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| Full Council |
| 21 November 2011 |

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Subject: Community Governance Review – Morton Parish Council

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| Report by: | Electoral Registration Officer |
| Contact Officer: | Graham Spicksley Assistant Electoral Registration Officer 01427 676576 Graham.Spicksley@west-lindsey.gov.uk |
| Purpose / Summary: | To approve a reduction in the number of parish councillors on Morton Parish Council from 11 members to 9 members. |

RECOMMENDATION:

That Members approve the reduction of Morton parish councillors from 11 members to 9 members effective from 7 May 2015.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: None arising from this report.

Financial : None arising from this report.

Staffing : None arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights : Not applicable

Risk Assessment : None arising from this report.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities : None arising from this report.

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Correspondence from Morton Parish Council and copy of letter sent to all households dated 12 August 2011. Located within the Electoral Registration Section at the Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough.

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

Yes

No

Key Decision:

Yes

No

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A request has been received from Morton Parish Council to reduce the number of seats on their Parish Council from the current number of 11 to 9 – a reduction of two seats. If approved, this proposal would be implemented at the next full Parish Council election to be held on 7 May 2015.
- 1.2 Morton Parish Council has made this request as a result of their inability to fill all of their seats on the Parish Council. At recent parish council elections there have been insufficient nominations received resulting in the Parish Council being required to co-opt suitable persons to fill any remaining vacancies. Unfortunately the Parish Council has been unable to fill all of the seats even by co-option and five seats currently remain vacant as a result of the uncontested election held in May 2011.
- 1.3 The number of parish councillors for each parish council does vary across the West Lindsey area and there is no set criteria for deciding how many councillors each parish should have. However, taking into account the electorate for the parish of Morton the number of councillors is high in comparison with parishes representing a similar number of electors within West Lindsey. Therefore, the proposed reduction in the number of parish councillors appears acceptable on this occasion.
- 1.4 In accordance with Section 82 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, West Lindsey District Council **may** exercise its discretion to undertake a Community Governance Review.
- 1.5 The objective of a review is to ensure that local governance will continue to be effective and convenient and will reflect the identities and interests of local communities.
- 1.6 The electorate may petition West Lindsey to undertake a full Community Governance Review but this must be supported by a signed petition from at least 250 electors.

2. CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN

- 2.1 Morton Parish Council has been proactive in advertising on a regular basis for new councillors and several articles have been published in the Parish Newsletter. Notices have been placed on the village notice board, in the village hall and in the local Co-op advising electors of the parish council's intention to request a reduction in the number of parish councillors. As a result no objections to the proposal were received by the parish council.
- 2.2 Before requesting West Lindsey to conduct a formal Community Governance Review the decision was taken to issue a letter to each household formally advising them of the request by Morton Parish Council for a reduction in the number of parish councillors from 11 to 9.

The letters were issued with each electoral registration form on 12 August 2011 to 611 households giving electors the opportunity to make objections to the proposal on or before 12 September 2011. No objections were received.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 In view of the fact that all electors have been made aware of the difficulties encountered by Morton Parish Council in filling the total number of parish council seats over a period of several years and that there has been no objections raised by any elector residing in the parish to the proposals it is recommended that West Lindsey District Council approve the reduction in parish councillors without the need for the undertaking of a full Community Governance Review.