

Chichester District Council

Boundary Review Panel

Tuesday 13 January 2015

**Increase in Number of Parish Councillors
on Chidham and Hambrook Parish Council**

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendation

That following the community consultation the Boundary Review Panel recommends to the Council that there be an increase of one additional councillor to serve on Chidham and Hambrook Parish Council taking its members from nine to ten.

3. Background

- 3.1. At its meeting on Tuesday 22 July 2014 the Boundary Review Panel considered a request from Chidham and Hambrook Parish Council to undertake a community governance review to increase the amount of councillors the parish has on it. The Boundary Review Panel recommended that a consultation should take place. This report explains the results of the consultation.
- 3.2. In carrying out the consultation exercise, Chichester District Council (CDC) has:
 - (a) Advertised the proposal on CDC's website.
 - (b) Written to Chidham and Hambrook Parish Council.
 - (c) Advertised the proposal on the noticeboards within the parish.
 - (d) Written to West Sussex County Council.
 - (e) Requested the views of the local ward members at CDC.
- 3.3. No comments have been received from any individual or group.
- 3.4. Although there was no response to the consultation, I feel that because of the transfer of the 229 properties and the gain in parishioners it seems sensible to increase Chidham and Hambrook Parish Council by one member.
- 3.5. The *Local Government Act 1972* specifies that each parish council must have at least five councillors; there is no maximum number. In practice there is a wide

variation in the number of parish councillors. Research by the Aston Business School found that a typical parish council, representing fewer than 500 people, had between five and eight councillors and those between 501 and 2,500 had between six and 12 councillors. Chidham and Hambrook Parish Council has an electorate of 1196 (January 2015).

- 3.6. The Local Government Boundary Review Commission is of the view that it is for each area to consider the appropriate size on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and the pattern of communities.
- 3.7. As the Electoral Registration Officer I was initially of the view that Chidham and Hambrook Parish Council had sufficient parish councillors to undertake its parish council work because the last parish council election was uncontested and it did not have sufficient candidates to stand. This led to Chidham and Hambrook Parish Council having to co-opt two members. However, in subsequent correspondence with the parish clerk he has informed me that the parish's workload has increased because of the extra number of parishioners being transferred into the parish and, because it has commenced work on its neighbourhood plan, it is experiencing an increased interest in parish affairs. It believes there will be sufficient candidates standing at the next election to fill the additional place. The number it is proposing is reasonable for the size of the electorate and I can confirm that it has had an increase in work. However, I remain somewhat concerned that by increasing the number it might still have uncontested elections in 2015 and might have to continue to co-opt.
- 3.8. The Boundary Review has two options:
- (i) Agree to the increase of parish councillors to Chidham and Hambrook Parish Council from 9 to 10 members

or

 - (ii) Agree to leave the parish council membership as it is, at nine members
- 3.9 If the increase in councillors is agreed, the new arrangements would take effect from the next election on Thursday 7 May 2015.

4 Alternatives Considered

- 4.1 See above.

5 Resource and Legal Implications

- 5.1 CDC does not have a specific budget for reviews of this nature. There is, however, a legal duty to consider the review.
- 5.2 Although there will be some staffing implications for the Electoral Services, the cost will be minimal.

6 Consultation

- 6.1 As detailed in the report.

7 Other Implications

Crime and Disorder	None
Climate Change	None
Human Rights and Equality Impact	None
Safeguarding	None

8 Background Papers

9.1 None.

9 Appendices

10.1 None.