**PARISH CONSULTATION EVENING**

**24 OCTOBER 2016**

**UPDATE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVIEW & FORTHCOMING COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS**

You will be aware that the Commission has conducted a boundary review of the Harrogate district and its draft recommendations are that Harrogate should have 40 single-member wards from May 2018. More particularly the recommendations are for:

• 19 single member wards for the Harrogate urban area

• 4 single member wards for Ripon

• 4 single member wards for Knaresborough

• 13 single member wards for the rural areas in the District

In the main the Commission’s draft recommendations adopted the Council’s proposals for warding patterns. However, the one area where its recommendation differed significantly from the Council’s proposal was Knaresborough albeit still proposing 4 single member wards.

Consultation on the draft recommendations closed on 22 August 2016. We are therefore awaiting the Commission’s final recommendations which we understand will be published in November 2016. The recommendations once published will be, subject to a Parliamentary Order, and be implemented to take effect at the Council’s all-out elections in May 2018

**Impact of Review on Parish Councils**

The Commission is not and cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes. However, under the legislation the Commission has power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of its recommendations for Harrogate Borough Council’s warding patterns. It is therefore anticipated that it will Order that all Parishes hold elections in May 2018 to align with the Borough Council’s move to all out elections.

In so far as the impact of the proposed new ward boundaries on Parish councils then the legislation provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards then it must be divided into parish wards, so that each parish lies wholly within a single ward. Based on the Commission’s draft recommendations we anticipate that it will propose revised arrangements for:

• Killinghall Parish Council – the Commission’s draft recommendation is that there should be 10 parish councillors (as there is now) but representing 3 parish wards: Killinghall Oakdale (returning 2 members); Killinghall rural (returning 5 members) and Killinghall Saltergate (returning three members). The issue with this is that there are unlikely to be any electors in the Killinghall Oakdale parish ward until the development is complete and populated. We have raised this with the Commission and await their response.

• Knaresborough Town Council - as at present the Commission’s draft recommendation is that there should be 15 parish councillors representing 4 wards: Knaresborough Aspin & Calcut (returning 3 members), Knaresborough Eastfield ( returning 4 members), Knaresborough Scriven ( returning 4 members), and Knaresborough Tentergate ( returning 4 members)

• Ripon City Council - as at present the Commission’s draft recommendation is that there should be 15 parish councillors representing 4 wards: Ripon Minster (returning 3 members), Ripon Spa ( returning 4 members), Ripon Ure Bank ( returning 4 members), and Ripon Moorside ( returning 4 members)

In the interests of effective governance, Harrogate Borough Council will be considering the benefits of undertaking a community governance review of all areas in the District in a programmed approach. The likely imbalance in ward representation for Knaresborough & Ripon (being 4:4:4:3) means that the Council will be asked to prioritise these areas for a community governance review so that each Parish ward has equality of representation on the Parish Councils.

**So what do we mean by a Community Governance Review?**

It is a review of the whole or part of the district to consider one or more of the following:

• Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;

• The naming of parishes;

• The electoral arrangement for parishes (including the ordinary year of election; council size; the number of councillors to be elected to the Council and parish warding);

• Grouping or de-grouping parishes;

Legislation allows the Council to decide how to undertake a community governance review, provided that the Council complies with its duties under the Act. One such duty being the requirement to consult local people and groups and take account of any representations received. The Council is required to complete the review within 12 months of the start of the review and the review starts when the Council publishes Terms of Reference for the review. It is likely that reports will be taken to Council’s General Purposes Committee on 10 November recommending that a Community Governance Review be undertaken for Ripon & Knaresborough. Further details will be made available when this happens including how to participate in the consultation process.

**Parish Precepts**

One area which we often get asked about in Community Governance Reviews is about pre-cepting. In this respect I understand that there has been a question about the non-payment of a parish precept by Harrogate town residents. It has been suggested that the revenue base for Harrogate Borough Council would be increased by levying Harrogate town residents with the equivalent of a parish precept to pay for facilities and amenities particularly enjoyed by the people living in the town thereby reducing the requirement to increase charges for services to all Harrogate Borough Council taxpayers.

Pre-cepting authorities are parish, town or community councils or charter trustees. Harrogate town (other than Pannal & Burnbridge) does not have such pre-cepting authorities & their creation would require a community governance review. This is unlikely to be a priority for the Council but if anyone wants to know if they can require a community governance review of the urban areas of Harrogate then I would refer them to the guidance which sets out the requirements of a petition.