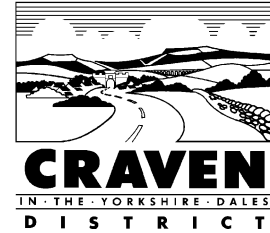


Policy Committee – 18 July 2017

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW- PARISH COUNCILS



Report of the Members Services Manager

Ward(s) affected: All

1. **Purpose of Report** – To consider carrying out a community governance review of electoral arrangements in smaller parish councils.
2. **Recommendations** – Members are recommended to:
 - 2.1 Carry out a community governance review of electoral arrangements in those parish councils with fewer than seven councillors to examine whether the number of councillors should be increased to the NALC recommended minimum of seven councillors.
 - 2.2 The views of larger parishes also be sought on the adequacy of their current electoral arrangements.
 - 2.3 That a report on the outcome of the consultation be submitted to Policy Committee for the approval of any recommendations to be made to the Local Government Boundary Committee for England.
3. **Report**
 - 3.1 Thornton-in-Craven Parish Council have requested Craven District Council to undertake a community governance review to consider increasing the number of councillors on the parish council from the current figure of five in order that it might more effectively carry out its business.
 - 3.2 The Local Government Act 1972, as amended, specifies that each parish council must have at least five councillors. In practice, there is a wide variation of council size between parish councils. That variation appears to be influenced by population. Research found that the typical parish council representing less than 500 people had between 5 and 8 councillors; those between 501 and 2,500 had 6 to 12 councillors; and those between 2,501 and 10,000 had 9 to 16 councillors. The National Association of Local Councils suggests that the minimum number of councillors for any parish should be 7.
 - 3.3 The Electoral Commission stress the importance of having the right number of councillors to take decisions effectively on behalf of an area. If the council has too few members, it might not be able to take important decisions quickly and the

council could lack democratic accountability in some areas of its work. However, too many councillors could also lead to inefficient decision making.

- 3.4 In addition to Thornton-in-Craven, 12 other parish councils have fewer than seven members these are shown in the table below. It may be opportune to review electoral arrangements in these parishes at the same time as any review of the arrangements for Thornton-in-Craven.

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Seats</i>	<i>Electorate</i>	<i>Election Year</i>		
			<i>Year</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Year</i>
Appletreewick	5	180			2020
Austwick	5	387	2018		
Buckden	5	147			2020
Coniston Cold	5	159	2018		
Draughton	5	209			2020
Hebden	5	198			2020
Kettlewell-with-Starbotton	5	265			2020
Linton	5	115			2020
Lothersdale	5	444	2018		
Stainforth	5	196	2018		
Thornton-in-Craven	5	370		2019	
Thornton-in-Lonsdale	5	255	2018		
Thresholdfield	5	814			2020

- 3.5 The process for carrying out a community governance review of electoral arrangements would be as follows:

- Parish Council (or local petition) requests CDC to carry out a Community Governance Review (CGR)
- CDC decides whether or not to carry out a CGR
- If CGR goes ahead, CDC will draft proposals and consult on them
- CDC makes recommendation for any changes to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) for their approval
- If LGBCE give approval, CDC makes Local Order to implement the decision.
- Implementation with effect from the next normal election date.

4. Implications

- 4.1 **Financial Implications** –Costs in officer time in carrying out a community governance review is estimated at between £1,500 and £2,000 which can be contained within the overall budget for the service.

- 4.2 **Legal Implications** – Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 principal councils have the power to carry out community governance reviews and put in place or make changes to local community (parish) governance arrangements.
- 4.3 **Contribution to Corporate Priorities** – Supporting the work of parish Councils helps promote the resilient communities policy.
- 4.4 **Risk Management** – The proposals do not carry any significant risk to the Council
- 4.5 **Equality Impact Assessment** -
The Council's Equality Impact Assessment Procedure **has been** followed. An Equality Impact Assessment **has not** been completed on the proposals as completion of **Stage 1- Initial Screening** of the Procedure identified that the proposed policy, strategy, procedure or function **does not have** the potential to cause negative impact or discriminate against different groups in the community based on •age • disability •gender • race/ethnicity • religion or religious belief (faith) •sexual orientation, or • rural isolation,
5. **Consultations with Others** – Thornton-in-Craven Parish Council.
6. **Access to Information : Background Documents**
7. **Author of the Report** – Andrew Mather, Member Services Manager. Telephone 01756 706226 or e-mail:amather@cravenc.gov.
- Note : Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.
8. **Appendices** – None