

HAMBLETON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report To: Council
23 May 2017

From: Chief Executive

Subject: **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

Aiskew, Bedale and Leeming Bar Wards

1.0 Purpose and Background:

- 1.1 This report sets out the consultation responses received in respect of the community governance arrangements for two parishes, namely Bedale and Aiskew, and seeks approval of the recommendation that there be no changes to the current community governance and electoral arrangements.
- 1.2 Members will recall that a Community Governance Review was triggered following receipt of a petition which proposed that the Aiskew Ward of Aiskew Parish be merged with the Parish of Bedale to create a new parish of Bedale with Aiskew, together with the creation of a new Parish Council called Bedale Town Council. The Leeming Bar ward of Aiskew Parish was excluded from the petition proposal.
- 1.3 The Council considered and approved terms of reference for the Community Governance Review on 21 February 2017. The terms of reference proposed three options (including the Petition proposal) and set out a timetable for direct consultation with all residents and relevant stakeholders in both parishes, and resolved that draft recommendations be presented to Council on the outcome of the consultation at its meeting on 23 May 2017.

2.0 Community Governance Review Criteria:

- 2.1 Members are reminded that a Community Governance Review provides an opportunity to consider whether, amongst other things, community governance arrangements properly reflect the identities and interests of the community, and are effective and convenient. A Community Governance Review must also take into account a number of influential factors including how local arrangements impact on community cohesion, and the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.
- 2.2 A Community Governance Review can consider one or more of the following:
 - (a) to create, merge, alter or abolish parishes;
 - (b) the naming of parishes and the style of new parishes;
 - (c) the electoral arrangements for parishes (including the ordinary year of election, council size, the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding); and
 - (d) grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.
- 2.3 The criteria set out above were included in the consultation.

3.0 Consultation with Residents/Stakeholders:

- 3.1 The consultation included all residents in the two parishes and relevant stakeholders. Each property was sent a copy of the consultation document together with a covering letter and information leaflet. Additional consultation documents were available on request or could be downloaded from Hambleton District Council's website. Residents could also complete an online version of the consultation document.
- 3.2 The consultation documents included three options for residents/stakeholders to consider and to choose from. In summary these were:
- Option 1 – the Petition proposal to merge Aiskew Ward (of Aiskew Parish) with Bedale Parish to create a new parish, together with the abolition of Bedale Town Council and Aiskew Parish Council and the creation of a new Parish Council for the new parish. The Leeming Bar Ward (of Aiskew Parish) was not included in this proposal.
 - Option 2 – an alternative proposal for the whole of Aiskew Parish (including the Leeming Bar Ward) to merge with Bedale Parish to create a new parish, with the abolition of Bedale Town Council and Aiskew Parish Council and the creation of a new Parish Council for the new parish.
 - Option 3 – to continue with the existing community governance and electoral arrangements.

The consultation ran from 21 February to 21 April 2017.

- 3.3 The two parishes combined have an electorate of 4825 and approximately 2700 properties.

4.0 Consultation Results:

- 4.1 The response rate for the consultation was modest, with only 674 replies received by 21 April 2017. The table below sets out those responses.

Option	Number of replies in favour
Option 1 – the Petition proposal to merge Aiskew Ward and Bedale Parish etc.	139
Option 2 – alternative proposal to merge all of Aiskew Parish with Bedale Parish etc.	83
Option 3 – No change to electoral arrangements	417
No Opinion	35

- 4.2 As can be seen from the table of responses there is a clear margin of support for the existing arrangements to continue.
- 4.3 Option 3 (no change to electoral arrangements) was the preferred option of 62% of respondents. Bedale Town Council and Aiskew Parish Council were also in favour of no change being made to the current arrangements. This clearly suggests that existing arrangements are considered satisfactory by the majority of respondents and, in consequence, there is no need to proceed to a stage 2 consultation, which was only required in the event that there was a change recommended to the existing arrangements.

4.4 It is a requirement that the Council consults on its draft proposals before making its final recommendations. The consultation on the draft proposals will run from 24 May to 23 June 2017 with a further report being brought to Council for consideration on 18 July 2017.

5.0 Recommendation:

5.1 It is recommended that Council approves the continuation of the existing community governance and electoral arrangements for the existing parishes of Bedale and Aiskew, as it is satisfied that the existing arrangements properly reflect the identities and interests of the community, and are effective and convenient.

JUSTIN IVES

Background papers: none

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