

Community Governance Review of Thorp Arch Parish Council: Increase in the number of Councillors

Date: 8 February 2023

Report of: Chief Officer, Elections and Regulatory

Report to: General Purposes Committee

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the City's and council's ambitions

- A Community Governance Review of Thorp Arch Parish Council was approved by the Committee at their meeting of 19 October 2023.
- The Parish Council requested an increase in the number of councillors from 5 to 6.
- A consultation exercise has taken place as part of the review process, and this report sets out the outcome of that consultation, and the recommendation of Electoral Working Group.

Recommendations

- a) Members of General Purposes Committee take a decision on whether to recommend to Full Council that the number of councillors for Thorp Arch Parish Council be increased from 5 to 6.
- b) Should the decision be taken to increase the number of Councillors, that the change is implemented in time to be effective for the Parish Council elections on 4 May 2023.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 On 12 July 2022, the Council received a request from Thorp Arch Parish Council, to increase the number of Parish Councillors from 5 to 6 (Appendix A).
- 2 Thorp Arch Parish Council sits within the Wetherby Ward of Leeds City Council, polling district WYD. A map can be found at Appendix B to this report.
- 3 The electorate of the Parish is currently 682, across 499 properties.
- 4 A large development within the Parish boundaries will see an additional 145 properties and an estimated 200 additional electors added to the Thorp Arch Parish Council register.
- 5 By way of comparison, neighbouring Walton Parish Council has an electorate of 173, represented by 7 Parish Councillors (24 electors per Councillor), and Clifford Parish Council has an electorate of 1414 represented by 9 Parish Councillors (147 electors per Councillor).
- 6 Guidance from the National Association of Local Councils on the number of Parish Councillors can be found at Appendix C.
- 7 An estimated electorate of approximately 900 shared between the proposed 6 Parish Councillors equates to 150 electors per Councillor.
- 8 The request was supported by all 5 of the existing Parish Councillors, who agreed to formally request an increase at their meeting of 11 April 2022.
- 9 Further support has been received by the 3 Leeds City Council Wetherby Ward Councillors, in which the Parish Council falls (Appendix D).
- 10 General Purposes Committee gave approval for a Community Governance Review to take place at its meeting of 19 October 2022.
- 11 A five week public consultation period commenced on 20 October 2022 and ended on 25 November 2022.
- 12 No responses to the public consultation were received.
- 13 The Council's Electoral Working Group considered the request in December 2022 and resolved to make the following recommendation to the Committee:
"Electoral Working Group Members recommend that General Purposes Committee approve the increase of Councillors for Thorp Arch Parish Council from 5 to 6".
- 14 The Committee must now make a recommendation to Full Council for consideration at the meeting on 22 February 2023.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards Affected: Wetherby

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 15 Ward members have confirmed their support of a review. See Appendix D to this report.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 16 A five week public consultation period took place between 20 October and 25 November 2022. No responses were received.

What are the resource implications?

- 17 There are minimal resource implications for Electoral Services. There is no cost to the Service or the Council.

What are the legal implications?

- 18 The Council must decide whether to approve the Parish Council's request.
- 19 Should the request be approved, a reorganisation order will be made, to allow for the advertisement of 6 vacancies for the Parish Council elections on 4 May 2023.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 20 That the Parish Council will not have sufficient Councillors to represent their electorate.

Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?

- Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

- 21 If the Thorp Arch Parish Council area is better represented, it will assist the community to maintain its positive identity, culture, heritage and contribute towards a sustainable future for the area.

Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered?

- 22 No other options could be considered as the authority needs to follow the procedure for a community governance review as laid out in legislation.

b) How will success be measured?

- 23 By the successful election of an additional councillor, should the Committee agree to increase the number of Parish councillors.

c) What is the timetable for implementation?

- 24 If the increase in councillors is approved, the change will be implemented in time to be effective for the Parish Council elections on 4 May 2023.

Appendices

- 25 Appendix A – Request for a Community Governance Review from Thorp Arch Parish Council
- 26 Appendix B– Map of the Thorp Arch Parish Council area
- 27 Appendix C – Guidance from NALC on parish councillor numbers
- 28 Appendix D – Letter of support from Wetherby Ward Councillors

Background papers

- 29 None.