

## **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW WHITEHAVEN**

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER:** Councillor Peter Kane  
**LEAD OFFICER & REPORT AUTHOR** Lindsay Tomlinson, Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

### **Why has this report come to the Council?**

To consider the results of the two consultation exercises and to decide whether to parish the currently unparished area of the Borough.

**Recommendation:** That Council agrees:

1. That a single Parish Council be set up which encompasses the currently unparished area of the Borough, namely Whitehaven and Sandwith;
2. That the new Parish Council be divided into seven wards with boundaries that are co-terminous with the Copeland Borough Council wards within the area (excluding those areas already parished)
3. That a report be made to Council in December 2014 with the final recommendations of the Whitehaven Community Governance Review Group

## **1 Introduction**

1.1 Council on 5 December 2013 decided to conduct a Community Governance Review under Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 into the unparished area of the Borough, namely Whitehaven and Sandwith. The purpose of the Review was to establish whether or not there was public support for establishment of a parish tier of local government in the area. Council delegated full powers to the Whitehaven Community Governance Review Panel to consider and determine all stages of the Review except the making of a Community Reorganisation Order..

## 2 Consultation

2.1 A principal authority undertaking a Community Governance Review is required to consult local government electors in the area under review and other persons or organisations they consider to have an interest in the review. There were two phases of consultation during the Review:

### Phase 1:

- (i) During February 2014 ten drop-in sessions were held at different locations within the Whitehaven and Sandwith area to give local residents the opportunity to share their views on whether or not they supported a new parish tier of governance in Whitehaven. A total of 35 people attended the drop-in sessions of which around half were in favour of establishing a town council in Whitehaven. Of the remainder around three were opposed to a new town council, the remainder expressed no firm view.
- (ii) A questionnaire was issued both electronically on the Council's website and in paper format at the drop-in sessions and at the main reception desk. A total of 149 questionnaires were returned.

### Phase 2:

- (i) Members of the Whitehaven Community Governance Review Panel ran a stall at the Whitehaven Carnival on 5 July 2014 to engage with local residents, offer information about the process and distribute questionnaires.
- (ii) A further drop in session and coffee morning was held at the United Reformed Church in Whitehaven on 12 July 2014.
- (iii) Information about the process and questionnaires were made available in the Copeland Centre reception area during July and August 2014.
- (iv) Information was published on the Council's website and articles were placed in the local media.

## 2.2 Results of Phase 2 Consultation Exercise

Option 1 (1x parish council) 75.61%

Option 2 (2x parish councils) 8.54%

No Town/Parish Council 13.41%

Spoilt Questionnaire 2.44%

2.3 On 29 May 2014 a petition was received containing 2,614 signatures calling on the Council to create a Whitehaven Town Council. This was reported to the Whitehaven Community Governance Review Group on 13 June 2014 and the Panel welcomed the petition as a strong indication of public support for the setting up of a parish council.

- 2.4 The Whitehaven Community Governance Review Group at its meeting on 14 August 2014 considered the results of the Phase 2 consultation exercise and also took into consideration the petition received on 29 May. The Group came to the conclusion that there was strong support within Whitehaven for the setting up of a parish council.

### **3 The Parish Council Area**

- 3.1 The proposed parish council area comprises the currently unparished area of the Borough – the town of Whitehaven and the village of Sandwith, as shown hatched on the plan at Appendix A. This area consists of the following Borough Council wards:
- Bransty (excluding that part covered by Moresby Parish)
  - Harbour
  - Hensingham
  - Hillcrest
  - Kells
  - Mirehouse
  - Sandwith (excluding that part covered by St Bees Parish)

- 3.2 Because of boundary anomalies dating back to, among other things, the Copeland (Parishes) Order 2009, in both the Bransty and Sandwith wards the Borough Council and the parish boundary is not contiguous. This meant that it will not be possible to take the complete Borough wards and re-designate them as parish wards within the new parish council. This is a matter that could be resolved at a later date by way of a Boundary Review.

### **4 Matters to be Determined**

- 4.1 Should Council agree to the setting up of the parish council then it is proposed that the Whitehaven Community Governance Review Panel submits a further report to Council in December 2014 setting out recommendations on the following:
- (i) The name of the new parish council
  - (ii) The total number of Councillors to be elected to the new parish council;
  - (iii) The cycle of elections for the new parish council;
  - (iv) The budget and precept for the new parish council in its first year;
  - (v) Arrangements for the first Annual Meeting of the new parish council

### **5 Key Stages of the Review**

- 5.3 The following is the revised indicative timescale for the Review:

Action	Timescale
Final recommendations submitted to Council	4 December 2014
Community Reorganisation Order made	After Council 4 December 2014
New Parish Council comes into Existence	1 April 2015
First Elections to new Parish Council	7 May 2015

## **6 Conclusions**

- 6.1 The proposals in this report move the recommendations of the Whitehaven Community Governance Panel forward towards the setting up of a parish council for Whitehaven.

Consultees: Chief Executive; Section 151 Officer; Lead Executive Member

Monitoring Officer comments: Included in report

S151 Officer comments: The new Parish Council will be funded by the precept that is set. There is budget provision in place to cover consultation costs etc.

EIA comments: No groups are advantageously or disadvantageously affected by the proposals in the report.

Appendices – Appendix A – Plan of the proposed Parish Council