

Title of Report:	Review of Number of Parish/Town Councillors
Report to be considered by:	Executive
Date of Meeting:	17 February 2011
Forward Plan Ref:	N/a

Purpose of Report: To review the number of Councillors on Parish/Town Councils.

Recommended Action:

1. That an Order be made in accordance with Section 17(3) of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997 to change the number of Parish Councillors on Greenham and Theale Parish Councils.
2. That no change be made to the number of Councillors on any other Parish/Town Council ! in the District.

Reason for decision to be taken: A review of the number of Parish/Town Councillors has not been undertaken since 2001

Other options considered: None considered as Council has a statutory duty to keep numbers under review

Key background documentation: Local Government & Rating Act 1997

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Theme:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CPT12 - Including Everyone
The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:	
Encouraging participation in local elections	

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Anthony Stansfeld - Tel (01488) 658238
E-mail Address:	astansfeld@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	08 February 2011

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	David Holling
Job Title:	Head of Legal & Electoral Services
Tel. No.:	01635 519422
E-mail Address:	dholling@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy: The Council is required to keep the number of councillors under review.

Financial: There are no financial implications.

Personnel: N/A

Legal/Procurement: Relevant Order will be required under Section 17(2) of the Local Government & Rating Act 1997.

Property: None

Risk Management: None

Equalities Impact Assessment: N/A.

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

1.1 The number of Councillors on each Parish / Town Council in the District was last comprehensively reviewed in 2006 prior to the elections in May 2007. Since this review there have obviously been changes in the population in many Parishes.

1.2 The provisions relating to a review of Parish Councillors are contained in Section 17(2) of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997 which states:

"(2) A district council or unitary county council may conduct a review of the electoral arrangements for the council of a parish in their area for the purpose of considering whether or not to make any changes to the arrangements and, if so, what changes".

1.3 In determining the number of Councillors on Parish Councils in the past, the Council has had regard to the formula set out below:

Electorate	Number of Members of Parish Council
Electorate exceeding 150 but not more than 250	5
Electorate exceeding 250 but not more than 550	6
Electorate exceeding 500 but not more than 1000	7
Electorate exceeding 1000 but not more than 1500	9
Electorate exceeding 1500 but not more than 2000	11
Electorate exceeding 2000 but not more than 2500	13
Electorate exceeding 2500 but not more than 3000	15
Electorate exceeding 3000 but not more than 4000	17
Electorate exceeding 4000 but not more than 5000	19
Above 5000	21

The Council however has not rigidly applied this scale, as it is only guidance and has in past reviews responded to requests by Parish Councils for a higher or lower number of Councillors, having regard to individual circumstances. Any requests to increase numbers should not however been seen as a way of avoiding holding elections.

1.4 The attached Appendix is a Schedule listing the current number of Electors in each Parish and the current number of Parish/Town Councillors. This table is based on the electorate, as at 1st December 2010, and shows a wide variation in the number of electors per Parish/Town Council.

1.5 All Parish/Town Councils have been asked to submit proposals for changes in the number of Councillors, responses have been received from Greenham and Theale. Hungerford Town Council considered an increase in numbers at a meeting on Monday 7th February 2011 but determined to stay at 15.

1.6 Greenham Parish Council have requested that the current number of councillors be increased from 13 to 15 in view of the recent increase in the number of properties in the Parish, and proposed further changes. The number of Councillors on Greenham Parish Council was increased from 11 to 13 at the last review, however

at the elections only 11 nominations were received, and the election was therefore uncontested. The current electorate of Greenham Parish is 2,778.

- 1.7 Theale Parish Council have requested an increase in the number of Councillors from 9 to 11 as it is considered that this may encourage more candidates to put themselves forward for election. At the last elections only 5 nominations were received. The current electorate of Theale Parish Council is 2,200.
- 1.8 It is therefore recommended that an Order be made to increase the number of councillors on Greenham Parish Council from 13 to 15 and on Theale Parish Council from 9 to 11 with effect from 5th May 2011.

Appendices

Appendix A – Schedule of number of Electors per seat per Parish

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: Parish/Town Councils were consulted

Officers Consulted: David Holling, Nick Carter

Trade Union: Not consulted