

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Council
2.	Date:	28th July 2010
3.	Title:	Parish Review/Community Governance Review
4.	Directorate:	Chief Executive's

5. Summary

This report informs the Council of the outcome of further consultation undertaken, as agreed by the Council at its meeting on 21st April 2010, and makes further final recommendations as a result.

6. Recommendations

- (1) That with regard to the proposals to extend the boundaries of the parishes of Brinsworth and Dalton, which were the subject of further consultation as agreed by the Council, no further action be taken.
- (2) That in the absence of any revised proposals or evidence of popular support for the creation of a parish at Thorpe Hesley, no further action be taken.

7. Proposals and Details

The Council has a duty to keep under review the arrangements of its parishes. The last review was undertaken over twenty years ago and since then there has been new development and population movement across the borough, which may mean that local identities have changed. The review is of the whole borough, whether presently parished or unparished.

The main aim of the review is to ensure that parish boundaries continue to reflect the identities and interests of the communities they serve, are meaningful, and facilitate the delivery of effective and convenient services. The review also looks at electoral arrangements within parishes, such as level of representation and warding arrangements.

Following preliminary consultation, a Member and Officer Working Group, chaired by Councillor Hussain, met on a number of occasions to discuss the initial proposals and meet some of those who made them. Separate meetings between officers and community representatives also took place and, where necessary, Area Partnership Managers brought parties together.

Draft recommendations were recommended to Council last year and issued for general public consultation and specific consultation with all those affected. Following conclusion of the consultation, the Working Group met to give further consideration to the draft recommendations in the light of responses received.

In April of this year, a report was submitted to Cabinet containing final recommendations in most areas. These were recommended by Cabinet to Council. Minute C224 refers. In some cases, the final recommendations approved by Council, were subject to the approval of the Electoral Commission (now the Local Government Boundary Commission), insofar as they affected Parish Councils which have protected electoral arrangements.

In three areas, no final recommendation was made and further consultation was approved by Council. These are as follows:-

(a) Brinsworth

A proposal was made by the Parish Council to extend the parish into an unparished area to the north of Bawtry Road. The Parish Council had carried out a consultation exercise, which suggested that opinion was divided with a fairly narrow majority in favour. However, 87% of those affected did not respond. The Council, therefore, agreed that further consultation should be undertaken.

A letter was sent to all households within the area affected by the proposal, asking if the area should be included within Brinsworth Parish. A booklet setting out details of the services provided by a Parish Council was enclosed. It was explained that a Parish Council is funded through a precept which is collected with the Council Tax and the current precept for a Band A property within Brinsworth Parish was quoted. The outcome of the consultation was that 196 responses were received to 465 letters, a response rate of 42.15%.

Of these, 26 were in favour of the proposal and 170 against, representing 5.6% and 36.6% respectively of the total of households consulted.

As a result of this the Working Group has given further consideration to the proposal and is making a final recommendation that the proposal be not supported and no further action be taken.

(b) Dalton

Dalton Parish Council had submitted evidence of consultation with residents from the non-parish area of East Herringthorpe. Whilst the Working Group was inclined to support the proposal, the recommendation of Cabinet, which was accepted by Council, was that further consultation be taken.

Letters were sent to 912 households within the area affected, of which 37 were returned undelivered. 158 were returned, representing 17.3% of the total. Of these 11 were in favour of the proposal and 147 against, representing respectively 1.2% and 16.1% of the total of households consulted.

Based on this evidence, there appears to be insufficient support for the proposal and the final recommendation of the Working Party is that the proposal be not supported and no further action be taken.

(c) Thorpe Hesley

Consultation originally took place on the creation of a new parish for Thorpe Hesley, with a proposed boundary comprising polling district HA (Thorpe Hesley) and part polling district HF (Keppel). Letters were sent to 1,850 properties within the area affected. Just 23 responses were received, all against the proposal.

Representations were, however, made by the Thorpe Hesley and Scholes Community Forum, requesting further consultation over a wider area. The Working Party recommended deferral of the matter to allow further consultation to be undertaken by the forum. The recommendation was accepted by Cabinet and Council.

Since that decision, no further input has been received from the Thorpe Hesley and Scholes Community Forum and it is understood that they have not undertaken any further consultation. Whilst consultation might have included a wider area, it is considered that any parish of Thorpe Hesley would have to include the area within which the Council had previously undertaken consultation, which elicited no support. At a public meeting in Scholes held during the original consultation period, a majority of residents attending had not supported the inclusion of Scholes within a parish of Thorpe Hesley.

In the absence of any further evidence of support, the Working Group is making a final recommendation that the draft recommendation to create a parish of Thorpe Hesley be not supported and no further action be taken.

8. Finance

No specific financial implications arise from this report.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The Working Group has given careful consideration to all representation made as part of the consultation upon the original draft recommendations and made final recommendations, which have been accepted by Cabinet and by Council. Where Cabinet and Council required further consultation, as set out in this report, the outcome has been considered by the Working Group leading to the recommendations in this report.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Parish Councils play an important part in engaging with local people and providing local leadership. Government guidance on Community Governance Reviews included a presumption in favour of creating parishes where communities requested them.

At a local level, supporting and enhancing the role and function of Parish Councils is a high priority for the Borough Council, as reflected in key plans and strategies, such as the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Corporate Plan and the RMBC/Parish Charter.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Review of Parish Boundaries, Report to CMT – 30 June 2008

Parish Boundary/Community Governance Review Phase Two –

- Recommendations, Report to Member Working Group – 04 March 2009.
- Guidance on Community Governance Reviews, Report to Member Working Group – 04 March 2009
- Report to Cabinet – 01 July 2009
- Report to Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel – 10 December 2009
- Responses to Consultation on draft recommendations
- Report to Cabinet, 7th April 2010

The Local Government and Rating Act 1997.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

DCLG guidance and circulars available at www.communities.gov.uk

Contact Name:

Tim Mumford, Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services), RMBC, ext 23500, tim.mumford@rotherham.gov.uk