

Report to the Electoral and Community Governance Review Committee

Date of Meeting: 1 March 2011

Item: 5

Subject: Community Governance Review – Stage 2 Consultation and Revised Timetable

Officer Contract for Further Information: I Willett (01992 564243)

Committee Secretary: P Sewell (01992 564532)

Recommendations:

- (1) To approve a further revision to the timescale for the completion of this review as set out in Appendix 1;**
- (2) To consider the scope of the stage 2 consultation namely:
 - (a) households in The Lavers;**
 - (b) households in Matching Parish; and**
 - (c) households or electors in Matching Green (MBL part);**and whether consultation could be restricted to Matching Green only.**
- (3) To consider, as suggested by Matching, Bobbingworth and The Lavers Parish Council, that consultation with Matching Green residents affected by the change should be conducted for all electors, not households.**
- (4) To confirm that priority should be given to the expressed views of Matching Green residents affected by the change if wider consultation is sought.**
- (5) To approve the consultation documents set out as follows:
Appendix 2 - Consultation Document
Appendix 3 - Matching Parish Council letter
Appendix 4 - Matching Parish Council questionnaire
Appendix 5 - Matching, Bobbingworth and The Lavers Parish Council letter
Appendix 6 - Matching, Bobbingworth and The Lavers Parish Council questionnaire**

1. This report deals with the stage 2 consultation on the review.

Timescale

2. The legislation requires that a community governance review must be completed over a period of one year from its inception. It is recommended that the election period should be avoided in respect of the stage 2 consultation so as to minimise voter uncertainty about the May 2011 elections.
3. The Committee is therefore asked to approve the new timescale.

Scope of Consultation

4. It is proposed to carry out consultation with the electorate for the three Lavers wards and Matching Parish Council. Special arrangements will be made to highlight the views of Matching Green electors. The rationale behind this approach is:
 - (a) that all Lavers electors need to be told that the re-warding is going forward as a firm proposal and that a boundary change at Matching Green may come about;
 - (b) that all Matching residents are aware of the possible boundary change at Matching Green; and
 - (c) that responses by Matching Green electors who are directly affected by the Parish boundary change can be easily identified.
5. The Council is required to consult with persons and organisations affected by a change in community governance. It is possible to run an argument that consultation should only be with Matching Green Village electors (MBL Part) as they are the only ones directly affected. Matching Parish and the remaining electors of The Lavers could simply be informed (rather than consulted).
6. Matching, Bobbingworth and The Lavers Parish Council has raised the issue of consultation in Matching Green being based on individual electors instead of households, as this will give a better picture of local opinion.
7. The Committee is asked to reach a view on these issues.

Consultation Document

8. The Appendices show a draft consultation document, questionnaires and electors' letters for approval. This requires:
 - (a) amendment on points agreed at this meeting;
 - (b) inclusion of information of the financial effect of the boundary change on the basis of precepts by the two Councils; and
 - (c) information on District and County ward/division electorate growth over 5 years.
9. The emboldened sections of the documents are suggestions by Matching, Bobbingworth and The Lavers Parish Council for changes.
10. The Committee is asked to consider these documents in preparation for the launch of consultation.