

COUNCIL	AGENDA ITEM 7 (iii) (c)
13 APRIL 2011	PUBLIC REPORT

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GROUPING OF BOROUGH FEN AND NEWBOROUGH PARISH COUNCILS

RECOMMENDATIONS
FROM: SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL
<p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agrees to the grouping of Newborough and Borough Fen Parish Councils under the name of Newborough and Borough Fen Parish Council; 2. Authorises the Solicitor to the Council to draw up an Order to group the parish councils to include the following electoral arrangements: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the number of parish councillors should be twelve, eight representing Newborough and four representing Borough Fen; (ii) the current parish councillors elected in 2010 for Newborough and Borough Fen should continue to represent the new parish council, elections will be held at the end of their term of office in 2014.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report seeks Council's approval to group the parishes of Borough Fen and Newborough and allow a common parish council under the name of Newborough and Borough Fen Parish Council to be formed, and request the Council to make an Order to bring the parish council into force.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Parish Councils may apply to the principal council for an Order grouping the parish with neighbouring parishes in the same district under a common parish council under s11 of the LGA 1972.
- 2.2 Under the 1972 Act Parishes cannot be grouped without the consent of the meeting of each of the parishes.
- 2.3 A request has been received from Borough Fen and Newborough Parish councils to group for the following reasons:
 - Borough Fen should comprise of 5 parish councillors but has only had 4 for some time;
 - Borough Fen is not functioning effectively as its meetings are rarely quorate and frequently have to be adjourned;
 - The electorate of Borough Fen is 100 which is too small to have its own parish council;
 - Borough Fen and Newborough Parish Councils are in favour of the grouping;

- Newborough and Borough Fen were one parish council until the 1970s and already have many shared interests such as the village hall and the burial ground.

2.4 At a parish meeting in May 2010, residents were informed of the proposals, Notices were displayed on the parish notice boards, on the Website and an article placed in the village magazine.

2.5 A special public meeting was held on 23 November 2010 at which it was unanimously agreed to apply to the Principal Council (Peterborough City Council) for an Order to Group the two parishes.

2.6 The ward councillor, Cllr Harrington, has been consulted and is in favour of the proposal.

2.7 Ian Dewar, Chief Executive Officer of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Association of Local Councils has been consulted, has given advice to both Parish Councils and has recommended the grouping of the parish councils.

3. GROUPING AND ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 At the meeting in November it was agreed that the proposed Newborough and Borough Fen Parish Council should comprise of twelve parish councillors, eight representing Newborough and four representing Borough Fen.

3.2 The currently elected councillors, elected in 2010, will continue to represent the grouped parish council until the end of their current term of office in 2014 when elections will be held.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 There are no alternative options to grouping. Borough Fen is too small to have its own parish council and is not able to function lawfully with its current arrangement.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Parish Councils may apply to the principal council for an Order grouping the parish with neighbouring parishes in the same district under a common parish council under s11 of the LGA 1972. The Order will set out the name of the parish and the electoral arrangements that are to apply.

5.2 Adopting the recommendations

5.2.1 On agreeing to the request of Newborough and Borough Fen Parish Councils, the Council is committed to make an Order to group the parish councils. The Council has to be satisfied therefore that the grouping of the parish councils is the appropriate form of governance for the area.

5.2.2 In deciding whether to group the parishes the Council must consider the recommendations made by each of the parishes in requesting the Council to make an Order to form the new parish council.

5.3 Electoral arrangements

5.3.1 The current parish councillors representing Newborough and Borough Fen, elected in 2010, will continue to represent the grouped parish council until the end of their current term of office in 2014 when elections will be held.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The parish precept has already been set for 2011/2012 for Newborough and Borough Fen. It is intended that the two precepts should run together for 2011/2012 and to review the budget and precept for 2012/2013.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The recommendations fulfil the Council's statutory responsibilities.

8. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 8.1 Local Government Act 1972

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