

Briefing Note

Community Governance Review July 2019

1.0 Background

1.1 Cornwall Council is currently supporting a Community Governance Review which gives parish councils the opportunity to make changes to their size (number of councillors), their name and their boundaries. Previous Briefing Notes¹ have given the background and explained this council's progress in assessing any need for change.

1.2 At its public meeting on 21 March 2019, councillors agreed to set up a Working Group 'to to examine the proposals and agree a response those proposals from Liskeard Town Council that changes should be made to our adjacent boundaries.' The Group has met on seven occasions since that date, and is now in a position to publish its conclusions and make its recommendations to full council.

2.0 The Review's Aims

2.1 The review is overseen by Cornwall Council's Electoral Review Panel, whose terms of reference set out its criteria. These are: to review parish governance and to ensure that it is fit for purpose for the future.² The council also needs to demonstrate and evidence how its governance reflects the identities and interests of its community, and provides effective and convenient local government.

2.2 The deadline for submission of Menheniot Parish Council's response is 17 July 2019.

2.3 Any proposals that are supported by the ERP will be out for consultation in November 2019, with their final recommendations passed to Cornwall Council for approval in June 2020. Any changes that are agreed will be implemented from May 2021.

3.0 Working Group Recommendations

The Group believes that the Parish Council provides effective and convenient local government in three ways:

3.1 Electoral Equality

Councillors are elected and co-opted to represent an appropriate number of electors. The current number of councillors and the forecast number of electors is sufficient to maintain electoral equality.

3.2 Planning

This is one of three examples of how the parish council reflects the interests of the community. The Group believes that the parish council uses the planning system as an effective means of promoting community engagement.

3.3 Procurement

¹ February, March, April 2019

² Local Government Boundary Commission for England Guidance on community governance reviews para 80 March 2010 & CCGR ToR para 47.

The Group believes that the council offers value for money and added social value in its procurement.

3.4 Grants & Donations

The Group believes that the council's windfall funding has been effectively used to extend the range of services that the parish council provides and simultaneously builds community cohesion.

3.5 Financial Viability

The Group agrees with residents that the parish council provides value for money in its operations³. This is due partly to its procurement and grants system, and partly to its forward planning so that there are no sudden increases in expenditure that have not been forecast.

3.6 Community Identity

The Group believes that schools in the parish sit at the heart of the community. The governors of Menheniot Primary School have submitted a statement that explains how shared parenting and shared childhood create a local community.

3.7 Consultation & Engagement

The Working Group has supported 34 individual events where it has engaged with residents to pass on information about this review, and to obtain their opinions. They have also conducted two surveys in the parish: 'We are Menheniot' was an opinion survey among all Menheniot residents to examine their attitudes towards the parish and the parish council. The 'Shoppers Survey 2019' was a face to face survey with visitors to the Bubble Retail Park and Liskeard Tavern to examine their attitudes towards boundaries and any potential impact they might have on their shopping experience.

4.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

4.1 The Working Group has considered the evidence and research submitted to it, and has reached the unanimous conclusion that there is no case for a change in the parish boundary, the parish name or the number of parish councillors.

4.2 This conclusion accurately reflects the views of the parish's residents, who in their recent opinion survey were 92%⁴ against any changes in the historic boundary.

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Date: 9 July 2019.

³ We are Menheniot Q2

⁴ We are Menheniot Q11