

Community Governance Review (Parish Review) Draft Recommendations

Parish of: Sparham

Introduction

Breckland Council has responsibility for undertaking Community Governance Reviews under the terms of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The purpose of a Community Governance Review is to provide a mechanism whereby the boundaries of areas served by Parish Councils and their related electoral arrangements (including provision of any parish council wards, and allocated numbers of parish councillors) can be amended where appropriate.

The Council's General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 24th November 2022 gave approval for the Deputy Chief Executive to carry out a Community Governance Review for the parish of Sparham under the terms of the 2007 Act:

1. To carry out a Community Governance Review with a view to increasing the number of councillors from Five to Seven councillors.

The period of initial public consultation which sought the views on the submission of detailed proposals for consideration under the Review closed on 6th January 2023.

Details of the Sparham parish council existing electoral arrangements, along with a parish boundary map were made available for inspection at the Breckland Council Offices, Walpole Loke, Dereham, NR19 1EE.

No representations were received to the consultation. The Draft Recommendations that follow are approved for public consultation under the terms of the Community Governance Review of parishes and parish electoral arrangements. The period of public consultation commences with the publication of this document and closes at 5pm on 20th January 2023.

In the preparation of their Draft Recommendations under this review, Breckland Council seek to provide community governance that will be reflective of the identities and interest of the community in the area concerned and is effective and convenient.

The law requires the Council to complete each Review within 12 months of commencement. Any changes arising from the Review will come in effect at the May 2023 full elections of parish councils (combined with the next scheduled elections to Breckland Council).

Criteria and aim of the review

In conducting this Review, Section 93 of the 2007 Act requires Breckland Council to seek to ensure that community governance within the area under review will be reflective of **the identities and interests of the community** in that area; and is **effective and convenient**.

When considering this, Breckland Council will take into account a number of influential factors, including:

- the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
- the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.

Consultation process

Breckland Council received a request from Sparham Parish Council to increase the number of Councillors on the Parish Council from Five to Seven. There would be no alteration to the parish boundaries as part of this review.

The electorate (1 September 2023) and councillor ratio for Sparham Parish Council is detailed in the table 1 below.

Table 1

Parish Name	Number of Councillors	Electorate	Proposed Councillor/ Elector Ratio
Sparham	5	246	1:49

The proposed number of 7 seats on the parish council would reduce the ratio of electorate per councillor' to the number in table 2 below.

Table 2

Parish Name	Number of Councillors	Electorate	Proposed Councillor/ Elector Ratio
Sparham	7	246	1:35

The Council undertook a consultation with electors and interested stakeholders in the area by way of Notice of the Review on the Sparham Parish Council Notice Board and Breckland Council website.

The initial consultation period was held from 25 November 2022 to 6th January 2023.

A total of '0' (Nil) responses were received. All representations received as part of the consultation process are available for public inspection at Electoral Services Office, Breckland Council, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham, NR19 1EE.

Summary of proposals

Breckland Council will seek to make an 'Order' to the effect of increasing the size of Sparham Parish council from Five to Seven councillors. The 'Order' will be effective from the date of the next scheduled elections on Thursday 4 May 2023.

The review process

The Council published a notice on 16th January 2023 announcing the above Draft Recommendations in relation to the Community Governance Review. This will commence a consultation period of one week during which anyone with an interest is invited to submit proposals and comments for consideration by Breckland Council prior to the making of the Final Recommendations on future electoral arrangements for the areas listed above.

Representations are being invited from any person or organisation that has an interest in this review.

We would welcome comments at this stage of the Review and will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing Final Recommendations.

Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, the Council will make available for public inspection, copies of all representations it takes into account as part of this Review at the Electoral Services Office, Breckland Council, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham, NR19 1EE.

Final Recommendations will be prepared by the Deputy Chief Executive taking account of the representations received on the Draft Recommendations.

Any changes to electoral arrangements resulting from this review will be implemented in time to operate at the next full Parish elections scheduled to be held on Thursday 4th May 2023.

Dated 16th January 2023.