



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Community Governance Review Consultation

Stage 2

August 2023



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Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to update members of South Kesteven District Council's Community Governance Review Working Group (CGRWG) and full Council with the results of the second stage of the Community Governance Review for Grantham consultation.
2. Containing the draft recommendations for the new parish/town council of Grantham - approved in principle by full Council on 26 May 2022 - feedback from this consultation will inform the recommendations made by the CGRWG and assist the Council in the determination of three parameters for the new town council. These include:
 - The setting of the administrative external boundary for that area, considering boundaries of parishes directly adjacent to Grantham
 - The warding arrangements of the new parish/town council and the number of councillors
 - The impact of any proposed boundary changes on neighbouring Parish Councils (if applicable)

Scope

3. The scope of this consultation was determined by the Community Governance Review Working Group (CGRWG) and is in accordance with guidance from central government on Community Governance Reviews. Other relevant legislation includes:
 - The Local Government and Public Health Act 2007: section 100
 - The Local Government Act 1972
 - The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009

When the distribution of property, rights and liabilities and the setting of precepts for new parishes are being determined, the following two acts are also important:

- The Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) England Regulations 2008 -NO 625
 - The Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008 -NO 626
4. This consultation is the second phase of consultation in respect of the formation of a parish/town council for Grantham. Some additional consultation was undertaken with respect to parish boundaries with some of the parishioners in three of the parish areas adjacent, which has been referred to as stage one plus. The requirements of the consultation included:
 - Communicating the steps in the process - those that have been undertaken so far and those still to do. A flow chart¹ has been prepared to assist with this.
 - Conveying the support that was received for the proposal to create a town council for Grantham during the first phase of consultation
 - Communicating the results of the stage one plus stage of consultation with the areas located within three of the parishes - Belton & Manthorpe, Great Gonerby and Londonthorpe & Harrowby Without with respect to the parish/town council boundary
 - Outlining the decision taken by the CGRWG in respect of the other parishes – Barrowby, Harlaxton and Little Ponton & Stroxtun regarding the boundary

¹ Please go to appendix one to view

- Presenting the draft recommendations on warding arrangements and numbers of councillors for the new parish/town council

Objectives

5. The objectives of the consultation were to:
 - Communicate the steps that have been undertaken to date
 - Communicate the results of the first and stage one plus stages of consultation. These include the support for the formation of a new parish/town council, the decisions that have been taken in respect of where the boundary should be drawn with the adjacent parishes and the wishes of those living in the areas identified by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) as being an anomaly
 - Present the proposals in respect of the new parish/town Council. These include where the boundary should be positioned, the warding arrangements that should be applied and the number of councillors
 - Enable respondents to ask questions/seek clarification on any of the issues raised in the consultation

Timescales

6. Preparatory work was undertaken during June 2023. The consultation was open for six weeks – from 1 July 2023 until 11 August 2023. The CGRWG is scheduled to meet in September to consider responses to this consultation and propose the final recommendations. It is then expected that the Content of the Reorganisation of Community Governance Order 2024 will be submitted to full Council for approval on 28 September 2023. If approved, elections to the new parish council should take place in May 2024.

Stakeholders

7. The stakeholders were identified as follows:
 - Residents who had responded to either the first or additional boundary stage of consultation and wanted to be informed of the outcomes/ consulted about subsequent stages
 - Parish Councils with a boundary adjacent to the Grantham unparished area. These are Belton and Manthorpe, Barrowby, Great Gonerby, Harlaxton, Little Ponton & Stroxtun, and Londonthorpe and Harrowby Without
 - South Kesteven District Councillors
 - Lincolnshire County Councillors (South Kesteven divisions)
 - 32 Community Groups in the Grantham area
 - Lincolnshire County Council
 - The Members of Parliament for the Grantham and Stamford and Sleaford and North Hykeham constituencies – Gareth Davies and Caroline Johnson
 - Grantham Almshouses Charity Trustees
 - Chair of the Grantham Business Club
 - Charter Trustees (sent to the Mayors Parlour)
 - Any other local resident with an interest

Methodology

8. The methodologies followed depended on the type of stakeholder. The table below outlines the option adopted for each of the stakeholder types:

Stakeholders	Method(s)	Details
Residents who responded to either the first or additional boundary stage of consultation	Respondents were contacted – either by email or post Number of respondents contacted by email: 584 Number of respondents contacted by post: 62 Page on SKDC's website Dedicated Email address Phone support	Project team contacted every household which had responded to previous consultations, supplied contact details and indicated that they wanted to be notified. Email included information about the consultation, link to the CGR for Grantham webpage, survey and QR code. Letter included information about the consultation, link to webpage, survey and QR code. Webpage contained: - the information needed for someone to participate in the consultation should they wish to. - maps detailing the administrative external boundary for each of the areas highlighting the boundaries of parishes directly adjacent to the Town area and the proposed wards Dedicated email address: cgr@southkesteven.gov.uk Assistance provided by phone by elections staff if required
Parish Councils	All parish councils with a boundary adjacent to the currently unparished area of Grantham emailed.	Parishes are: Barrowby, Belton and Manthorpe, Great Gonerby, Harlaxton, Little Ponton & Stroxton and Londonthorpe and Harrowby Without Parish Councils were invited to participate by either:

		- submitting their views on the proposals via the dedicated email - completing the survey
All councillors at South Kesteven District Council	Councillors representing South Kesteven emailed	Email included information about the consultation and link to the CGR for Grantham webpage
Lincolnshire County Council – councillors representing Grantham in South Kesteven	14 County Councillors representing electoral divisions in South Kesteven emailed	All divisions within South Kesteven
Lincolnshire County Council	LCC emailed	Email included information about the consultation and link to the CGR for Grantham webpage
Community Groups	Community groups and organisations contacted by the Community Engagement Manager	

Details

9. South Kesteven District Council is currently undertaking a community governance review to establish if households in the currently unparished area of Grantham (and those living in the parishes adjacent) support a proposal to create a parish or town council for the area of Grantham.
10. As part of this process, just over 23,000 households and other stakeholders were contacted in March last year and asked if they agreed with this proposal or not. Two thirds of respondents (974 or 66.2%) supported this proposal.
11. Before agreeing to the creation of a new parish/town council for Grantham, the Council wanted to check if those living in three specific areas (identified by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as being areas included within the boundary of a parish, but also part of a continuous estate predominantly situated in the unparished area of Grantham) thought they had more in common with the town of Grantham or the parish where their household is currently located.
12. When asked if they would prefer to remain part of the parish their household currently belongs to or join the new parish/town council of Grantham, three quarters of respondents (64 or 75.3%) from

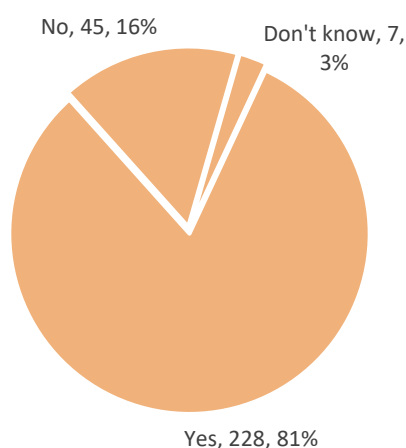
specific areas in the parishes of Belton & Manthorpe, Loundthorpe & Harrowby Without and Great Gonerby stated that they would prefer to remain where they are for administrative purposes i.e., part of the parish where their household is currently located.

13. The results of this consultation were considered by the Community Governance Review Working Group (CGRWG) on 1 February 2023. They recommended that the boundary between the new parish/town council and the parishes remains as it is now, for all the parishes adjacent. Following consideration of warding arrangements and the number of councillors who will represent those living in the area covered by the new parish/town council; the CGRWG also recommended that the wards of the new parish/town council should mirror existing district wards and that 22 councillors should represent the area. These recommendations were presented to and approved by the Council on 1 March 2023.
14. SKDC was then able to proceed to the next stage of the review which is to present to stakeholders - in accordance with legislative requirements - the draft recommendations for the new parish/town council and ask for comments.
15. The actions undertaken to promote this consultation included setting up a survey; contacting those who had responded to previous consultations stating that they wanted to be kept informed; sending an email to other stakeholders including district and county councillors, parish councils and local MPs; issuing a press release, updating the Community Governance Review for Grantham webpage and posting the consultation on the Council's social media channels.

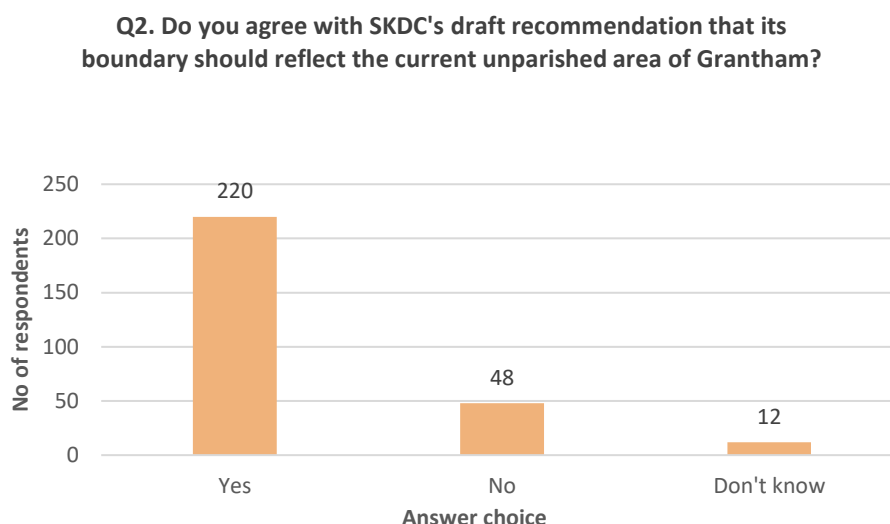
The results

16. The first question on the survey asked respondents if they agreed with the Council's draft recommendation that a Town Council should be set up to serve the town of Grantham. Most supported the proposal as illustrated in the graphic below:

Q1. Do you agree with SKDC's draft recommendation that a Town Council should be set up to serve the town of Grantham?

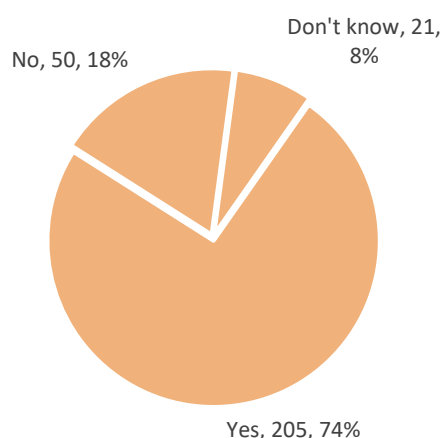


17. Respondents were then asked for their opinion on the boundary of the new Town Council - specifically if they agreed with the Council's recommendation that it should reflect the current unparished area of Grantham. To help them visualise what this would look like, the consultation included a map illustrating the boundaries. Over three quarters of respondents (220 or 78.6%) agreed that the boundaries of the new Town Council should reflect the current unparished area of Grantham, as illustrated in the chart below:



18. Views were then sought on the warding arrangements for the new town council. When asked "Do you agree with South Kesteven District Council's proposed warding arrangements for a new Town Council for Grantham which reflect the current District Council wards, as set out in Appendix A?" a slightly lower but still significant proportion of respondents (205 or 74.3%) were in favour. This is shown below:

Q3. Do you agree with SKDC's proposed warding arrangements for a new Town Council for Grantham which reflect the current District Council wards?



19. When prompted to provide an alternative, comments received by those who didn't agree with the proposal to adopt the same warding arrangements included but were not limited to the following themes:

- Changes that will happen as a result of housing development which will not be reflected in the warding arrangements

"I appreciate that people do not like change, but, with all of the new developments taking place in and around Grantham, historic boundaries of any kind are making less and less sense."

"Retaining fossil boundaries which do not reflect the economic and social structure of Grantham in 2023 would be a lost opportunity to shape the town's future"

- The arbitrary nature of some of the boundaries

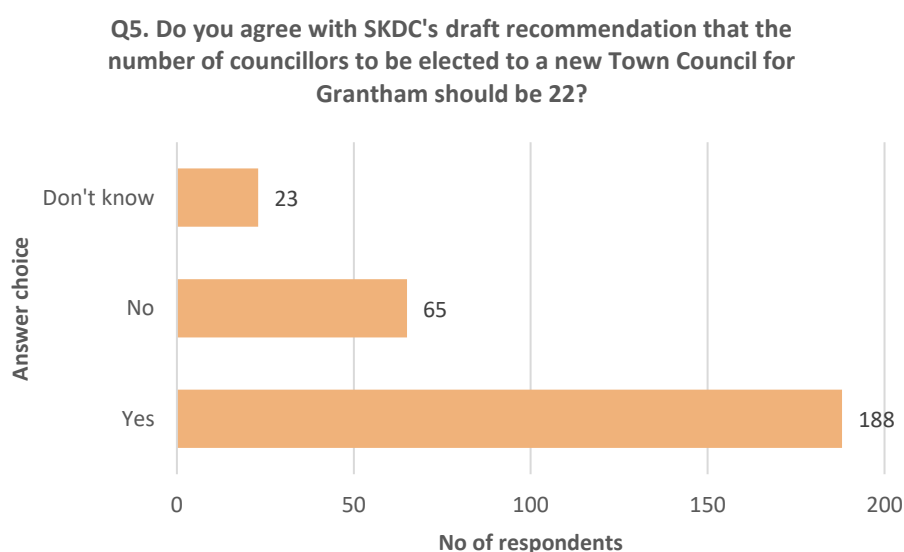
"Why is St Vincents so large, and does Welham Street get split so arbitrarily - Welham St Car Park in St Wulframs, Waterfront directly opposite in St Vincents when the river provides a much better boundary?"

"Boundary should follow key housing ...why does boundary cut Somerby hill estates in half?"

- To express their lack of support for the proposal to create a new Town Council for Grantham

"In my view Grantham does not need a Town Council."

20. Respondents were then asked for their opinion on the Council's draft recommendation that the number of Councillors to be elected to a new Town Council for Grantham should be 22. Seven out of ten respondents (188 or 68.1%) supported this recommendation, as illustrated in the bar chart below:



21. When asked to propose an alternative, there were three main threads to the comments made by those who didn't support the recommendation. Some thought it would be better to have an odd number of councillors, so that the outcome of decisions would be clearcut. A handful thought the arrangements shouldn't be finalised until there is more information available on the functions that the town council will be responsible for, but the most popular comments were that 22 is too high. These are illustrated in the comments made by respondents:

"I suggest a lower odd number, 21 or 19. This will ensure a majority during the voting process."

"Until there is clarification of the responsibilities which will pass to the Town Council it is hard to understand, and to justify, an additional 22 elected members...."

"22 is way too many"

22. The next question on the survey asked participants if they had any questions or would like to comment on anything included in the survey, to mention them. Their comments were wide-ranging and included reservations about the introduction of another level of bureaucracy and what the potential costs might be, as well as the services the new Town Council will be responsible for. These are illustrated in the quotes below:

"Thanks for the opportunity to indicate I do not agree with this plan which dilutes or duplicates responsibility and accountability."

"A Town Council is a step in the wrong direction. Another layer of local government will add to the public's confusion as to "who does what?"

"The costs to administrate this proposed change outweigh the benefits."

"I would like proposed costs for the Town Council to be disclosed and discussed, and for residents to have input into the areas of responsibility."

23. Some used the opportunity to re-iterate their support for the move:

"A Town Council is a much-needed thing for Grantham"

"I am all for a town council"

"Grantham desperately needs a town council."

24. Most responses were received from residents, as shown in the table below:

Number	% (based on 265 responses to this question)
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A resident of South Kesteven	262	98.9
A Parish, District or Town Councillor	11	4.2
Representing a Parish Council	1	0.4
Representing a local business	8	3.0
Representing a group or local organisation	4	1.5
Other, please specify	11	4.2

Respondents used the other space to state the type of organisation they represent. They included landlords, a member of the Civic Society and a Sports and Social Club.

25. To ensure that responses had been received from areas which would be directly affected by any changes that might be introduced, respondents were asked to supply their postcode. Perhaps not surprisingly given the subject matter, most (237 or 92.6%) were from the Grantham area (NG31) with a few coming from adjacent parish councils (NG32) and other stakeholders. The distribution of responses is illustrated in the table below:

	Number	% (based on 286 responses to this question)
NG31 6	21	8.2
NG31 7	52	20.3
NG31 8	78	30.5
NG31 9	86	33.6
NG32 1	11	4.3
NG32 2	2	0.8
NG32 3	2	0.8
NG33	1	0.4
NG33 4	1	0.4
NG34 0	1	0.4
PE10 0	1	0.4
Total	256	100

Conclusion

26. The feedback from this consultation will assist the Council in the determination of three parameters for the new town council. These are:
- The setting of the administrative external boundary for the currently unparished area of Grantham
 - The warding arrangements of the new parish/town council and the number of councillors

- The impact of any proposed boundary changes on neighbouring Parish Councils – although as no draft recommendations have been made to make changes to the administrative boundary, there shouldn't be any impact on any of the parishes adjacent.
27. There was strong support for each of SKDC's draft recommendations. Most stakeholders (228 or 81.4%) supported the Council's draft recommendation that a Town Council should be set up to represent the town of Grantham. Nearly eight out of ten respondents (220 or 78.6%) agreed with the recommendation to keep the boundary between the currently unparished area of Grantham and the adjacent parishes the same as it is now. A similar proportion agreed that the warding arrangements for a new town council should reflect the current district council wards. Three-quarters of respondents (205 or 74.3%) were in favour. A slightly lower number of respondents were in favour of 22 councillors being elected to represent the new town council. Seven out of ten (188 or 68.1%) supported this draft recommendation.
28. Some respondents expressed reservations about some of the draft recommendations – particularly if they weren't in favour of the proposal. Quite a few respondents thought that 22 was too high a number, particularly when the functions the new Town Council will be responsible for have not yet been determined.
29. Members are asked to note the contents of this report, and the degree of support for the draft recommendations.

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