

**COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW: DECREASE IN PARISH COUNCILLORS
– LITTLE THETFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

Committee: Council

Date: 16 October 2014

Author: Principal Democratic Services Officer/Electoral Services Officer

[P101]

1.0 ISSUE

1.1 To consider the outcome of the consultation on the draft proposal to decrease the number of Parish Councillors on Little Thetford Parish Council from nine to seven, as part of a Community Governance Review (CGR) arising from a request from the Parish Council.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 That the final proposal/recommendation, in accordance with the Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Review, be:

‘That the number of Parish Councillors on Little Thetford Parish Council be decreased from 9 to 7, to come into effect for the Parish elections in May 2015.’

and that Council approve the making of an Order to that effect.

3.0 BACKGROUND/OPTIONS

3.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of the Council on 15 May 2014, Members considered a request from Little Thetford Parish Council to decrease the number of Parish Councillors from 9 to 7 arising from their Parish Council meeting on 24 October 2013, to come into effect from the next Parish elections in 2015.

3.2 Terms of Reference and a Public Notice had been prepared for the CGR. As part of the initial consultation process, the conducting of the CGR was publicised on the Council's website and Shape Your Place website; and a consultation letter enclosing copies of the public notices widely circulated to local stakeholders. The closing date for representations was 30 April 2014.

3.3 The only representation received was that from Little Thetford Parish Council requesting the decrease in the number of Parish Councillors from 9 to 7 to come into effect for the Parish elections in May 2015.

3.4 Therefore, a draft proposal was approved by Annual Council on 15 May 2014, in accordance with the Terms of Reference for the CGR as follows:

'That the number of Parish Councillors on Little Thetford Parish Council be decreased from 9 to 7, to come into effect for the Parish elections in May 2015.'

- 3.5 The draft proposal was published and stakeholders notified on 9 June 2014 as part of a final 2-month consultation period, which ended on 4 August 2014. No further representations were received on the draft proposal. Therefore, the draft proposal is now submitted as a final proposal/recommendation for approval by full Council on 16 October 2014.

4.0 ARGUMENTS/CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Little Thetford Parish Council gave the following justification for requesting the decrease in the number of Councillors:

“The Parish Council expanded from 7 to 9 councillors when there was a major project under way to purchase and develop a recreation field in the village. This project has been completed for some years now and the workload of the council has reduced as a consequence.

The last two elections have resulted in insufficient candidates to fill all the vacancies and it has been necessary to go through the co-option process. Since the last election in 2011 the Council has been working with a membership of 7 as it has not been possible to fill all the vacancies. There have been some co-options but there have also been resignations. Regular requests for nominations are inserted in the newsletter and there is permanent information on the notice board if residents wish to be considered for co-option. A membership of 7 councillors would be more in keeping with the size of the village and will be a more practical size going forward. Recent experience has shown that parish council business can be properly carried out with 7 councillors.”

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 There are no costs to the Council in agreeing to this decrease apart from the administrative costs relating to the undertaking of the CGR.
- 5.2 The costs recoverable from the Parish Council for an election would be approximately £1,750 in conjunction with the District Council Elections and £3,500 for a standalone Parish Council Election.
- 5.3 Equality Impact Assessment (INRA) not required.

6.0 APPENDICES

- 6.1 None.

Background Documents

Request letter dated 5
December 2013 from Little
Thetford Parish Council

Location

Room 214
The Grange
Ely

Contact Officer

Tracy Couper – Principal Democratic
Services Officer
(01353) 616278

E-mail:

tracy.couper@eastcambs.gov.uk

Joan Cox – Electoral Services Officer
(01353) 616460

E-mail: joan.cox@eastcambs.gov.uk