



Report to: General Purposes Committee – 20 March 2025

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Report Summary	
<b>Report Title</b>	Community Governance Review – Newark Town Council
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To consider initial submissions following the first stage of the Community Governance Review of Newark Town Council and to consider Draft Proposals for further public consultation.
<b>Recommendations</b>	That the General Purposes Committee approve the Draft Proposals as set out at Appendix B to the report, for the second and final stage of public consultation.
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	To undertake a community governance review of Newark Town Council to ensure the ward boundaries and electoral arrangements remain effective and convenient for the local community.

## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 In accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 the Council has the responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews.
- 1.2 The boundaries for Newark Town Council were last considered in a similar review in 2017. However, the East Ward (established following the Local Government Boundary Commission for England review of the electoral arrangements for Nottinghamshire County Council in 2017) still has minimal electors with no prospect of significant development ahead of the next scheduled elections in 2027. In addition, the South Ward is continuing to see development growth and therefore an increase in electors.
- 1.3 Following approval of the draft Terms of Reference by the Committee at their meeting held on 12 December 2024 and in accordance with the timetable for the review, the agreed Terms of Reference were published in January 2025 for the first stage consultation. This first stage consultation closed on 18 February 2025 and the responses are set out in **Appendix A** to the report.
- 1.4 In total, 28 responses were received from residents, one parish councillor and Newark Town Council. There was also a response from the County Council, but this advised that they would only comment at the final stage of the public consultation.

- 1.5 In respect of the residents' comments, these were split quite evenly between those which were neutral, reflecting there were no issues with the current governance changes and those who had made specific comments on the current arrangements. Some of the comments made such as widening the Town Council boundaries were outside the scope of the Terms of Reference, whilst others were suggesting specific changes which the Committee are invited to consider.
- 1.6 The representation from Newark Town Council stated that the South Ward should be renamed as Middlebeck, but otherwise a review of the warding arrangements should be deferred given the impending review of local government and a move to large unitary authorities.
- 1.7 The renaming of the South Ward to Middlebeck was also supported in some of the public representations. In respect of the other point to effectively defer the review until after local government re-organisation, this is not considered feasible as the electoral arrangements need to be clarified in advance of the full parish elections which will take place in 2027.

## **2.0 Proposal/Options Considered**

- 2.1 The Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 places a duty on the Council to have regard to the need to secure that any Community Governance Review reflects the identities and any interests of the local community and that it is effective and convenient. Relevant considerations which influence judgements against those two principal criteria include the impact on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of the proposed area.
- 2.2 There is a clear rationale for renaming the South Ward Middlebeck. This reflects the addressing of properties in this Ward and residents will instinctively relate to this. Whilst the Town Council does not consider any further review is required, it is still necessary to formalise the arrangements for the East Ward and to address some of the elector ratios ahead of the elections which will take place in 2027.
- 2.3 Some of the stage one representations do suggest changes to some arrangements and it is proposed in the Draft Recommendations to address the current elector ratios by reallocating one Member to Magnus Ward from Beacon Ward and to recommend that the East Ward, whilst the polling district will be maintained (due to District Council Ward boundaries), should be merged within the Beacon Ward.
- 2.4 If those recommendations were to be implemented this would address some of the inequalities in elector ratios (based on the Register of Electors published on 1 December and used for the Terms of Reference) as illustrated in the table here.

<b>Current Arrangements</b>			<b>Proposed Arrangements</b>		
<b>Ward</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Ratio to Electors</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Ratio to Electors</b>
Beacon	5	1:987	Beacon	4	1:1,234
Bridge	3	1:1,281	Bridge	3	1:1,281
Castle	2	1:1,343	Castle	2	1:1,343
Devon	5	1:1,318	Devon	5	1:1,318

Magnus	1	1:1,973	Magnus	2	1:987
Sleaford	1	1:1,013	Sleaford	1	1:1,013
South	1	1:1,006	Middlebeck	1	1:1,006

2.5 The Draft Recommendations are attached as **Appendix B** to the report.

### **3.0 Implications**

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

#### **Legal Implications (LEG2425/8220)**

3.1 The review proposed, takes into account the Local Government Boundary Commission for England Guidance on Community Governance Reviews. The review provides for a transparent and accessible consultation process, for a reasonable period, to ensure that the views of local electors and other stakeholders are fully considered.

3.2 The General Purposes Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

#### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Report to General Purposes on 12 December 2024

Terms of Reference for the Review