SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of Vicky Thomson, Assistant Director Democratic Services

To: Council – 18 June 2014

(Author: Rhonda Oldfield, Member and Electoral Services Team Leader)

Subject: Community Governance Review

Purpose: To consider a request for a Community Governance Review (CGR) for the Parish of Gedney to reduce the number of Councillors from eleven to nine.

Recommendations:

1. To approve a Community Governance Review for the Parish of Gedney;
2. That delegated powers are given to the Monitoring Officer to carry out the Review
3. That the Monitoring Officer reports the findings of the Review to Council for final decision

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (LGPIH) devolved the power to take decisions relating to the creation or abolition of parishes, the boundaries of parishes and the electoral arrangements of parish councils from the Secretary of State and the Electoral Commission to principal councils.

1.2 A Community Governance Review (CGR) is a legal process whereby Councils can create parish councils, review and change parish boundaries and in extreme cases, abolish parishes. The Council must ensure that community governance in the area under review reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area, and is effective and convenient. It is important that recommendations made through a CGR should bring about improved community engagement, more cohesive communities, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

1.3 At a parish council meeting held on 8 April 2014, Gedney Parish Council voted in favour of reducing their council size from eleven to nine due to the council not having a had a full compliment of councillors for a number of years. It was proposed to remove two seats, one from North ward which currently had five seats and one from South ward which currently had six seats.

1.4 The minimum legal number of parish councillors is five. There is no maximum number. There is no other legislative guidance with regard to the ideal number of parish councillors and there is no legal sliding scale.

1.5 In 1998, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) published guidance on the suggested number of parish councillors to be allocated depending on the size of the population represented. The request for the reduction in councillor size is in line with the guidance from NALC for council size published in its Circular 1126/1998 (Appendix 2).

1.6.1 The Parish of Gedney currently has eleven seats on its parish council. Based on an electorate of 1,891, the current ratio of electorate per councillor is:- 1:172
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish Name</th>
<th>Electorate</th>
<th>Current Councillor /Elector Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gedney North</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>1:114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gedney South</td>
<td>1,323</td>
<td>1:220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gedney Parish total</td>
<td>1,891</td>
<td>1:172</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **THE REVIEW**

2.1 If Council agrees with the proposed review, it is asked to recommend:-

   a. that a Review under Section 79 to 102 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 be carried out with the following terms of reference:-

      The Review is to consider whether the Parish Council should reduce its number from eleven to nine and, if so, what consequential arrangements should be made in order to put this into effect; and

   b. that the Monitoring Officer be instructed to carry out the Review

   c. the results of the Review will then be reported to Council for final decision.

3. **OPTIONS**

   Option 1 - That approval is given for a Community Governance Review for the Parish of Gedney to be carried out.

   Option 2 - That delegated powers are given to the Monitoring to carry out the Review and report back to Council.

   Option 3 - Do Nothing.

4. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 A community governance review enables the Council to review and put in place or make changes to community governance systems and structures – for example by creating, merging, abolishing or changing parish or town councils in the review area.

5. **EXPECTED BENEFITS**

5.1 The expected benefits to be drawn from this CGR are more effective local governance.

6. **IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 **Legal** – The review to be conducted having regard to the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Council's Constitution.

6.2 **Risks** – None specific in this report

6.3 **Financial** – the review will have financial implications which have not been budgeted for in relation to advertising, printing and postage costs in undertaking the consultation – these costs will have to be found from existing budgets.

6.4 **Timescales** – The timescales for a community governance review is governed by Statute. The review must be completed within 12 months from the date of issue of the
Terms of Reference.

6.5 **Equality and Diversity** – The review will be carried out with due consideration to equality and diversity needs of those involved.

6.6 **Stakeholders / Consultation** - Consultation will take place with the Member of Parliament for South Holland and the Deepings, Parish Councillors, local electors, the local member for Gedney Ward, Lincolnshire County Council and other interested parties.

6.7 **Contracts** – None specific in this report

6.8 **Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998** – None specific in this report

7. **WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED**

7.1 Gedney

Background papers:-

Extracts of Minutes of the meeting of Gedney Parish COUNCIL, held on Tuesday 8 April 2014,

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (LGPIH)

Lead Contact Officer

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Director/Officer who will be attending the Meeting
Name/Post: Vicky Thomson, Assistant Director – Democratic Services

Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix 1 - Extract of Minutes of Gedney Parish Council meeting held on 8 April 2014;

Appendix 2 - NALC – Council Size

Appendix 3 - Timetable
Appendix 1

Extract of Minutes of Gedney Parish Council meeting held on 8 April 2014.

1) **52.14 To Resolve on number of seats for Council at next election**
   Due to council not having had a full complement of Councillors for a number of years due to lack of candidates willing to join the council, it was proposed to remove 2 seats (one from North Ward and one from South ward) at the next election in 2015. This would then enable the council to have a fully elected membership and enable them to use The Power of Wellbeing should it have occasion to. Council voted 7 in favour and 1 abstain, Item RESOLVED, clerk to contact SHDC.
Appendix 2

Minimum and maximum limits, NALC guidance on councillor allocations - (1998)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electors</th>
<th>Councillors</th>
<th>Electors</th>
<th>Councillors</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 900</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10,400</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11,900</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000*</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13,500</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,700</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15,200</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,400</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18,900</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,400</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20,900</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,700</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Over 23,000</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>16</td>
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* Gedney electorate is 1,891.
## Timetable for the Review: Gedney Parish Council

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Timeline (1)</th>
<th>Outline of Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Stage - Deciding when the review commences</td>
<td>18 June 2014</td>
<td>Council approval to carry out the review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue Terms of Reference and Introductory Stage (1 Month)</td>
<td>1 July 2014</td>
<td>District Council publishes Terms of Reference and notifies stakeholders. Publicity and engagement with stakeholders and individual submissions invited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2 (1 month)</td>
<td>2 August 2014 to 2 September 2014</td>
<td>Consideration of submissions and preparation of draft proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3 (1 month)</td>
<td>3 September 2014 to 4 October 2014</td>
<td>Draft recommendations are published Consultations on draft proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Proposals (1 month)</td>
<td>4 October 2014 to 5 November 2014</td>
<td>Consideration of submissions received and Final proposals prepared Publication of final proposals and conclusion of the Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Council</td>
<td>17 December 2014</td>
<td>Full Council approval and publication of the final recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making the Community Governance Order</td>
<td>Thereafter</td>
<td>Council to make Order</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>