

Subject: **Community Governance Review Petition –
Snitterfield Parish Council**

Lead Officer: **Darren Whitney**
Contact on 01789 260210

Lead Member: **Councillor P Seccombe**

Summary

The purpose of the report is to consider a petition from Snitterfield Parish Council for a community governance review (CGR) to increase the number of Parish Councillors.

Recommendation to Council

That the petition from Snitterfield Parish Council is deemed valid and a Community Governance Review regarding the number of Councillors for Snitterfield Parish Council is undertaken.

1 Background/Information

- 1.1 Stratford-on-Avon District Council completed a Community Governance Review, under the terms of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, in April 2013. This considered changes in Parishes across the whole District.
 - 1.2 Under the 2007 Act, local electors throughout England can petition their principal council for a CGR to be undertaken.
 - 1.3 A principal council is under a duty to carry out a CGR if it receives a valid community governance petition for the whole or part of the Council's area. However, the duty to conduct a review does not apply if:
 - a) the principal Council has concluded a community governance review within the last two years which in its opinion covered the whole or a significant part of the area of the petition; or
 - b) the Council is currently conducting a review of the whole, or a significant part of the area to which the petition relates.
 - 1.4 Where a review has been conducted within the last two years the principal Council still has the power to undertake another review if it so wishes.
 - 1.5 Snitterfield Parish Council decided not to make a submission during the CGR but it now finds itself under resourced due a number of reasons (Appendix 1). These being:
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- Snitterfield being below the National Association of Local Councils recommended minimum number of Councillors.
 - Ratio of Councillors to electors is greater than surrounding parishes.
 - The workload of Councillors has increased.
 - The village is designated as a Local Service Village meaning there will be further houses being built in the near future.
- 1.6 Snitterfield Parish Council arranged a petition which was received by the Chief Executive on 2 June 2014 (Appendix 1). For their petition to be valid it needed to be signed by at least 250 local electors, the petition contained 274 eligible signatories.

2 Options available to Audit Committee

- 2.1 To recommend to Council that the petition be accepted. The petition for a review is to change the number of Councillors so no boundary changes would be involved. Even if the petition is accepted and a CGR is undertaken this does not guarantee an increase in Councillor numbers. This is the preferred option.
- 2.2 To recommend to Council to reject the petition. The Council is not under a duty to carry out a CGR.

3 Evidence Base

- 3.1 The Community Governance Review for parishes in the SDC area is at <https://democracy.stratford.gov.uk/documents/s20909/Audit%20-%20Community%20Governance%20Review.pdf>

4 Members' Comments

- 4.1 None received.

5 Implications of the proposal

5.1 Legal/Human Rights Implications

- 5.1.1 Included within the report. An order would have to be produced if the CGR finds in favour of the proposal from Snitterfield Parish Council.

5.2 Financial

- 5.2.1 If Council decide to undertake a CGR for Snitterfield there will be an amount of officer time involved.

5.3 Environmental

- 5.3.1 None.

5.4 Corporate Strategy

- 5.4.1 Electoral equality relates to Aim 3 – Improving Access to Services.

5.5 Analysis of the effects on Equality

- 5.5.1 The proposal should improve electoral equality if the CGR finds in favour of the proposal from Snitterfield Parish Council.

6 Risk Assessment

- 6.1 Elements of risk are dealt with in the options section.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 This report recommends to Council that a CGR be undertaken as the electorate have a chance to comment on an increase in their number of Councillors and that no boundaries would be affected by these changes.

Paul Lankester
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Background papers:

Representation from Snitterfield Parish Council