

Date: 21 September 2010

**APPENDIX 3**

Our ref: PU/IW/JES/ER/11/5/2

Your ref:

Householders in the High Laver, Little Laver  
and Magdalen Laver Wards of  
The Moreton, Bobbingworth and The Lavers  
Parish Council

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Dear Householder

**Community Governance Review – Moreton, Bobbingworth and The Lavers (MBL)  
Parish Council**

This letter is a formal consultation with electors in the parishes of High Laver, Little Laver and Magdalen Laver about a Community Governance Review affecting electoral arrangements in those parishes.

**What is a Community Governance Review?**

A Community Governance Review is a procedure under Section 79 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. This procedure allows the District Council to carry out a review of Community Governance arrangements in any part of its district. The procedure involves consulting members of the community who might be affected on any request for change and on the proposals to implement the results of the review.

**Why is a Community Governance Review being Proposed for High Laver, Little Laver and Magdalen Laver?**

The District Council has been asked by MBL Parish Council to make changes to its parish electoral warding arrangements.

This involves combining the three separate wards of High Laver, Little Laver and Magdalen Laver into a single parish ward.

**Why is it being Proposed to Combine the three Lavers Wards into a Single New Ward?**

The MBL Parish Council put forward three main reasons for this change as follows:

- (a) to make the ratio of electors per councillor more even not only within the three Laver Wards but also across the entire Moreton, Bobbingworth and The Lavers Parish Council area;
- (b) to achieve savings in the administration costs for elections within the Moreton, Bobbingworth and The Lavers Parish Council area; and

(c) to ensure that, with the changes mentioned in (a) and (b) above, the individual character of The Lavers area continues to be recognised.

### **How Will Combining the three Lavers Wards improve Electoral Representation?**

An Appendix to this letter shows the electorate figures for each of the five parish wards in MBL Parish and, in the right hand column, the number of councillors and the number of electors per councillor.

The lower table in the Appendix shows the effect of combining the three Lavers Wards into one new Ward. As can be seen by comparing the two right hand columns, under the present warding the ratio of one councillor to electors ranges between 1:35 in Little Laver to 1:92 in Moreton. Compare this with the situation in the new wards where the ratio for The Lavers Ward is 1:74, thereby reducing the range to 1:74 to 1:92 for Moreton.

The District Council has supported the proposed amalgamation of the three Lavers Wards as it ensures that all electors in the area have more comparable access to their parish councillors.

### **How Will the Warding Changes Save Costs?**

A cost comparison between the present five wards in Moreton, Bobbingworth and The Lavers and the proposed three wards shows a total saving on election costs of £224 on a typical Parish Council election if it is not contested. Although this is not a large saving in financial terms, it is nevertheless significant for a rural parish like Moreton, Bobbingworth and The Lavers. In the event that elections are held in all seats there is likely to be further savings to the Parish Council, simply through having 5 wards rather than 3.

### **Will the Lavers area continue to have a separate identity as a result of the three wards being combined?**

The Parish Council has made representations to the District Council that the special identity of The Lavers area needs to be recognised in the warding arrangements for the parish. The District Council is persuaded that this local identity is with the Lavers Parishes together rather than with the three parishes individually. With this in mind the District Council has supported the proposal to combine the three Lavers wards in that this protects the identity of that area whilst achieving more uniform democratic representation. The Council also supports the suggested name for the new ward, namely "The Lavers".

### **Are there Any Other Electoral Changes being Proposed?**

The current review is focused purely on the internal parish wards for MBL Parish Council. No changes are being proposed to the external boundaries of the parish or to the District Council, County Council and Parliamentary electoral boundaries. Similarly, no changes to polling stations are envisaged as the District Council considers the single new ward does not involve a change in polling arrangements.

### **How Will the New Lavers Parish Ward Appear on the Map?**

Attached to this letter are two maps. Map 1 shows the existing warding arrangements for MBL Parish Council. Map 2 shows the proposed warding arrangements with the three Lavers Wards combined together.

### **What Other Matters can be covered by a Community Governance Review?**

As part of this consultation, local residents are able to raise any other governance issues affecting The Lavers area. These can include electoral arrangements, creation, dissolution or grouping of parish councils.

## **What is the role of the District Council in Community Governance Reviews?**

The 2007 Act requires the District Council to take the following steps when a review is launched:

- (a) publish a notice of the opening of the review;
- (b) invite comments from the local community and other relevant persons and organisations on the issues being covered;
- (c) consider those comments from the local community and prepare draft proposals for the review;
- (d) publish those draft proposals and invite comments from the local community;
- (e) finalise proposals after taking account of all representations received; and
- (f) make an Order bringing the changes into effect.

The District Council's principal responsibility is to have regard to the importance of securing Community Governance arrangements which reflect the identities and interests of the community and which are also effective and convenient.

## **What should Householders do now?**

The Council would appreciate any views by 22 October 2010. Please use the pro forma, which is attached to this letter. Once all the responses have been received these will then be considered by a committee of the District Council which will reach a view on whether the Council should proceed to the second stage, which would be to publish formal proposals regarding the new warding arrangements.

## **What Happens Next?**

Once it has formulated proposals, the District Council must then publish these for consultation purposes and consider the response. If the response is favourable, the Council will then draft a formal Order bringing the changes into effect including an implementation date and this will be publicly notified.

## **What is the Timescale?**

The law stipulates also that the review must be completed within 12 months from the date on which the review was launched. In this case this is the year ending on 28 June 2011.

## **Responses**

Please complete and return the response form to Ian Willett, Assistant to the Chief Executive, Epping Forest District Council, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, Essex CM16 4BZ in the return envelope provided. If you prefer to reply on line, a link to the Council's website is shown on the form.

Yours sincerely

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Assistant to Chief Executive