

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007 – STATEMENT UNDER SECTION 92

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – MORETON, BOBBINGWORTH & THE LAVERS (MBL) PARISH COUNCIL

The Epping Forest District Council opened a Community Governance Review in regard to MBL Parish Council at its meeting on 30 June 2010.

The review was occasioned by a request from the Parish Council for its electoral wards to be examined with a view to:

- (a) achieving a ratio of electors to Councillors which was more even across the Parish;
- (b) achieve savings in the costs of administering local elections.

The Parish Council proposed that its 5 Parish Wards be reduced to 3 by combining the wards of High Laver, Little Laver and Magdalen Laver (W1) to form a single new ward to be called “The Lavers”.

This proposal was agreed by the Council at its June 2010 meeting as the terms of reference for a Community Governance Review (W2). As required by the 2007 Act, consultation then took place with all households in the three Lavers wards (W3) and the results reported to a newly-established Committee (titled the Community Governance Reviews Committee) on 18 November 2010 (W4).

The results of the consultation indicated from support from local households for the re-warding and the Committee accepted this as a firm proposal.

The consultation found a significant level of support from respondents for a change in the external boundaries of MBL Parish in the village of Matching Green. The Committee decided on 1.3.11 (W5) that this support was significant enough to carry out further consultation with households in The Lavers area and in the adjoining Parish of Matching. This second round highlighted the view expressed locally that the present route of the Parish boundary was illogical, in that it effectively divided Matching Green in two (W6).

Following the March 2011 Committee meeting, further consultation was launched (W7). This consultation recognised the central importance of electors in Matching Green (but part of MBL Parish) in determining whether a boundary change should be undertaken. For this reason, individual electors in that area rather than households were contacted as these electors were most directly affected.

The objective of the consultation was to understand local opinion on whether all of Matching Green Village should be in Matching Parish.

The results of this consultation were reported to the Committee on 19 May 2011 (W8). There was general support for the boundary change among respondents and, after discussion, the Committee concluded that non-responders could be deemed to have at least acquiesced in the change.

The 2nd round of consultation also explored the need for changes in the number of Councillors in the two Parish Councils, were the boundary change to proceed. MBL residents in The Lavers were asked if one less Councillor were required as the Parish was losing electors. By the same token, Matching householders were asked if an increase in the

number of electors through incorporating all of Matching Green in the Parish warranted one more elected member.

There was little support for these changes in Matching. In MBL, there was a significant but not overwhelming support for one less Councillor for The Lavers ward. However, the Committee accepted the case put forward by the Parish Council that MBL was a large rural area and the removal of one Councillor would make access for electors to their representatives more difficult. The Committee therefore supported the option of no change.

The Committee at its meeting in May 2011 formulated its final proposals for approval by the Council (W9). These included proposals for applying to the Local Government Boundary Commission to change the District Ward and County Electoral Division boundaries so that they continued to be co-terminous with the Parish boundary after the latter was altered. A final informal consultation was also commissioned through 2 Matching Councillors and 1 MBL Parish Councillor who lived in the MBL part of Matching Green Village. This concerned any "democratic deficit" for those Matching Green electors who would transfer to Matching Parish and not be able to participate in a Parish election until 2015.

This consultation was reported to the Council meeting on 28.6.11 along with the other proposals of the Committee.

[NB Statement to be completed following the Council meeting].