

**Community Governance Review – Schedule of Consultation Responses**

This should be read in conjunction with the responses to the original consultation exercise set out in Appendix A to this report.

<b>Parish</b>	
Bittesby	<p><b><u>Proposal</u></b></p> <p>To amalgamate the existing parish area of Bittesby with the existing parish area of Bitteswell.</p> <p>Note: This proposal would abolish the existing parish of Bittesby. The boundary of the new parish would be the joint extent of both existing parishes.</p> <hr/> <p><b><u>Consultation Response</u></b></p> <p><u>Bitteswell Parish Council</u></p> <p>Bitteswell Parish Council, at a meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, unanimously supported the proposals, and was supported in that view by the District Councillor, D. Cllr Page.</p> <p><u>Bittesby Residents:</u></p> <p>The Local Government Electors in Bittesby were consulted by individual letter – no responses have been received.</p> <hr/> <p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>It is recommended that the existing parish of Bittesby be abolished and the area amalgamated with Bitteswell. It is also recommended the name of the parish be ‘Bitteswell and Bittesby’ and that the parish council be re-named the ‘Bitteswell with Bittesby Parish Council’.</p> <p>It is proposed that that the single council consists of 6 parish councillors and with the first elections based on the new boundary taking place in 2015. Until the next election the 6 parish councillors serving on the Bitteswell Parish Council to remain in office.</p>
Broughton Astley	<p><b><u>Proposal</u></b></p> <p>To effect a boundary change between the parishes of Broughton Astley and Dunton Bassett to incorporate 67B to 101 Dunton Road within the Broughton Astley (Broughton) Ward.</p>

## Consultation Response

### Dunton Bassett Parish Council

On Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November the Council discussed proposals put forward by Harborough District Council and also that of a fourth created by a collaboration of Dunton Bassett residents – Proposal D - (which I believe you are already in receipt of a copy of). The Parish Council voted **in favour** of supporting **proposal D** as it was felt that, more fairly, this not only addresses the needs listed within the LGBCE in relation to local identities but, although similar to proposal C which marks a change in the boundary via an 'identifiable gap', remains closest to the current Parish Boundary using the start of the 'lay-by' curve as its divider. Proposal D would ensure that those houses already within Dunton Parish remain so, without separating a few of those residents who protest any move to Broughton Astley Parish (as would proposal C). I believe that you have also been in receipt of letters from Dunton Road residents, along with a petition in opposition to any intended incorporation of the 'Dunton Road lay-by' within Broughton Astley (dated 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2012).

Please see below an extract from the Proposal D which demonstrates how this fits both the guidance and wishes of residents; I also attach a map of Proposal D for your information.

#### **PLAN D :**

By following the clearly identifiable and distinctive features of the rear boundaries of properties 67a > 75 up to a point where the line rejoins the line of Plan C, you address both the issues of removing the anomaly of bisected land parcels and the need for clearly identifiable boundary lines, but also now keep the identity of a whole community intact. This resolves all issues and meets the requirements of the guidelines.

Please accept this letter as the formal submission of Dunton Bassett Parish Council, as minute number 128/12 that the Council vote in favour of support of Proposal D.

I would also wish to note that, with regards to the Postal Code relating to the properties in question, I was asked to enquire in to the possibility of getting this altered and, as I was informed that it could be possible, am currently in the process of pursuing this request as instructed.

**Note: The alternative boundary shown on the plan referred to ("Plan D") is replicated on the plan attached at Appendix B.**

Broughton Astley Parish Council:

Thank you for providing the Parish Council with the opportunity to make comment on the district wide review of community governance arrangements; and in particular the proposal to affect a boundary change in respect of the parishes of Broughton Astley and Dunton Bassett. The Members of the Parish Council considered the letters outlining the reasons for the proposals and the LGBCE guidance issued. They also studied plans showing the existing boundary and the two options (Plans B & C) being proposed, and debated the merits of each option at its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2012. In addition they considered a letter submitted to Harborough District Council on behalf of the residents of Dunton Road who will be affected by the proposals, and an alternative proposal put forward (Plan D) in respect of the boundary review. In support of option Plan B: the majority of Members considered that the properties concerned do not form part of the Dunton Bassett settlement, but were in the area adjoining the boundary of Broughton Astley parish within the existing limits of development. They referred to the guidance issued by LGBCE that boundaries should reflect areas of 'no man's land' rather than be placed between existing properties. In support of option Plan D: Councillors Bannister, Golding and Grafton-Reed considered that in the spirit of the Localism Act the views of the residents should be reflected in decisions made on their behalf. A proposal to recommend option B was seconded and on a vote the result was Plan B: For 11 – Against 3. The Parish Council has therefore resolved to support option Plan B – the relocation of the parish boundary to match adjoining field boundaries. I hope that these comments prove useful for your review.

Ward Councillors (Councillors Bannister and Golding)

As the councillors representing the two wards concerned, we are submitting this letter to register our thoughts on the matter surrounding the potential change of boundary between Dunton Bassett and Broughton Astley (Broughton) Wards, and the resulting impact on those residents likely to be affected.

In considering our comments we would refer to both Sheena Mortimer's letter dated 30th October, and the letter dated 24th November submitted by all residents affected by the potential change.

On the strength of the comments contained within these two letters, Broughton Astley Parish Council has supported Option B, whilst Dunton Bassett Parish Council has supported the further option suggested by residents, which they call Option D. In essence this leaves the parish boundary as before save for the very slight adjustment correcting the current boundary line running through someone's property.

Clearly there is a difference of opinion between both neighbouring parishes. The current boundary has been in place for many years yet is not a physical barrier.

Neither parish council has ever made any representation to HDC to seek a change to the current boundary.

It is worthy of comment that nowhere within the explanation given by HDC for reason for change is there any mention of consideration being given to the considered views of those residents affected by any change, i.e. no credence appears to be given to any form of "localism" being practiced. We understand a petition signed by all the residents of the affected properties supports their Option D, and they do not wish to be incorporated into the parish of Broughton Astley.

It is conceded that anyone viewing the area under review would consider the positioning of the properties 67a - 101 Dunton Road to be physically part of Broughton Astley, but the response to the current proposals, from all residents living in those properties, emphasises their feeling that they are part of Dunton Bassett.

None of the suggested changes would affect the wider political spectrum inasmuch as they would not affect any boundary linking HDC to an adjacent district's boundary.

In the light of past history and, most importantly, in line with the feelings of those residents concerned, we as the HDC councillors most closely associated with the geography would support the resident's Option D which would appear to meet the needs of regularising the boundary whilst allowing the residents to remain within their current ward.

Mrs D A Barnard, 3 Mount View, The Mount, Dunton Bassett

I am writing to object in the strongest terms to the Service Road in Dunton Bassett, opposite Charlie Brown's Garden Centre, being taken over by Broughton Astley. My reasons are as follows:

*The most pressing argument is that the residents of this part of the village are against this change and wish to remain in Dunton Bassett. It is outrageous that people from another village are threatening to disrupt their lives in this way.*

*Dunton Bassett is a rural parish of 1300 acres bounded by 6 other parishes one of which is Broughton Astley. The boundaries were probably marked by the planting of hedges in 1796. In the past people walked the bounds to preserve the entire parish. This ancient village should not be destroyed because it suits a neighbouring parish to purloin some of Dunton's land.*

*We have seen how the beautiful village of Bitteswell is almost engulfed by Lutterworth. We do not wish to see Dunton swallowed up as well.*

*It is important to preserve the green areas too which are such a characteristic of the village.*

Please take my arguments and those of my fellow villagers into account and refuse this crazy idea.

D Eccles, 93 Dunton Road enclosing a petition signed by 35 residents of Dunton Road (67A, 67B, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, 83, 85, 87, 89, 91, 93, 95, 97, 99, 101 Dunton Road)

Please find enclosed a response from the residents of 67a-101 Dunton Road re. the proposed boundary change and options.

Statement on Petition: We wish to put forward an alternative proposal, Plan D, for consideration by the Council. Please find attached: 1. Petition signed by residents of all properties affected supporting Plan D, 2. response explaining why we wish to support Plan D and reasons for remaining in the parish of Dunton, 3. map showing Plan D boundary proposal. This plan also has the support of Dunton Bassett Parish Council.

Further to the petition already presented, and individual submissions, the under-signed residents of 67a-101 Dunton Road wish to make known their collective views and responses to proposed boundary changes on Dunton Road, following LGBCE Guidance. As well as our reasons for staying within the parish of Dunton, we wish to submit a fourth proposal: PLAN D which is detailed with the submission. We wish to formally submit the attached response and ask that PLAN D be adopted.

Residents' Response to HDC Boundary Change Proposals: Thank you for your detailed response explaining the considerations and reasoning behind the review of the boundary at Dunton Road, and for the three outline proposals to remove anomalies in accordance with LGBCE guidelines. We wish to offer the following comments and responses which address both the need and remit of Local Governance review re ensuring boundaries are clearly identifiable, and also the need to take note of the community's feelings and sense of identity. To this end we submit a fourth proposal PLAN D. At the Dunton Parish Council meeting of 12.11.12 residents put forward this proposal and the Council voted in favour of continuing to support the wishes of the residents and to support PLAN D in their response to the proposed boundary change and options. All the residents have formally signed this submission.

LGBCE Boundary Review: Creating an easily identifiable boundary/removing current anomaly: physical boundary proposals:

**Plan A:** To maintain the status quo clearly does not address the issues of the anomaly caused by the building of a property on the existing parish line, so is a non-starter. The fact that the current

boundary splits parcels of land and divides a dwelling is clearly an issue to resolve. **Plan B:** We wish to oppose this suggestion to place all properties 67b-101 Dunton Road within the parish of Broughton. We and many residents have already submitted reasons to you which 'consider community identity issues' and the 'identities and interests of the area' as quoted in the guidelines. For many reasons, all residents unanimously wish to remain part of Dunton parish and we summarise these again below. **Plan C:** Whilst this does follow 'recognizable and identifiable' features, removes the anomaly of the dissected land parcel/divided dwelling, and takes note of the feelings and wishes of the majority of residents, it actually divides the 'lay-by' into two sections – hiving off and separating 5 properties to transfer to Broughton. All these residents feel as much part of Dunton as the others of us, and wish to remain so. The lay-By is a distinct group of dwellings that follow the course of the old main road; properties up to this point front onto the current main road. We therefore wish to suggest an alternative: **Plan D. Plan D: New Suggestion:** See attached map (Appendix C). By following the clearly identifiable and distinctive features of the rear boundaries of properties 67a-75 up to a point where the line rejoins the line of Plan C, you address both the issues of removing the anomaly of bisected land parcels and the need for clearly identifiable boundary lines. But also keep the identity of a whole community intact. This resolves all issues and meets the requirements of the guidelines. IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY: The residents of the lay-by strongly feel part of Dunton Bassett. As well as being physically distinct in that we are all grouped in a loop away from the main road and do not front onto it, there are many reasons 'which differentiate these properties from neighbouring properties on Dunton Road' (to quote your letter) and which demonstrates why we wish to preserve our link with Dunton Bassett. We should like to summarise these again: The Importance of History and Tradition: The shape of traditional Rural England is under threat, Whilst changes have to be made for administrative efficiency, we feel the changes should both make things clearer re boundary lines but also reflect the wishes and sense of community and identity of the residents. We feel a part of the VILLAGE of Dunton; we are involved in the village and parish community life. We DO NOT feel any affiliation with Broughton. It makes sense to preserve traditional boundaries and the map of rural England whenever possible. Proximity: The centre of Dunton is physically closer than the centre of Broughton. A well maintained footpath along the main road and a direct right of way across fields links us to our village centre. A regular bus route also links us. Green Space/Future Development: We value the rural nature and green space surrounding our area; the location and outlook coupled with being part of a traditional rural Leicestershire village are what makes properties in the Lay By so attractive to purchasers. Changing the boundary as in Plan A would firmly place the area into control of Broughton and facilitate

any decision to develop the land as it would come under the Broughton Astley Neighbourhood Plan. Extending Broughton Astley housing further along Dunton Road would fundamentally alter the rural landscape, when there is no need to do so as better sites already exist in Broughton. We wish to remain under the control of a parish not committed to large development and expansion – we wish to remain firmly part of Dunton, we feel no ties with Broughton nor do we have faith that the views of a very small number of residents would be taken note of should we become incorporated into a large community that has a very different, more anonymous and more impersonal feel. School Catchment Area: Currently children in the Lay By are in the catchment for Lutterworth Secondary Schools. Schooling is a very important factor for people when buying a property and the Lutterworth Schools are highly thought of and desired by many (and used as a selling point by estate agents). Placing us into Broughton could impact on current catchment areas and would also effect the current free school bus provision which only extends to the current Dunton parish boundary at 67b. Community facilities and Activities: As we are part of Dunton Bassett, we are an integral and active part of the community and life of that village and its facilities. Some residents have lived in the Lay By for many years, some are more recent, but all are linked closely with the parish of Dunton and not with Broughton. This includes: voting in the Village hall for councillors representing a local ward that reflects our area, our concerns, our environment and our way of life; children attending Dunton Primary School and valuing the ethos of a small local primary school; children being part of Scout and Guide groups with friends they know locally from school; receiving the Church and Parish newsletters, which informs us of issues affecting the village as well as information about events and activities within the community which we attend; attendance a major Christian calendar events as All saints Church in Dunton; eligibility for allotments; valuing and using the Dunton Post Office and its small shop; attending fetes and village functions; use of the Dunton Bassett Arms both as a local meeting place and for its excellent restaurant and reached easily on foot; being involved with, and informed about, Dunton community and village concerns and initiatives in areas such as crime and care of the environment, and chance to have a say and input upon things affecting our parish and the area we live in.

In addition the actual lay-by itself has its own sense of sub-community within Dunton parish. This is evidenced by the local Neighbourhood Watch scheme and Jubilee Street parties, which involve just the residents of the lay-by, Our link to Dunton is also reinforced by the provision of a parish notice board sited in the lay-by, keeping us up to date with village affairs. Our loop of houses grouped together and not fronting the main road makes us distinct from other properties on Dunton Road that fall within the Broughton parish boundary. We are proud to be part of a

traditional, small, Leicestershire village parish.  
Para 51 of the Governance review guidelines document states:  
*“The pattern of daily life in the existing community, the local centres for education and child care, shopping, community activities, worship, leisure pursuits, transport facilities, and means of communication generally will have an influence ...” and continues on para 54 with “the impact to community cohesion is linked specifically to the identities and interests of local communities..”* We trust we have now provided you with clear evidence, directly pertaining to the text of the guidelines, as to why we feel a sense of identity and community with the parish of Dunton and how our daily lives are integral to it. We also feel that Plan D offers a solution that fully addresses the principles and guidance for Local Governance Review.

Mr and Mrs Nicholls, 81 Dunton Road

We wish to inform you that my husband and I have lived here for over 40 years and we do not want to leave Dunton Bassett.

D Poultney, 77 Dunton Road:

I wish to express my support for the locally proposed changes to the parish boundary shown in Plan D (attached). In Plan D the boundary line follows the clearly identifiable and distinctive features of the boundaries at the rear of properties 67a to 75 Dunton Road up to a point where the line rejoins the line of Plan C. This course of action removes the anomalies that have split parcels of land and provides clearly identifiable boundary lines but also keeps the identity of our distinct community intact. Thus, Plan D resolves all issues and meets the requirements of the guidelines. As well as taking a general interest in the life of the village, I am a member of the Dunton Bassett Parish Plan Committee and the Dunton Goes Green Environmental Action Group. Naturally, I wish to remain within the parish of Dunton Bassett and hope that suitable signage identifying the service road as part of Dunton Bassett can be provided, somewhat belatedly, to prevent a re-occurrence of this issue.

P Fuchs, The Elwells, Bennetts Hill, Dunton Bassett

I write to support the alternative that proposes a slight change to these boundaries that would result in any property not being in two parishes, but nothing else. The District Council in reaching any conclusion must take note of the wishes of those parishioners subject to any change; The Council must bear in mind the policy of localism that central government is pursuing; The Council must understand the fears of local parishioners that Broughton Astley might expand towards the main body of the village of Dunton Bassett, and will as a result swallow their particular environment;

To add to this latter point, the Council should be clear about its policies relating to the retention of green belts between settlements and not agree to changes which might in future jeopardise that division. In considering the particular interest of Dunton Bassett parishioners that live in Dunton Road, Broughton Astley, the Council should bear in mind that at present several residents are active in the activities of Dunton Bassett. For instance the choir master of the Dunton Bassett Community Singers lives in Dunton Road, as does an active member of the community group 'Dunton Goes Green', which aims to make the village carbon neutral within 20 years. No good reason, other than one of tidiness, has been put forward to make these changes, and so there is no good reason to cause change for a group of residents who enjoy their role in the Dunton Bassett Parish, and whose position within the Parish is well recognised by the Parish.

Mrs A Fuchs, The Elwells, Dunton Bassett

I am writing with regard to the proposed boundary changes between Broughton Astley and Dunton Bassett. As an active member of the Dunton Bassett village community I am against the inclusion of the houses on Dunton Road into Broughton Astley for two reasons: 1. There are people living on this road who consider themselves as very much part of the Dunton Bassett community, for example, one being the leader of the Dunton Bassett Community Singers and the other a member of the Dunton Goes Green Group. 2. The existing boundary creates a significant buffer against the development in Broughton Astley creeping closer to Dunton Bassett and the possibility, in the future, of engulfing the village totally. People in Dunton Bassett are proud of their village and do not want to be part of Broughton Astley which has become a sprawling urbanised commuter belt of Leicester. Please reconsider the proposal bearing in mind that people living in villages have a strong identity with where they live and wish to remain separate from other settlements.

J. Reynolds, 73 Dunton Road

I am writing to support a letter and new suggestion for a boundary that was put forward by Mr Eccles, suggesting a Plan D which includes ourselves in the Dunton Bassett Parish boundaries. We have lived at this address for 22 years, in which all of this time my husband and myself have been actively involved in Dunton Bassett Football Club, with my husband being a valued committee member. We have had New Years Eve parties held in the Dunton Village Hall that involved many local families. I also act as the local 'litter picker' keeping our road/pavements and the spinney/lagoon clear of litter. We have an immense amount of pride living in our little community and strongly consider ourselves affiliated to Dunton Bassett. When we bought our house 22 years ago, we

couldn't understand why our address was Broughton Astley yet the parish was Dunton. But as being in the parish of Dunton we have paid a premium in the asking price! With all this in mind, I am asking you to strongly consider Plan D and include us in the Dunton Bassett parish. When all is said and done, it was the council itself that allowed the building of the houses that infiltrate both parishes, 30 years ago! We've all managed since then, so why in times of financial restraints, I find it baffling that this has even raised its head!! I look forward to your response.

P and M Clark, 97 Dunton Road

You should by now have received an alternative submission 'Plan D' supported by all the residents together with our petition from Mr Eccles at 93 Dunton Road. We believe this to be the most suitable option with a fairly clear boundary definition. I support the choice of Mrs Tuckey at 67a to be in the same Parish as her son at 67b. Mrs Hounsome at no 71 and Mick at 73 who runs the Dunton Bassett choir and football clubs respectively. You have stated 'This has been the case here with the existing boundary having become unclear with next door neighbours on Dunton Road being in different parishes'. I enclose a plan of the road from over 40 years ago when neighbours on the road were also in different parishes much the same as they are now. I do not see why this has suddenly become an issue. I understand the guidance also makes mention of communities and hope the council will also take that into account in reaching their decision. As a second choice we would opt for your plan C out of self-interest to remain in Dunton Bassett parish. My own house is  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from Dunton Bassett centre and 1.5 miles from Broughton Astley centre. Our children went to Dunton Bassett school and our son now lives in the very centre of Dunton Bassett. We wish to remain within the parish of Dunton Bassett that is our community and see no advantage to any change. We stress it is a shame if the wishes of the residents of 67a-73 are not accepted.

HDC Planning Policy

In planning policy terms, the residential properties on Dunton Road (67B to 101) clearly form part of settlement of Broughton Astley. Retained policy HS/8 of the 2001 Local Plan includes these properties within Broughton Astley's limits to development as they physically form part of Broughton Astley's built up area albeit at the southern extremity. As these properties are over half a mile from the recognisable village of Dunton Bassett (as defined by the limits to development), they are not part of the physical built up form of Dunton Bassett.

Option B therefore represents the most logical boundary in planning terms and reflects the fact that physically the properties

67B -101 Dunton Road form part of the continuous built up area of Broughton Astley. Whilst option C is an improvement on the existing boundary in so far as it follows an identifiable gap and curtilage boundaries, it does not reflect the fact that these properties represent part of Broughton Astley's evolution and current built form as does option B.

**Information**

LGBCE guidance states that the identification of a community is not a precise or rigid matter. The pattern of daily life in each of the exiting communities, the local centres for education and child care, shopping, community activities, worship, leisure pursuits, transport facilities and means of communication generally will have an influence.

Although LGBCE guidance states that it is desirable to create clear boundaries between parishes the concept of community identity is paramount and the principal council in undertaking a review must ensure that the community governance arrangements are reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area and the principal council should take account of the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion.

The properties in the 'Lay-By' on Dunton Road are within the parish of Dunton Bassett but do not physically form part of the village of Dunton Bassett. However, there is substantial evidence, including a petition signed by every resident of the properties affected by the proposed boundary change to demonstrate that there is a very strong feeling of local identity and community cohesion, both with the parish and village of Dunton Bassett but also on a local basis within the lay-by itself.

The residents accept that the existing parish boundary is not sustainable as it divides properties and land parcels between the two parishes and have put forward an alternative proposal, as shown on the alternative proposal (Plan D) attached to their petition. This proposal would involve moving one property, 67a Dunton Road (which is the property currently bisected by the parish boundary) from Broughton Astley to Dunton Bassett. The occupier of 67a is a signatory to the petition. The proposal follows property boundaries and would create a clear divide between the two parishes.

**Recommendation**

In view of the evidence provided in response to the consultation demonstrating the strength of feeling of community identity with the village and parish of Dunton Bassett and in the interests of community cohesion it is recommended that the alternative

	<p>revision to the parish boundary put forward by the residents be accepted and recommended to Council for approval. The exact line of the proposed boundary change is shown at Appendix B.</p>
Fleckney	<p><b><u>Proposal</u></b></p> <p>To reduce the number of parish councillors from 13 to 11.</p> <hr/> <p><b><u>Consultation Response</u></b></p> <p><u>Fleckney Parish Council</u></p> <p>I refer to your letter dated 5<sup>th</sup> November 2012 setting out the District Council's proposals to reduce the number of parish councillors for Fleckney from 13 to 11 from the next elections. Firstly, I must express disappointment that you failed to indicate in your initial letter dated 20<sup>th</sup> March 2012 that one of the options for consideration was the reduction of the numbers of parish councillors for existing parishes. The number of parish councillors is a fundamental issue and something that has a direct impact on the way a parish council functions. Your letter dated 5<sup>th</sup> November allows only a very limited time in which to respond and for the matter to be given full and proper consideration and has no regard to the dates or frequency of parish meetings which for many parishes are not on a monthly basis. Fleckney Parish Council strongly objects to the proposal to reduce the number of councillors from 13 to 11. We fail to see why it is necessary to reduce the number of councillors merely to ensure that elections take place, with the additional cost that would be incurred, as would be the inference from your letter. There is no cost to having vacant seats on parish councils and it does provide an opportunity for those interested in becoming involved in local affairs to be either elected or co-opted as the case may be. Fleckney currently has two vacant seats and one co-opted member but has still been able to become a Quality Parish Council and does meet the criteria for acquiring the General Power of Competence under the Localism Act. The fact that the Parish Council only has 11 councillors at the present time is detrimental to the efficient running of the Council and a permanent move to that number as a maximum would only serve to continue that situation in perpetuity. There appears to be a failure to understand that not all parish councils are the same and do not operate in the same way. The proposal to impose a 'one size fits all' is simplistic and demonstrates a lack of thought coupled with any proper discussion with the key stakeholders. Fleckney Parish Council is one of the larger and more active councils in the District with a fairly substantial budget and a lot of different ongoing projects and facilities to manage. Council meetings are held monthly, there are recreation, Planning and Human resources committees and a number of working parties on various topics. This creates ac</p>

substantial workload for councillors who currently struggle to service all of their commitments which often leads to meetings being cancelled and delays occurring in making decisions and progressing projects etc. the Council, whilst it has not been able to fill all its seats in recent years, is fully committed to achieving this and is constantly advertising and encouraging individuals to come forward to serve their local community. The Council also has in mind the impact that localism may have in the future as more issues have an impact locally and again it is important that we have the capacity in terms of numbers of members to be able to respond. A good example of this is the recent changes in Planning and the fact that Fleckney has been designated as a Rural Centre. This has greatly increased the interest of developers in building new houses in Fleckney and has meant that pre application discussions with the local community are now part of the planning process. There is no justification for reducing the number of councillors in Fleckney from 13 to 11 and as such would trust that you will have regard to the views of the Parish Council which has a real interest in community governance locally, and leave the number of seats unchanged. Please ensure that the full contents of this letter are brought to the attention of all members of the District Council.

**Information**

Fleckney Parish Council currently has 13 seats. At the 2011 elections there were 9 nominations and these were 'elected' unopposed. The Quality Parish Council Scheme is currently being reviewed by NALC. Electoral mandate forms one of the accreditation tests for quality status and on first application councils are required to show that at least two-thirds of councillors were elected. 'Elected' can mean either at a contested or uncontested election. However, they must have stood. A Council with 13 seats would need to have at least 9 'elected' councillors (Fleckney PC therefore meets this requirement). Parish Councils wishing to utilise the additional powers afforded to 'competent' councils under the Localism Act similarly need to have two third of their members 'elected' (Fleckney PC therefore meets this requirement).

Setting the number of seats on parish councils is a function of the District Council and although there is nothing wrong with filling vacant seats by co-option an inability to do so may indicate that the council size is larger than it need be. Fleckney have been unable to co-opt sufficient councillors to fill the vacant seats from the 2011 elections and still have two vacant seats over 18 months after the date of those elections.

If, following a normal election, a parish council has vacant seats but has sufficient 'elected' councillors to make a quorum (3 or a

	<p>third, whichever is the greater) it has a period of 35 days from the date of the election to co-opt to fill any remaining vacant seats. After the period of 35 days however, the District Council could order a further election to properly constitute the council. The costs of any such election would be met by the parish although the District Council has not chosen to enforce this option. Reducing the number of seats could help to lessen this problem where there is a long standing history of vacant seats and help to ensure that a parish council is properly constituted.</p> <p>In this instance Fleckney Parish Council have demonstrated that they are pro-actively trying to fill their vacant seats through co-option and it is not considered appropriate to enforce a reduction in councillor numbers against their wishes at this time. They also meet the qualifications requirements with respect to the ratio of 'elected' councillors for the Quality Parish Council scheme and competency test under the Localism Act.</p> <p>The District Council is committed to working with parish councils to stimulate public interest in local affairs and the current problems Fleckney PC are having attracting residents to become involved in serving on the Council is not specific to them as was evidenced by the district wide parish council election results in 2011. However, if this situation were to continue after the next parish council elections to be held in 2015 then it may become appropriate to recommend a reduction in councillor numbers at that time as part of a future review.</p>
	<p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p>It is recommended that no change is made to the number of parish councillors for Fleckney at the present time (remains at 13).</p>
Gilmorton	<p><b>Proposal</b></p> <p>To reduce the number of parish councillors from 7 to 6</p> <p><b>Consultation Response</b></p> <p>None received</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p>Gilmorton were one of only 5 parishes which held contested elections in 2011. This would indicate that there is an active interest in local affairs and a willingness to serve the community on the parish council.</p> <p>It is therefore recommended that councillor numbers remain unaltered at 7 councillors.</p>

<p>Kibworth Beauchamp Kibworth Harcourt</p>	<p>The specific proposals for Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt to which the latest public consultation relates are detailed below with consultation responses matched to the individual proposals. The following general comments have also been received in respect of the Kibworth proposals as part of those submissions:</p> <p><u>Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council:</u></p> <p>We wish to express our concerns about the way that the information concerning the review consultation has been made available to the public and the parish councils. No acknowledgement has been made of the timescales that the council has to work to in respect of the cycle of meetings and agreeing a response. Much has been made of the needs of HDC in this respect. Information sent out regarding the consultation was incorrect and finding information via the website has been problematic. The onus has been put on the parish council to publicise the consultation period and poll, a process initiated by HDC.</p> <p>We understand that the process does have a deadline for completion but proposing such a significant change in local arrangements needs to be given time to ensure that appropriate decisions are made by the electorate and HDC.</p> <p>We feel that this change is being steamrollered through without due time being afforded to the electorate to come to an informed opinion.</p> <p><u>County Councillor Dr K Feltham:</u></p> <p>Thank you for your letter and invitation to comment. I have been in considerable email contact with Richard Ellis over the past 2 weeks, as I am very concerned that the process being followed is less than transparent. I appreciate the consultation ends today, and I am concerned about the apparent rush to hold the poll with very little information available to the electorate. If there wasn't a Kibworth &amp; District Chronicle how would residents have been informed? Sadly, even though this community newspaper reaches every household, I know from a long history of writing a monthly column, and a short stint as the editor, that it is read by a minority. If the Police &amp; Crime Commissioner election had a low turnout, I'd be very surprised if these polls even gets into a double figures percentage of the electorate.</p> <p>I have represented the Kibworth ward as county councillor since 2001, and was a frequent observer at parish council meetings in both villages for the previous 10 or so years. My division includes eight parish councils, and 18 parish meetings, and I am disappointed that more effort has not been used to make contact</p>
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	<p>with the parish meetings and see whether any might be prepared to group in parish councils as I put in my original submission. I am delighted the Shangton parish meeting now has a chairman.</p> <p>The representations in support of the amalgamation of the two Kibworth parish councils were from the parish council itself, a councillor of the current council, a former parish councillor and a former clerk to the Joint Recreation Committee - hardly independent balanced views. Why has HDC taken this very biased and limited minority cause this current consultation on, in particular, Proposal 2?</p>
<p>Kibworth Beauchamp Kibworth Harcourt</p>	<p><b><u>Proposal 1</u></b></p> <p>To effect a boundary change between the parishes of Kibworth Harcourt and Kibworth Beauchamp to incorporate all properties on Dairy Way into the parish of Kibworth Harcourt.</p> <hr/> <p><b><u>Consultation Response</u></b></p> <p><u>Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council</u></p> <p>Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Councillors have no opposition to the proposed boundary change involving the remainder of the Dairy Way development.</p> <p><u>Kibworth Harcourt Conservation Society (KHCS)</u></p> <p>Members were pleased to support this proposal to incorporate all properties on Dairy Way into Kibworth Harcourt.</p> <p><u>Councillor Phil King (ward councillor)</u></p> <p>The proposed boundary change appears to be logical and <u>I am supportive</u> of this proposal.</p> <p><u>County Councillor Dr K Feltham:</u></p> <p>I would have preferred to see more of the KB/1 development included in the Harcourt parish by redrawing boundaries, as the railway line forms a natural barrier. However, I am in support of the proposal to include the whole of Dairy Way within the parish and to redraw the boundary.</p> <p><u>David Wilson Homes (Developer)</u></p> <p>No objections.</p>

	<p><b><u>Information</u></b></p> <p>This proposal was put forward by Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council as part of their response to the initial public consultation.</p> <p>Dairy Way is a loop road and at present the beginning and end sections (which have already been built) are located within the parish of Kibworth Harcourt whilst the central section lies within the parish of Kibworth Beauchamp. The central section is still under construction. Individual consultation letters have been delivered to the properties within this area which have already been constructed and also the developer (David Wilson Homes). No adverse comments have been received.</p> <p>It is logical that all properties on Dairy Way be located within the same parish area and will ensure that all properties share the same address and postcode. The proposal also includes minor boundary changes affecting 3 other properties on Barnards Way which will bring them within the parish of Kibworth Harcourt (Barnards Way forming the parish boundary in this area).</p> <p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>That the parish boundary between Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt be revised as indicated on the attached plan (Appendix C to this report).</p>
<p>Kibworth Beauchamp Kibworth Harcourt</p>	<p><b><u>Proposal 2</u></b></p> <p>To group the parishes of Kibworth Harcourt and Kibworth Beauchamp under a single village council.</p> <p>Note: This arrangement would preserve the existing parishes of Kibworth Harcourt and Kibworth Beauchamp but create a single council for administrative purposes with councillors drawn from each parish.</p> <p><b><u>Consultation Response</u></b></p> <p><u>Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council (letter dated 8<sup>th</sup> December 2012 from Clerk)</u></p> <p>Further to your letter dated 8<sup>th</sup> November 2012, please see below the official response from Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council: In respect of the consultation regarding the grouping of Kibworth Harcourt and Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Councils into one 'village' council it is resolved that: In response to the proposals made by HDC, KHPC vigorously express the concern that this is a retrograde step and would significantly reduce the democratic representation of the electorate in K, the accountability of</p>

Councillors and that the reasons given for such a move are not robust and based on false assumptions. That KHPC will aim to continue to ensure that the local electorate are made fully aware of the consequences and impact of this proposal, thus enabling individuals to make an informed decision. To use whatever cost neutral means are available to achieve this aim.

Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council (letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> December 2012 from Chair)

In addition to the letter sent to you by our clerk we wish to submit the attached letter agreed by all councillors as part of the consultation process: There has been no call from the parishioners either for or against the proposal to join together with Beauchamp into one council and it would be true to say that neither council have a mandate to pursue the current proposal. We do not consider that the reasons given, for what we see as a drastic and fundamental change, hold water and such a change is detrimental to local democracy and representation.

It is true that there has recently been difficulty in recruiting sufficient councillors but this is a situation that has arisen only since the last elections in 2011. Up until then there was full membership with Harcourt councillors remaining in office for a longer period than many of councillors in the neighbouring parish. It is said that the parish boundary is artificial but so are all parish boundaries, sometimes following a logic that is now outdated. Previous adjustments have taken place and we proposed a change during this review to take account of new developments. We know that the officers of HDC, particularly in the Planning Department, do not have a precise knowledge as to where the boundary lies but they have access to that information. This change should not be based on the administrative convenience of HDC.

The issue of sense of place is important. The government guidance on reviews makes the point that just because amenities and facilities may be accessed out of the area does not negate the feeling of place for residents. For example, the residents of Kibworth Harcourt took on Royal Mail to have the postal address of Kibworth Harcourt reinstated. While a postal address does not, of itself, indicate a place that people relate to, we would contend that being prepared to take on such a fight demonstrates the wish of local people to retain a local identity.

Much is made of the savings such a proposal would make. However it has been agreed by the Corporate Services Manager, HDC that this would depend on the arrangements made by the new council. When Beauchamp Parish Council was more up to strength they found it necessary to have additional committees,

planning and finance, in order to complete their routine business in a timely fashion. Therefore it is unlikely that there would be a significant reduction in the number of meetings as managing the recreation areas and cemetery would need to continue.

In respect of administrative costs being lower, again this is debatable. The clerk hours necessary and the office facilities needed are likely to lead to a parish office being created rather than the clerks working from their own home. This will mean additional cost, so this argument is not based on fact.

The current joint arrangements address those areas of mutual use by parishioners of both parishes. We cannot identify other facilities that are shared by all residents paid through the parish councils precepts, so feel this is a spurious argument not based on fact.

There has always been joint working between the two parishes on matters of mutual interest, such as securing the lease of Warwick Road recreation area and fighting major developments. This has been done in the past in an atmosphere of respect and acknowledging that there may be a different stance taken that will reflect the views of our individual electorates. We would contend that this model is the most responsive to local people”.

The model proposed for the new `village council` would place any councillor elected to represent Kibworth Harcourt residents in a difficult and impotent position. They could be out voted on any matter relating specifically to Harcourt. In such a situation the level of undue influence that Beauchamp councillors would wield is contrary to sections 165/166 of the government guidance on reviews. In our opinion this is unworkable, reducing dramatically the democratic representation of Harcourt residents and the accountability of their councillors. There should be equal numbers of councillors from each ward or the council should not be warded so all councillors are responsible to all the electorate for the decisions they make.

However we would reiterate that the current model is superior in respect of representation and accountability and see no coherent reason for change.

Ward Councillor P. King

I am firmly opposed to proposal two for a number of reasons:-

Firstly the only representations received in favour of this merger/grouping was from Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council and one member of the public. The other 'public' rep was in fact a member of the KBPC.

I attended a recent meeting of Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council

and they have indicated that they are not in favour of this grouping or merger.

My reasons for coming to this conclusion are:-

- 1) Attracting sufficient councillors - in fact in 2007 there was an election for both parish councils. This is a complex matter and there will always be swings in the numbers of people coming forward.
- 2) Parish Boundaries- both parishes and villages have been in existence for long periods and are distinctly different in character, community and governance.
- 3) Sense of place- Kibworth- This is inaccurate. Most residents describe themselves as either living in Harcourt or Beauchamp. Whilst to an 'outsider' we may say 'Kibworth' or 'the Kibworths'. There are many unique features and characteristics about both villages. Agree that there are some items of joint ownership and governance which are managed by the Joint Recreational Committee and the Joint Burial Committee. But other items such as village hall is a separate charity which has 30 different stakeholders as owners from Kibworth Beauchamp, Kibworth Harcourt and Smeeton Westerby.

The Old Grammer School Hall is a Kibworth Beauchamp asset, but that is leased on a very long lease to the Old Grammer School Hall Charity, which has reps on from all three parish councils.

It is also fair to say that Smeeton Westerby is just as near if not nearer to Kibworth Beauchamp and it could be argued that there could be a case to group all three parishes, based upon their proximity to one another and joint ownership of various community assets.

- 4) There are complex reasons why neither council has been able to make up the numbers by co-options. There is no guarantee that this would change if a grouping was taken forward as it is very likely that a number of members would resign.
- 5) Saving time and money on joint arrangements- There is no evidence whatsoever that there would be any savings of time and money from these proposals. No study or work has been undertaken to support this notion, nor any business case established.

Given that there is always insufficient time at the Kibworth Beauchamp PC meetings to consider all their matters of business, and it is a monthly 3 hour meeting, not sure you can

say that by merging Kibworth Harcourt which holds monthly meetings also of 2.5 hrs duration, where the 'time savings would be'. Also a merged council would require a different support structure from the clerks who are both part-time and work from home. Therefore it is likely that any grouped body would require a full time official or more, and that this likely would require parish offices to be acquired, as it would be very unlikely anyone would consider turning their house into the parish offices.

- 6) Not all village facilities are located in Kibworth Beauchamp. This is a very misleading statement. For example most of the local employment sites are located in Kibworth Harcourt as are 3 restaurants and pubs. These matters have ebbed and flowed over a number of years. What is the case now may not be the case in the future.
- 7) It doesn't matter whether it is a grouping order or full blown amalgamation, there will be an over dominance by representatives from Kibworth Beauchamp in any new set up over those from Kibworth Harcourt which will have a significant impact upon the decision making processes.
- 8) Parish residents already pay a variable amount for their local parish services due to the nature of their Council Tax banding and as far as I'm aware this will continue. Kibworth Harcourt spends less than Kibworth Beauchamp, although it's base is becoming larger due to the KB1 development. Kibworth Beauchamp spends more, but presently doesn't have the benefit of the growth from KB1 and thus is limited. In my view there would be no reduction, and likely an increase put through.
- 9) It is claimed that there will be lower administrations costs, but again there is **no evidence or business case** to substantiate this claim. There may in fact be additional costs as already outlined earlier in respect of higher NI costs, higher pension costs, higher wage costs, plus possibly a need for office accommodation.

Finally, this idea is opposed by one of the Parish Councils and supported by the other. This is not the way to proceed in such a geographically close area. If there was more joint working and joint meetings and if there was business plan/review that was properly conducted that defined what the real benefits would be then maybe that is something which should then be out to the residents to vote on”.

County Councillor Dr K Feltham:

I object strongly to this proposal as it is not necessary, is wasteful

of resources and the few advantages given are at best spurious, and at worst misleading and inaccurate. If this proposal is approved it will lead, in my opinion based on considerable observational experience, to a far worse situation for both parishes than now. Fewer volunteers will stay the additional council workload, and some of the existing experienced Harcourt councillors have already begun talking about resigning, which would increase the challenges of ensuring Harcourt issues are discussed with knowledge and experience.

The whole Review process has been muddled and far from transparent as well as being very rushed. Why couldn't HDC officers have visited to discuss grouping proposals with both parish councils in an open public meeting, so any benefits could be discussed openly and quantified? There has been no business plan to support any of the spurious benefits.

This proposal might have had more support by Harcourt residents and the parish council, if there was a history of joint working together in public apart from the bi-monthly Joint Recreation and Burial Committees. A far more sensible proposal would be to suggest that both parishes hold say 2 or 3 public meetings together each year; this would be likely to be supported by both parish councils. It does not need the heavy hand a HDC to use a Governance Review to change the structure that has been in existence for well over 100 years.

Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council has been talking about an amalgamation for several years, because they have struggled to retain councillors (unlike Harcourt) and even have a quorum at meeting. Their advances have always been repulsed strongly by Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council - even though two of the current Harcourt councillors live in Beauchamp!

From my experience of attending both parish councils for over 20 years, I believe this proposal is not likely to improve efficiency, reduce costs or make for greater effectiveness, e.g.

- One set of meetings rather than two parish council meetings, plus joint recreation and joint burial meetings. The two parish councils currently meet for at least 2 hours each every month. The joint committee meetings last at least another hour per month. There are few common agenda items across the two parishes that could save time, so grouping the two councils into a single council could mean 5 to 6 hours of meetings per month. Is this likely to lead to more people volunteering for this level of commitment? I am aware of parish councils who hold two full parish councils each month, plus separate committee meetings for planning, recreation, finance and even footpaths!
- One parish clerk. The amount of work generated by this level

	<p>of meetings, and subsequent actions, could inevitably lead to a full time commitment by a clerk. Some large parish councils now employ a clerk and one or more assistants to handle the scale of workload.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Parish council elections not stimulating enough candidates.</u> Within my county division there are 18 parish meetings and eight parish councils, and none held elections in 2011, so nothing exclusive about the Kibworth parishes! There were only eight contested parishes out of 92 across the whole district in 2011. There were contested elections for both Kibworth parishes in 2007.</li> <li>• <u>Sense of place.</u> As we learnt from Michael Wood's excellent 'Story of England' TV series in 2010, the medieval 'parish of Kibworth' not only included Beauchamp and Harcourt, but also Smeeton Westerby. Kibworth Improvement Team's activities cover all three villages and include businesses, as per the web portal. The present Kibworth Anglican benefice also includes Saddington, but nobody is suggesting grouping these two neighbouring parish councils into this new proposal! Although the majority of services and shops etc. are currently in Beauchamp, this is only a fairly recent occurrence. Kibworth Harcourt was the major village during the medieval ages and upto the 19th century when the railway was built in Beauchamp and took over from stagecoaches that ran along the A6 through Kibworth Harcourt. There are a few shops and a couple of restaurants in Harcourt, so it is wrong to intimate that Beauchamp has <u>ALL</u> village facilities.</li> </ul> <p>Although not included in the consultation paperwork, mention has been made in emails that if the grouping was to go ahead, the ratio of councillors would be 3:1 i.e. 9 from Beauchamp and 3 from Harcourt. This would be wrong, and in my opinion, is counter to the DCLG guidance (paras. 165 and 166), where equality is essential to prevent one group becoming overbearing and the minority group having limited effect. A figure of 6 each would be consistent with guidance and ensure balance of decisions especially in the initial period from 2015.</p>
	<p><b><u>Information</u></b></p> <p>A proposal to amalgamate the parish councils was put forward by Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council as part of their response to the initial public consultation. The current proposal to group the existing parishes under a single council has been agreed by Council for further consultation.</p> <p>A local advisory poll of the local government electors within both</p>

parishes has been arranged to take place on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2012. The question being asked is:

“Do you support the proposal that the parishes of Kibworth Harcourt and Kibworth Beauchamp be grouped under a single village council? Yes/No”

The electors within each parish are being polled separately which will hopefully give a clear indication of public feeling towards this issue within each parish area. It must be stressed that an advisory poll is merely a tool to assist in gauging public opinion on an issue and the results of the poll are not binding. The results will need to be considered alongside other information and evidence gained in reaching a balanced view on the issue. Turnout and the numbers voting ‘yes’ or ‘no’ will also impact on its usefulness.

In deciding whether to recommend the grouping order to Council members of the Community Governance Review Committee will need to be satisfied that this is something which the clear majority of the electorate of each parish want to happen and that it is in the best interests of community governance for the two parishes both now and into the future. If there is no such clear indication then the status quo of the existing system should prevail.

In responding to the comments regarding councillor numbers and the split between the two parish areas on any grouped council there appears to be some misunderstanding of the LG BCE guidance on this issue as evidenced in the consultation responses.

The first point to make is that the councillors on a grouped council represent the whole area, not just their particular parish area. This is fundamental to the operation of a grouped council and if this is seen as a potential issue then may impact on the viability of this as a proposal. A grouping order relates to the parishes and creates a single council. It is not a combination of 2 separate councils.

The issue regarding size and representation of a single grouped council would be a matter for resolution if a decision were taken to group the parishes under a single council. However, any such arrangement would need to provide for a similar councillor/elector ratio between the 2 parishes which would mean that there would be more councillors representing the larger parish (Beauchamp) than the smaller one (Harcourt).

Each parish in a grouped arrangement must be represented by at least one councillor and in examples where a number of very small parishes are grouped together to form a grouped parish council this could equate to 1 or 2 councillors per parish. However this is not the case with Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt due to the size of their electorate.

LGBCE guidance on councillor numbers on warded councils is:

*Section 166 of LGBCE Guidance: It is an important democratic principle that each person's vote should be of equal weight so far as possible, having regard to other legitimate competing factors, when it comes to the election of councillors. There is no provision in legislation that each parish councillor should represent, as nearly as may be, the same number of electors. However, the LGBCE believes that it is not in the interests of effective and convenient local government, either for voters or councillors, to have significant differences in levels of representation between different parish wards. Such variations could make it difficult, in workload terms, for councillors to adequately represent the interests of residents. There is also the risk that where two or more wards of a parish are over-represented by councillors, the residents of those wards (and their councillors) could be perceived as having more influence than others on the council.*

*Section 167 of LGBCE Guidance: The LGBCE offer no specific guidelines for what might constitute significant differences in levels of representation; each case will need to be considered on its merits. Principal councils should be mindful that, for the most part, parish wards are likely to be significantly smaller than district or London borough wards. As a consequence, imbalances expressed in percentage terms may be misleading, disguising the fact that high variations between the number of electors per councillor could be caused by only a few dozen electors.*

The arguments for a similar councillor/elector ratio between wards at parish council level are the same as those which apply at district level – that roughly speaking one person's vote should be equal to another's. In carrying out district level reviews the LGBCE will try to ensure that each councillor represents a similar number of electors.

If as is suggested in some of the consultation responses both parishes in the group were represented by the same number of councillors. Using a simple example of 2 parishes, Parish A with 3000 electors and Parish B with 1000 if each were given the same number of councillors (for the purposes of the example 6 each giving 12 in total) the councillor/elector ratio for Parish A on the grouped council would be 1:500 whilst the councillor/elector ratio for Parish B would be 1:166 – a clear imbalance in levels of representation and contrary to LGBCE guidance on the issue. Parish B could be conceived as having an more influence on the joint council than Parish A.

The alternative model which would allow for councillors to be elected from either area would be an amalgamation of the two parishes rather than a grouping order. An amalgamation would

	<p>abolish the existing parishes of Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt, remove the parish boundary between them, and create a new parish area based on the combined boundaries of the two existing parishes. This is not what has been proposed in the current consultation but is set out here for the sake of clarity.</p>
	<p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>An officer recommendation will be circulated to members of the Community Governance Review Committee following conclusion of the advisory poll and prior to the meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January.</p>
<p>Kibworth Beauchamp</p>	<p><b><u>Proposal 3a</u></b></p> <p>To reduce the number of parish councillors from 13 to 11 (based on existing arrangements)</p> <p>If grouped with Kibworth Harcourt the grouped council to consist of 12 Councillors in total, 9 from Kibworth Beauchamp and 3 from Kibworth Harcourt.</p> <hr/> <p><b><u>Consultation Response</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council</u></b></p> <p>The model proposed for the new `village council` would place any councillor elected to represent Kibworth Harcourt residents in a difficult and impotent position. They could be out voted on any matter relating specifically to Harcourt. In such a situation the level of undue influence that Beauchamp councillors would wield is contrary to sections 165/166 of the government guidance on reviews. In our opinion this is unworkable, reducing dramatically the democratic representation of Harcourt residents and the accountability of their councillors. There should be equal numbers of councillors from each ward or the council should not be warded so all councillors are responsible to all the electorate for the decisions they make.</p> <p>However we would reiterate that the current model is superior in respect of representation and accountability and see no coherent reason for change.</p> <p><b><u>Kibworth Harcourt Conservation Society (KHCS):</u></b></p> <p>Members supported this proposal as it maintains the Kibworth Harcourt parish council at six councillors.</p>

County Councillor Dr K Feltham

If proposal 2 (grouping) is defeated, which I sincerely hope is the outcome of the meeting on 15th January, then I support this proposal to reduce the number of councillors of Beauchamp PC and leave Harcourt PC as it is.

**Information**

Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council currently comprises of 13 seats. At the last elections 5 nominations were received. The Council currently has 8 councillors (4 'elected' and 4 co-opted), leaving 5 vacant seats over 18 months after the last elections.

If, following a normal election, a parish council has vacant seats but has sufficient 'elected' councillors to make a quorum (3 or a third, whichever is the greater) it has a period of 35 days from the date of the election to co-opt to fill any remaining vacant seats. After the period of 35 days however, the District Council could order a further election to properly constitute the council. The costs of any such election would be met by the parish although the District Council has not chosen to enforce this option. Reducing the number of seats could help to lessen this problem where there is a long standing history of vacant seats and help to ensure that a parish council is properly constituted.

The quorum for a council with 13 seats is 5. The number of 'elected' councillors required to meet the electoral mandate test for accreditation as a Quality Parish Council and also to meet the requirements of a 'competent' council under the Localism Act for a council with 13 seats would be 9 'elected' councillors (8 for a council with 11 or 12 seats). For a Council with 11 or 12 seats the number of councillors needed to make a quorum is also less (4).

Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council have not indicated their views on the proposed reduction in council size but with 5 vacant seats unless more residents are prepared to put themselves forward in the future a reduction in council size could prove beneficial to the council operationally for the reasons set out above. However, this needs to be balanced against the size of the electorate (Kibworth Beauchamp is one of the districts larger parishes) and current levels of public interest will hopefully improve. It may therefore be more appropriate at this point in time to reduce council size by one, rather than the two originally proposed.

**Recommendation**

If the grouping of the councils does not take place it is

	recommended that the number of seats on Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council is reduced from 13 to 12.
Kibworth Harcourt	<p><b><u>Proposal 3b</u></b></p> <p>No change to councillor numbers (6 based on existing arrangements)</p> <p>If grouped with Kibworth Harcourt the grouped council to consist of 12 Councillors in total, 9 from Kibworth Beauchamp and 3 from Kibworth Harcourt.</p> <hr/> <p><b><u>Consultation Response</u></b></p> <p><u>Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council:</u></p> <p>The model proposed for the new `village council` would place any councillor elected to represent Kibworth Harcourt residents in a difficult and impotent position. They could be out voted on any matter relating specifically to Harcourt. In such a situation the level of undue influence that Beauchamp councillors would wield is contrary to sections 165/166 of the government guidance on reviews. In our opinion this is unworkable, reducing dramatically the democratic representation of Harcourt residents and the accountability of their councillors. There should be equal numbers of councillors from each ward or the council should not be warded so all councillors are responsible to all the electorate for the decisions they make.</p> <p>However we would reiterate that the current model is superior in respect of representation and accountability and see no coherent reason for change.</p> <p><u>County Councillor Dr K Feltham:</u></p> <p>If proposal 2 (grouping) is defeated, which I sincerely hope is the outcome of the meeting on 15th January, then I support this proposal to reduce the number of councillors of Beauchamp PC and leave Harcourt PC as it is.</p> <hr/> <p><b><u>Information</u></b></p> <p>Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council currently comprises of 6 seats. At the last parish elections (2011) 3 nominations were received. The Council currently has 4 councillors (2 vacant seats).</p> <p>If, following a normal election, a parish council has vacant seats but has sufficient 'elected' councillors to make a quorum (3 or a third, whichever is the greater) it has a period of 35 days from the date of the election to co-opt to fill any remaining vacant seats. After the period of 35 days however, the District Council could</p>

	<p>order a further election to properly constitute the council. The costs of any such election would be met by the parish although the District Council has not chosen to enforce this option. Reducing the number of seats could help to lessen this problem where there is a long standing history of vacant seats and help to ensure that a parish council is properly constituted.</p> <p>A parish council must comprise of a minimum of 5 councillors. This number is normally be limited to smaller parish councils (less than 500 electorate) and would not be appropriate for a council with an electorate the size of that in Kibworth Harcourt. It is therefore proposed that the number of seats remain at 6 but as levels of public involvement are low across the district as witnessed by the results of the 2011 parish election that the District Council works with parish councils on identifying options for attracting increased public interest in serving the local community to ensure that parish councils, including Kibworth Harcourt, can be properly constituted in the future.</p> <p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>If the grouping of the parishes of Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt does not take place it is recommended that the number of seats on Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council remains at 6.</p>
Kimcote and Walton	<p><b><u>Proposal</u></b></p> <p>To reduce the number of parish councillors from 7 to 6</p> <p><b><u>Consultation Response</u></b></p> <p><u>Kimcote and Walton Parish Council</u></p> <p>No objection to the proposal.</p> <p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>That the number of seats on Kimcote and Walton Parish Council is reduced from 7 to 6 with effect from the next parish elections in 2015.</p>
Knaptoft	<p><b><u>Proposal</u></b></p> <p>To consider the possibility of grouping or amalgamation with an adjoining parish</p> <p><b><u>Consultation Response</u></b></p>

	<p>Councillor B Smith arranged for a parish meeting to take place and a new chair has been elected.</p> <p>Andrew Kay Knaptoft Hall Farm Welford Road Knaptoft Leicestershire LE17 6PA</p>
	<p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>No further action required as the parish meeting has now elected a chair.</p>
Market Harborough	<p><b><u>Proposal</u></b></p> <p>To undertake a separate Community Governance Review on a specific proposal for the creation of a separate parish (town) council for Market Harborough.</p>
	<p><b><u>Information</u></b></p> <p>At its meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2012 Council resolved that the possibility of forming a parish (town) council for Market Harborough should form the subject of a separate community governance review solely related to that question. This cannot commence until the current review has been completed and will need to be scheduled so as not to impact on the Electoral Review of District wards due to commence in 2013.</p>
Scraptoft	<p><b><u>Proposal</u></b></p> <p>Increase number of parish councillors from 7 to 8</p>
	<p><b><u>Information</u></b></p> <p>Scraptoft Parish Council had 8 nominations for 7 seats at the last parish elections in 2011 and a contested election was held. Elector numbers have increased in recent years due to residential development within the parish (Scraptoft Hall) and it is considered appropriate to recommend an increase in the number of seats to reflect this growth.</p>
	<p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>That the number of seats on Scraptoft Parish Council is increased from 7 to 8 with effect from the next parish elections in 2015.</p>

Shangton	<p><b><u>Proposal</u></b></p> <p>A parish meeting be convened to elect a chair of the parish meeting and that if no appointment can be made to consider options for grouping or amalgamation with an adjoining parish.</p> <p><b><u>Consultation Response</u></b></p> <p>A parish meeting took place on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2012 chaired by Councillor P King and attended by 12 villagers. The parish meeting expressed a desire to remain as an independent parish and a chair of the parish meeting was elected.</p> <p>Geoff Dilworth Manor Farm Main Street Shangton Leicestershire LE8 0PG</p> <p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>No further action required as the parish meeting has now elected a chair.</p>
Shearsby	<p><b><u>Proposal</u></b></p> <p>To create a parish council for Shearsby (included at the request of Shearsby Parish Meeting).</p> <p><b><u>Consultation Response</u></b></p> <p><u>Shearsby Parish Meeting</u>: “I can inform you that at tonight’s Parish Meeting (6<sup>th</sup> December 2012) at a request of the Parish Meeting a paper vote was taken on Item 4a/ of the Shearsby Parish Meeting December 6<sup>th</sup> 2012 Agenda (this paper vote is customary practice in Shearsby when deemed appropriate). The votes cast were 39 in favour, 9 against, and 5 blank paper voting slips which were recorded as abstentions by independent tellers (i.e. not myself as Chair nor the members of the working party). The result would indicate that Shearsby Parish Meeting now wishes to proceed to becoming a Parish Council. Please advise the working party contact Ann O’Connell and myself as to the next steps in this process at your earliest opportunity (Sylvia Reid, Chair Shearsby Parish Meeting)</p> <p><b><u>Information</u></b></p> <p>The parish meeting appointed a working party to look at the possibility of forming a parish council for Shearsby. The parish</p>

	<p>meeting considered an option of employing a paid clerk but has been advised that a parish meeting cannot employ staff and to do so would be ultra vires. A subsequent parish meeting has voted in favour of progressing a request to create a parish council for Shearsby. The parish has sufficient electors for the District Council to agree to formation of a parish council (in excess of 150).</p>
	<p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>That a parish council is created for the parish of Shearsby consisting of 5 parish councillors and that an election takes place in 2013 to appoint parish councillors to the new council for an initial term of office expiring in 2015 to bring the electoral arrangements back in line with the normal electoral timetable for parish councils. Thereafter elections to take place every 4 years (from 2015).</p>
<p>Tilton on the Hill and Halstead</p>	<p><b><u>Proposal</u></b></p> <p>Amalgamate the parishes of Tilton on the Hill and Halstead (currently a grouped arrangement)</p> <p>Note: This proposal would abolish the parish of Halstead. The boundary of the parish would become the combined extent of Tilton and Halstead.</p> <p><b><u>Consultation Response</u></b></p> <p><u>Tilton on the Hill and Halstead Parish Council</u></p> <p>Councillors are clear in their wish to be one Parish. This means that your proposal is to be taken forward. Within that arrangement the need for balanced representation, which is the concern, will be organised locally.</p> <p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>It is recommended that the existing parish of Halstead be abolished and the area amalgamated with Tilton on the Hill. It is recommended that the name of the parish be ‘Tilton on the Hill and Halstead’ and the name of the parish council be ‘Tilton on the Hill and Halstead Parish Council’.</p> <p>It is proposed that that the single council consists of 6 parish councillors and with the first elections based on the new boundary taking place in 2015. Until the next election the 6 parish councillors serving on the Tilton on the Hill and Halstead Parish</p>

	Council to remain in office.
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