

HALC VIEWS ON COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

‘HALC has welcomed being involved in the consultation with parish councils on the proposed Community Governance Review by Herefordshire Council and acknowledges the responsibility of Herefordshire Council to undertake such reviews. It is noted that 13 parishes have made specific requests for possible change to either boundaries or numbers of councillors within their area. Herefordshire Council has also identified 5 parishes which they believe might benefit from a review. It would be helpful to note that 40 parish councils responded by stating that they did not wish any changes to be made to their status. Furthermore, many of those parishes queried why Herefordshire Council was considering a countywide review at a time when local service delivery was severely challenged due to financial cutbacks.

In the light of the number of responses specifically requesting no change, should a countywide review be undertaken by Herefordshire Council, the anticipated staffing and stationery costs are likely to be high. The targeted parishes will work with Herefordshire Council to achieve their aim but those parishes who have changes made against their wishes will undoubtedly take up a great deal more current officer time, irrespective of the temporary staff.

The first direct approach in 18 years to all parish councils across Herefordshire in the 2015 county consultation exercise has only resulted in 13 specific requests from 133 parish councils. The financial and time risk to Herefordshire Council of imposing change on 120 unwilling parish councils may well prove to be unacceptable.

In conclusion, it is hoped that the overwhelming response from parish councils to Herefordshire Council’s recent consultation exercise will be recognised and that Herefordshire Council will resolve to work with identified parish councils in a targeted approach to the CGR requests, supported by HALC.

6th April 2016
