

## **Draft Proposals of the Community Governance Review of Yeovilton Parish Council and Limington Parish Meeting**

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### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To report the outcome of the initial public consultation (Community Governance Review) which has taken place in the parishes of Yeovilton and Limington on the proposal to join the two parishes together (under the provisions of Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007).

### **Public Interest**

2. A Community Governance Review is a review of the whole or part of a district to consider one or more of the following:
  - creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
  - the naming of parishes and the style (i.e. whether to call it a town council or village council etc) of new parishes;
  - the electoral arrangements for parishes – the ordinary year of election, the size of the council, the number of councillors to be elected and parish warding;
  - grouping parishes under a common parish council, or de-grouping parishes.
3. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, 2007, sets down the principal legal framework within which councils must undertake these reviews.

### **Recommendations**

4. That Council:-
  - a. note the results of the consultation;
  - b. note that the majority of responses received were in favour of the original proposals by Yeovilton Parish Council and Limington Parish Meeting and therefore the draft recommendation for further consultation be: “To accept the vote from the people of Yeovilton and Limington and to form a single parish council to be named “Yeovilton and District Parish Council”.
  - c. agree to publish the results of the consultation;
  - d. note that a further period of consultation on the results of the initial consultation responses will take place;



## South Somerset District Council

- e. note that a further report will be brought to Council in February 2022 in order that a decision may be made in respect of the final recommendations of the Review.

### Background

5. A valid request was received from Yeovilton Parish Council and Limington Parish Meeting in February 2019, requesting that the District Council conduct a consultation (Community Governance Review) of all the electors and local interested groups to ask if they would be agreeable to form a single Parish Council. Initial consultation within the parishes has now taken place and this report details the outcome of that consultation.
6. Following receipt of the requests from both Parishes, the Local Government Boundary Commission were contacted to obtain permission to accept the requests as the District Council had undergone a Ward boundary review in 2017/18 and were unsure if we could effect any further changes for 5 years. However, the Local Government Boundary Commission confirmed that the review could go ahead. It was subsequently delayed during 2020 by the Covid 19 restrictions. However, we hope to conclude the review in February 2022 and implement any proposed changes in March 2022 if the Parish Council elections are brought forward to May 2022.

### Report Detail

7. In their request, the parishes stated a number of reasons for wishing the two parishes to be grouped including:
  - Yeovilton Parish Council already encompasses the communities of Yeovilton, Podimore, Bridghampton and Speckington, and would welcome Limington as part of a bigger parish.
  - Yeovilton Parish Council recently increased the number of parish councillors from 5 to 7, and feel there would be no need to increase the number further as representation from Limington would be welcomed.
  - Limington residents would benefit from representation by regular parish council meetings and a Parish Clerk.
  - Joining the parishes will mean a wider Council Tax base which could reduce slightly the overall Council Tax per household in Yeovilton Parish, whilst not increasing by as large a margin in Limington Parish.
  - If the merger is agreed, it is proposed to amend the name of the new Parish Council to Yeovilton and District Parish Council. This will encompass all the villages in the new parish.

### Consultation

8. The initial consultation period was held from 27 September to 05 November. Consultation leaflets were delivered to all registered electors within the two Parishes (a total of 650 people) together with Ward Members, Member of Parliament, Somerset Association of Local Councils and Somerset County Council. Public comments were also invited by e-mail.



## South Somerset District Council

9. A total of 107 responses were received (16.5% of the total electorate). Of the 107 responses, 89 were in favour of the proposal and 18 were against it.
10. Part of the consultation leaflet asked for any comments on the proposals and a broad range of responses were received. They varied from:-
  - As this request has come from both parishes I am happy to support it
  - Is it possible to have a balance of representation from the villages?
  - Limington and Yeovilton share a similar demographic and experience similar problems especially with flooding.
  - Should have been done a long time ago
  - All makes for smoother decision making
  - I prefer the parish council to remain as it is. The larger unit makes for more bureaucracy and time delays
  - I think it will make it too big for one parish.
11. Having taken into account all consultation responses made during this first stage of consultation, and having regard to the need to ensure that Community Governance within the area reflects the identities and interests of the community, and is effective and convenient, the draft recommendation of officers is: "To accept the vote from the people of Yeovilton and Limington and to propose that the two parishes should be grouped to form a single parish council".

### Community Governance Review Timetable

12. The draft recommendation of the Council on the outcome of the review will be published by 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021, followed by the commencement of a further 5 week period of consultation closing on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2022. That the further consultation on the draft proposals will be through the SSDC Website, social media, local press and posters. Representations received on the draft recommendation will be submitted for consideration by South Somerset District Council at its meeting of the full Council on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022 when the final decision on the review will be taken. Any changes which may result from this review will be implemented at the next Parish Council elections.

### Financial Implications

13. The cost of producing the consultation leaflets (675) and distributing by second class post was £488. There has been a cost in staff time in the production of the consultation leaflets and the analysis of the responses and these costs have been absorbed within existing budgets.
14. It is anticipated that the further consultation on the draft proposals will be through the SSDC Website, local press and posters. This cost is likely to be less than £50.
15. There is no specific budget for Community Governance Reviews and all costs have been absorbed within the existing Democratic Services budget for 2021/22. Additionally, there is no power to re-charge the cost of the review to any other Council,



## South Somerset District Council

except by agreement. This is because the statutory power to conduct the review rests with this Council.

### Legal implications (if any) and details of Statutory Powers

16. This Community Governance Review has taken place under the provisions of Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

### Council Plan Implications

17. Our Values: **Working collaboratively** - Working with partners to enhance outcomes for our communities.

### Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

18. No implications at the current time.

### Equality and Diversity Implications

19. The local government electors within the parishes of Yeovilton (including Yeovilton, Podimore, Bridghampton, and Speckington) and Limington were consulted on the proposal and their views considered as part of the consultation process. The council must have regard to the need to secure that the community governance arrangements for the area and the identities and interests of the community in the area are effective and convenient.

### Privacy Impact Assessment

20. The only personal data collected has been the names and addresses of the residents responding to the consultation, to ascertain that they are eligible (i.e. a registered elector within the parish of either Yeovilton or Limington) to participate. This information has only been processed by SSDC staff and will be retained until the conclusion of the review in approximately 4 months time. The data is held securely and will be deleted at the conclusion of the review.

### Background Papers

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

The Electoral Commission Guidance on Community Governance Reviews, April 2008

Formal request from Yeovilton Parish Council

Formal request from Limington Parish Meeting

Proposed joining of Yeovilton Parish Council and Limington Parish Meeting –  
Community Governance Review Report to Council – July 2020

Terms of Reference of the Community Governance Review of the Parish Arrangements  
for Yeovilton Parish Council and Limington Parish Meeting

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