



## **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE (PARISH COUNCIL) REVIEW REPORT**

**Parishes of:**

Denby Dale Parish Council  
Holme Valley Parish Council  
Kirkburton Parish Council  
Meltham Town Council  
Mirfield Town Council

**June 2009**

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## **SECTION 1 - RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **Aim of the review**

The aim of the review is to ensure that parish councils' arrangements are relevant to local communities; with the objective of improving democratic arrangements and increasing opportunities for people to get involved at a local level.

Government guidance makes clear that the key factors for consideration are that community governance arrangements reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area **and** are effective and convenient. It is acknowledged that there can be a degree of tension between these two overarching objectives.

This report provides an analysis of the issues, having regard to:

- Issues raised through the public consultation
- Knowledge of the existing community governance 'landscape' in Kirklees.
- A range of factors the Council is required to give consideration to by virtue of statutory government guidance

### **The Council's reasons for undertaking the review**

Government guidance recommends that principal councils consider on a regular basis whether a review of community governance arrangements is needed. It states that principal councils should exercise their discretion, but it would be good practice to consider conducting a review every 10-15 years. In Kirklees no formal review has been undertaken since the establishment of the first parish councils in 1974.

In September 2006 a petition was submitted to Council requesting a review of local governance arrangements in the Denby Dale parish area. The petition was referred by Council to Cabinet for consideration.

At its meeting on 24 January 2007, Cabinet was advised that the petition did not meet statutory requirements which would have obliged the council to initiate a review. However, Cabinet agreed in principle to carrying out a review of parish arrangements once the outcomes of anticipated changes to relevant legislation and guidance were known. (The requirements relating to parish reviews were at the time subject to proposed change within the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill).

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 delegated powers previously exercisable by the Secretary of State to councils. This gave principal councils full responsibility not only for undertaking community governance reviews but also to decide whether to give effect to the recommendations made in those reviews.

Under the new legislation, decision making in relation to parish reviews (now called community governance reviews) cannot be a cabinet function. In Kirklees, it is now the responsibility of Council to determine the outcome of reviews, but the power to initiate a review and to agree the reviews terms of reference was delegated by Council to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.

In August 2008 the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee agreed to initiate a community governance review focussed on the five currently parished areas.

## **Definition of Terms**

Within this document the following terms appear:

- Parish Council - a local authority operating at civil parish level. For the purpose of this review this includes Town Councils.
- Principal Council – a local authority operating at a county, unitary or district level. For the purpose of this review, Kirklees Council is the principal council.

## **Terms of Reference**

That a community governance (parish) review be undertaken by Kirklees Council under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

The review will have regard to the legislative requirements and associated government guidance and will be conducted in accordance with these terms of reference.

The review will focus on those areas of Kirklees which are currently parished and relevant adjoining land, namely:

- Denby Dale Parish Council
- Holme Valley Parish Council
- Kirkburton Parish Council
- Meltham Town Council and
- Mirfield Town Council.

The review will seek to assess the degree to which community governance in the areas under review:

- reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area; and
- is effective and convenient

... and make recommendations with regard to:

- Creating, merging or abolishing parishes
- The naming of parishes
- The electoral arrangements for parishes; and
- Grouping of parishes

The review will invite and take account of submissions from all interested parties.

## **What is not being reviewed?**

The following are not covered in this review:

- The boundaries of UK parliamentary constituencies,
- The boundaries and names of Kirklees Council wards
- Non parished areas

## **What is a Parish Council?**

Parish councils are the most local level of elected local government. They represent the interests of a particular community and are statutory bodies.

Members are elected for a term of four years. The role of parish councillor is an unpaid position. Parish councils are funded principally by an annual precept and are governed by statute. Parish and town councils can apply for other funding such as grant and funding awards, but they do not receive funds directly from central government, as principal authorities do. An individual member of a parish or town has no statutory authority on his/her own. The power of the council comes from the majority of councillors together acting as a whole. The main role of a parish councillor is to speak on behalf of people in the parish and to take part in decisions which are required to be made by the council. Many parish and town councils are involved in planning, promoting tourism, licensing, community halls, representation and management of town and village centres.

Hazel Blears, when Communities Secretary, announced a new era of “parish power” with the publication of the white paper, Real People – Real Power. The paper highlighted proposals designed to reinvigorate local democracy and devolve power to parish councils. Recent legislation extended the “wellbeing” power - which was previously only applicable to principal councils - to parish councils (subject to parish councils meeting certain criteria). This has the potential to shift more power locally enabling parish councils to more freely make decisions, as long as they are in their community’s interest and promote the wellbeing of its area.

## **The community governance picture in Kirklees**

Kirklees Council recognises the importance of local democracy and local involvement. Parish councils are a key element in the community governance picture in terms of community empowerment at the most local democratic level, potentially more responsive to deliver certain services, and representing the community’s interest.

Kirklees Council also operates an area committee structure, 12 committees that cover the whole of the district. Area committees have devolved powers to spend funding allocated to them by Cabinet on local projects – for commissioning services in their area and some give grants to groups for community activities. All Kirklees councillors are members of the area committee which covers the ward they represent. Some area committees cover a single ward (having 3 ward members) and some cover more than one ward (having up to 12 members). The area committees work with communities and partners to put together, and progress, local action plans to address issues and play a role in holding services to account. Some area committees have decided to have co-opted members, who are members of the public or represent local organisations. Co-opted members don't have voting rights on devolved powers i.e. on decisions to spend area committee funding.

In wards where there is a parish or town council, the parish councils are able to nominate representatives on the committees, and some parish councils have done so. Like the co-opted members they don't have any voting rights on devolved powers i.e. on decisions to spend area committee funding.

Parish councils and area committees play a key role in giving local people a voice in their local areas.

Recently Kirklees Council introduced locality planning arrangements which provide local intelligence to support the Council and its partners service planning and informing change to service delivery.

### **What is meant by the term 'community governance'?**

The term 'community governance' is used to describe the variety of ways in which local communities are able to take more responsibilities for local issues affecting their area. A key aspect of community governance is community empowerment, and the ability of local people and organisations to see through specific projects to tackle local issues.

In parished areas, both the principal council and the parish council have a formal democratic role in terms of community governance. However, a variety of different structures and organisations can also contribute to community governance at a local level - including, for example, local residents' associations and community or neighbourhood forums, all of which make a distinct contribution to the community.

The review of parish arrangements needs to take into account all current and any future plans for community governance in making recommendations about parish arrangements.

### **Issues considered in the Community Governance (Parish) Review**

The following are summarised extracts from the Department for Communities and Local Government guidance on community governance reviews. The full guidance is available from the Communities and Local Government website.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/communitygovernancereviews>

#### Parish Boundaries

It is desirable that parish boundaries are readily identifiable by permanent features e.g. watercourses, major roads or railway lines. Whatever boundaries are selected they need to be, and likely to remain, easily identifiable.

#### Potential population and housing growth

Within the information provided to assist residents to make a submission were predicted population growth forecasts which take into consideration any planning developments within the area of the review for a period of five years from October 2008. This was to ensure submissions do not simply reflect a single moment but take account of expected population movements in the short to medium term.

#### Council size

Council size is the term used to describe the number of parish councillors to be elected to the whole parish council. The Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) specifies each parish council must have at least five parish councillors; there is no maximum number. There are no rules relating to the allocation of those councillors between parish wards but each parish ward must have at least one parish councillor.

In considering the issue of parish council size each area should be considered on its own merits having regard to its historical picture, population, geography and the pattern of communities.

### Parish warding

Parish warding is the division of a parish into wards for the purpose of electing parish councillors, including the number and boundaries of any wards, the number of councillors to be elected for any ward and the names of wards.

In considering whether or not a parish should be divided into wards, the legislation requires that consideration be given to whether:

- a) The number, or distribution of the local government electors for the parish would make a single election of parish councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
- b) It is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented.

There is a need to consider not only the size of the electorate in the area but also the distribution of communities within in it.

When contemplating parish ward boundaries there is a need to ensure that consideration is given as to the desirability of fixing of boundaries which are, and will remain, easily identifiable, as well as taking into account any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.

### Names of Parish wards

In considering the names of parish wards, thought should be given to existing local or historic places so that, where appropriate, these are reflected.

### The number of parish councillors to be elected for parish wards

If it is proposed that a parish should be warded, consideration should be given to the levels of representation between each ward i.e. the number of parish councillors to be elected for each ward and the number of electors they represent.

It is not in the interests of effective and convenient local government, either for voters or parish councillors, to have significant differences in levels of representation between different parish wards.

### Ordinary year of election

Ordinary parish elections are held once every four years with all parish councillors being elected at the same time. The standard parish electoral cycle is for elections in 2011 and every four years thereafter.

New or revised parish electoral arrangements come into force at ordinary parish elections, rather than at parish by-elections, so they usually have to wait until the next scheduled parish elections. For Kirklees this is 5 May 2011.

### Parish names and alternative styles for parishes

Prior to the 2007 Act, a parish could be given the status of a town under the Local Government Act 1972. "Town" status continues to be available to a parish. In addition, the 2007 Act offers a further choice of alternative styles for a parish: community, neighbourhood and village. However, for as long as the parish has an alternative style, it will not also be able to have the status of a town and vice versa.

The 'name' of a parish refers to the geographical name of the area concerned, whereas its status or 'style' allows for that area to be known as a town, community, neighbourhood or village, rather than as a parish. The status or style of the parish will be reflected in the name of any council of the parish, the parish meeting, and the chairman or vice-chairman of the parish meeting or of any parish council. So, for example, the council of a parish which uses the style 'village' will be known as the 'village council' and its councillors as the 'village councillors', etc.

So far as existing parishes under review are concerned, the review must make recommendations as to whether the geographical name of the parish should be changed, but it may not make any recommendations for the parish about alternative style. It will be for the parish council or parish meeting to resolve whether the parish should have one of the alternative styles.

#### Recommendations and decisions on the outcome of the Community Governance Review

In relation to a Community Governance Review, Kirklees Council must make recommendations as to:

- Whether a new parish or any new parishes should be constituted;
- Whether existing parishes should or should not be abolished or whether the area of existing parishes should be altered; or
- What the electoral arrangements for new or existing parishes, which are to have parish councils, should be.

It may also make recommendations concerning:

- The grouping or degrouping of parishes; or
- Making related alterations to the boundaries of its own electoral areas.

In deciding what recommendations to make the principal council must have regard to the need to secure that community governance reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area **and** is effective and convenient.

In making its recommendations Kirklees Council will consider the information it has received in the form of submissions of local opinion on the matters considered by the review, representations made by local people and other interested persons, and also use its own knowledge of the local area.

#### **The review process and timescales**

The community governance (parish review) involved two distinct phases of public consultation.

- Stage 1 – A general opportunity to make representations relevant to the terms of reference (06 October 2008 - 28 November 2008)
- Stage 2 – A more focused consultation on specific proposals (16 February 2009 - 08 May 2009)

A public notice initiating the review was published on 6 October 2008. This started an initial consultation period of 8 weeks, during which people were invited to submit evidence based

comments and proposals about current parish arrangements, in line with the terms of reference.

The first stage of the consultation closed on 28 November 2008. The public representations received were considered by the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee in January 2009, and refined into a number of proposed options for each parished area. These options were subject to a further period of public consultation between 16 February 2009 and 08 May 2009.

### **Methodology for phase 2 consultation**

Following the phase 1 consultation and analysis report, parish and town Councils received a presentation from the Council's Policy Manager outlining the findings, proposed options and the next steps for the phase 2 consultation.

Details of the phase 2 consultation process were discussed and devised with the project team.

Over the 12 week consultation period, information was made available in a number of ways in order to raise awareness of the review and encourage local residents and community groups to respond.

A range of promotional material was developed to publicise the consultation (5000 flyers, 200 posters, 7 banners, 2300 questionnaires).

Questionnaires outlining the proposed options for each Parish/Town Council were developed specifying the Council's preferred option.

The public was given the opportunity to comment on the specific proposals via the Kirklees website or to return a feedback form in the freepost. Accompanying information included a map for each of the options.

Residents potentially directly affected by minor boundary changes were sent a letter and a questionnaire inviting them to comment; in Thurstonland (35), Blackmoorfoot (32), South Crosland (10) and Whitley Willows (29). All councillors, MPs, MEPs, community organisations and individuals who responded to the phase one consultation were also received a letter and a questionnaire.

All Kirklees libraries in the parish council areas publicised the review with banners and maps on display and feedback forms available. Comments on the phase one consultation were available to view at the Huddersfield library along with the maps and feedback forms for all five areas.

Flyers and posters publicising the review were on display in Council buildings (sports halls, cash offices, museums), sent to all local schools, post offices and businesses, and put on local community notice boards.

Publicity included press releases and articles in Kirklees Together magazine (January, March and April editions) and parish council websites and newsletters. There were articles on the Kirkburton proposals in community newsletters for Shepley, Shelley (with feedback forms),

Flockton, Highburton/ Kirkburton (Burton Bulletin), Kirkheaton, Lepton and on the community websites of Thurstonland and Farnley Tyas.

In Denby Dale area information on the Denby Dale proposals appeared on the Cumberworth community website, and newsletters in Emley and Birdsedge. Scissett Middle School publicised the review and circulated forms with its community newsletter. In Birdsedge, Upper Denby and High Flatts forms were distributed via the community action group.

In Holme Valley South, press releases were sent to The Echo.

The review was also publicised at local area committee public meetings during this period and the opportunity was taken to inform residents, on a one to one basis, of the proposals at the Local Development Framework drop in events in each parish council area. In Meltham where a drop in LDF event was not held an officer attended the parents evening at Meltham Moor School and Morrisons supermarket on a drop in basis.

A Kirklees intranet poll was used to firstly find out how aware Council employees are of the parish councils and the review, and secondly to direct them onto the Community Governance web pages. The question asked was: Do you live in a Kirklees Parish or Town Council area? 45% Yes, 42% No, 13% Don't Know.

A couple of features to attract wider awareness with the public were placed on Kirklees Internet homepage over the 12 week period.

## SECTION 2 - REPORT AND ANALYSIS

This section provides an analysis of the issues for each parish council area and a summary of common or cross cutting themes. The analysis takes account of the feedback provided through both stages of the public consultation, but a more detailed description of the responses received to the first stage of the consultation is contained in the summary and analysis report published in January 2009<sup>1</sup>.

### DENBY DALE PARISH AREA

Ward	Electorate	Population	No. of Councillors
Clayton West	2,440	3,100	4
Denby and Cumberworth	4,261	5,160	6
Emley	1,513	1,930	4
Skelmanthorpe	4,170	5,150	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,384</b>	<b>15,340</b>	<b>20</b>

In the first stage of the consultation 31 initial representations were received about Denby Dale. Key issues from the first stage of the consultation were:

- A polarisation of views in relation to the size and boundaries of the parish council between those in favour of retaining the status quo and those supportive of disestablishing the current parish council and replacing it with smaller parish councils.
- Concerns centred in particular on certain villages within the parish boundary, namely Upper Denby, Birdsedge and High Flatts.
- Confusion as to the respective roles and functions of the parish council and Kirklees Council's Denby Dale Area Committee

The representations received included suggestions for future structural arrangements for the parish area. These suggestions were expressed as the following options on which public views were sought via the second stage of the consultation:

Option 1 - no change to the existing parish arrangements for Denby Dale Parish Council.

See map - Denby Dale Civil Parish – Option 1 (no change)

Option 2 - the dissolution of the existing Denby Dale Parish council and the establishment of two parish councils in its place:

- One parish council to be established for Upper and Lower Denby, Birdsedge and High Flatts - by creating a parish comprising DD3 and DD4 (with possible minor boundary alterations) (901 electors) and;
- a second parish consisting of the remainder of the existing Denby Dale Parish Council area.

See map - Denby Dale Civil Parish – Option 2: creation of two new parish councils

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<sup>1</sup> Report to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee - 29<sup>th</sup> January 2009.

Option 3 - the dissolution of the existing Denby Dale Parish Council and the establishment of six separate parishes comprising:

- Clayton West (DD1) – existing parish ward (2416 electors)
- Emley (DD7, DD8) – existing parish ward (1475 electors)
- Skelmanthorpe (DD9, DD10, DD11) – existing parish ward (4185 electors)
- Denby Dale (DD5) (2274 electors)
- Upper & Lower Cumberworth (DD2, DD6) (1000 electors)
- Upper & Lower Denby, Birdsedge & High Flatts (DD3, DD4) (901 electors)

See map - Denby Dale Civil Parish – Option 3: creation of six new parish councils

Respondents' preferences for the different options are shown in the table below:

<b>Denby Dale Summary - stage 2</b>	
Total number of responses received	86
Number of responses from individuals	77
Number of responses from groups	9
<b>Preferred option:</b>	
Option 1	40
Option 2	6
Option 3	37
Preferred option not stated	3

Key themes from the second stage of the consultation include:

- The responses continue to express a polarisation of opinion between those in favour of maintaining the current boundaries and those in favour of splitting the area into smaller parishes
- A variety of different and contrasting opinions about what natural community identity means in reality, with some respondents arguing that even the much smaller parish councils proposed in option 3 do not necessarily reflect natural communities in practice
- A perception that current administrative costs are too high
- Different perspectives on what impact smaller councils would have in relation to administrative costs; but an underlying desire to avoid any change which would result in increased bureaucracy and administrative costs.
- Concerns from some residents about the current parish council's ability to engage effectively with communities and the degree to which its activities are effectively councillor led.

## **Analysis**

In relation to the size and boundaries of the parish council there is a very clear polarisation of views, expressed both in the initial submissions and the second consultation.

Denby Dale Parish Council was created in December 1973 along the same boundaries as the previous Denby Dale Urban District Council, with its four wards reflecting the earlier

boundaries of the four urban district councils (previously boards) of Clayton West, Denby and Cumberworth, Emley and Skelmanthorpe. The geography of the parish, in terms of the sense of a shared community interest, does therefore have a firm historical rooting. However, sense of community identity is a subjective issue, and many people do feel closer identity to their village or local neighbourhood.

Some respondents took the view that the parish is too large to represent a natural community identity and are supportive of dividing the area into several smaller, more distinct parishes. Others, including the current parish council, argue strongly that existing parish boundaries should remain unchanged. Many of these respondents recognised the achievements of the current parish council and considered it a strength that the council has the size and resources to represent issues pertinent to all villages.

Government guidance suggests that parishes should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity; and makes clear that the feelings of local community and the wishes of local inhabitants are the primary consideration in this regard. There is, however, no prescribed approach and what is appropriate for one community may not be so for another.

The impact of parish arrangements on community cohesion is another principal factor which must be taken into consideration. The impact on community cohesion is linked strongly to the degree to which community governance arrangements reflect the identity and interests of local communities; and reflect and are sufficiently representative of people living across the whole community and not just a discrete cross-section or small part of it.

Nationally, the size and population of parish councils vary enormously - from those representing small hamlets of around 50 people to parishes with well over 40,000 electors' although most parishes are below 12,000 in population. Guidance does make clear, however, that size should be viable as an administrative unit of local government.

Parish councils need to be convenient enough to be easy to reach and accessible to local people, but also need to be able to deliver quality services economically and efficiently. While in parishes of between 151 and 999 electors there is no requirement to have a parish council (the principal council can recommend a parish meeting as an alternative), in general terms the smaller the parish, the greater the likelihood of a higher percentage of the precept being needed for administration. There is therefore, a very real tension between size and efficiency.

The significance of this tension depends in part on the aspiration and vision of the parish council and the communities it serves, and their ambition for the future. For example, whether the parish council envisages playing a more significant role in terms of service delivery. A parish should, as a minimum, be in a position to provide some basic services and many larger parishes will be able to offer much more to their communities. Arguably, larger parishes are better placed to make the most of the expansion of powers offered to eligible parish councils under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, in terms of the extension of "wellbeing powers". Denby Dale Parish Council, in its submission to the second consultation, clarified its intention to meet the criteria required for it to be eligible to exercise wellbeing powers, and expressed the view that smaller parishes would not have the resources or capacity to do so.

National research would seem to support this proposition - larger councils are more likely to be accredited under the Quality Councils scheme. More than one third of councils representing populations of greater than 20,000 and over a quarter of councils representing populations of greater than 10,000 have Quality Status, compared with less than 3% of councils representing populations of under 5,000<sup>2</sup>.

In Kirklees, Denby Dale is the second smallest of the parish councils in terms of number of electorate, so is not unusually large in the local context, although nationally 80% of parish councils represent communities of fewer than 2,500 electors.

In our initial analysis of the results of the first consultation, we indicated a preference towards maintaining the current boundaries on the basis that:

- There is a tension between size and efficiency and the smaller parishes suggested in options 2 and 3 would likely need to devote a greater proportion of their precept to administration costs.
- Existing democratic mechanisms could be better used to address concerns regarding representation

However, it was felt appropriate to test this rationale through the second consultation, and to seek views on the suggestions which had been put forward. Responses to the second consultation show that opinion is divided and reinforces the issue that residents in a particular part of the parish feel disengaged under current arrangements. This is not, however, reflected to anything like the same degree in other areas of the parish, and is therefore suggestive of a quite localised issue.

It also needs to be noted that the overall response to the consultation is a small percentage of the Denby Dale Parish Council electorate. On that basis there does not appear to be a significant mandate for major structural reform, and it would suggest that measures to tackle the specific concerns of residents in Upper Denby, Birdsedge and High Flatts might be more appropriate than wholesale dissolution and establishment of new parish councils. The fact that there are active community and neighbourhood groups within this area, and other villages in the parish, is a resource which should be welcomed and supported through positive relationship building with the parish council. This local engagement is vital as well as the important role in representing the shared and common interests of communities from across the parish council area.

The overall picture seems to be that a relatively small number of people who have been directly engaged with the parish council have very polarised views about its effectiveness and impact. This could suggest for the parish council, that it needs to think more creatively about its impact and engagement with communities generally, as well as working with stakeholders and residents to build more effective engagement and relationships with residents in Upper Denby, Birdsedge and High Flatts.

A key theme identified in the initial consultation was that there is confusion about the respective roles and functions of the parish council and Kirklees Council's Denby Dale Area Committee; and about the difference between the roles of parish councillors and Kirklees ward councillors. This suggests a collective need to work for greater clarity and to improve

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<sup>2</sup> Research study of the Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme, DEFRA, 2006

how this information is communicated effectively to residents at a local level. This theme is not unique to the Denby Dale area, being also reflected in the submissions for other parishes, and so is also dealt with in the later section of this report that deals with general or cross cutting comments and suggestions. In the Denby Dale context it is relevant to the extent that there is even greater need for clarity and effective communication where the parish council's administrative area is exactly the same as the area committee's (as is the case in Denby Dale).

**Suggested recommendation for Denby Dale parish area:**

That Council consider approving: Option 1 - no change to existing parish arrangements

**HOLME VALLEY PARISH AREA**

Ward	Electorate	Population	No. of Councillors
Brockholes	1,354	1,750	1
Fulstone	1,546	2,010	2
Hepworth	840	1,020	1
Holmfirth Central	1,723	2,400	2
Honley Central and East	2,225	2,840	3
Honley South	1,180	1,410	1
Honley West	1,567	2,040	2
Netherthong	1,697	2,100	2
Scholes	1,851	2,370	2
Upper Holme Valley	1,777	2,240	2
Upperthong	2,055	2,500	2
Wooldale	2,720	3,570	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,535</b>	<b>26,250</b>	<b>23</b>

In the first stage of the consultation 23 initial representations were received about Holme Valley. Key issues from the first stage of the consultation were:

- Most respondents expressed satisfaction with their parish council.
- Some concerns were expressed in relation to financial efficiency
- Representations were received that the village of Thurstonland should be placed wholly within the Kirkburton Parish Council area.

The options put forward for the second stage of public consultation were:

Option 1 - no change to the existing parish arrangements for Holme Valley Parish Council

See map - Holme Valley Civil Parish - option 1 – no change

Option 2 (PREFERRED OPTION) - redrawing of the boundary to transfer the existing part of Thurstonland village that is within the Holme Valley Parish Council area to Kirkburton Parish Council.

See maps - Holme Valley Civil Parish - option 2 – minor boundary change  
 - Holme Valley Civil Parish - option 2 – Thurstonland minor boundary change  
 (enlarged)

Respondents' preferences for the different options are shown in the table below:

<b>Holme Valley Summary - stage 2</b>	
Total number of responses received	43
Number of responses from individuals	35
Number of responses from groups	8
<b>Preferred option:</b>	
Option 1	9
Option 2	29
Preferred option not stated	5

Key themes from the second stage of the consultation include:

- Most respondents supportive of the proposed boundary changes
- Some concerns over high administration costs
- Some concerns that the parish councils engagement with the community is currently limited
- A small number of respondents indicating that they would wish the parish council to be disestablished

## Analysis

The majority of respondents to the first stage of the consultation expressed satisfaction with their parish council. However, concerns were expressed in relation to its financial efficiency. One respondent went so far as to suggest that the parish council should be abolished because of this perceived inefficiency. This view was echoed in a small number of responses to the second consultation. There was an underlying perception that the parish council needs to better demonstrate its impact and engagement with the community.

Government guidance makes clear that it would be undesirable to see existing parishes abolished with the area becoming un-parished with no community governance arrangements in place; and that this would only be justified in very exceptional circumstances. Historically, a factor taken into account in deciding abolition cases has been that local support for abolition should have been demonstrated over at least a period equivalent to two terms of office of parish councillors (i.e. 8 years) and that such support was sufficiently informed. We do not believe this to be the case in relation to Holme Valley Parish Council and, given the strong support for the parish council from many of the respondents, this was not considered appropriate to put forward as an option for consultation.

That does not however, undermine the validity of the concerns expressed around efficiency; and no doubt this is an issue that the parish council and the communities it serves will want to consider further. Central to this are the aspiration and vision of the parish council - their perspective as to value added from the parish council's precept income, the potential to utilise the potential new wellbeing powers and to further develop its role in terms of service delivery.

However, these issues would not, in our view, be supported by significant changes to structure such as splitting into smaller parishes or merging with existing parishes.

The majority of respondents to the second consultation were supportive of the proposal to transfer the small part of Thurstonland village which is currently in the Holme Valley Parish Council area to the Kirkburton Parish Council Area. This would mean moving a small number of electors (76) between the two parishes and consequently redrawing the boundary between the district council wards of Holme Valley North and Kirkburton. This alteration would, therefore, be subject to approval from the Electoral Commission, but given the small number of electors affected it is not considered likely that such a request would be refused. This change has no impact on parliamentary constituency boundaries.

The vast majority of respondents from Thurstonland agreed that it made sense for the whole village to be in the same administrative area, and felt that this would enable better engagement and representation from parish councillors, and lead to a more cohesive sense of community. It is clear from the responses to both stages of the consultation that the residents in Thurstonland have a shared sense of community identity, so it is appropriate for all the residents to be represented by a single parish council. Some did express a view though, that the entire village should be within the Holme Valley parish area rather than Kirkburton. This option was not specifically consulted upon as no representations to this effect were received in the first stage. However, the majority view - including that of the Thurstonland Village Association - was supportive of Thurstonland being within Kirkburton Parish Council. The move in that direction would certainly affect the least number of electors.

**Suggested recommendation for Holme Valley parish area:**

That Council consider approving: Option 2 - redrawing of the boundary to transfer the existing part of Thurstonland village that is within the Holme Valley Parish Council area to Kirkburton Parish Council

And redraw the boundary between Holme Valley North ward and Kirkburton ward subject to consequential approval from the Electoral Commission to alter the Kirklees ward boundary

**KIRKBURTON PARISH AREA**

Ward	Electorate	Population	No. of Councillors
Flockton	1,172	1,450	2
Kirkburton	3,410	3,940	5
Kirkheaton	3,109	4,100	4
Lepton	4,306	5,130	5
Lepton and Whitely Upper	1,463	1,820	2
Shelley	2,332	3,130	2
Shepley	2,123	2,770	3
Thurstonland and Farnley Tyas	2,431	2,680	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,346</b>	<b>25,020</b>	<b>25</b>

In the first stage of the consultation 14 initial representations were received about Kirkburton. Key issues from the first stage of the consultation were:

- Most respondents were positive with regards to the contribution the parish council makes

- Some concerns over efficiency and value for money
- Representations were received that the village of Thurstonland should be placed wholly within the Kirkburton Parish Council area.
- A proposal to alter the ward boundary between Lepton and Lepton and Whitley Upper to ensure that ward boundaries continue to reflect natural communities.
- Proposal to revise the levels of councillor representation between different parish wards as some respondents felt their area to be disadvantaged as a result of disparities in levels of councillor representation relative to number of electors.
- A proposal (not supported in the initial analysis) to create a separate parish council for Shelley
- A proposal to disestablish the existing parish council and replace it with two new parish councils - one covering the current parish council wards of Shelley, Kirkburton, Shepley and Thurstonland & Farnley Tyas and a second parish covering the current parish council wards of Kirkheaton, Lepton, Lepton & Whitley Upper and Flockton
- Issues relating to Shelley Village Hall, with views expressed that this asset could be better managed for the benefit of residents of the whole parish

The options put forward for the second stage of public consultation were:

Option 1 - no change to the existing parish boundaries for Kirkburton Parish Council

See map - Kirkburton Civil Parish – Option 1 – no change

Option 2 - revise the councillor representation per ward to:

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Proposed no. of councillors</b>
Flockton	1
Kirkburton	4
Kirkheaton	4
Lepton	5
Lepton & Whitley Upper	2
Shelley	3
Shepley	3
Thurstonland and Farnley Tyas	3

See map – Kirkburton Civil Parish – Options 2 and 5 – minor boundary changes, revised numbers of councillors per ward

Option 3 - the dissolution of the existing Kirkburton Parish Council and the establishment of two parish councils in its place:

- one parish council to be established covering the current parish council wards of Shelley, Kirkburton, Shepley and Thurstonland & Farnley Tyas
- a second parish consisting of the remainder of the existing Kirkburton Parish Council area, i.e. covering the current parish council wards of Kirkheaton, Lepton, Lepton & Whitley Upper and Flockton

See map - Kirkburton Civil Parish – options 3 and 5: creation of two parish councils and minor boundary changes

Option 4 (not supported) - the dissolution of the existing Kirkburton Parish council and the establishment of two parish councils in its place:

- one parish council to be established (Shelley Parish Council) covering the current parish council ward of Shelley
- a second parish consisting of the remainder of the existing Kirkburton Parish Council area.

See map – Kirkburton Civil Parish – options 4 and 5: creation of two parish councils and minor boundary changes

Views were also sought on the following proposed minor boundary changes:

- transfer the existing part of Thurstonland village that is within the Holme Valley Parish Council area to Kirkburton Parish Council.
- alter the ward boundary between Lepton and Lepton & Whitley Upper

See maps - Kirkburton Civil Parish – Option 5a – Thurstonland minor boundary change (enlarged)  
- Kirkburton Civil Parish – Option 5b – Whitley Willows minor boundary changes (enlarged)  
- Kirkburton Civil Parish – Options 5c – St. John’s Church car park minor boundary changes (enlarged)

Respondents’ preferences for the different options are shown in the table below:

<b>Kirkburton Summary - stage 2</b>	
Total number of responses received	65
Number of responses from individuals	62
Number of responses from groups	3
<b>Preferred option:</b>	
Option 1	4
Option 2	24*
Option 3	38
Option 4	1
Preferred option not stated	6

\*of which 13 also supported option 3 and are shown in the figures for Option 3

Key themes from the second stage of the consultation were:

- Majority support for Option 3, which would see the disestablishment of the current parish council and creation of two new parish councils in its place
- A significant view that there is an imbalance in current levels of councillor representation

- Support for the proposed minor boundary changes
- Some concerns expressed over efficiency and value for money, and that administration costs are too high in relation to overall expenditure

## Analysis

In the first stage of the consultation process, representation was received to the effect that the current parish council is too large to effectively represent all of its constituent villages, and that there are tensions between the competing interests of different communities within the parish council area. It was suggested that this issue could be addressed by splitting the current parish council area to create two new parishes - one covering the current parish council wards of Shelley, Kirkburton, Shepley and Thurstonland & Farnley Tyas and a second parish covering the current parish council wards of Kirkheaton, Lepton, Lepton & Whitley Upper and Flockton

This option (option 3) was supported by a majority of the respondents to the second stage of the consultation, with few respondents in favour of retaining the status quo, although the overall level of response represented only a tiny fraction of the electorate in this parish council area.

Kirkburton Parish Council's view is that the size and diversity of the area is one of the strengths of the parish council; and that smaller units would not benefit from economies of scale and would lead to higher administration costs.

However, other respondents point out that that the two new parish councils proposed under option 3 would be administratively viable, and that the size of their electorates would still place each of the new parish councils in the top 20% of parish councils nationwide.

It is argued that the two areas do represent very different and distinctive communities and that the fact that different areas have such different needs and aspirations has hindered the current parish council to act for the benefit of the whole area. The majority of the respondents to the second stage of the consultation indicated that the proposed two new parish councils under option 3 would more accurately reflect natural community identity and cohesive communities. However this needs to be balanced with cost and efficiency, and the fact that two councils would likely cost more to administer. No suggestions were received through the consultation process as to proposed parish names or arrangements for warding or councillor representation.

Option 3 would represent a significant structural change involving the disestablishment of the current parish council and establishing two new parish councils in its place. In this context, it is felt that such a small response rate does not amount to a definitive public mandate.

Other responses supported the notion that there is an imbalance of councillor representation between existing parish wards. Shelley Ward, for example, has 2307 electors but only two parish councillors, whereas Shepley with 2091 electors has three parish councillors.

There is no provision in legislation that each parish councillor should represent, as nearly as may be, the same number of electors. However, the Electoral Commission believes it is not in the interests of effective and convenient local government, either for voters or councillors, to have significant differences in levels of representation between different parish wards.

Government guidance highlights that such variations could make it difficult, in workload terms, for councillors to adequately represent the interests of residents. There is also a risk that where one or more wards of a parish are over-represented by councillors, the residents of those wards (and their councillors) could be perceived as having more influence than others on the council. The Commission offers no specific guidelines for what might constitute significant differences in levels of representation; each case needs to be considered on its merits.

The proposal which was consulted on in the second stage of the review was to revise the councillor representation across the parish council, as follows:

Ward	Polling Districts	Electorate	Population	Current no. of councillors	Proposed no. of councillors
Flockton	K14	1,172	1,450	2	1
Kirkburton	K15 - K16	3,410	3,940	5	4
Kirkheaton	DA6	3,109	4,100	4	4
Lepton	AL6 - AL8	4,306	5,130	5	5
Lepton and Whitley Upper	K17AA - K17AB, K110	1,463	1,820	2	2
Shelley	K18	2,332	3,130	2	3
Shepley	K19	2,123	2,770	3	3
Thurstonland and Farnley Tyas	KI1 - KI3	2,431	2,680	2	3

Note: Electorate is at 1 September 2008, population is ONS Mid-Year Estimate 2006.

Feedback was largely supportive but subject to some modifications, namely:

- Representation for Flockton to remain at 2, given the ward covers a wide geographical area.
- No need to increase the councillor representation in Thurstonland / Farnley Tyas to 3, as a large proportion of the existing electorate is made up of the students in Storthes Hall, who do not make many calls on the parish councillors.

This would result in the following representation:

Ward	Current no. of councillors	Proposed no. of councillors
Flockton	2	2
Kirkburton	5	4
Kirkheaton	4	4
Lepton	5	5
Lepton and Whitley Upper	2	2

Shelley	2	3
Shepley	3	3
Thurstonland and Farnley Tyas	2	2
Total:	25	25

This change would apply if the current parish council is retained. Should the decision be taken in principle to disestablish the parish council and create two new councils in its place (as per option 3), then this could provide the starting point for the proposed warding arrangements for each new council, i.e.

#### New parish council 1

Ward	Polling Districts	Electorate	Population	Current no. of councillors	Proposed no. of councillors
Kirkburton	K15 - K16	3,410	3,940	5	4
Shelley	K18	2,332	3,130	2	3
Shepley	K19	2,123	2,770	3	3
Thurstonland and Farnley Tyas	KI1 - KI3	2,431	2,680	2	2
Totals:		10,296	12,520	12	12

#### New parish council 2

Ward	Polling Districts	Electorate	Population	Current no. of councillors	Proposed no. of councillors
Flockton	K14	1,172	1,450	2	2
Kirkheaton	DA6	3,109	4,100	4	4
Lepton	AL6 - AL8	4,306	5,130	5	5
Lepton and Whitley Upper	K17AA - K17AB, KI10	1,463	1,820	2	2
Totals:		10,050	12,500	13	13

Most respondents supported the proposed minor boundary changes, subject to a number of points of detail:

- transfer the existing part of Thurstonland village that is within the Holme Valley Parish Council area to Kirkburton Parish Council.

- alter the ward boundary between Lepton and Lepton & Whitley Upper at Whitley Willows and St. John's Church car park minor boundary changes

However, it was also suggested by Kirkburton Parish Council that the boundary change at Lepton Parish Church should include the total area of land owned/managed by the church. The parish council also recommended an additional boundary change that had not been suggested in its initial submission, namely to investigate the possibility of moving the addresses in Corn Mill Bottom, Shelley (Nos 2 & 3, Millwood House and Barn Cottage) and Nos 1,2, & 3 Cote Close, Shelley (17 electors in total) from Shepley Ward into Shelley Ward. However, as this was not put forward as an initial representation it has not been possible to consult on this proposal.

**Suggested recommendation for Kirkburton parish area:**

That Council consider approving: Option 2 (with amendments) COMBINED with minor boundary changes described in Options 5a) 5b) and 5c) (Option 5c amended to include the total area of land owned/managed by St. John's Church, not just the car park. See map: Kirkburton Civil Parish – Options 5c St John's Church car park and burial ground minor boundary change (enlarged))

Option 5a - subject to consequential approval from the Electoral Commission to alter the Kirklees ward boundary between Holme Valley North and Kirkburton

Option 2 amendments: Revise councillor representation to: Flockton (2), Kirkburton (4), Kirkheaton (4), Lepton (5), Lepton and Whitley Upper (2), Shelley (3), Shepley (3), Thurstonland and Farnley Tyas (2)

**MELTHAM PARISH AREA**

Ward	Electorate	Population	No. of Councillors
(not warded)	6,524	8,600	12

In the first stage of the consultation 16 initial representations were received about Meltham. Key issues from the first stage of the consultation were:

- Most respondents expressed satisfaction with the Town Council
- Some minor boundary changes were proposed which would affect a small number of properties considered unlikely to look to Meltham as their local centre.
- A difference of opinion in relation to the merits of warding the town council area; with the Returning Officer supportive of warding the parish and the town council opposed to this suggestion.

The options put forward for the second stage of public consultation were:

Option 1 - no change to external town council boundaries;

See map - Meltham Civil Parish – option 1 – no change

**OR**

Option 2 - (**Supported Option**) Minor boundary changes to HN5 and HN6 around the Blackmoorfoot/ Netherton/ South Crosland area. This alteration would require a change to Kirklees district ward boundaries and therefore would be subject to approval from the Electoral Commission. It is estimated this will affect 169 electors (68 for Colne Valley district ward and 101 for Crosland Moor and Netherton district ward).

See maps - Meltham Civil Parish – option 2 – minor boundary changes  
- Meltham Civil Parish – option 2 Blackmoorfoot (enlarged)  
- Meltham Civil Parish – option 2 Netherton, South Crosland (enlarged)

**COMBINED WITH EITHER**

Option 3a) - leaving the town council area unwarded;

**OR**

Option 3b) - warding the town council area with boundaries based on the three existing polling districts HN5, HN6 and HN7, with the following councillor representation:

HN5 - 3 councillors  
HN6 - 4 councillors  
HN7 - 3 councillors;

**OR**

Option 3c) - warding the town council area with boundaries based on the three existing polling districts HN5, HN6 and HN7, with the following councillor representation:

HN5 - 4 councillors  
HN6 - 5 councillors  
HN7 - 4 councillors

Views were sought on potential names for the each of the three proposed wards referred in Option 3b) and 3c).

See map – Meltham Civil Parish – option 3: creation of wards, revised councillor representation and minor boundary changes

Respondents' preferences for the different options are shown in the table below:

<b>Meltham Summary - stage 2</b>	
Total number of responses received	44
Number of responses from individuals	41
Number of responses from groups	3
<b>Preferred option:</b>	
Option 1	2
Option 1 + 3a	8
Option 1 + 3b	0
Option 1 + 3c	1
Option 2	4
Option 2 + 3a	25
Option 2 + 3b	2
Option 2 + 3c	0
Preferred option not stated	2

Key themes from the second stage of the consultation were:

- Majority support for the proposed boundary changes
- Majority support that the parish area should remain unwarded

## **Analysis**

Meltham is the only one of the five town and parish councils in Kirklees which is currently unwarded.

In his submission to the first stage of the consultation, the returning officer requested that Kirklees Council considers warding arrangements in respect of Meltham Town Council, to be based on the three existing polling districts HN5, HN6 and HN7, which are wholly contained within the town council area. It proposed consultation takes place with the town council as part of the wider consultation process, on councillor representation and names for the three proposed wards.

It is suggested these proposals will allow for the improvement in the management of elections within the town council boundary and be more cost effective. The submission notes that Meltham Town Council was based on the area of the former Urban District Council, which was one of the eleven constituent authorities which came together to form Kirklees upon local government reorganisation in 1974. Warding arrangements may not have been considered at that time, as there had been no previous warding arrangements in Meltham.

However, the electorate has increased significantly (by 31%) in the intervening period and is projected to continue to increase (by 5.8% in the next five years). The argument is made, therefore, that whilst it may have seemed practicable not to ward the council in 1974 as at that time the area was completely within one polling district, the increasing electorate means that it is now administratively more desirable.

The submission notes a range of administrative and practical issues which could be addressed through warding, including:

- Long ballot papers which are difficult to manage for both electors and elections staff
- Current arrangements necessitate the use of non-standard paper to produce ballot papers, which incurs increased cost
- Increased risks in the postal pack preparation process as manual processes need to be employed to insert ballot papers
- Increased difficulty and risk in the elections count

The town council in their initial submission note that its members have no wish to change electoral arrangements for the parish other than to use two polling stations as opposed to three. This change was already in place at the last parish election, so would not need to be addressed through the review. Members feel there would be no benefit to be gained by warding the parish, other than for the electoral services staff at election time. Parish Council members stressed that they were aware of the Electoral Service's view on this matter but wish the parish to remain the same.

In considering whether or not a parish should be divided into wards, the legislation requires that consideration be given as to whether:

- a) The number, or distribution of local government electors for the parish would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
- b) It is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented

Government guidance suggests that if the principal council decides to recommend that a parish should be divided into wards, the principal council must have regard to the following when considering the size and boundaries of the wards and the number of councillors to be elected for each ward:

- the number of local government electors for the parish;
- any change in the number, or distribution, of the local government electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts;
- the desirability of fixing boundaries which are, and will remain, easily identifiable;
- any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries

There is no indication from representations made that it is desirable for any areas of the parish to be separately represented; respondents to the first stage of the consultation were generally positive about representation and ease of contact of the parish councillors and representations indicate a common sense of shared community identity across the parish area as a whole. Whilst the practical and administrative benefits of warding the parish are acknowledged, it is important to ensure that warding would not impact negatively on this existing community identity, the effectiveness of representation or on the ease or ability of people to access their local representatives. It would be undesirable to create artificial divisions between existing communities and their representatives. Meltham Town Council covers a relatively compact area which is geographically linked, as distinct from other parishes where there are a number of different and distinct communities or villages.

Responses to the second stage of the consultation strongly support remaining unwarded. Many respondents express the view that the issue of cohesion and collective responsibility should outweigh the administrative issue for elections staff.

### **Suggested recommendation for Meltham parish area:**

That Council consider approving: Option 2 - Minor boundary changes to HN5 and HN6 around the Blackmoorfoot/ Netherton/ South Crosland area. And redraw the boundary between Holme Valley North ward and Colne Valley ward and between the Holme Valley North ward and Crosland Moor and Netherton wars - subject to consequential approval from the Electoral Commission to alter the Kirklees wards boundaries.

COMBINED WITH

Option 3a) - leaving the town council area unwarded

This alteration would require a change to Kirklees district ward boundaries and therefore would be subject to approval from the Electoral Commission. It is estimated this will affect 169 electors in the Holme Valley Ward (68 moving to Colne Valley district ward and 101 moving to Crosland Moor and Netherton district ward).

### **MIRFIELD PARISH AREA**

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Electorate</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>No. of Councillors</b>
Battyeford	5,307	6,830	5
Crossley	2,906	3,500	3
Eastthorpe	2,262	2,800	3
Hopton	2,108	2,610	2
Northorpe	2,238	2,890	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,821</b>	<b>18,630</b>	<b>16</b>

In the first stage of the consultation 5 initial representations were received about Mirfield. Key issues from the first stage of the consultation were:

- Some concerns about the coordination of governance at a local level, specifically how the town council and area committee work together
- Diverse view on the effectiveness and impact of the town council, but from a very small number of respondents.
- No representations suggesting boundary changes, although a small number of respondents called for the town council to be disestablished

No alternative options were proposed for the second stage of public consultation, although general comments were still welcomed. The representation suggesting the disestablishment of the town council was not reflected as a proposed option because it was considered that there was no evidence to suggest that the relevant statutory criteria for so doing had been met.

Government guidance makes clear that it would be undesirable to see existing parishes abolished with the area becoming un-parished with no community governance arrangements in place; and that this would only be justified in very exceptional circumstances. Historically, a

factor taken into account in deciding abolition cases has been that local support for abolition should have been demonstrated over at least a period equivalent to two terms of office of parish councillors (i.e. 8 years) and that such support was sufficiently informed.

One representation made reference to the appropriateness of parish or town council arrangements in urban areas, suggesting that the benefits of parish councils evident in more rural areas cannot be as easily duplicated in an urban context. Whilst it is true that there are different challenges for parish councils in urban areas, there are many examples of successful urban parish councils. In November 2008, the then Communities and Local Government Secretary Hazel Blears emphasised that she particularly wanted to see more parishes set up in urban areas.

<b>Mirfield Summary - stage 2</b>	
Total number of responses received	16
Number of responses from individuals	11
Number of responses from groups	5
<b>Preferred option:</b>	
Option 1	10
Preferred option not stated	6

The majority of respondents were supportive of the option of “no change”. However, a number of responses were received - including a submission from the Mirfield Labour Party - frustrated that an option to wind up the town council had not been provided.

A single respondent to the second stage of the consultation suggests a minor boundary change to the boundary between Battyeford and Eastthorpe wards - the current boundary between those wards makes a short detour along the A644 Huddersfield Road towards Mirfield. The respondent suggests that at the cluster of houses at Low Littlemoor, the boundary should run across Huddersfield Road and along the public footpath from it to Nettleton Road. This change would affect a small number of electors. As this proposal was not put forward as a representation initially, it has not been consulted on.

A response was received from Mirfield Town Council addressing a number of issues raised in the analysis of the submissions to the initial consultation. The Town Council clarified its rationale for not providing an initial representation on the basis that the consultation should seek to establish general public opinion rather than the views of the organisations under review.

The submission points out that the Town Council in partnership with the Area Committee conducted a postal survey of all Mirfield Households. 2400 responses to the survey were received and 80% of respondents considered that the town council was doing a good job.

**Suggested recommendation for the Mirfield parish area:**

That Council consider approving: Mirfield Civil Parish - Option 1 - no change

## **GENERAL AND CROSS CUTTING ISSUES**

The consultation process has highlighted a number of issues, observations and learning points relevant to all parish councils in Kirklees. Inevitably this includes issues which cannot be addressed through recommendations on parish arrangements and structure. It is, however, important that they are considered, and actions agreed to help improve the effectiveness of parish arrangements in the future.

The key issues raised are summarised below, with suggested recommendations for how the issues can be addressed.

**Cost and efficiency** - Respondents from across the parished areas made comments on the cost efficiency of parish and town councils. While some responses indicated a general lack of understanding of the nature of parish councils as precepting organisations, it is apparent that there are cross cutting concerns about the administrative costs of parish and town councils and in particular, a perception that the proportion of the overall budget spent on administration is high.

Acknowledging that it is a matter for each of the parish and town councils to agree their own budgets and expenditure, it is recommended that they give consideration to the potential to streamline administration, for example by using a clustering or collaborative working arrangement.

While such arrangements are more usually applied to much smaller, usually rural, parishes, there is no reason why the concept could not be beneficial in the Kirklees context. Indeed, developing a secretariat approach might provide additional opportunities to widen the skill base in terms of professional support outside of the traditional administrative sphere.

**RECOMMENDATION 1 - That the parish and town councils consider developing a clustering / collaborative arrangement to streamline administration costs**

**Lack of understanding about local governance arrangements** - There is a recurring theme to suggest that confusion exists about the respective roles and responsibilities of Kirklees Council's area committees and parish councils. There would be merit in the principal council and the parish and town councils working together to ensure greater clarity for residents.

It is anticipated that principal councils will soon be under a new legal 'duty to promote democracy'. The new duty is a recognition of the principle that political activity is valuable and that local authorities should be vibrant hubs of local democracy and not be seen simply as units of local administration. The duty builds on the work carried out by the Councillors Commission and complements the 'duty to involve' introduced in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

There is, therefore, now a timely opportunity to develop our approach to promoting democracy jointly with parish and town councils.

**RECOMMENDATION 2 - That Kirklees Council and the parish and town councils work collaboratively to ensure that the distinctive and complementary roles and responsibilities of parish councils and Kirklees area committees are clearly**

communicated to citizens, in order to improve democratic understanding and participation. This should be an integral part of the work to promote local democracy.

**Relationships between parish councils and Kirklees Council (including area committees)** - It is essential also, that parish councils and area committees work together effectively at an operational level. While there are examples of where this works well in Kirklees, there are also some concerns and tensions. Too often, procedural considerations such as cooption and voting rights for example have been a distraction from the real issue of effective relationships, clarity of purpose and practically ensuring that the different roles complement and support each other.

While the formal roles of parish councils, parish councillors, Kirklees Area Committees and Kirklees ward councillors are set out in a number of constitutional, legal and other documents, there would be merit in clarifying and consolidating this to set out more clearly what residents can expect. This process should be informed by practical experiences over recent months and years in each parish council area.

**RECOMMENDATION 3 - Review the formal relationship between the parish councils and Kirklees Area Committees in the context of work to develop more effective relationships at an operational level (including the issue of cooption of parish council members onto Kirklees Area Committees and vice versa)**

**RECOMMENDATION 4 - Develop an agreement/pledge setting out the roles and responsibilities of parish councils, parish councillors, Kirklees area committees and ward councillors to clarify what residents can expect, areas of individual responsibility and areas where there is an expectation to work together collaboratively. This could be incorporated within the parish charter.**

**Engagement and consultation** - There is a general sense that more could be done to improve the engagement and reach of parish councils into the communities they represent. However it should be acknowledged that there are already examples of good and effective practice in some parish areas.

Expectations in relation to community involvement and engagement are increasing. The national policy agenda around encouraging active and empowered communities is now central to all the main political parties' stances on local government. It is vital that parish and town councils play an important role in that aspiration. This is recognised by central government, with recent changes to legislation making it a condition on parish and town councils to have a published statement of intent as to community engagement before they are eligible to use the newly extended well-being power.

The relationship between Kirklees Council and parish councils needs to evolve to take account of this new landscape. There are two main elements to this:

- The role of Kirklees ward councillors in facilitating engagement at a local level, and their relationship to parish councillors in that context
- How Kirklees Council and other public services involve and engage with parish councils as part of their wider responsibilities to involve representatives of local persons.

The new duty to promote local democracy and the 'duty to involve' places even greater emphasis on the community leadership role of Kirklees ward councillors, as community champions and advocates, at the heart of communication and dialogue between public services and the communities.

It is important that, in parished areas, parish councillors work and engagement within their communities supports and complements that role and that the two levels of local government work together effectively and do not duplicate activity. This requires effective relationships between parish councillors and Kirklees ward councillors, so that information and intelligence identified at the parish level can be communicated through Kirklees ward councillors.

Community engagement activities undertaken by parish councils - such as activity to inform the development of parish plans - need to be part of a cohesive approach to engagement at the local level, which brings together parish councillors and ward councillors; and both tiers of local government need to operate in a spirit of partnership working for the benefit of residents. By so doing we will avoid duplication of effort, provide more coherent focus for external relationships and funding and increase the potential for positive change as a result of our engagement activities.

Public services and agencies also need to more systematically take into consideration the views of parish councils when engaging communities and about the design and delivery of public services - and this should be integral to our approach to implementing the duty to involve. It is recognised that this is an area which could be improved, and there needs to be clear and consistent guidance to Kirklees officers about what is expected of them in terms of involving ward and parish councillors.

It would be helpful if the parish charter was reviewed and refreshed to help translate this aspiration into practical action.

**RECOMMENDATION 5 - That parish and town councils work to share good practice and learning regarding effective community involvement and engagement practices. That this is done in the context of a coherent and joined up approach to engagement at a local level - for example making explicit the connections between village/neighbourhood planning, parish plans and area committee action plans.**

**RECOMMENDATION 6 - That the current Parish Charter be reviewed and refreshed to take account of the above and to ensure that the aspirations of the charter are being delivered in practice.**

The consultation process has highlighted - particularly in the larger geographical parishes - the very real tension between the benefits of having a larger parish in terms of cost and efficiency, with the difficulties this can bring of engaging at a local level, when a parish covers a larger area spanning several distinct settlements or villages.

On balance it is considered to be the right judgement not to recommend significant structural change as a result of the community governance review process. It does need to be recognised, however, that there are settlements and villages who feel disconnected and remote from the activities of their parish council. Many of these areas have active village or community groups which have been formed to discuss and resolve local issues of concern.

We feel the parish councils should be encouraging and welcoming this local activity; and that there needs to be more explicit effort and focus in linking the work of the parish to activity at a village level. In this way, the parish retains the benefits of being able to act more strategically for the benefits of the whole area, but does so in a way which actively engages and responds to the needs and aspirations of individual villages and communities. This greater connectivity should be reflected in the community representation activities of the parish and in community and parish planning activity.

**RECOMMENDATION 7 - That the parish and town councils consider ways in which they can build on, promote and sustain links between their formal governance role and more localised community governance structures. This needs to be done in the context of the more coherent and joined up approach to engagement at the local level previously referred to.**

**Delivery of functions and services** - A number of the respondents to the consultation indicated they would like to see more devolution of power to a local level and a view that doing so would result in improved public engagement and community action. It is clear though that increased power and responsibility would need to go hand in hand with increased accountability to local communities.

The effectiveness of community governance depends on the vision and aspiration of the parish councils to further develop their community engagement and service delivery roles - including the potential to creatively utilise the new 'wellbeing' powers - and the ability of the principal council, parish councils and other organisations to work together strategically in the best interest of local communities.

The starting point here needs to be clarity of what wants to be achieved at a local level. By joining up our engagement approaches locally, and using that engagement to inform the development of community and parish plans and area committee action planning, the parish councils can start to explore on an issue by issue basis where there is potential and added value and effectiveness of developing more localised service delivery.

**RECOMMENDATION 8 - That Kirklees Council continue to provide strategic support and liaison to parish and town councils, in particular where they have aspirations to develop their service delivery role or to utilise the extended powers of wellbeing.**

## SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

### Summary of completed forms for Denby Dale:

Stage 1 - initial representations

	Individual			Group/Organisation		
	Agree	Disagree	No comment	Agree	Disagree	No comment
Contact	9	6	0	2	3	1
Representation	8	7	0	3	3	0
Consultation	4	10	1	1	5	0
Boundaries	8	5	2	2	3	1
Split	8	4	3	2	3	1
Serving the Community	8	7	0	3	3	0

Combined total from 21 forms =

	Agree	Disagree	No comment
Contact	11	9	1
Representation	11	10	0
Consultation	5	15	1
Boundaries	10	8	3
Split	10	7	4
Serving the Community	11	10	0

General comments received = 10

Stage 2 - consultation responses

<b>Denby Dale Summary - stage 2</b>	
Total number of responses received	86
Number of responses from individuals	77
Number of responses from groups	9
<b>Preferred option:</b>	
Option 1	40
Option 2	6
Option 3	37
Preferred option not stated	3

## Summary of completed forms for Holme Valley:

Stage 1 - initial representations

	Individual			Group/Organisation		
	Agree	Disagree	No comment	Agree	Disagree	No comment
Contact	3	0	1	6	0	0
Representation	3	0	1	6	0	0
Consultation	1	2	1	3	2	1
Boundaries	2	0	2	5	0	1
Split	2	0	2	4	0	2
Serving the Community	3	0	1	6	0	0

Combined total from 10 forms =

	Agree	Disagree	No comment
Contact	9	0	1
Representation	9	0	1
Consultation	4	4	2
Boundaries	7	0	3
Split	6	0	4
Serving the Community	9	0	1

General comments received = 13

Stage 2 - consultation responses

<b>Holme Valley Summary - stage 2</b>	
Total number of responses received	43
Number of responses from individuals	35
Number of responses from groups	8
<b>Preferred option:</b>	
Option 1	9
Option 2	19
Preferred option not stated	5

## Summary of completed forms for Kirkburton:

Stage 1 - initial representations

	Individual			Group/Organisation		
	Agree	Disagree	No comment	Agree	Disagree	No comment
Contact	5	0	0	3	1	0
Representation	5	0	0	4	0	0
Consultation	2	2	1	4	0	0
Boundaries	2	2	1	4	0	0
Split	3	2	0	3	1	0
Serving the Community	5	0	0	4	0	0

Combined total from 9 forms =

	Agree	Disagree	No comment
Contact	8	1	0
Representation	9	0	0
Consultation	6	2	1
Boundaries	6	2	1
Split	6	3	0
Serving the Community	9	0	0

General comments received = 5

Stage 2 - consultation responses

<b>Kirkburton Summary - stage 2</b>	
Total number of responses received	65
Number of responses from individuals	62
Number of responses from groups	3
<b>Preferred option:</b>	
Option 1	4
Option 2	24*
Option 3	38
Option 4	1
Preferred option not stated	6

**Summary of completed forms for Meltham:**

Stage 1 - initial representations

	Individual			Group/Organisation		
	Agree	Disagree	No comment	Agree	Disagree	No comment
Contact	6	1	1	2	0	0
Representation	7	0	1	2	0	0
Consultation	5	1	2	2	0	0
Boundaries	5	2	1	1	1	0
Split	3	2	3	2	0	0
Serving the Community	6	1	1	2	0	0

Combined total from 10 forms =

	Agree	Disagree	No comment
Contact	8	1	1
Representation	9	0	1
Consultation	7	1	2
Boundaries	6	3	1
Split	5	2	3
Serving the Community	8	1	1

General comments received = 6

Stage 2 - consultation responses

<b>Meltham Summary - stage 2</b>	
Total number of responses received	44
Number of responses from individuals	41
Number of responses from groups	3
<b>Preferred option:</b>	
Option 1	2
Option 1 + 3a	8
Option 1 + 3b	0
Option 1 + 3c	1
Option 2	4
Option 2 + 3a	25
Option 2 + 3b	2
Option 2 + 3c	0
Preferred option not stated	2

**Summary of completed form for Mirfield:**

Stage 1 - initial representations

	Individual			Group/Organisation		
	Agree	Disagree	No comment	Agree	Disagree	No comment
Contact	1	0	0			
Representation	0	1	0			
Consultation	0	1	0			
Boundaries	1	0	0			
Split	1	0	0			
Serving the Community	0	1	0			

General comments received = 5

There are also 2 other pieces of correspondence that have been received but 1 relates to all councils and the other provides no useful information.

Stage 2 - consultation responses

<b>Mirfield Summary - stage 2</b>	
Total number of responses received	16
Number of responses from individuals	11
Number of responses from groups	5
<b>Preferred option</b>	
Option 1	10
Preferred option not stated (or option 1 disagreed with)	6

## **SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED OPTIONS**

### **DENBY DALE PARISH AREA**

**Option 1 (PREFERRED OPTION)** - no change to the existing parish arrangements for Denby Dale Parish Council. See map – Denby Dale Civil Parish – Option 1 (no change)

**Option 2** - the dissolution of the existing Denby Dale Parish council and the establishment of two parish councils in its place:

- One parish council to be established for Upper and Lower Denby, Birdsedge and High Flatts - by creating a parish comprising DD3 and DD4 (with possible minor boundary alterations) (901 electors) and;
- A second parish consisting of the remainder of the existing Denby Dale Parish Council area.

See map – Denby Dale Civil Parish – Option 2: creation of two new parish councils

**Option 3** - the dissolution of the existing Denby Dale Parish Council and the establishment of six separate parishes comprising:

- Clayton West (DD1) – existing parish ward (2416 electors)
- Emley (DD7, DD8) – existing parish ward (1475 electors)
- Skelmanthorpe (DD9, DD10, DD11) – existing parish ward (4185 electors)
- Denby Dale (DD5) (2274 electors)
- Upper & Lower Cumberworth (DD2, DD6) (1000 electors)
- Upper & Lower Denby, Birdsedge & High Flatts (DD3, DD4) (901 electors)

See map – Denby Dale Civil Parish – Option 3: creation of six new parish councils

### **HOLME VALLEY PARISH AREA**

**Option 1** - no change to the existing parish arrangements for Holme Valley Parish Council

See map - Holme Valley Civil Parish - option 1 – no change

**Option 2 (PREFERRED OPTION)** - redrawing of the boundary to transfer the existing part of Thurstonland village that is within the Holme Valley Parish Council area to Kirkburton Parish Council.

See maps - Holme Valley Civil Parish - option 2 – minor boundary change  
- Holme Valley Civil Parish - option 2 – Thurstonland minor boundary change (enlarged)

## **KIRKBURTON PARISH AREA**

**Option 1** - no change to the existing parish boundaries for Kirkburton Parish Council

See map – Kirkburton Civil Parish – Option 1 – no change

**Option 2** - revise the councillor representation per ward to:

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Proposed no. of councillors</b>
Flockton	1
Kirkburton	4
Kirkheaton	4
Lepton	5
Lepton &Whitley Upper	2
Shelley	3
Shepley	3
Thurstonland and Farnley Tyas	3

See map – Kirkburton Civil Parish – Options 2 and 5 – minor boundary changes, revised numbers of councillors per ward

**Option 3** - the dissolution of the existing Kirkburton Parish Council and the establishment of two parish councils in its place:

- one parish council to be established covering the current parish council wards of Shelley, Kirkburton, Shepley and Thurstonland & Farnley Tyas
- a second parish consisting of the remainder of the existing Kirkburton Parish Council area, i.e. covering the current parish council wards of Kirkheaton, Lepton, Lepton & Whitley Upper and Flockton

See map – Kirkburton Civil Parish – options 3 and 5: creation of two parish councils and minor boundary changes

**Option 4 (not supported)** - the dissolution of the existing Kirkburton Parish council and the establishment of two parish councils in its place:

- one parish council to be established (Shelley Parish Council) covering the current parish council ward of Shelley
- a second parish consisting of the remainder of the existing Kirkburton Parish Council area.

See map – Kirkburton Civil Parish – options 4 and 5: creation of two parish councils and minor boundary changes

## **Further supported change – Option 5 (supported option)**

Irrespective of which of the above options is progressed, we are supportive of the following proposed minor boundary changes, and welcome views on this:

- transfer the existing part of Thurstonland village that is within the Holme Valley Parish Council area to Kirkburton Parish Council. This alteration would require a consequent change to the Kirklees district ward boundary between the wards of Holme Valley North and Kirkburton, and we welcome comments on this proposed change. It is, therefore, also subject to approval from the Electoral Commission, but given the small number of electors affected we do not consider it likely that such a request would be refused.

See map – Kirkburton Civil Parish – Option 5a – Thurstonland minor boundary change (enlarged)

- alter the ward boundary between Lepton and Lepton & Whitley Upper)

See maps – Kirkburton Civil Parish – Option 5b – Whitley Willows minor boundary changes (enlarged)  
– Kirkburton Civil Parish – Options 5c – St. John’s Church car park minor boundary changes (enlarged)

## **MELTHAM PARISH AREA**

**Option 1** - no change to external town council boundaries;

See map - Meltham Civil Parish – option 1 – no change

**OR**

**Option 2** - (**Supported Option**) Minor boundary changes to HN5 and HN6 around the Netherton/South Crosland area. This alteration would require a change to Kirklees district ward boundaries and therefore would be subject to approval from the Electoral Commission. It is estimated this will affect 169 electors (68 from Colne Valley district ward and 101 from Crosland Moor and Netherton district ward). We welcome comments on this proposal.

See maps - Meltham Civil Parish – option 2 – minor boundary change  
- Meltham Civil Parish – option 2 Blackmoorfoot (enlarged)  
- Meltham Civil Parish – option 2 Netherton, South Crosland (enlarged)

## **COMBINED WITH EITHER**

**Option 3a)** - leaving the town council area unwarded;

**OR**

**Option 3b)** - warding the town council area with boundaries based on the three existing polling districts HN5, HN6 and HN7, with the following councillor representation:

HN5 - 3 councillors  
HN6 - 4 councillors  
HN7 - 3 councillors;

**OR**

**Option 3c)** - warding the town council area with boundaries based on the three existing polling districts HN5, HN6 and HN7, with the following councillor representation:

HN5 - 4 councillors  
HN6 - 5 councillors  
HN7 - 4 councillors

Views are sought on potential names for the each of the three proposed wards referred in Option 3b) and 3c).

See map – Meltham Civil Parish – option 3: creation of wards, revised councillor representation and minor boundary changes

## **MIRFIELD PARISH AREA**

**Option 1 (PREFERRED OPTION)** - no change

See map – Mirfield Civil Parish – option 1 (no change)