



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Council

26 May 2022

Report of: Councillor Linda Wootten

Cabinet Member for Corporate
Governance and Licensing



Community Governance Review for Grantham

To update the Council on the outcome of the consultation undertaken and consider the recommendations from the Community Governance Review Working Group to agree the next steps of the review.

Report Author

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Corporate Priority:	Decision type:	Wards:
Administrative	Regulatory	Two or more Wards

Reviewed by:	Graham Watts (Assistant Director of Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer)	10 May 2022
Approved by:	Alan Robinson (Deputy Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer)	13 May 2022
Signed off by:	Councillor Linda Wootten (Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing)	18 May 2022

Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s)

That Full Council:

- Approves option 1 as set out in the report to agree in principle to the recommendations of the Community Governance Review Working Group for the establishment of a Parish Council for Grantham, subject to undertaking further consultation with residents of neighbouring parishes and Parish Councils to consider the boundary.**

- 2. Notes that the Community Governance Review Working Group will reconsider the Terms of Reference in relation to the timeline for the review, consider the format and process for the next stage of the consultation in relation to the boundary and to develop draft proposals for consideration by Full Council at a future meeting.**

1 The Background to the Report

- 1.1 At the meeting on 30 September 2021, Full Council resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review in relation to the establishment of a Town Council for Grantham. Grantham is the only unparished area of South Kesteven without a separate Parish or Town Council or Parish meeting.
- 1.2 At its meeting on 25 November 2021, Full Council agreed to establish a Community Governance Review Working Group, comprising all South Kesteven District Councillors of the current Grantham Town District Wards to oversee the review.
- 1.3 The Terms of Reference for the review was approved by Full Council on 27 January 2022. The review is considering:
 - a) The possibility of establishing a parish or town council for the currently unparished area of Grantham, comprising the seven Grantham district wards;
 - b) The setting of the administrative external boundary and the boundary with neighbouring parishes;
 - c) The warding arrangements of any new Council and the number of councillors;
 - d) The impact of any proposed boundary changes on neighbouring Parish Councils.
- 1.4 The Community Governance Review working group met six times between December 2021 and April 2022 to agree the initial consultation process and the contents of the information document and survey.
- 1.5 The public consultation began on 11 March and closed on 22 April 2022. The aim of the first consultation was to gauge public support for the establishment of a new parish or town council for Grantham and obtain views on the boundary and electoral arrangements should a new council be established. Any new governance arrangements would need to reflect the communities and identities of the area.
- 1.6 Section 93(3) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act requires the principal council to consult with local residents and any other third parties who might have an interest.
- 1.7 During the initial consultation, an information document and printed survey together with accompanying letter was sent to a total of 23,201 residential properties within the unparished area of Grantham and the neighbouring parishes of Barrowby; Belton and Manthorpe; Great Gonerby; Harlaxton; Little Ponton and Stroxtan; and Loundthorpe and Harrowby Without.
- 1.8 Email notifications together with the link and QR code to access the survey were sent to councillors, Parish Clerks for the parishes neighbouring Grantham, the Members of Parliament, Community Groups and businesses.
- 1.9 Press releases were issued during the period of consultation as well as social media posts on Facebook and Twitter.
- 1.10 Responses to the survey could be made online or by completing the paper version which had been delivered to all residential households in Grantham and the neighbouring parishes.

2 Community Governance Review Process

- 2.1 In carrying out the Community Governance Review, the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires the District Council to have regard to the identities and interest of the community. This means that Community Governance arrangements should reflect and be sufficiently representative of people living across the whole community. In addition, the Council is required to have regard to the results of the consultation.
- 2.2 Before making any recommendations or publishing draft proposals, the Council is required to take account of the views of local people and stakeholders and ensure that the proposals reflect the identities and interests of the community in the area and are effective and convenient.
- 2.3 If the review results in a recommendation to create a parish, the review must also make recommendations for the:
- name of the new parish;
 - boundary;
 - warding arrangements (the number of wards, boundaries and names of wards); and
 - number of councillors.

2.4 Name of Parish Council

It is not open to the District Council to designate an area as a town council. If a new council is created, it would initially be named as a parish council, eg Grantham Parish Council. Section 245 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides the adoption of the name of Town would be a matter for the new parish council to resolve, if one is created.

This report therefore refers throughout to “the parish council” or “the new council” even though it is widely understood that any parish council for Grantham would choose to call itself a town council.

It would then fall to the new parish council to resolve, under section 245(6) of the Local Government Act 1972, to have the status of a town and adopt the name of town council.

2.5 Boundary of any new Council

Also being considered as part of the review is the external boundary of any new Council and whether any changes should be made to boundaries with any of the neighbouring parishes. As mentioned at paragraph 2.2 above, any proposal for a future parish council should reflect the identities and interest of the community in the area.

Currently the boundaries of the existing District Council wards are not coterminous with the boundary of the unparished area of Grantham. Following the review of the electoral arrangements undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in 2015, three small areas from neighbouring Parish areas were included within the Grantham District wards but remained within neighbouring Parish Council areas. These areas are identified on the map included at Appendix 1.

Additionally, a number of housing developments are taking place adjacent to and across the current boundary of the unparished area of Grantham. These areas of development are identified on the map included at Appendix 2.

When drawing up parish boundaries, the Council must have regard to the existence of natural communities and at the same time, ensure that boundaries are easy to understand and rely on existing landscape features such as roads or rivers.

2.6 **Warding arrangements**

If it is proposed that a new parish council be established, the Council will need to decide whether it should be divided into wards for the purpose of electing councillors and the names of those wards.

One option would be to adopt a similar warding arrangement to that of the District Council where Grantham is divided into seven wards.

2.7 **Number of councillors**

If it is proposed that a new parish council is established, the Council is required to consider the number of councillors for a new Parish Council.

There is no legislative guidance relating to the number of councillors with the exception that each Parish Council must have at least five councillors. Guidance published by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) suggests the number of parish councillors be allocated depending on the size of the population represented and that the practical maximum should be 25 councillors for an area with over 23,000 electors.

The Aston Business School also published research that typically Parish Councils have the following number of councillors based on the number of electors in the parish:

Electors	Councillors
<500	5-8
501 – 2,500	6-12
2,501-10,000	9-16
10,001-20,000	13-27
>20,000	13-31

The electorate of the current unparished area of Grantham is currently 28,137.

3 Consultation and Feedback Received, Including Overview and Scrutiny

- 3.1 The period of consultation ran for six weeks from 11 March to 22 April 2022.
- 3.2 Detailed analysis of the responses received to the survey during this period of consultation are included at Appendix 3. The full responses together with all comments made by respondents are also available on the Council's website.
- 3.3 The Working Group met on 29 April 2022 to consider the responses received and to agree recommendations to Council on the next steps of the review. The survey results provided a clear indication of support for the creation of a Town Council from respondents and the Working Group unanimously agreed to recommend to Council that a Parish Council be created for Grantham, in principle.
- 3.4 The Working Group noted that responses to the questions relating to the boundary of any new Council with neighbouring parishes were much less clear and felt that it was not at the present time in a position to make a recommendation to Council. The Working Group therefore recommended that further consultation be undertaken with the residents and Parish Councils in the adjoining parishes to facilitate making draft proposals for consideration by Full Council.

- 3.5 The minutes of the Working Group meeting held on 29 April 2022 are attached at Appendix 4.

4 Available Options Considered

- 4.1 Option 1 – Council to agree in principle to the recommendations of the working group to the creation of a Parish Council for Grantham and to consult further with the residents and Parish Councils of the neighbouring parishes to consider the boundary ahead of determining draft recommendations for consultation.
- 4.2 Option 2 – decide not to proceed with the establishment of a Parish Council for Grantham and end the Community Governance Review and set out the reason for the decision.
- 4.3 Option 3 – to formally agree a proposal for the establishment of a Parish Council for Grantham and determine draft recommendations for consultation. If Council is minded to propose draft recommendations, it must agree upon a) the boundary; b) the warding arrangements; c) the number of councillors for the proposed new Council; d) the year of the first elections to the proposed new parish council.

5 Preferred Option

- 5.1 The Community Governance Review Working Group has outlined option 1 as the preferred option following the results of the initial period of consultation.
- 5.2 Full Council is invited to consider all options available before reaching its decision.

6 Reasons for the Recommendation (s)

- 6.1 Council is invited to consider all options available as part of the Community Governance Review process and proceeding to the next stage.

7 Next Steps – Communication and Implementation of the Decision

7.1 Option 1

Approval of Option 1 would require Full Council to agree for the Working Group to reconsider the Terms of Reference to extend the timeline for the review and to agree the next phase of consultation relating to the boundary. By approving option 1, Full Council at this stage can only agree in principle to the establishment of a Parish Council. A Parish Council can only be formally proposed alongside recommendations of the boundary, warding arrangements, the number of councillors and the year of the first elections.

Undertaking further consultation on the boundary as recommended by the Working Group would mean that the first elections for a new Parish Council for Grantham could not be held in May 2023. Any subsequent establishment of a Parish Council would result in the first term of office being reduced to ensure the election cycle for future elections is aligned with the scheduled elections of the District Council.

The recommendation for the Working Group to undertake further work on the boundaries will facilitate the draft proposals for consideration by Full Council at a future meeting.

7.2 Option 2

If Council decides not to proceed with the establishment of a Parish Council for Grantham, the Community Governance Review process would end with immediate effect and a decision notice would be required to be published setting out the reasons for the decision.

7.3 **Option 3**

If Council agrees a proposal for the establishment of a Parish Council for Grantham including its boundary, warding arrangements and the number of councillors it will be necessary to formally consult on these draft recommendations. The Working Group would then be required to consider the format and process for this second stage of consultation.

8 Financial Implications

- 8.1 A budget of £20,000 was approved as part of the 2022/23 budget setting to facilitate the Community Governance Review. Approximately £14,100 of this budget has been allocated to date for the first stage of the consultation. Therefore the remainder of the budgeted allocation will be available to support the further consultation that is referenced in the report.

Financial Implications reviewed by: Richard Wyles, Chief Finance Officer

9 Legal and Governance Implications

- 9.1 The Community Governance Review is being conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the 2007 Act) and statutory guidance issued in 2010 by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
- 9.2 Section 93 of the 2007 Act requires Councils to ensure that community governance within the area under review will be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in the area and be effective and convenient.
- 9.3 Where a review is conducted as a result of a community governance application or petition, section 93(8) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires the review to be completed within 12 months. This requirement does not however apply where a Council has taken the decision to undertake a review.

Legal Implications reviewed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director of Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer

10 Background Papers

- 10.1 Full survey and email responses to initial consultation
www.southkesteven.gov.uk/GranthamCGR
- 10.2 Guidance on community governance reviews published by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England :
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/8312/1527635.pdf

11 Appendices

- 11.1 Appendix 1 – Map of the existing unparished Grantham area boundary with neighbouring parishes
- 11.2 Appendix 2 – Map of the development sites, Grantham District Ward boundaries and neighbouring parishes
- 11.3 Appendix 3 – Results of the initial consultation

11.4 Appendix 4 – Draft Minutes of the Community Governance Review Working Group meeting held on 29 April 2022