



Report of: Head of Law and Governance

To: Full Council

Date: 20th February 2012 **Item No:**

Title of Report: **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – BLACKBIRD LEYS PARISH COUNCIL – REDUCTION IN MEMBERS**

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To ask Council to approve the terms of reference for the community governance review into the number of councillors on Blackbird Leys Parish Council.

Key decision: No

Approved by:

Legal: Jeremy Thomas
 Finance: Jackie Yates
 Lead Member: Councillor Bob Price

Policy Framework: Not applicable

Recommendation(s): Council is RECOMMENDED to approve the terms of reference for the community governance review of Blackbird Leys Parish Council.

Background

1. Blackbird Leys Parish Council has requested this Council (the principal council) to consider reducing the number of councillors from 16 (8 in each parish ward) to 14 (7 in each ward). Its rationale is that for many years it has not been possible to fill all the available seats on the Council. The Parish Council would like to reach a position where there was competition for seats and elections to raise the awareness and interest amongst the parishioners and feel that a reduced number of councillors will help in this. It is also concerned, in terms of effective governance, that it has difficulty in reaching a quorum at meetings at times of holiday etc.

The Way Forward

2. Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 a principal council can hold a community governance review either of its own volition, from a request from a parish council or via a petition.
3. The Act, subsequent regulations and Government circulars have guided principal councils on how to undertake the reviews. This review is likely to be a relatively simple affair.
4. The timetable for the review is as follows:-

Stage	What happens	Timescales	Dates
Commencement	Term of Reference are published		20 th February (by Full Council)
Stage One	Initial submissions are invited	Six weeks	21 st February – 3 rd April
Stage Two	Consideration of submissions	Four weeks	4 th April – 1st May

	received, draft recommendations are prepared		
Stage Three	Draft Recommendations are published – consultations on them	Two weeks	2nd May – 15th May
Stage Four	Consideration of submissions received – final recommendations are drawn up	Two weeks	16 th May – 30 th May
Stage Five	Consideration by Full Council		9 th July
	If recommendations agreed, Full Council makes the Reorganisation Order		Takes effect - 1 st August

- 5 The Act requires that Terms of Reference are drawn up and approved by full Council and it is full Council that makes the final decision and agrees any Reorganisation Order.
- 6 The Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix A.
- 7 There are no financial implications.

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List of background papers: None