

Northampton Borough Council

Community Governance Review 2012 Appendix 3

Consultation Survey Results

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report contains the results of the Community Governance Review (CGR) Consultation survey on each of the twelve proposals agreed by the General Purposes Committee on 20 June 2012 to go forward to this stage. The consultation survey took place between 3 September 2012 and 19 October 2012.

Key results

1.2 A total of 724 individuals responded, providing 876 responses, as follows:

- 468 responses were received to the survey
- 245 people submitted a petition response – 76 of these agreed with all three Wootton & East Hunsbury proposals
- 11 letters/emails were received from individuals

Consultees' Responses and Comments

1.3 The number of comments received as free text, together with the numbers that agreed and disagreed with each proposal, are as follows:

	Agreed	Disagreed	Comments
Parklands new parish council	9	4	18
Rectory Farm new parish council	14	5	26
Sunnyside & Obelisk new parish council	43	3	18
West Hunsbury new parish council	69	24	88
Westone new parish council	4	3	10
St James new parish council	32	100	78
Hunsbury Meadows new parish council	42	8	54
Wootton & East Hunsbury PC boundary change (Turners)	87	0	3
Wootton & East Hunsbury PC and Collingtree PC boundary change (Belfry Lane)	78	0	0
Hardingstone PC and Great Haughton PC boundary change	0	0	0
Wootton & East Hunsbury PC parish split	155	192	109
Upton PC boundary change	1	0	0
Other proposals – new parish councils, unspecified	2	1	12
	536	340	416

1.4 In addition, a petition of 39 signatures and 1 response form disagreeing with the Wootton & East Hunsbury parish split proposal, arrived after the deadline, and are not included in these figures.

1.5 The free text comments received on new parishes fell into the following themes:

- In favour:
 - i. More parish councils will enhance the borough
 - ii. Parish councils will be more responsive at a local level

- iii. Parish councils will allow more influence and control over local public services
- Against:
 - i. Parish councils will be an extra tier of local government, increased bureaucracy
 - ii. Parish councils will increase the cost of local government to residents
 - iii. Additional resources will be needed to run parish councils which will be difficult in the current economic climate
- Process:
 - i. Consultation process should have provided more detail

1.6 The free text comments received on the proposed parish split at Wootton & East Hunsbury Parish Council fell into the following themes:

- In favour:
 - i. Will localise the decision making including what precept is spent on
 - ii. People have a different character and no connection
 - iii. The A45 is a significant barrier to the two communities
- Against:
 - i. The services provided by the current parish council are good
 - ii. Levels of service offered by divided parishes will deteriorate unless precept is increased
 - iii. Large parish has economies of scale, capacity/scale to develop innovative schemes and can speak with a louder more effective voice
 - iv. Wootton Fields budget would be cut becoming a smaller parish
 - v. East Hunsbury would suffer as many community facilities are in Wootton

Impact of Proposals on Consultees

1.7 People were asked about the impact of the proposals on the community. The responses recorded in the survey response form across all proposals are as follows (question 4 in survey):

	Agreed	Disagreed	Don't Know	Total Responses
It will improve the way public services are delivered (effective and convenient)	63%	34%	3%	462
It is a good opportunity for residents to influence local decisions (local democracy)	67%	31%	2%	464
It will make the area safer and/or cleaner (effective)	59%	34%	7%	463
It will provide value for money (effective)	60%	35%	5%	459
It will reflect the identities and interests of the local community	66%	33%	1%	463

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Community Governance Review started on 6 February 2012. The public were asked to submit proposals for new community governance in the form of petitions with a deadline of 18 May 2012. General Purposes Committee approved on 20 June 2012 twelve CGR proposals to be taken forward to detailed consultation.

2.2 Consultation is being carried out in two principal phases:

- a consultation survey to obtain views and comments from the public on each of the twelve proposals, which is the subject of this report
- a Local Advisory Poll to be carried out on 15 November for affected electors to vote YES or NO to the proposal affecting them.

2.3 This consultation has followed the principles set out in the Council's Consultation Toolkit and industry standard guidance on best practice in consultation.

2.4 The consultation survey was made available along with an information booklet in paper format, to download from the CGR webpage and as an online survey. Paper consultation booklets were available from the One Stop Shop, from NBC community centres and from proposal campaigners. Individual proposal campaigners produced their own detailed proposal documents and made them available to the public as required.

2.5 Respondents who took part in the consultation either completed an individual survey response form, or groups of people submitted a response in the style of a petition in favour or against a particular proposal. A small number of respondents sent in a letter or email in favour or against a particular proposal.

2.6 Under the legislation, the review must ensure that community governance reflects the identities and interests of the community in the area and that it is effective and convenient to local people.

2.7 The main purpose of the consultation survey was qualitative – to understand the public's views on the potential impacts of the CGR proposals and to elicit debate and discussion on each proposal. The secondary purpose of the survey was quantitative – to establish how many registered electors support each of the CGR proposals.

- 2.8 The second part of the CGR consultation process – the Local Advisory Poll on 15 November – will be purely quantitative; a YES vote or a NO vote for each of the nine substantial proposals. A targeted consultation letter has been sent to the registered electors in two of the minor proposal areas – Turners and Belfry Lane. This will be a YES or a NO vote, but will also allow qualitative comments to be made. The twelfth proposal does not affect any registered electors and will be considered on a purely technical basis.
- 2.9 The results of the first part of this consultation are contained in this report. They will be used by the Council as part of the process for deciding which proposals should be implemented.
- 2.10 The second part of the consultation, the Local Advisory Poll, will then be undertaken on 15 November 2012. Registered electors in the nine significant proposal areas will be able to vote – Parklands, Rectory Farm, Sunnyside & Obelisk, West Hunsbury, Westone, St James, Hunsbury Meadows, Wootton & East Hunsbury parish split and Upton PC boundary change.
- 2.11 Two minor proposals will not go to the vote due to the small number of electors affected – Wootton & East Hunsbury boundary change (Turners) and Wootton & East Hunsbury PC and Collingtree PC boundary change (Belfry Lane). They are being specifically consulted through a targeted letter to obtain their views on the proposals affecting them.
- 2.12 The final proposal, minor boundary changes to Hardingstone and Great Haughton parish councils, do not affect any registered electors. This proposal will therefore be considered by officers on a technical basis.

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 Residents, businesses, and other stakeholders were invited to provide feedback on the twelve proposals during the consultation period and support was made available to maximise involvement and understanding of the proposals.
- 3.2 People were able to engage in a range of methods:
- Meeting of the Council's General Purposes Committee on 20 June 2012;
 - A press release announcing the start of the consultation process and advertising two public drop-in sessions
 - Public drop-in sessions held at the Guildhall on 11 and 13 September
 - Engagement with other stakeholders through an explanatory letter and a copy of the Consultation booklet – Northamptonshire County Council; NHS; PCT; the Police; existing Parish Councils
 - Ad-hoc meetings with individual organisations as requested eg St James Residents Association
 - Information circulated to NBC community forums
 - Attendance at each NBC community forum to brief the forum and to answer questions
 - Paper copies of the information booklet and survey made available at community centres and the One Stop Shop
 - Consultation booklet and survey made available on the Council's website at www.northampton.gov.uk/cgr
 - Survey made available for completion online.
- 3.3 The consultation was advertised by sending a press release to local radio, TV and newspapers, local community groups as well as senior officers, councillors, existing parish councils. Advice of the consultation was also circulated by email to other voluntary and community organisations. In addition, a paid notice was placed in the Herald at the start of the consultation period.
- 3.4 The methods of advertising listed above were considered more than adequate for the purposes of this consultation given the numbers of people reached by these methods:
- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| • Website homepage hits | 400,000 last 12 months |
| • Website CGR page hits | 2,900 |
| • Twitter | 2,000 last 12 months |
| • Chronicle & Echo circulation | 24,000 |
| • Herald circulation | 55,000 |
- 3.5 It was not deemed necessary to send the consultation booklet and survey to every household across Northampton Borough or to every household in the affected areas due to the reach of the methods

outlined above, as well as the high costs that would have been incurred. The total numbers involved are as follows:

- Total population in Northampton 212,100 (2011 Census)
- Number of households 88,700 (2011 Census)
- Registered electors in Northampton 158,000
- Registered electors in affected areas 41,900

4 RESULTS

Findings and Analysis – Overview

- 4.1 A total of 724 individuals responded, providing 876 responses, as follows:
- 468 responses were received to the survey
 - 245 people submitted a petition response – 76 of these agreed with all three Wootton & East Hunsbury proposals
 - 11 letters/emails were received from individuals
- 4.2 In addition, a petition of 39 signatures and 1 survey disagreeing with the Wootton & East Hunsbury parish split proposal, arrived after the deadline and are not included in these figures.
- 4.3 Full details of each of the responses received are contained in **Appendix 1**.
- 4.4 The number of comments received as free text for each proposal, together with the numbers that agreed and disagreed with each proposal, are as follows:

	Agreed	Disagreed	Comments
Parklands new parish council	9	4	18
Rectory Farm new parish council	14	5	26
Sunnyside & Obelisk new parish council	43	3	18
West Hunsbury new parish council	69	24	88
Westone new parish council	4	3	10
St James new parish council	32	100	78
Hunsbury Meadows new parish council	42	8	54
Wootton & East Hunsbury PC boundary change (Turners)	87	0	3
Wootton & East Hunsbury PC and Collingtree PC boundary change (Belfry Lane)	78	0	0
Hardingstone PC and Great Haughton PC boundary change	0	0	0
Wootton & East Hunsbury PC parish split	155	192	109
Upton PC boundary change	1	0	0
Other proposals – new parish councils, unspecified	2	1	12
	536	340	416

- 4.5 People were asked about the impact of the proposals on the community. The responses recorded in the survey response form across all proposals are as follows (question 4 in survey):

	Agreed	Disagreed	Don't Know	Total Responses
It will improve the way public services are delivered (effective and convenient)	63%	34%	3%	462
It is a good opportunity for residents to influence local	67%	31%	2%	464

	Agreed	Disagreed	Don't Know	Total Responses
decisions (local democracy)				
It will make the area safer and/or cleaner (effective)	59%	34%	7%	463
It will provide value for money (effective)	60%	35%	5%	459
It will reflect the identities and interests of the local community	66%	33%	1%	463

Findings and Analysis – Individual Proposals

Parklands – new Parish Council

4.6 Number of responses and free text comments:

	Agreed	Disagreed	Comments
Parklands new parish council	9	4	18

4.7 Comments received and points raised fell into the following themes:

- In favour
 - will enhance the Borough
 - will be more responsive at a local level
 - will allow more influence and control over local public services
- Against
 - will be an extra tier of local government, increased bureaucracy
 - will increase the cost of local government to residents
 - Additional resources will be needed to run parish councils which will be difficult in the current climate
- Process
 - Consultation process should have provided more detail

4.8 The responses recorded for the impact of the proposal on the community are as follows (question 4 in survey):

	Agreed	Disagreed	Don't Know	Total Responses
It will improve the way public services are delivered (effective and convenient)	69%	31%	0%	13
It is a good opportunity for residents to influence local decisions (local democracy)	85%	15%	0%	13
It will make the area safer and/or cleaner (effective)	69%	31%	0%	13
It will provide value for money (effective)	55%	36%	9%	11
It will reflect the identities and interests of the local community	69%	31%	0%	13

Rectory Farm – new Parish Council

4.9 Number of responses and free text comments:

	Agreed	Disagreed	Comments
Rectory Farm new parish council	14	5	26

4.10 Comments received and points raised fell into the following themes:

- In favour
 - Will provide positive benefit
 - Residents can shape services
 - will allow local group to have more influence and control over local public services
- Against
 - will be an extra tier of local government, increased bureaucracy
 - will increase the cost of local government to residents

4.11 The responses recorded for the impact of the proposal on the community are as follows (question 4 in survey):

	Agreed	Disagreed	Don't Know	Total Responses
It will improve the way public services are delivered (effective and convenient)	69%	26%	5%	19
It is a good opportunity for residents to influence local decisions (local democracy)	74%	26%	0%	19
It will make the area safer and/or cleaner (effective)	63%	26%	11%	19
It will provide value for money (effective)	63%	26%	11%	19
It will reflect the identities and interests of the local community	74%	26%	0%	19

Sunnyside and Obelisk – new Parish Council

4.12 Number of responses and free text comments:

	Agreed	Disagreed	Comments
Sunnyside and Obelisk new parish council	43	3	18

4.13 Comments received and points raised fell into the following themes:

- In favour
 - will be good to involve the community
 - will bring the community together
- Against
 - will increase the cost of local government to residents

4.14 The responses recorded for the impact of the proposal on the community are as follows (question 4 in survey):

	Agreed	Disagreed	Don't Know	Total Responses
It will improve the way public services are delivered (effective and convenient)	94%	4%	2%	46
It is a good opportunity for residents to influence local decisions (local democracy)	94%	4%	2%	46
It will make the area safer and/or cleaner (effective)	87%	7%	6%	46
It will provide value for money (effective)	87%	7%	6%	45
It will reflect the identities and interests of the local community	94%	4%	2%	46

West Hunsbury – new Parish Council

4.15 Number of responses and free text comments:

	Agreed	Disagreed	Comments
West Hunsbury new parish council	69	24	88

4.16 Comments received and points raised fell into the following themes:

- In favour
 - Local issues will be dealt with by local people
 - An opportunity to improve residents' lifestyle, environment
 - Benefits will outweigh the costs
 - Will be responsive and improve communities at a local level
- Against
 - will be an extra tier of local government, increased bureaucracy
 - will increase the cost of local government to residents
 - Additional resources will be needed to run parish councils which will be difficult in the current climate

4.17 The responses recorded for the impact of the proposal on the community are as follows (question 4 in survey):

	Agreed	Disagreed	Don't Know	Total Responses
It will improve the way public services are delivered (effective and convenient)	71%	27%	2%	89
It is a good opportunity for residents to influence local decisions (local democracy)	74%	25%	1%	89
It will make the area safer and/or cleaner (effective)	70%	27%	3%	89
It will provide value for money (effective)	63%	28%	9%	89
It will reflect the identities and interests of the local community	74%	26%	0%	89

Westone – new Parish Council

4.18 Number of responses and free text comments:

	Agreed	Disagreed	Comments
Westone new parish council	4	3	10

4.19 Comments received and points raised fell into the following themes:

- In favour
 - Should improve the area
- Against
 - will be an extra tier of local government, increased bureaucracy
 - will increase the cost of local government to residents
- Process
 - Consultation process should have provided more detail

4.20 The responses recorded for the impact of the proposal on the community are as follows (question 4 in survey):

	Agreed	Disagreed	Don't Know	Total Responses
It will improve the way public services are delivered (effective and convenient)	57%	43%	0%	7
It is a good opportunity for residents to influence local decisions (local democracy)	72%	14%	14%	7
It will make the area safer and/or cleaner (effective)	72%	14%	14%	7
It will provide value for money (effective)	57%	43%	0%	7
It will reflect the identities and interests of the local community	57%	29%	14%	7

St James – new Parish Council

4.21 Number of responses and free text comments:

	Agreed	Disagreed	Comments
St James new parish council	32	100	78

4.22 Comments received and points raised fell into the following themes:

- In favour
 - Will have positive impact on the community
 - Will allow active local participation
 - Will represent the area and put funding where it is needed most
- Against
 - will be an extra tier of local government, increased bureaucracy
 - will increase the cost of local government to residents
 - residents can't afford it
 - cannot see who will benefit

- cannot see how day to day life/services would be improved
- existing arrangements are sufficient
- Process
 - Consultation process should have provided more detail

4.23 The responses recorded for the impact of the proposal on the community are as follows (question 4 in survey):

	Agreed	Disagreed	Don't Know	Total Responses
It will improve the way public services are delivered (effective and convenient)	45%	51%	4%	67
It is a good opportunity for residents to influence local decisions (local democracy)	48%	48%	4%	67
It will make the area safer and/or cleaner (effective)	45%	51%	4%	67
It will provide value for money (effective)	44%	51%	5%	66
It will reflect the identities and interests of the local community	50%	47%	3%	66

Hunsbury Meadows – new Parish Council

4.24 Number of responses and free text comments:

	Agreed	Disagreed	Comments
Hunsbury Meadows new parish council	42	8	54

4.25 Comments received and points raised fell into the following themes:

- In favour
 - Will be beneficial to the residents
 - Will give the area a soul
 - The area's voice would be heard in future
- Against
 - The area is far too small and the overheads would be disproportionately high
 - Should join West Hunsbury instead as everyone uses their services eg library, shops, buses, open spaces, schools
 - will be an extra tier of local government, increased bureaucracy
 - will increase the cost of local government to residents
- Process
 - Consultation process should have provided more detail

4.26 The responses recorded for the impact of the proposal on the community are as follows (question 4 in survey):

	Agreed	Disagreed	Don't Know	Total Responses
It will improve the way public services are delivered (effective)	84%	14%	2%	50

	Agreed	Disagreed	Don't Know	Total Responses
and convenient)				
It is a good opportunity for residents to influence local decisions (local democracy)	86%	14%	0%	51
It will make the area safer and/or cleaner (effective)	83%	15%	2%	51
It will provide value for money (effective)	86%	14%	0%	50
It will reflect the identities and interests of the local community	84%	14%	2%	50

Wootton & East Hunsbury PC – boundary change (Turners)

4.27 Number of responses and free text comments:

	Agreed	Disagreed	Comments
Wootton & East Hunsbury PC boundary change (Turners)	87	0	3

4.28 Comments received and points raised actually related to the proposed split of the parish into two separate parishes. All supported the proposed split.

4.29 The responses recorded for the impact of the proposal on the community are as follows (question 4 in survey):

	Agreed	Disagreed	Don't Know	Total Responses
It will improve the way public services are delivered (effective and convenient)	100%	0%	0%	11
It is a good opportunity for residents to influence local decisions (local democracy)	100%	0%	0%	11
It will make the area safer and/or cleaner (effective)	91%	0%	9%	11
It will provide value for money (effective)	100%	0%	0%	11
It will reflect the identities and interests of the local community	100%	0%	0%	11

Wootton & East Hunsbury PC and Collingtree PC – boundary change (Belfry Lane)

4.30 Number of responses and free text comments:

	Agreed	Disagreed	Comments
Wootton & East Hunsbury PC and Collingtree PC boundary change (Belfry Lane)	78	0	0

4.31 There were no free text comments received.

- 4.32 The responses recorded for the impact of the proposal on the community are as follows (question 4 in survey):

	Agreed	Disagreed	Don't Know	Total Responses
It will improve the way public services are delivered (effective and convenient)	50%	0%	50%	2
It is a good opportunity for residents to influence local decisions (local democracy)	50%	0%	50%	2
It will make the area safer and/or cleaner (effective)	50%	0%	50%	2
It will provide value for money (effective)	50%	0%	50%	2
It will reflect the identities and interests of the local community	100%	0%	0%	2

Hardingstone PC and Great Haughton PC – boundary changes

- 4.33 Number of responses and free text comments:

	Agreed	Disagreed	Comments
Hardingstone PC and Great Haughton PC boundary changes	0	0	0

- 4.34 There were no free text comments received.

- 4.35 The responses recorded for the impact of the proposal on the community are as follows (question 4 in survey):

	Agreed	Disagreed	Don't Know	Total Responses
It will improve the way public services are delivered (effective and convenient)	0%	0%	0%	0
It is a good opportunity for residents to influence local decisions (local democracy)	0%	0%	0%	0
It will make the area safer and/or cleaner (effective)	0%	0%	0%	0
It will provide value for money (effective)	0%	0%	0%	0
It will reflect the identities and interests of the local community	0%	0%	0%	0

Wootton & East Hunsbury PC – Parish split

- 4.36 Number of responses and free text comments:

	Agreed	Disagreed	Comments
Wootton & East Hunsbury PC Parish split	155	192	109

- 4.37 In addition, a petition of 39 signatures and 1 survey disagreeing with the Wootton & East Hunsbury parish split proposal, arrived after the deadline and are not included in these figures.
- 4.38 Comments received and points raised fell into the following themes:
- In favour
 - Will localise the decision making
 - Parish precept raised will be controlled by those living in the local area and spent in the local area
 - People in East Hunsbury have no connection and a different character with people in Wootton
 - The A45 is a significant barrier between the two communities
 - Wootton has expanded and would now have enough income
 - Against
 - Wootton Fields budget would be cut due to it becoming a smaller parish
 - The split would cost the taxpayers more money
 - It is a good service as it is now
 - Levels of service offered by divided parishes will deteriorate unless precept levels are increased
 - A larger community can speak with a louder more effective voice
 - Split will dilute effectiveness of each, increase costs and make organising large events more difficult
 - Set up costs would be disproportionate to any benefit
 - Large parish has advantages of economies of scale
 - Large parish has capacity/scale to develop innovative schemes
 - A divided parish would be less representative of the diverse communities
 - East Hunsbury would suffer as many community facilities are in Wootton
 - Concerned that arguments for the split are misleading and not substantiated
- 4.39 The responses recorded for the impact of the proposal on the community are as follows (question 4 in survey):

	Agreed	Disagreed	Don't Know	Total Responses
It will improve the way public services are delivered (effective and convenient)	47%	50%	3%	152
It is a good opportunity for residents to influence local decisions (local democracy)	50%	49%	1%	153
It will make the area safer and/or cleaner (effective)	37%	52%	11%	151
It will provide value for money (effective)	45%	52%	3%	153
It will reflect the identities and interests of the local community	49%	50%	1%	153

Upton PC – boundary change

4.40 Number of responses and free text comments:

	Agreed	Disagreed	Comments
Upton PC boundary change	1	0	0

4.41 There were no comments received.

4.42 The responses recorded for the impact of the proposal on the community are as follows (question 4 in survey):

	Agreed	Disagreed	Don't Know	Total Responses
It will improve the way public services are delivered (effective and convenient)	100%	0%	0%	1
It is a good opportunity for residents to influence local decisions (local democracy)	100%	0%	0%	1
It will make the area safer and/or cleaner (effective)	100%	0%	0%	2
It will provide value for money (effective)	100%	0%	0%	1
It will reflect the identities and interests of the local community	100%	0%	0%	2

Other Proposals

4.43 Number of responses and free text comments:

	Agreed	Disagreed	Comments
Other Proposals	2	1	12

4.44 Comments received and points raised fell into the following themes:

- In favour
 - All proposals are beneficial to both the local communities and the Borough generally
 - All parts of Northampton should have a community-level council representing their specific needs and interests (NCALC)
- Against
 - Additional parish councils will be an extra tier of local government, increased bureaucracy
 - Additional resources will be needed to run parish councils which will be difficult in the current climate

4.45 The responses recorded for the impact of the proposal on the community are as follows (question 4 in survey):

	Agreed	Disagreed	Don't Know	Total Responses
It will improve the way public services are delivered (effective and convenient)	60%	40%	0%	5

	Agreed	Disagreed	Don't Know	Total Responses
It is a good opportunity for residents to influence local decisions (local democracy)	80%	20%	0%	5
It will make the area safer and/or cleaner (effective)	80%	20%	0%	5
It will provide value for money (effective)	80%	20%	0%	5
It will reflect the identities and interests of the local community	80%	20%	0%	5

6 EQUALITIES

- 6.1 The Council will consider the results of this consultation to make an informed decision regarding each of the twelve CGR proposals, having due regard to its legal equalities duties.
- 6.2 The process of consultation and the proposals that are approved for implementation will be considered carefully to ensure that their impact is understood and any risks of inequality addressed.
- 6.3 An equality impact analysis and screening was completed at the first stage of the process. There were no adverse impacts identified at that stage in relation to any of the groups with protected characteristics.
- 6.4 Further equality considerations were taken into account throughout the period of the review. Respondents were invited to provide details of any impacts of the proposals in relation to equalities groups and their feedback was captured on the response forms. There were no adverse impacts identified on any of the twelve proposals.
- 6.5 An equality impact analysis at the end of the consultation process is available as **Appendix 2**.

Appendices – Included as Background Papers

Appendix 1 Consultation Survey Responses

Appendix 2 Current Equality Impact Analysis