

## **CGR\_G**

### **Parishes Affected**

Uffington

### **Matter to be considered**

Increasing the number of parish councillors from six to seven

### **Impact on district and county council boundaries**

None

### **Summary of parish council responses**

Uffington Parish Council put forward the request.

### **Summary of other responses**

No responses were received during the initial engagement.

### **Recommendation**

To consult on a proposal to increase the number of councillors for Uffington Parish Council to seven.

### **Justification for recommendation**

When considering the number of councillors to be elected for a parish the council must have regard to the number of local government electors for the parish and any change to that number that is likely to occur within five years. The number of registered electors for the parish of Uffington is currently 643 and is not expected to increase a great deal over the next five years.

Joint guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in 2010 provides further information on community governance reviews and the factors influencing size and membership of parish councils. On size, the guidance says:

“154. In practice, there is a wide variation of council size between parish councils. That variation appears to be influenced by population. Research by the Aston Business School Parish and Town Councils in England (HMSO, 1992), found that the typical parish council representing less than 500 people had between five and eight

councillors; those between 501 and 2,500 had six to 12 councillors; and those between 2,501 and 10,000 had nine to 16 councillors. Most parish councils with a population of between 10,001 and 20,000 had between 13 and 27 councillors, while almost all councils representing a population of over 20,000 had between 13 and 31 councillors.

155. The LGBCE has no reason to believe that this pattern of council size to population has altered significantly since the research was conducted. Although not an exact match, it broadly reflects the council size range set out in the National Association of Local Councils Circular 1126; the Circular suggested that the minimum number of councillors for any parish should be seven and the maximum 25.

156. In considering the issue of council size, the LGBCE is of the view that each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and the pattern of communities. Nevertheless, having regard to the current powers of parish councils, it should consider the broad pattern of existing council sizes. This pattern appears to have stood the test of time and, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, to have provided for effective and convenient local government.

157. Principal councils should also bear in mind that the conduct of parish council business does not usually require a large body of councillors. In addition, historically many parish councils, particularly smaller ones, have found difficulty in attracting sufficient candidates to stand for election. This has led to uncontested elections and/or a need to co-opt members in order to fill vacancies. However, a parish council's budget and planned or actual level of service provision may also be important factors in reaching conclusions on council size."

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Circular 1126 recommends:

Electors	Councillors	Electors	Councillors
Up to 900	7	10,400	17
1,400	8	11,900	18
2,000	9	13,500	19
2,700	10	15,200	20
3,500	11	17,000	21
4,400	12	18,900	22
5,400	13	20,900	23
6,500	14	23,000	24
7,700	15	45,000	25
9,000	16		

The table above suggests a parish council consisting of up to 900 electors should have seven councillors.

Both the parish council elections in 2011 and 2015 were contested with those in 2019 being uncontested.

This council has applied the NALC guidance when considering requests to increase councillor numbers unless there are exceptional circumstances. The NALC recommends that the minimum number of members of a parish council should be seven, and that this number should apply to all councils with an electorate up to 900. In respect of Uffington Parish Council's request a council size of seven councillors is reasonable.