

# Community Governance Review of Ledston Parish Council

Date: 22 February 2023

Report of: Chief Officer, Elections and Regulatory

Report to: Full Council

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

- Ledston Parish Council requested that a Community Governance Review (CGR) take place, to consult publicly on the future of the Parish Council.
- General Purposes Committee approved the CGR on 14 December 2022, marking the start of a 5-week public consultation period.
- The consultation period ended on 19 January 2023. 5 responses were submitted, which can be found at Appendix A to this report
- This report contains the recommendations of Electoral Working Group and General Purposes Committee

## Recommendations

Full Council are asked to:

- a) Approve the recommendation made by General Purposes Committee on 8 February 2023 to abolish Ledston Parish Council.

## Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 On 1 November 2022, the Council received a request from the Chair of Ledston Parish Council, asking for a CGR to be carried out to consider the future of the Parish.
- 2 The request, which details the reasons the Parish Council wanted the Council to undertake a CGR, can be found at Appendix B.
- 3 The CGR was approved at General Purposes Committee on 14 December 2022.
- 4 In addition to the information provided by the Chair at Appendix B, the Council has also experienced issues. More information on these can be found in the timeline of issues at Appendix C to this report.

## About Ledston Parish Council

- 5 Ledston Parish Council sits within the Kippax and Methley Ward of Leeds City Council, polling districts KMD and KMI. A map can be found at Appendix D to this report.
- 6 The electorate of the Parish is 287, represented by 5 Parish Councillors.

## Consultation Period

- 7 In accordance with regulations, a public consultation period for the CGR commenced on 15 December 2022, and ended on 19 January 2023.
- 8 A total of 5 responses were received to this consultation, which can be found at Appendix A.
- 9 4 of the responses submitted were from residents in KMI, the Ledston Luck part of the Parish. 1 response was from a resident in KMD, the Ledston part of the Parish.

## Electoral Working Group Recommendation

- 10 As was the case at previous Community Governance Reviews, representations made during the consultation period were considered by the Council's Electoral Working Group (EWG) who are experienced in this role.
- 11 At the EWG meeting held at 9am on Monday 23 January, all Members resolved to recommend the abolition of Ledston Parish Council.
- 12 Members felt that the previous measures and support provided had offered more than sufficient opportunity to resolve the issues the Parish continue to experience, and that the Parish Council in its current form is untenable.

## General Purposes Committee Recommendation

- 13 At the meeting of General Purposes Committee held at 10am on Wednesday 8 February, the Committee agreed with the recommendation and rationale in 11 and 12 above, and resolved to recommend the abolition of Ledston Parish Council.

## What impact will this proposal have?

**Wards Affected:** Kippax and Methley

Have ward members been consulted?       Yes       No

- 14 Ward members have been largely consulted, both by Officers and the Parish Council over the past 8 years.
- 15 Should the Parish Council be abolished, the areas of Ledston and Ledston Luck will no longer be parished.

- 16 The Kippax and Methley ward Councillors are keen to support the residents and are happy to work with them to put other arrangements in place for the community, such as a residents' association.

### **What consultation and engagement has taken place?**

- 17 A 5-week consultation period was undertaken, as per the information in 7, 8 and 9 above.
- 18 The consultation has been conducted in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, as required by Section 93(3). The process adopted has ensured that the Council has consulted with local government electors for the area under review, and any other person or body which appears to have an interest in the review.

### **What are the resource implications?**

- 19 Should the Parish Council continue to operate, there is a risk that the issues with Governance within the Parish will remain unresolved, leading to significant Officer time spent dealing with casual vacancies, an inquorate council, interim Orders, and re-running elections due to insufficient nominations.
- 20 There could also continue to be issues relating to the precept which would impact on resources for Finance colleagues.
- 21 Should Full Council approve the abolition of the Parish, this would have an impact on resources for the Council.
- 22 The Parish Councils property, rights and liabilities which relate to their area will transfer to Leeds City Council. More detail about this can be found in the original request for a Community Governance Review, from the Chair of Ledston Parish Council, at Appendix B.
- 23 Relevant Officers are aware of the transfer of assets and are making preparatory arrangements in readiness for the decision at Full Council.

### **What are the legal implications?**

- 24 The Community Governance Review has been conducted in accordance with regulations, under relevant delegations to the Chief Executive in respect of Community Governance.
- 25 General Purposes Committee make their recommendation to Council in accordance with the [terms of reference](#) published on 15 December 2022.
- 26 The final decision to give effect to the recommendations is reserved to Full Council.
- 27 An Order will be made to dissolve the Parish Council should the abolition be approved.

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

- 28 That the Parish Council continues to operate ineffectively, does not provide value for money to precept payers and is unable to deal with administrative procedures including the ability to field candidates at the parish council elections on 4 May 2023.

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

Inclusive Growth

Health and Wellbeing

Climate Emergency

- 29 Not applicable.

## **Options, timescales and measuring success**

### **a) What other options were considered?**

- 30 A Community Governance Review previously took place in 2017/18, which considered the option to abolish the Parish Council. The decision was taken not to abolish, and measures were put in place to assist the Parish with the issues that had occurred.
- 31 The report to the Committee from March 2018 can be found [here](#).
- 32 The measures put in place did not resolve the issues which have continued to occur, leading to the review now taking place.
- 33 The Parish Council explored possible mergers with neighbouring Parish Councils without success.

### **b) How will success be measured?**

- 34 Not applicable.

### **c) What is the timetable for implementation?**

- 35 A decision will be taken at Full Council on 22 February 2023.
- 36 Should the decision to abolish be approved, an Order will be made to dissolve the Parish Council no later than 24 March 2023.

## **Appendices**

- 37 Appendix A – Responses to consultation
- 38 Appendix B – Request for a Community Governance Review from Ledston Parish Council
- 39 Appendix C – Timeline of issues
- 40 Appendix C – Map of the Ledston Parish Council area

## **Background papers**

- 41 None.