

**GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE – 12 JANUARY
2007****ELLINGHAM, HARBRIDGE & IBSLEY PARISH COUNCIL – REDUCTION
IN NUMBER OF MEMBERS****1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley Parish Council consists of 10 members.
- 1.2 There has been a vacancy on the Parish Council since September 2005, and despite advertising the vacancy, the Parish Council has been unable to fill the position. Since that time, another vacancy has arisen following the resignation of a Parish Councillor and similar difficulties have been experienced with recruitment.

2. ACTION TAKEN BY THE PARISH COUNCIL

- 2.1 The Parish Council has undergone an advertising campaign in order to fill the two vacancies with limited success. The Parish Council see little likelihood of suitable persons being found for the vacancies and have therefore requested that the numbers on the Council be reduced from 10 to 8.
- 2.2 The members of the Parish Council also recognise that the total number of Councillors serving on the Parish Council is large when compared with other New Forest parishes of a similar size, for example: -

Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley, 10 Councillors, electors 958
Ashurst & Colbury – 8 Councillors, electors 1719
Boldre – 8 Councillors, electors 1572
Burley – 6 Councillors, electors 1170
Netley Marsh – 7 Councillors, electors 1711

- 2.3 The Chairman and members of the Parish Council are therefore confident that the business of the Parish Council can be undertaken successfully and effectively with 8 Councillors.

3. COMMENTS ON THE PARISH COUNCIL'S REQUEST

- 3.1 The District Council has powers under the Local Government and Rating Act 1997 to vary the numbers on Parish Councils. In considering the number of parish councillors to be elected from the parish, the District Council must have regard to the number of electors for the parish, and any likely change in that number in the next 5 years. There is no expectation that elector numbers in the Parish will fluctuate significantly over the next few years.
- 3.2 As seen in 2.2 above, Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley Parish Council has a large Council when compared to other New Forest parishes of a similar electoral size.

- 3.3 In the circumstance, the request for a reduction in the size of the Parish Council is considered reasonable.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley Parish Council has requested that the numbers of Councillors be reduced from 10 to 8. The Parish Council has been unable to recruit suitable persons despite advertising, and it is unlikely that the District Council would succeed in finding suitable candidates. The number of Councillors for the Parish Council is above the average for other parishes of similar size.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 That in accordance with the provisions of Section 17 (2) of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997, the number of Parish Councillors be reduced from 10 to 8 with immediate effect.