

Community Governance Review 27th April 2022

Report of Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval to carry out a Community Governance Review to amend the boundary line between the Scotforth East, John O'Gaunt and University and Scotforth Rural Wards and subsequent amendments of the boundary line of Scotforth Parish Council. Also, for Council to determine which body should oversee the process for taking the Community Governance Review forward.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That Council Business Committee be requested to develop and agree terms of reference, determine consultation plans and agree a timetable for a Community Governance Review.**
- (2) That the Committee be consulted throughout the process and make recommendations on the final proposals to Council.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 transferred responsibility for the creation and amendment of parish councils from the then Department for Communities and Local Government to principal councils. A Community Governance Review must be undertaken and completed before any changes can be made.
- 1.2 There are provisions in the Act for community governance petitions to be submitted and acted upon, but there is also provision for the principal council to carry out community governance reviews where there is a need to do so.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 There are 3 pockets of land where the boundary sits between the University and Scotforth Rural Ward and Scotforth East Ward and also between the University and Scotforth Rural Ward and John O'Gaunt Ward. In both cases the areas of land in question are separated from the majority of the rest of the ward by the M6 motorway.
- 2.2 The issue has been drawn to our attention due to the building of an estate of houses on a former field where the boundary between the Scotforth East and University and Scotforth Rural Wards meet (Appendix A). A small number of homes on the

development currently sit in the University and Scotforth Rural Ward and Scotforth Parish Council but the remainder of the development sits within the unparished Scotforth East Ward. The houses in the University and Scotforth Rural Ward cannot be accessed at any point other than through Scotforth East Ward. The houses that are currently included in Scotforth Parish will be subject to parish precept charges when the rest will not.

- 2.3 Northwards along the M6 there is also another pocket of land that currently sits between the University and Scotforth Rural Ward and John O’Gaunt Ward that is also divided by the M6. There is possible scope for future development of this land so it is prudent to address this issue during the same Community Governance Review.
- 2.4 The plan at Appendix B shows the boundary anomalies and suggested changes to better effect.
- 2.5 The proposal is to alter the boundary to allow the boundary lines between the three wards to sit along the central line of the M6. Should agreement be reached for these changes, approval will be sought from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England for an adjustment to the current Scotforth Parish boundary line to make it coterminous with the boundary of the University and Scotforth Rural Ward.
- 2.4 The proposed timetable for the Community Governance Review is as follows:

Report to Council	April 2022
Publication of terms of reference	June 2022
First stage consultation	June 2022
Preparation of draft proposals	July 2022
Publication of draft proposals	August 2022
Second stage of consultation	August 2022
Preparation of final proposals	September 2022
Publication of final proposals	October 2022
Agreement of final proposals by Council and publication of final recommendations	November 2022
Publication of any reorganisation order	December 2022

3.0 Proposal

- 3.1 The terms of reference for the review need to be established, agreed and published and it is recommended that a Committee of Council meet to formulate and agree those terms of reference and oversee the process. The most appropriate body would seem to be Council Business Committee. Previous Community Governance reviews have been delegated to that Committee and special meetings were convened as necessary.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 It is clear that the issue with these boundary lines need to be addressed in order to ensure that there is no division within this new community off Bowerham Road and with other possible future communities in John O’Gaunt.

4.2 Members should be involved at all stages of the process before any final recommendations are brought before Council. The most effective way to do this would seem to be to delegate the matter to Council Business Committee.

**CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT
(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing):**

None.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Chapter 3 of Part 4 of The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 devolved the power to take decisions about such matters as the creation and amendment of parishes and their electoral arrangements to local government and local communities in England. Principal councils are required, by Section 100(4) of the 2007 Act, to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State when undertaking review and the guidance has been followed in drafting this report to Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of the review will be met within existing budgets.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces

None.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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