

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Monday 11 February 2013

PROPOSED COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

– WEST END PARISH WARDS

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that a community governance review be undertaken in respect of the warding arrangements at West End Parish Council.

Summary

A request has been received from West End Parish Council to conduct a community governance review, with the aim of reducing the size / increasing the number of wards within West End Parish Council.

Statutory Powers

Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

Introduction

1. A request has been received from West End Parish Council to conduct a community governance review in respect of its warding arrangements. The Parish Council suggest that it would be more accountable if it had more and smaller wards. The Parish Council is not seeking to change its membership number (14).
2. Chapter 3 of Part 4 of the Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 devolves the power to take decisions about matters such as the creation of parishes and their electoral arrangements to principal councils such as Eastleigh Borough Council.

The proposal in detail

3. Currently, the parish warding arrangement for West End Parish Council is as follows:
 - Kanes Hill - a one member ward with 564 electors which consists of one polling district (BD) from the Bursledon and Old Netley EBC ward

- West End North - a six member ward with 4,070 electors which consists of three polling districts (HH, HI and HJ) and which shares the same boundaries as the West End North EBC ward
 - West End South - a seven member ward with 4,651 electors which consists of three polling districts (HK, HL and HM) and which shares the same boundaries as the West End South EBC ward
4. West End Parish Council is content that its composition should remain at 14 Members, but that the potential for those members representing geographically smaller parish wards should be investigated.

The reasons for suggesting the review that have been put forward by the Parish Council are that:

- It would be better to have smaller wards which are attended to by a smaller number of councillors
 - Smaller wards enable parish councillors to become far more familiar with the issues in their area and to “take ownership” of those issues
 - With the transfer of assets it would be positive for councillors to become more involved and aware of issues relating to open spaces in their ward which are managed by the Parish Council
 - Open spaces such as Hatch Grange and West End Copse would have a smaller number of councillors representing the specific area they are in (making it easier for residents to know which parish councillors to contact)
 - It would be easier for residents to develop relationships with their parish councillors
 - Rather than residents having six or seven parish councillors spread across a whole Borough Council ward, they will have two or three representing their polling district
 - It will be easier for residents to get to know their parish councillors and to hold them to account
5. This could be achieved by moving from three Parish Council wards (with two based on the West End Borough wards) to seven Parish Council wards based on each of the polling districts in the parish.
6. If approved, the result would be the following (electorate figures are those of December 2012):
- Kanes Hill – a one member ward with 549 electors which consists of one polling district (BD) from the Bursledon and Old Netley EBC ward (no change)

- HH - a two member ward with 873 electors which consists of one polling district from the West End North EBC ward
 - HI - a two member ward with 1532 electors which consists of one polling district from the West End North EBC ward
 - HJ - a two member ward with 1,628 electors which consists of one polling district from the West End North EBC ward
 - HK - a three member ward with 2251 electors which consists of one polling district from the West End South EBC ward
 - HL - a two member ward with 1,444 electors which consists of one polling district from the West End South EBC ward
 - HM - a two member ward with 997 electors which consists of one polling district from the West End South ward
7. The Parish Council has also considered the issue of naming the new wards, should the proposal be successful. It feels that the different areas have certain characteristics which ought to be celebrated. Residents in HK for example were very pleased when the open space between Duddon Close and Harbourne Gardens was renamed Chartwell Green, because the area has been informally known as Chartwell Green for some time but there was not an area of open space actually called "Chartwell Green" until 2010.
 8. The Parish Council feels that the public should be involved in any naming of new wards but each polling district has open spaces and features which could be put forward. BD has the name Kanes Hill already, HH covers Allington Lane and IVCP, HI covers Hatch Grange, HJ covers the Moorgreen area, HK covers Chartwell Green and West End Copse, HL covers St James's Church and HM covers Telegraph Woods and the Ageas Bowl.
 9. Keeping Borough Ward and Parish Ward names different will help to prevent confusion both for the Councils and for the public, and this should be borne in mind with any naming / re-naming that takes place.

The process in detail

10. Under the 2007 Act principal councils are required to consult both those local government electors in the area when a community governance review takes place, along with any others (including a local authority such as a county council) who appear to the principal council to have an interest in the review. Other bodies might include local businesses, and public and voluntary organisations. The principal council must take into account any representations it receives as part of a community governance review.
11. The review, if agreed, needs to be completed within twelve months of starting it, and would be effective from the parish council's next elections, scheduled for May 2015.

12. In reaching conclusions on the boundaries between parish wards, the principal council should take account of community identity and interests in the area, and consider whether any particular ties or linkages might be broken by the drawing of particular ward boundaries. Principal councils should seek views on such matters during the course of a review. This is unlikely to be an issue here as the parish council are proposing boundaries based upon long-standing, easily identifiable polling district boundaries.
13. Consideration to the levels of representation between each ward must also be given; that is, the number of councillors to be elected from each ward and the number of electors they represent.
14. In considering the names of parish wards, the principal council should give some thought to existing local or historic places so that, where appropriate, these are reflected and there should be a presumption in favour of ward names proposed by local interested parties.
15. The principal council must also consider any change in the number or distribution of the electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts. The most recent electoral register should be used to gain an accurate figure for the existing electorate.
16. If the Boundary Commission consents to the changes it will inform the principal council which can then implement the proposed changes by local order. Conversely, if the Boundary Commission declines to give consent, no local order can be made by the local authority until the five-year period has expired.
17. Where changes to the number or boundaries of parish wards are proposed, the principal council will also need to provide the Boundary Commission with an existing and five-year forecast of electors in the parish(es) affected. Five-year forecasts must be accurate from the day that the review began. Both existing and forecast figures should be provided for the existing parish / parish wards and the proposed parish / parish wards.
18. A reorganisation order will then need to be prepared confirming the revised arrangements, together with a document setting out the reasons for the decisions it has taken (including where it has decided to make no change following a community governance review) and to publicise these reasons.
19. Each recommendation and order should be depicted on a map or maps. The mapping should clearly show the existing parish ward make up and all proposed parish ward and parish boundaries in the area(s) affected, or given effect to in a reorganisation order.
20. The principal council must publicise how it has given effect to the review, and that the order and map are available for public inspection. Other means of publicity it may wish to consider are through publication on the council's website, in local newspapers, on notice boards in public places, and in local libraries, and community buildings in the area concerned. In addition, after a

principal council has made a reorganisation order, as soon as practicable, it must inform the following organisations that the order has been made:

- a) The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
- b) The Boundary Commission
- c) The Office of National Statistics
- d) The Director General of the Ordnance Survey
- e) The relevant County Council
- f) The Audit Commission

Financial Implications

- 21. Costs for conducting the review, should it be approved, can be contained within existing resources.

Risk Assessment

- 22. The Borough Council has a responsibility to ensure that both it, and the parish councils within its area are, in electoral terms, structured and organised appropriately in order that they can serve the public need as effectively as possible.

Equality and Diversity Implications

- 23. The Parish Council, in requesting this review, recognises the diversity that exists within its area and has asked the Borough Council to conduct a review in order to better reflect this. The Borough Council needs to ensure that, when conducting any such review, that all affected residents are given the opportunity to comment on the review through a variety of ways.

Conclusion

- 24. What is being requested by West End Parish Council is a modest review with minimal cost and resource implications for the Borough Council. It is felt that the reasons for requesting the review are valid, and is therefore positively supported by officers for recommendation to the Committee.

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Appendices Attached: None

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - SECTION 100D

The following is a list of documents which disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. This list does not include any published works or documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information: None