

REPORT TO CABINET

Open		Would any decisions proposed :			
Any especially affected Wards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hillington • Hockwold • Walpole Cross Keys 	Mandatory/	Be entirely within Cabinet's powers to decide		NO	
	Discretionary /	Need to be recommendations to Council		YES	
	Operational	Is it a Key Decision		YES/NO	
Lead Member: Stuart Dark E-mail: cllr.stuart.dark@west-norfolk.gov.uk		Other Cabinet Members consulted:			
		Other Members consulted:			
Lead Officer: Andrew Barrett E-mail: andrew.barrett@west-norfolk.gov.uk Direct Dial: 01553 616306		Other Officers consulted: Lorraine Gore, Sam Winter			
Financial Implications NO	Policy/ Personnel Implications NO	Statutory Implications NO	Equal Impact Assessment YES/NO If YES: Pre-screening/ Full Assessment	Risk Management Implications NO	Environmental Considerations NO

Date of meeting: 16 November 2021

REQUEST FOR VARIATION OF NUMBER OF PARISH COUNCILLORS

Summary

To address the requests made by Hillington, Hockwold and Walpole Cross Keys Parish Councils to increase their current number of Parish Councillors.

Recommendation

- (1) That the variation for Hillington be approved.
- (2) That the variation for Hockwold be approved.
- (3) That the variation for Walpole Cross Keys be approved.

Reason for Decision

- To enable Hillington Parish Council to reach quorate with greater ease
- For both Hockwold and Walpole Cross Keys, an additional Councillor would help to resolve an increasing number of local issues, due to a large influx of additional parishioners over the previous 15 years.

1 Background

Under Schedule 5 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Section 4, 3A(b) the number of Parish Councillors for each Parish is fixed from time to time by the Borough Council. The last occasion this matter was reviewed was in 1991, when the following scale was agreed:

Total Electorate	Number of Parish Councillors
Up to 300	7 (min of 5)

For every additional 300 (or part thereof)	1
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Variations in numbers have been dealt with on an ad hoc basis since then but have been very limited in number.

2 Options Considered

Whilst previously, the Borough Council has adopted the above sliding scale, there is NO requirement in legislation that the number of councillors should be proportional to electorate size; indeed, the ratio of electors to councillors is likely to vary considerably within a principal council's area (aside from the legal minimum of 5).

Principal councils should also bear in mind that the conduct of parish council business does not usually require a large body of councillors. In addition, historically many parish councils, particularly smaller ones, have found difficulty in attracting sufficient candidates to stand for election. This has led to uncontested elections and/or a need to co-opt members in order to fill vacancies.

A wide range of issues will impact on the decision regarding councillor numbers: urban-rural differentials, traditional scales of representation, the administrative workload, a parish council's budget and planned (or actual) level of service provision may also be important factors in reaching conclusions on council size.

The LGBCE (Local Government Boundary Commission England) state: "Our view is that each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and pattern of communities."

Both NALC (National Association of Local Councils) and The Aston Business School have published their own recommended numbers (see attached).

Hillington Parish Council

Current Parish Councillors: 5
Requested Parish Councillors: 6

2021 Electorate: 259
2005 Electorate: 260

Maximum allowed under previous scale: 7

Current number of vacancies: 0

2019 Borough/Parish elections: 5 nominations received (uncontested election)

Hockwold Parish Council

Current Parish Councillors: 9
Requested Parish Councillors: 10

2021 Electorate: 909
2005 Electorate: 848

Maximum allowed under previous scale: 10

Current number of vacancies: 1 (Cllr resigned Sept' 2021)

2019 Borough/Parish elections: 6 nominations received (uncontested election)

Walpole Cross Keys Parish Council

Current Parish Councillors: 8
Requested Parish Councillors: 9

2021 Electorate: 462
2005 Electorate: 368

Maximum allowed under previous scale: 8

Current number of vacancies: 0

2019 Borough/Parish elections: 9 nominations received (contested election)

3 Policy Implications

No policy implications if the scale is adhered to.

4 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications.

5 Personnel Implications

There are no personnel implications.

6 Environmental Considerations

There are no environmental implications.

7 Statutory Considerations

The Borough Council has a statutory obligation to keep the number of Parish Councillors under review.

8 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(Pre screening report template attached)

There are no Equality Impact Assessment implications.

9 Risk Management Implications

There are no immediate risks identified in the proposal.

10 Declarations of Interest / Dispensations Granted

None identified.

11 Background Papers

- Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
- NALC & Aston Business School recommendations
- Covering letter and minutes from Hillington Parish Council's meeting of 13 July 2021
- Covering letter and minutes from Hockwold Parish Council's meeting of 12 January 2021
- Covering letter and minutes from Walpole Cross Keys Parish Council's meeting of 15 June 2021

Pre-Screening Equality Impact Assessment

Borough Council of
King's Lynn & West Norfolk



Name of policy/service/function					
Is this a new or existing policy/service/function?	New / Existing (delete as appropriate)				
<p>Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened.</p> <p>Please state if this policy/service is rigidly constrained by statutory obligations</p>					
Question	Answer				
<p>1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups according to their different protected characteristic, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</p> <p>Please tick the relevant box for each group.</p> <p>NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p>		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age				
	Disability				
	Gender				
	Gender Re-assignment				
	Marriage/civil partnership				
	Pregnancy & maternity				
	Race				
	Religion or belief				
	Sexual orientation				
Other (eg low income)					

Question	Answer	Comments
<p>2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?</p>	Yes / No	
<p>3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?</p>	Yes / No	
<p>4. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?</p>	Yes / No	
<p>5. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions?</p> <p>If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section</p>	Yes / No	<p>Actions:</p>
		<p>Actions agreed by EWG member:</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>If 'yes' to questions 2 - 4 a full impact assessment will be required unless comments are provided to explain why this is not felt necessary:</p> <p>Decision agreed by EWG member:</p>		
<p>Assessment completed by:</p> <p>Name</p>		
<p>Job title</p>		
<p>Date</p>		