

TITLE OF REPORT: THE REVIEW OF GRAVELEY PARISH

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To note the views of the Committee about the future governance arrangements for the Parish of Graveley.
- 1.2 To assist the Committee in formulating those views.

2. FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has, therefore, not been referred to in the Forward Plan

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The attention of the Committee is drawn to the following extract from a report to Council on 25 February 2010. Following consideration of that report, the Council agreed to proceed with a Community Governance Review of the Parish of Graveley.

Extract – Council 25 February 2010 Community Governance Reviews, Report of the Chief Executive.

- 3.1 *Formally known as parish reviews, principal councils have been able to carry out community reviews since the Local Government and Rating Act 1997. Under that Act local authorities assisted the Secretary of State in the process. Under the 2007 Act, the responsibilities of the Secretary of State are transferred to local government. Principal councils are now responsible for all aspects of the process from the decision to review to creating local orders setting up new governance arrangements. The only reference to central government, now required, would be in the case where a local authority considered creating a new parish or altering electoral wards or boundaries as it would be necessary to consult with the Electoral Commission over proposed electoral arrangements or in the case where a principal authority wished to recommend consequential alterations to principal authority boundaries to the Electoral Commission.*

- 3.2 *In carrying out Reviews principal councils are required to have regard to the guidance which has been issued by the Secretary of State.*

Keeping Parishes under Review

- 3.3 *The guidance indicates that principal councils should use their knowledge and awareness of local issues, to consider whether or not reviews of individual parishes are necessary. This could easily be achieved in an annual statement produced as a by-product of the regular activities of the Electoral Services Department, in assessing electoral equality within polling districts. Responsibility could be delegated to the Democratic Services Manager for producing and maintaining such a statement. The decision to undertake a review would be via recommendation to Council. However, the Council would be required to undertake a review should it receive a valid petition from the parishioners of any parish falling within its boundaries.*

The Parish of Graveley

3.4 *Consideration was given to a request to review this parish in 2003. It was decided to wait until Great Ashby had developed more fully and to give time to assess the needs of that growing area. It is now clear, in terms of the Government's guidance, the Parish of Graveley displays key reasons for conducting a review. These include the presence, in the same parish, of two physically separate communities whose only common factor is containment within the ancient field boundaries which form the parish. However, this is not to suggest that this spatial arrangement cannot provide effective and convenient governance. It will be for the review to recommend whether or not the existing arrangements should continue, be enhanced or replaced.*

3.5 *Since 2003 interest in reviewing the parish has waxed and waned as particular individuals have joined or left Graveley Parish Council. A formal request to review was received on 2 June 2009. Present interest is such that, should the Council decline the request, it is expected that a petition would follow quite quickly afterwards. A valid petition would commit the Council to undertaking and making public a review within 12 months of receipt of the petition. In addition, the imperative set out in paragraph 3.3 above would suggest that a review ought to be undertaken even without a petition being received.*

3.2 A key element of such a review is about providing effective and convenient local government matched to the way people live their lives. The 2007 Act recognises that traditional forms of governance may no longer be appropriate and this is reflected in the nature of the survey of electors and local organisations within and around the parish currently being conducted. The survey material is attached at Appendix A and the Committee is invited to take this into account in formulating its views.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Council is required to consult and take into consideration, the views any organisations with an interest in the well being of the Parish. Its own area committee is considered, in statutory guidance, to be a potential important foundation in the creation of democratic forms. Its views should therefore be taken into account.

5. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no implications contained within this report.

6. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no implications contained within this report.

7. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

7.1 No external consultation has been undertaken on this report.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee agrees:

8.1 To formulate views on the governance arrangements of the parish of Graveley including whether or not those arrangements should continue, be amended or replaced.

8.2 To submit those views to the Chief Executive for transmission to the Council via the Graveley Parish Community Review Member Working Group as part of the consultation exercise.

9. AUTHOR

9.1 David Miley, Democratic Services Manager

10. CONTRIBUTING OFFICERS

10.1 David Scholes, Strategic Director of Planning, Housing and Enterprise

11. APPENICIES

11.1 Appendix A Survey Documents

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 Guidance on Community Governance Reviews – The Electoral Commission
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/guidancecommunitygovernance2010>

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