

## GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE – 7 SEPTEMBER 2018

# COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – NETLEY MARSH PARISH COUNCIL

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Committee will recall considering at its meeting on 8 June 2018 a request from the Netley Marsh Parish Council to discontinue the two wards of the Parish Council, Netley Marsh North and Netley Marsh South. These are shown on the map attached at Appendix 1. The Committee agreed to review the current arrangements.
- 1.2 As a reminder, there are currently 1,711 electors in Netley Marsh, with 7 Parish Councillors:

Ward	Electorate	No. of Councillors
Netley Marsh North	313	1
Netley Marsh South	1,398	6

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (“the Act”) enables a District Council to change a parish’s warding arrangements by order, but only after undertaking a “community governance review” (“CGR”).
- 2.2 When undertaking a review, the District Council must have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State and the Electoral Commission. However, subject to that, it is for the Council to decide how to undertake a review.
- 2.3 Netley Marsh is a relatively small parish, both geographically and in population terms. It is unusual for a Parish of this size to be warded. The reasons why the parish was warded originally are uncertain but it appears that it arose from a change in the boundary between Test Valley Borough Council and New Forest District Council. It is clear that the two wards have been in existence since at least 1992.
- 2.4 Netley Marsh Parish Council considers the two wards unnecessary and, indeed, that they cause some confusion to residents. There are additional administrative and cost implications arising from two wards, for example, when conducting elections – separate notices, ballot papers, poll cards, etc., have to be prepared.

## 3 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 Initial consultation with the local community was undertaken through the medium of a local newsletter ‘The Outlook’ and on the District Council’s website (See Appendix 2). No responses were received.
- 3.2 A second consultation with the local community was undertaken through the medium of ‘The Outlook’ and the New Forest District Council’s website (See Appendix 3). Five residents of the parish made contact with officers following the second consultation. All expressed support for the idea of combining the two wards.

#### **4. ISSUES TO CONSIDER**

- 4.1 To comply with the Government's guidance, the primary issue for the Committee to address in considering the Parish Council's request will be whether the request will result in "effective and convenient local government". A further important consideration is that community governance in the area reflects the interests and identities of the community.
- 4.2 All responses received have been in support of the proposal to combine the two wards.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Resources involved in undertaking the review have thus far and should continue to be mainly employee time. Further communication/consultation with residents will hopefully continue to be via the local newsletter and the District Council's website, and should not incur direct costs.

#### **6. ENVIRONMENTAL, CRIME & DISORDER AND EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are none.

#### **7. RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 That it be a recommendation to the Council that, as discontinuing the two wards of the Parish Council will result in effective and convenient local government and that community governance in the area reflects the interests and identities of the community:-
- (a) Final proposals and recommendations to abolish the two wards of Netley Marsh Parish Council with effect from the next ordinary election of Councillors in May 2019 be published, and that steps be taken to ensure that those who may have an interest are informed of them; and
- (b) Following the steps in (a) above, a Reorganisation Order be made to give effect to the changes set out above.

#### **Further information:**

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#### **Background Papers:**

Request from Netley Marsh Parish Council  
dated 22 June 2015  
Responses to consultation