

REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL – 16TH DECEMBER 2020

PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS TO BE CONDUCTED DURING 2021

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As part of the Local Government Boundary Review of North Norfolk District Council conducted in 2017 a small number of historical parish boundary anomalies or “misplaced” properties were identified, which can only be corrected or addressed through a formal process of Community Governance Reviews.

Further, there are three locations in the District where, based on rates of development, provision of major infrastructure and changing land-use / community identities, parish boundaries would now appear anomalous and could benefit from some revision to better reflect community identities and the use of local services and facilities and therefore parish precepts.

Whilst work was commenced to formally develop and consult on proposals to amend these anomalies in 2018 this work was never completed due to the time required for Community Governance Reviews, which take approximately twelve months, and was therefore considered insufficient to complete before the May 2019 District Council elections. Subsequently during the rest of 2019 when there were European elections and a UK Parliamentary Election and 2020 during which time focus has been on the Coronavirus response, there has not been capacity to progress the process of Community Governance Reviews.

The Elections Team have therefore developed a new project programme to undertake these Community Governance Reviews during 2021; which, if approved through public consultation, would be implemented and reflected in Council Tax billing and future Registers of Electors from April 2022.

The first group of proposals to be consulted upon are largely administrative and involve small numbers of properties which would appear to be incorrectly “plotted” such that the properties pay the “wrong” parish council precept or electors would seem to be in the incorrect polling district. It is believed that these proposals are relatively minor and seek to regularise or correct minor boundary anomalies which in themselves shouldn’t be particularly controversial but nevertheless require a formal Community Governance Review process to be undertaken. The following cases would fall into this category:-

- Boundary of Aldborough and Alby;
- Boundary of Binham and Hindringham;
- Boundary of Blakeney and Wiveton;
- Boundary of Brinton and Stody;
- Boundary of Barsham and Fakenham North;
- Boundary of East and West Beckham;
- Boundary of Runton (East) and Cromer;
- Boundary of Felbrigg and Cromer and Roughton;
- Boundary of Great and Little Walsingham;
- Boundary of Gunthorpe South and Briningham;
- Boundary of Gresham and Sustead;

- Boundary of Sidestrand and Northrepps;
- Boundary of Sidestrand and Trimingham; and
- Boundary of Upper Sheringham and Sheringham South on land to the west of Holway Road, Upper Sheringham where there are no current properties but a site allocation being developed out by Norfolk Homes which is not “connected” to Upper Sheringham village and more closely identified with communities in Sheringham.

There are then three proposals which are considered to be of potentially wider public interest or comment because of the numbers of properties involved and/or the change in the level of parish precept which would be levied on individual households, notwithstanding the community identity issues involved. These changes, around which it is anticipated that there might be significant public interest during the formal consultation stages of the Community Governance Reviews, are detailed below:-

1. Boundary of Fakenham and Sculthorpe (within the line of the A1065 / A148 Fakenham bypass).
2. Boundary of Cromer and Northrepps (along the Norwich Road to the south of the town, north of the Cromer to North Walsham railway line)
3. Boundary of Helhoughton and West Raynham within the former RAF West Raynham airbase.

These proposals are considered to reflect established community identities but will have an effect on a number of properties in terms of Council Tax parish precepts and some implications on local electors in terms of the parish / electoral wards in which they sit. Again these issues will be considered and comments invited through the formal processes of public consultation required through Community Governance Reviews.

The two types of proposals outlined above are supported by two appendices for members’ information at this stage – one a set of maps / plans showing the proposed changes attached to this report as public documents with the proposed new boundary line shown in red with the existing boundary being shown in blue; and an exempt appendix detailing the individual properties involved and their Council Tax banding and precept – details of which will form the basis of the formal processes of consultation with individual property owners moving forward.

Finally, the District Council has received a request for the formal “merging” of two small neighbouring Parish Councils at Hempton and Pudding Norton; which again would require a Community Governance Review to assess community support (or objection) to this proposal.

Members are therefore asked to indicate their approval for the formal process of Community Governance Reviews as outlined in the above report and appendices to be taken forward during 2021, with any final proposals being brought back to Full Council in late 2021 for discussion and approval / rejection, with any agreed changes implemented from April 2022.

Lead responsibility for undertaking these Community Governance Reviews will sit with the Elections Team, with some time / resource commitment required from the Communication, Legal and Revenues Teams. Costs involved are considered to be modest and relating to direct communications with individual households in the affected areas (estimated to be approximately 400 properties) and probably staged consultation events in Cromer and Fakenham in respect of the proposals made in those towns.

RECOMMENDED:-

That Full Council approve proposals to undertake a programme of Community Governance Reviews during 2021 based on the matters detailed in the above report, with final proposals / recommendations being brought back to Full Council in November or December 2021.