

Report to the Electoral and Community Governance Review Committee

Date of Meeting: 19 May 2011 **Item:**

Subject: Community Governance Review –
Moreton, Bobbingworth and The Lavers (MBL)
Parish Council – Stage 2 Consultation

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

Committee Secretary: -

Recommendations:

- (1) To consider the consultation responses in respect of the Matching Green boundary;**
- (2) To reach a view on whether there is sufficient public support for the boundary change at Matching Green taking account of:**
 - (a) the overall response rate;**
 - (b) the individual responses to consultation questions by area;**
 - (c) the views of Essex County Council and the 2 Parish Councils.**
- (3) To consider the level of public support for changes in the numbers of Councillors in MBL and Matching Parishes.**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report deals with the second round of consultation with residents of The Lavers Wards in MBL Parish and Matching Parish concerning the Parish boundary at Matching Green Village.
- 1.2 Consultation was conducted by letter with the following:
 - (a) 219 households in the Parish Wards of High, Little and Magdalen Laver (MBL);
 - (b) 273 households in the Parish of Matching; and
 - (c) 180 electors in Matching Green Village (MBL part).
- 1.3 The consultation consisted of an explanatory letter, a summary information sheet and return pro forma with specific questions about:
 - (a) the Matching Green boundary change;
 - (b) the possibility of reducing the number of Councillors in the Lavers by one to reflect the possible inclusion of all of Matching Green in Matching Parish; and

(c) the possibility of increasing by one, the number of Councillors in Matching Parish for the reason set out in (b) above.

- 1.4 The information sheet was supplemented by more detailed information on the Council's Website. In addition, households in The Lavers were advised that the proposal to combine the three Lavers Wards into one, which had been the subject of consultation earlier, was now proceeding as a firm proposal.
- 1.5 Consultation letters were sent to Essex County Council, the two local District Councillors, the two Parish Councils and the County Councillors for North Weald and Nazeing and Ongar and Rural Electoral Divisions.
- 1.6 A public meeting was held on 1 April 2011, to which the public from the area consulted were invited. The consultation period ran from 25 March to 15 April 2011.

2. Consultation Results

... 2.1 The responses to the consultation are set out below. Appendix 1 is a note of the discussion which took place at the public meeting on 1 April 2011. Appendix 2 shows the response of Essex County Council to the proposed boundary change at Matching Green (this followed consultation with the two County Councillors concerned). Appendix 3 shows an individual response by County Councillor G McEwen which was received by the District Council directly. Appendices 4 and 5 show the responses from MBL and Matching Parish Councils respectively.

2.2 In framing the second round of consultation, the Committee decided that those residents in the MBL part of Matching Green Village should be given priority in interpreting the results because they would be directly affected. For this reason, all electors (rather than households) were consulted. Matching Parish and the other parts of the Lavers Wards were consulted on a household basis because, although they would be affected, it was felt that this would be to a lesser extent than Matching Green residents.

2.3 The overall responses received from the three areas consulted are as follows:

Matching Green Electors (MBL): 100 electors out of a total of 180 consulted (50.5%).

The Lavers Wards (MBL) (excluding Matching Green): 37 households of 219 consulted (16.4%); and

Matching Parish: 60 households out of 273 consulted (27.4%)

2.4 Turning to replies from Matching Green (MBL part), the responses from electors to the consultation questions were as follows:

	Replies	% Respondents
1. Do you support the principle of changing the Parish Boundary in Matching Green so that the whole village is within Matching Parish and rather than part being in Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers Parish?	Yes: 81 No: 19	81% 19%
2. Do you support the new Parish boundary shown on the map in Appendix 2 to the consultation report?	Yes 80 No 19	80% 19%
3. Do you support having one fewer Parish Councillor representing the new Lavers ward if the boundary change takes place?	Yes 75 No 20	75% 20%

2.5 In respect of replies from Matching households, the results were:

Questions	Responses	% of Replies
1. Do you support the boundary change at Matching Green so that the whole village is within Matching Parish?	Yes 56 No 4	93.3% 6.6%
2. If the boundary changes, do you think that Matching Parish Council should have more than 7 Councillors to deal with the additional electors in the Parish?	Yes 20 No 40	33.3% 66.6%

2.6 For replies from households in the three Lavers parishes (excluding Matching Green Village) the replies were as follows:

Questions	Responses	% of Replies
1. Do you support the principle of changing the Parish Boundary in Matching Green so that the whole village is within Matching Parish and rather than part being in Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers Parish?	Yes 31 No 6	83.8% 16.2%
2. Do you support the new Parish boundary shown on the map in Appendix 2 to the consultation report?	Yes 31 No 6	83.8% 16.2%
3. Do you support having one fewer Parish Councillors representing the new Lavers ward if the boundary change takes place?	Yes 26 No 11	70.3% 29.7%

3. Conclusions

3.1 The recommendations at the commencement of this report invite the Committee to reach conclusions on the results of the consultation. The following points are worth considering:

- (a) the response rates for householders are 16.4% (for MBL excluding Matching Green) and 21.2% (Matching);
- (b) the response rate for Matching Green Village electors (MBL part) is 50.5%;
- (c) the principle of changing the boundary commands a large percentage support among responders in all three areas and is highest in Matching Parish but in all three areas percentages are lower if all consultees are included;
- (d) the new boundary at Matching Green generally commands support within the MBL area including Matching Green Village;
- (e) within Matching Green Village (MB part) the support from those responding stands at 50.5% whilst as a percentage of those consulted, the percentage falls to 45%;
- (f) there is support for reducing the number of Councillors by one in the three Lavers wards of MBL, but most significantly in the areas which would not transfer under the current proposal;
- (g) there is no majority support for an additional Councillor for Matching Parish Council.

4. Costs

4.1 The second stage consultation has been costed as follows:

Printing £121
Postage (including pre-paid reply envelopes) £216
Accommodation £50

4.2 To these costs should add those for Stage 1 of the consultation as previously reported:

Printing:	£299
Postage:	£107 (including pre-paid return envelopes)
Total	<u>£306</u>

5. Background Papers

3 consultation letters
Consultation returns from local residents.