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NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE SCRUTINY PANEL

9 January 2024

PRESENT: - Councillor J Lee (Chair)

Councillors A Davison (Vice-Chair) and H Rowson.

The meeting was held at the Room F01e, Conference Room, Church Square House, Scunthorpe.

176 **SUBSTITUTIONS** - There were no substitutions at the meeting.

177 **DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND PERSONAL OR PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS AND DECLARATIONS OF WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS (IF ANY)** - There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and personal or personal and prejudicial interests and declarations of whipping arrangements.

178 **TO TAKE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 12 DECEMBER 2023 AS A CORRECT RECORD AND AUTHORISE THE CHAIR TO SIGN** - That the minutes of the proceedings of the meeting held on 12 December 2023, having been printed and circulated amongst the members, be taken as read and correctly recorded and be signed by the Chairman.

179 **PUBLIC SPEAKING REQUESTS, IF ANY** - There were no public speaking requests.

180 **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW** - The Director: Outcomes submitted a report that was considered by Council at its meeting on 5 October 2023. The report requested that Council consider undertaking a Community Governance Review of Parish Councils in North Lincolnshire, consider and approve proposed draft Terms of Reference of the review at appendix 1 of the report, and authorise the Governance Scrutiny Panel to carry out the review and submit its recommendations to Council within required statutory timescales.

The Director in her report explained that Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the 2007 Act), relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972 and guidance issued in 2010 by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England allowed for, place a responsibility on and guide principal councils on undertaking Community Governance Reviews (CGR) of parishes(town/parish councils) within their district boundary. The 2007 Act enabled principal councils to carry out a review of the whole or part of the district to consider one or more of the following –

- Creating, merging altering or abolishing parishes

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- The naming of parishes and the style of any new parishes
- The electoral arrangements for parishes ie. the ordinary year of election, council size, the number of councillors to be elected to the council and parish warding,
- Grouping of parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes

A CGR must reflect the identities and interests of the communities in that area and be effective and convenient. Consequently, a CGR must consider –

- The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and
- The size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish

A CGR provided an opportunity for principal councils to review and make changes to community governance in their areas. Such reviews could be undertaken when there have been changes in population for example, or in response to specific, or local issues to ensure that the community governance in the area continues to be effective and convenient and reflects the identities and interests of the communities involved.

The report stated that following the implementation of the recommendations of the CGR carried out for North Lincolnshire Town Councils in May 2019, several parish councils had liaised, and expressed preferences with the Council regarding their electoral arrangements, numbers of councillors and community representation. Also, following the recent periodic electoral review of North Lincolnshire and implementation of its recommendations in May 2023 it was appropriate and timely to consider undertaking a CGR of these arrangements, apply a consistent approach and enhance the opportunity for democratic elections by conducting a review of parish councils across North Lincolnshire. The proposed terms of reference of the CGR were attached as appendix 1.

During a CGR the council would need to consult local people and take account of any representations received in connection with the review. Before making any recommendations or publishing final proposals, the council would take account of the views of local people in the parishes and would need to comply with the statutory consultative requirements set out in guidance. A CGR must by statute be completed within 12 months from the day on which it commences – the publication of its terms of reference.

The council would also consider published recommendations following the CGR on those matters defined by its terms of reference. The recommendations must take account of any representations received during consultations and be supported by evidence. The council would then publish its decision and its reasons for taking the decision. A Community Governance Order would then be made to give effect to the decision, and relevant government offices and organisations informed. Any changes will come into effect on a date specified within the CGR's recommendations.

The Director's report proposed that, following a delegation from Council, that

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the Governance Scrutiny Panel carry out the review as a committee of the Council and make recommendations back to council for its consideration and decision in accordance with statutory requirements and timescales. This would provide cross-party participation and ensure that the review was robust and transparent. (The scrutiny panel may also wish to consider adding non-voting co-opted members if required at any stage of the review).

Resolved – (a) That the proposed terms of reference of the review as detailed in appendix 1, be approved and published, and (b) that the Governance Scrutiny Panel commence the review with immediate effect and make recommendations to the Council for its consideration and decision in accordance with statutory requirements and timescales.

181 **ADDED ITEM, IF ANY** - There was no added item for consideration at the meeting.

182 **ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT MUST BE SPECIFIED** - There was no urgent business for consideration at the meeting.

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