

Community Governance Review – Final Recommendations for Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Parish Council.

REPORT OF: Head of Regulatory Services
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Wards Affected: Hurstpierpoint & Downs
Key Decision: No
Report to: Council
12 October 2022

Purpose of Report

1. Following completion of two public consultations, and two examinations by the Scrutiny Committee for Community Leisure & Parking (and its predecessor), to present to Council the Final Recommendations of the principal electoral authority.

Recommendations

2. **Council is recommended to:**
 - (i) **To approve the principal electoral authority's final recommendations for Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish Council as set out at paragraphs 23 – 26 of this report to make no changes to the Governance arrangements for Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish at this time.**
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Background

3. This Community Governance Review (CGR) was initiated following a valid petition submitted by the requisite number of local registered electors, pursuant to the provisions of Section 80 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
4. The petition called upon this Council to constitute a new Parish Council for the existing Sayers Common parish ward, to be styled as Sayers Common Parish Council. The names of the petition organisers are publicly promoted, and they are: Sayers Common Village Society (SCVS) and Mr. Seth Jee.
5. At its meeting of 2 February 2022, the Committee advised upon and accepted the Terms of Reference and Guidance for Respondents relating to the CGR. The first public consultation opened on 14 February 2022 and closed on 15 April 2022.
6. Our Guidance for Respondents required consultees, particularly at the first stage, to make qualitative submissions to address the themes explained within the Terms of Reference and/or other matters that we are able consider. We did not consider brief submissions that gave no explanation for support or for opposition to a particular proposition, or that provided nothing for us to consider.
7. The scrutiny committee considered the public responses to the first consultation and the resulting draft recommendations at its meeting of 25 May 2022. The second public consultation opened on 6 June 2022 and closed on 1 August 2022.

8. The second public consultation was specifically regarding our draft recommendations that resulted from the first public consultation, and submissions were mostly confined to those, unless suggesting an entirely different proposition.

Public Engagement relating to the second public consultation

9. At both stages of the Review each eligible elector was sent a letter or an email explaining the considerations of the CGR, and signposting to the consultation material published at the Council's website. This explained how to contribute to the Review. The letter also provided electors with their unique Elector Number, to be quoted with their submission to enable our electoral services team to verify that all individual responses came from registered local government electors of the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Parish Council area.

Timetable

10. Key stages of the Review were as follows:

Action	Date	Outline of Action
Public Consultation 1 Publication of the Review Terms of Reference	14 February 2022	First two-month public & stakeholder consultation
Public Consultation ends	15 April 2022	All representations are examined & considered
Draft proposals considered by Scrutiny Committee (Customer Services & Service Delivery)	25 May 2022	Any additional recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee are recorded and added to the draft proposals
Public Consultation 2	6 June 2022	Second two-month public & stakeholder consultation
Public Consultation ends	1 August 2022	All representations are examined & considered
Final recommendations considered by Scrutiny Committee (Community, Leisure & Parking)	28 September 2022	Scrutiny Committee will consider the CGR final recommendations and make recommendations to Full Council
Final recommendations (as amended, if applicable) are recommended to Full Council for adoption.	12 October 2022	Council is recommended to approve.

Conclusions

11. The Sayers Common Village Society (SCVS) and others appear to understand that support for a separate parish council for Sayers Common comes from those living west of the A23, rather than the entire Sayers Common parish ward, and therefore any such parish council would be for the village of Sayers Common.

12. We understand opinion expressed by some stakeholders that future governance arrangements need to consider the man-made constructs of the A23 and A2300 carriageways, and we note the views of the parish council and district ward members as to with where residents in the Goddards Green area identify, and where they look to for services and amenity.
13. Many respondents noted that early proposals for potential developments to the north and between Sayers Common and Albourne, indicated that a change to governance arrangements for Sayers Common, appears premature.
14. We note the views of several respondents about future housing development in the area and suggestions that the timelines for the MSDC 'District Plan Review 2038' are key to shaping the area and therefore, future governance arrangements.
15. It is acknowledged that developments may not have been materially delivered by 2025 and several respondents questioned whether they would be delivered within the coming decade.
16. The SCVS agrees that there is currently no certainty about the DP Review 2038 additional housing allocations in Sayers Common Village, but they believe there will be that certainty by 2025 and a further community governance review should be undertaken then. Any resulting new Parish would exist from 2027 when the Parish may have the benefit of additional precepts from the new housing. SCVS considers that these additional precepts do improve the viability of a new Parish Council.
17. The principal electoral authority notes that the draft budget supplied by SCVS does explain possible local taxation considerations and expenditure, together with comparisons drawn with other parish councils of a similar size.
18. We note that the new adjacent district wards of 'Downlands Villages' and 'Cuckfield, Bolney and Ansty' created by the LGBCE Electoral Review of MSDC have now the benefit of parliamentary approval and shall take effect in May 2023.
19. There was consensus regarding our findings that in recent years it has proved challenging to attract sufficient elected representatives for Sayers Common from within the parish ward, as it has at times also in Hurstpierpoint parish ward.
20. An evolving sense of distinct community identity in Sayers Common was evident, and it is believed that this may continue to grow over time.
21. Because of our findings detailed within the final recommendation's scrutiny committee report (paras 22 - 25) the principal electoral authority considers that a further CGR in 2029 is likely to be more appropriate given the time it takes to allocate sites and determine planning applications, building to commence, and homes to be occupied. We can, however, consider a review in 2025 if these matters have proceeded at unusual pace.
22. Taking the first and second public consultations fully into account, this Review has concluded that the final recommendations of the principal electoral authority are as follows:

Final Recommendations for Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish Council

23. The current governance arrangements for the parish of Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common are suitable and should continue.

24. This Authority (MSDC) should consider afresh a CGR in 2029 dependent on the progress of any permitted developments affecting Sayers Common and surrounding areas, or later if envisaged developments do not materialise and a consequential rising electorate forecast is not realised.
25. Any future CGR should consider a wider area within the two newly designated adjacent district wards: 'Downlands Villages' and 'Cuckfield, Bolney and Ansty' given that housing development, and electorate rises in these areas may require a wider area to be reviewed.
26. The existing Parish Council size is 15 comprised of 13 Councillors for the Hurstpierpoint Ward and 2 Councillors for the Sayers Common Ward. The current electorate of Hurstpierpoint Parish Ward is 4879 and of Sayers Common Parish Ward is 866. Your officers do not recommend any change to the parish wards or Councillor numbers at the present time.

Policy Context

27. The petition process allows for local views to be considered when considering community representation at Parish Level.

Other Options Considered

28. Your officers considered creating a new parish ward for Goddards Green to meet the identity and amenity considerations which have been mentioned by one elector, the parish Council, and some elected representatives. Whilst a new parish ward would reflect the physical construct of the A23 there would be fewer than 300 electors. The A2300 is a strong physical boundary and this would need to be considered in the context of a future CGR of an expanded area, that was not a subject of this Review.

Financial Implications

29. None.

Risk Management Implications

30. The present parish arrangement has led to sound community governance and there is every reason to expect this should continue, with the existing parish council continuing high quality engagement with all residents of the parish.

Equality and Customer Service Implications

31. All stakeholders and registered electors were consulted at two significant periods of public consultation.

Other Material Implications

32. At the conclusion of any CGR and following adoption in Council, the Council's Legal Services Division would be required to make Community Governance Orders, if there is to be a change. Considering the final recommendations this will not prove necessary.

Sustainability Implications

33. A key aim of any Community Governance Review is to alight upon suitable Governance and Electoral arrangements that are capable of enduring. There is little or no environmental impact.

Background Papers

[CGR webpage where all reference documents, scrutiny committee reports and the complete set of submissions for both public consultation stages are published.](#)

[Government & Local Government Boundary Commission Guidance on Community Governance Reviews.](#)

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