisation Order will be made in accordance with the requirements of Section 86 of the 2007 Act and the increase in the number of parish councillors approved would take effect from the next scheduled parish elections in May 2023.
- 11.3 Whatever the Council's decision in respect of this CGR, it is a requirement that the outcome must be publicised. Therefore, the Council's final decision, reasons for that decision, relevant maps and copies of any reorganisation order (if appropriate) will be made available through the following publicly accessible places:
- (i) the Guildford Borough Council website
 - (ii) the Guildford Borough Council offices
 - (iii) West Horsley Parish Council website

We will also issue a press release setting out details of the Council's decision in relation to this matter.

- 11.4 Following the making of a Community Governance Reorganisation Order, the following bodies must be informed as soon as practicable:
- the Secretary of State
 - the Local Government Boundary Commission for England
 - the Office of National Statistics
 - the Director General of the Ordnance Survey
 - Surrey County Council

12. Background Papers

["Guidance on Community Governance Reviews" – DCLG and Local Government Boundary Commission for England \(March 2010\)](#)

[Report to Council – 9 February 2022 \(Agenda Item 14\): COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW: WEST HORSLEY PARISH COUNCIL \(Pages 385 - 402\)](#)

13. Appendices

Appendix 1: West Horsley Community Governance Review Consultation Responses - Comments