

GREAT AYCLIFFE PARISH BOUNDARIES

AGENDA ITEM No. 16

MEETING: COUNCIL
DATE: 30th OCTOBER 2013
REPORT: TOWN CLERK

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to update members on the proposal to change Parish Boundaries in two locations, Eldon Whins (Middridge) and School Aycliffe (Heighington, Darlington).

2.0 Background

2.1 The proposal came from a Notice of Motion from Councillor E. Adam to the Council on the 18th September 2013.

It was resolved by Council that:-

That this Council instructs the Town Clerk to:

1. Write to Middridge Parish Council and invite them to take part in an informal discussion related to the area known as Eldon Whins with a view to a mutually agreed transfer of land and change of its boundary to the Parish of Great Aycliffe. (as indicated by the yellow line on map 1(a)).
 2. Investigate a further change to the boundary of Great Aycliffe Parish in relation to the Southern half of the Parish Boundary (School Aycliffe and the Industrial Estate).
 3. Inform Durham County Council and Great Aycliffe and Middridge Area Partnership (GAMP) of our intention to pursue these changes through consensus therefore, subject to the outcome of our investigations and discussions we will make an application for a Community Governance Review of the Great Aycliffe Parish Boundary.
 4. Convene the Great Aycliffe and Middridge Local Councils Committee to discuss the transfer of Eldon Whins and report back on its findings to Full Council.
- 2.2 Contact was made with Middridge Parish Council members to arrange an informal discussion in regard to Eldon Whins boundary change. Unfortunately, due to holiday commitments on the part of both Councils members were unable to meet informally to discuss this matter. Middridge Council members were made aware of the subject for discussion. The matter was also the subject of local press coverage.

3.0 **Current Situation**

- 3.1 A meeting of the Great Aycliffe and Middridge Local Council's Committee was held on the 3rd October 2013 in order to discuss the proposal and seek Middridge Parish Council's views. The representatives of Middridge Parish Council have indicated that they are not prepared to accept a change in the boundary at Eldon Whins to move this area into Great Aycliffe. Indeed they have stated "that Middridge Parish Council wished to retain all of the relevant land within their parish and would therefore oppose any suggested boundary change."
- 3.2 A copy of the Minutes of the meeting are attached and are reported at the Outside Bodies agenda item.
- 3.3 In regard to the proposal which would alter both Heighington Parish and Darlington Borough Council boundaries in favour of Great Aycliffe Town Council and Durham County Council. Whilst, no official approach or meeting had taken place, the proposal was picked up from publicity in Newspapers. Following which Town Council members have been contacted by members of Heighington Parish Council who have expressed their view on the matter. In effect it has been indicated by both members of Heighington Parish Council and the Leader of Darlington Borough Council that a boundary change to bring in part of the industrial estate and the Chestnuts housing development, at School Aycliffe, to Great Aycliffe Town Council and effectively Durham County Council would not be accepted and indeed would be vehemently opposed.
- 3.4 It has been advised to both Parish Councils that a report would be provided to Council to advise of their response to the proposal with a view to seeking further instructions as to how the Council wishes to proceed.

4.0 **Matters for Consideration**

- 4.1 Given the two responses that have been received from the two affected Parish Councils, which clearly do not agree with the proposals to change the Town Council's boundary to encompass parts of their Parish, Members will need to consider how they wish to proceed.
- 4.2 In particular, is it now appropriate to submit a request to D.C.C. for a Community Governance Review in order to attempt to encompass Eldon Whins area against the wishes of Middridge Parish Council, i.e. without consensus.
- 4.3 Equally, given the negative response of Heighington Parish Council and the support from Darlington Council against any change to the present boundary is it appropriate to pursue this proposal.

5.0 **Impact on Great Aycliffe Town Council**

- 5.1 The proposals, should they succeed, would bring further properties within the Council's boundaries and if they succeed would bring in further precept revenue.
- 5.2 There is no effect by the inclusion of industrial areas as no business rates would be received.

5.3 The inclusion of Eldon Whins could also have brought in CIL monies if this was applied by D.C.C. to the development. Currently 15% without a Neighbourhood Plan and 20% with an approved plan.

6.0 **Policy Implications**

6.1 The report complies with Aim No. 1 of the Council's Aims and Targets:-

Aim No. 1 – "To provide good quality governance and management of the Council".

7.0 **Staffing Implications**

7.1 There may be staffing implications in regard to the proposals, however, they are unknown at the present time.

8.0 **Financial Implications**

8.1 It is unlikely that there will be any direct financial implications to the Town Council.

9.0 **Crime and Disorder Implications**

9.1 None.

10.0 **Equal Opportunities Implications**

10.1 None.

11.0 **Environmental Implications**

11.1 None.

12.0 **Risk Assessment**

12.1 It is not considered that the matters contained in this report pose a risk to health and safety of staff or to the financial or public standing of the Council to a degree that a risk assessment should be appended to this report.

13.0 **Recommendations**

13.1 It is recommended:-

- (i) That Members receive the information in the report and in particular the response received to the two proposals in regard to boundary changes.
- (ii) That Members consider whether it is appropriate to submit a request for Community Governance Reviews to the two Principle Councils concerned.

Town Clerk.