

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 5 FEBRUARY 2013

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**Title:**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE  
FOR LOCAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW - ROWLEDGE**

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Robert Knowles]**

**[Wards Affected: All Farnham wards]**

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**Summary and purpose:**

A Petition signed by local government electors from the existing Rowledge ward, calling on Waverley Borough Council to conduct a Local Governance Review for the creation of a separate Parish Council for Rowledge, was submitted on Monday 19 November 2012. On receipt of a valid petition the Council is obliged to conduct a Review within 12 months of drawing up Terms of Reference.

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**How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:**

Waverley is committed to making continued improvements in community engagement, more effective and convenient delivery of local services and better local democracy.

**Equality and Diversity Implications:**

Waverley must ensure that all those entitled to participate in the consultation process can do so. A consideration for the Council when conducting a Review is the impact on community cohesion.

**Environment and Climate Change Implications:**

There are none at this stage.

**Resource/Value for Money Implications:**

Work conducted so far has been carried out within the current staff and financial resources. Additional financial resources will be required to conduct the Review and carry out the consultation required. A budget provision of £10,000 is proposed for inclusion in financial year 2013 – 2014 as part of separate reports on the agenda. This will cover for the most part postage costs for the issue of a questionnaire in the second consultation period. There is no legal requirement to hold a referendum when conducting a Review. The issue of a questionnaire will be a more flexible and inclusive option, tailored to reflect the findings of the first consultation period and able to give persons consulted a say. If a referendum were to be held during the second consultation period, the estimated cost would amount to £30,000.

## **Legal Implications:**

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 makes provision for local electors throughout England to petition their principal council for a community governance review to be undertaken. The petition must set out at least one recommendation that the petitioners want the review to consider making. Where a valid petition is received with the requisite number of signatures a Local Governance Review must be held. Section 93 of the 2007 Act allows principal councils to decide how they will conduct a Review provided they comply with the duties outlined in the legislation. In conducting a Review, the Council is required by Section 100 of the 2007 Act above to have regard to the guidance on reviews published by The Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010. Having set the Terms of Reference (for which there is no time limit), the Review must then be held within a period of 12 months.

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## **Background**

1. Rowledge currently forms part of the Farnham Town Council area. All town and parish councils are elected together in a four-yearly cycle. The next parish elections will be conducted in May 2015.
2. The Terms of Reference for conducting a Local Governance Review must specify the area under Review and must be published. If any modifications are made to the Terms, these must also be published. Central Government expects the Terms of Reference to clearly set out the matters on which the Review will focus. The Terms should be relevant to local people and their circumstances and reflect the specific needs of their communities.
3. Proposed Terms of Reference for the review are set out in Annexe 2.

## **Conclusion**

4. A valid Petition has been received from the requisite number of local government electors within the Rowledge ward. Waverley Borough Council has not conducted a Local Governance Review within the last two years and is not currently conducting a Review. As a result Waverley is under a duty to conduct a Local Governance Review.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended to the Council that

1. a Local Governance Review be conducted to review the arrangements in the area of Rowledge to which the Petition relates in accordance with the Terms of Reference outlined above; and
  2. the Terms of Reference for the review be published on 1 March 2013 and Surrey County Council be notified on the same date.
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## Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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**Annexe 1 PLAN OF AREA TO WHICH THE REVIEW RELATES**

**Annexe 2 PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Annexe 3 PROPOSED TIMETABLE FOR CONSULTATION**



**Proposed Terms of Reference for a Community Governance Review to be conducted by Waverley Borough Council further to receipt of a Petition pursuant to Section 80 Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007**

**Introduction**

1. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 makes provisions for local electors throughout England to petition their principal council for a community governance review to be undertaken. The petition must set out at least one recommendation that the petitioners want the review to consider making.
2. A Petition has been received in accordance with the provisions of Section 80 Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, requesting that a separate parish council be established for Rowledge.
3. In order to be determined as valid, a Petition must contain the requisite number of signatures of local government electors in the ward concerned. The Petition has been checked against the most recently published electoral register for Rowledge ward and found to contain the required numbers of signatures. The Petition must define the area to which the Review relates (please see Appendix 1) and it must outline at least one recommendation sought. The Petition meets all of these criteria and is therefore valid.
4. The Petition contains five recommendations:
  - (i) That a separate Parish Council be established for Rowledge, and that
  - (ii) The boundary of the existing Rowledge BQ ward be altered and extended to include the "Sandrock Triangle", being all that area south-west of Sandrock Hill Road contained by the centre-line of Sandrock Hill Road and the existing boundary of Rowledge BQ ward, and that
  - (iii) A referendum be held for all residents within the existing Rowledge BQ ward together with the additional "Sandrock Triangle" area as described above asking whether there should be a separate parish council for Rowledge, and
  - (iv) That such parish council have 5 elected members, and
  - (v) That such Community Governance Review is undertaken by Waverley Borough Council to facilitate an official order in time for Elections in June 2014.
5. Further to the receipt of a valid petition, Waverley Borough Council is under a duty to undertake a Community Governance Review under Section 83 Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. This duty does not apply:
  - (i) Where a Review has been conducted within the last two years which in the Council's opinion covered the area or a significant part of the area subject to the petition or,
  - (ii) Where a Review is being conducted currently.

Waverley Borough Council has not conducted a Local Governance Review within the last two years and is not currently conducting a Review.

6. Section 93 of the 2007 Act allows principal councils to decide how they will conduct a Review provided they comply with the duties outlined in the legislation. In conducting a Review, the Council is required by Section 100 of the 2007 Act above to have regard to the Guidance on Community Governance Review published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in March 2010.
7. Waverley Borough Council has the power to decide whether or not to establish a new Parish Council. If the Council decides not to create a new parish council, the community concerned can only appeal by way of Judicial Review.

#### **What is a Community Governance Review?**

8. A Community Governance Review is a review of the whole or part of the Local Authority's Area for the purpose of making recommendations with regards to establishing, aggregating, amalgamating or separating parishes, the name and style of a new parish and electoral arrangements.

#### **Who will conduct the Community Governance Review?**

9. Waverley Borough Council, as the principal council, will conduct the Review.

#### **What area will the Community Governance Review cover?**

10. The Council will conduct a Review of the arrangements in Rowledge, being the part of the Local Authority's area that has submitted the Petition.

#### **How long will the Review take?**

11. The Review will begin when the Council publishes its Terms of Reference and it concludes with the publication of its recommendations. The Review will be conducted within a twelve month period.

#### **How will the Review be conducted?**

12. The Review will be conducted in accordance with the duties outlined in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and Guidance on Community Governance Review published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in March 2010.
13. Waverley Borough Council will notify Surrey County Council in accordance with Section 79 of the 2007 Act that a Review is to be undertaken and will provide the Terms of Reference for the Review.
14. In accordance with Section 93 of the 2007 Act Waverley will consult with:

- (i) local government electors for the area under review, and
  - (ii) any other person or body (including another local authority) which appears to have an interest in the review.
15. Waverley will consult with Surrey County Council, Farnham Town Council and others any others who appear to have an interest in the review which might include local businesses and local public and voluntary organisations. The Council will publish the terms of reference of the review, any proposals made as a result of the conduct of the review and any recommendations made on its website.
16. In accordance with the 2007 Act, the Local Authority will have regard to the need to secure that any community governance for the area under review reflects the identities and interests of the local community in that area, and that it is effective and convenient. Relevant considerations will include the impact on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of the proposed area. The Government believes that the effectiveness and convenience of local government is best understood in the context of a local authority's ability to deliver quality services economically and efficiently, and give users of services a democratic voice in the decisions that affect them.
17. Consultation methodology – There will be two periods of consultation. The first will commence on 1 March 2013 and conclude on 20 May 2013. The second will commence on 2 September 2013 and conclude on 11 October 2013. Initial consultation will take place with all households residing in Farnham Town Council area, together with local businesses, organisations and any other persons who appear to have an interest in the review. Representations received during the first consultation period will be collated and considered and an Interim Report on initial findings provided for Executive and Full Council. The second consultation period will allow for a questionnaire to be issued to those who appear to have an interest in the review.

### **Community Governance**

18. Parish and Town Councils are the most local tier of government in England. They are a democratically elected tier, independent of other council tiers and budgets. There is a large variation in the size of parishes in England from those with a handful of electors to those with over 40,000 electors. The Government recognises the role that such councils can play in terms of community empowerment at a local level. Parish Councils have two main roles: community representation and local administration. The March 2010 guidance states that for both purposes it is desirable that a parish should reflect a distinctive and recognisable community of place, with its own sense of identity.
19. Waverley Borough Council will consider the wider picture of community governance when conducting this Review and will consider other forms of community governance as alternatives or stages towards establishing a parish council.

## **Options for consideration**

### **That a separate parish council be established for Rowledge**

20. The Petition that has been submitted asks the Council to establish a separate parish council for Rowledge. The Council has a duty to consider the request as a valid petition has been submitted.

### **Maintenance of the current position**

21. If there is no clear support for the establishing of a separate parish council, the Council will consider maintaining the current position. This would leave the area of Rowledge ward within the Farnham Town Council's area.

### **Area Committees**

22. Area Committees are part of the structure of some principal councils where they choose to have them. Area committees are a key initiative for enabling local government to fulfil community governance roles and also to deliver government policy on issues affecting social inclusion in local communities. They can cover large areas and exist to advise or make decisions on specific responsibilities that include parks, off street parking and planning applications. More widely, they contribute to shaping council services and improving local service provision.

### **Neighbourhood Management**

23. Neighbourhood management programmes are set up by Principal Councils and may be led by one of a number of bodies. The March 2010 guidance states that the expansion of neighbourhood management was promoted in the Local Government White Paper<sup>10</sup> as a tool to enable local authorities to deliver more responsive services through their empowerment of citizens and communities. Their purpose is to create the opportunity for residents to work with local agencies, usually facilitated by a neighbourhood manager, to improve services at the neighbourhood level.
24. Neighbourhood management arrangements aim to improve "quality of life" through implementation of (rather than advising or making decisions on) better management of local environment, increasing community safety, improving housing stock, working with young people, and encouraging employment opportunities, supported strategically by relevant stakeholders and Local Strategic Partnerships. They tend to cover smaller populations than area committees.

### **Area or Community Forums**

25. Area or Community Forums can be set up by the Principal Council, or created by local residents to act as a mechanism to give communities a say on principal council matters or local issues. Sometimes forums are set up to



comment on a specific project or initiative that will impact upon the local area, and so may be time-limited. They increase participating and consultation, aiming to influence decision making, rather than having powers to implement services. They vary in size, purpose and impact, but membership usually consists of people working or living in a specific area. Some forums also include ward councillors, and representatives from the council and relevant stakeholders can attend meetings.

### **Residents' and Tenants' Associations**

26. Residents' and Tenants' associations enable local people to participate in local issues affecting their neighbourhood or housing estate, including the upkeep of the local environment, crime, sometimes dealing with anti-social behaviour matters, or on some estates, housing management. They can be set up by any group of people living in the same area and can choose who members will be; how they will be represented and what they want to achieve. To engage effectively with other organisations, residents' and tenants' associations must be able to show that they are accountable and represent the view of the whole community, rather than narrow self interests of just a few local people.

### **Community Associations**

27. Community Associations offer a particular and widespread democratic model for local residents and local community-based organisations in a defined neighbourhood to work together for the benefit of that neighbourhood. They can use a model constitution registered with the Charity Commission. The Principal Council may also be represented on the association's committee. They usually manage a community centre as a base for their activities. Membership is open to everyone resident in the area.

### **Electorate forecast**

28. When considering the electoral arrangements, the Council will take into account the number of registered electors affected when the review starts, and a forecast of the number of electors expected to be in the area within five years. The most recently published electoral register has been used to gain an accurate figure for the existing electorate.
29. Farnham Town Council is split into the following wards:
- Farnham Bourne – 3204
  - Farnham Castle – 3355
  - Farnham Firgrove – 3285
  - Farnham Hale and Heath End – 3410
  - Farnham Moor Park – 3697
  - Farnham Shortheath and Boundstone – 3230
  - Farnham Upper Hale – 3262
  - Farnham Weybourne and Badshot Lea – 3411
  - Farnham Wrecclesham and Rowledge – 3443
- The total electorate for Farnham is 30,297

30. The Local Government Act 1972, as amended, specifies that each parish council must have at least five councillors; there is no maximum number. The National Association of Local Councils Circular 1126 suggested that the minimum number of councillors for any parish should be 7 and the maximum 25. In considering the issue of council size the Electoral Commission is of the view that each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and the pattern of communities and also that the broad pattern of existing council sizes should be considered.

### **The Conclusion of the Review**

31. If, at the conclusion of the Review, Waverley Borough Council decides to create a new parish council, this will be done by way of a Reorganisation Order. A Reorganisation order can be made at any time however for administrative and financial reasons (such as setting up the new parish council and setting its first precept) the order should take effect on the 1 April following the date on which it is made.
32. If such an order is made any additional matters may be considered including the setting of a precept (council tax levy) for any newly established parish council, the transfer and management or custody of any property and any other matters as appropriate.
33. Electoral arrangements will not come into force until the first elections to the parish council following the Reorganisation Order. The new parish council will not be formally constituted until this time. This can be at the same time as the next scheduled parish elections or if there would be some delay, the Council may decide to hold an election earlier for the parish before it falls into line with the normal electoral cycle for Waverley at the next parish elections.
34. In the period after the decision to create a new parish council, but before elections to it, the local authority may create a shadow council for the parish to assist with the transition period. Any decisions taken by a shadow council are not binding on a new parish council when it is elected.
35. The Local Government and Public Involvement and Health Act 2007 removed the requirement for the consent of the Secretary of State for the creation of new town or parish councils. If the Council decides not to create a new parish, no order will be made by Waverley Borough Council.

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 2 JULY 2013

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Title:

**ROWLEDGE LOCAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW - FIRST CONSULTATION  
FINDINGS**

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Robert Knowles]  
[Wards Affected: All Farnham Wards]**

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Summary and purpose:

This report presents the findings of the first consultation period for the Rowledge Local Governance Review, together with a summary of views from residents, businesses and organisations in the Farnham Town Council area.

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How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

Waverley is committed to making continued improvements in community engagement, more effective and convenient delivery of local services and better local democracy.

Financial Implications:

A budget provision is in place in the sum of £10,000 to cover the costs of production and printing of the questionnaire in the first consultation period and postage for the first and second consultation periods.

Legal Implications:

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 makes provision for local electors throughout England to petition their principal council for a community governance review to be undertaken. Section 93 of the 2007 Act allows principal councils to decide how they will conduct a Review provided they comply with the duties outlined in the legislation. Terms of Reference were set and published on 1 March 2013. The Review must be conducted within a period of 12 months.

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Introduction

1. One copy of a questionnaire entitled "Local Governance Review on the creation of a new Parish Council for Rowledge – Your chance to have a say" was sent to all households in the Farnham Town Council area that pay council tax with their council tax bills in March 2013. In addition an online version of the same questionnaire was created on the Waverley Borough Council's website.

2. **Responses from residents** A total of 340 representations were received from residents. The first question asked was as follows:

Do you think Rowledge should :

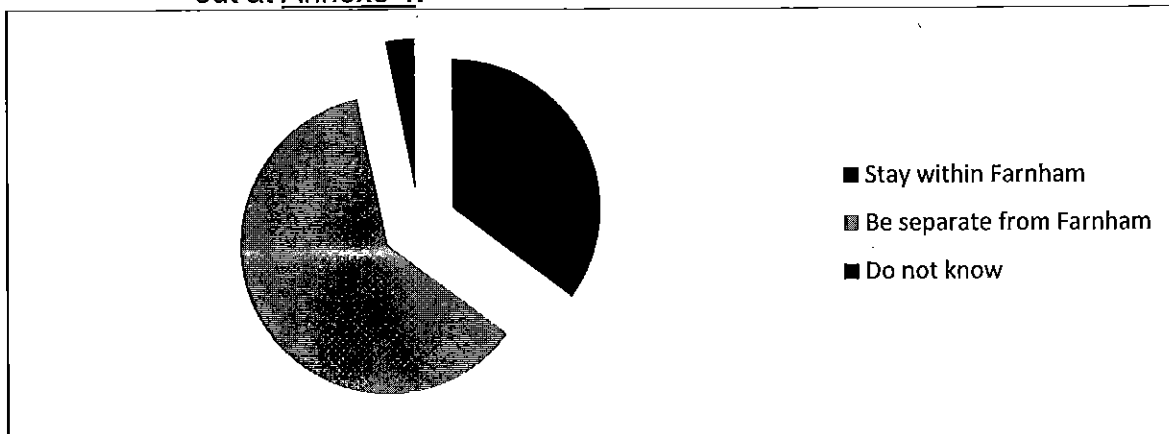
- (i) Stay within Farnham Town Council
- (ii) Be separate from Farnham Town Council
- (iii) I don't know

3. The representations referred to in paragraph 2 above have been separated into the following groups;

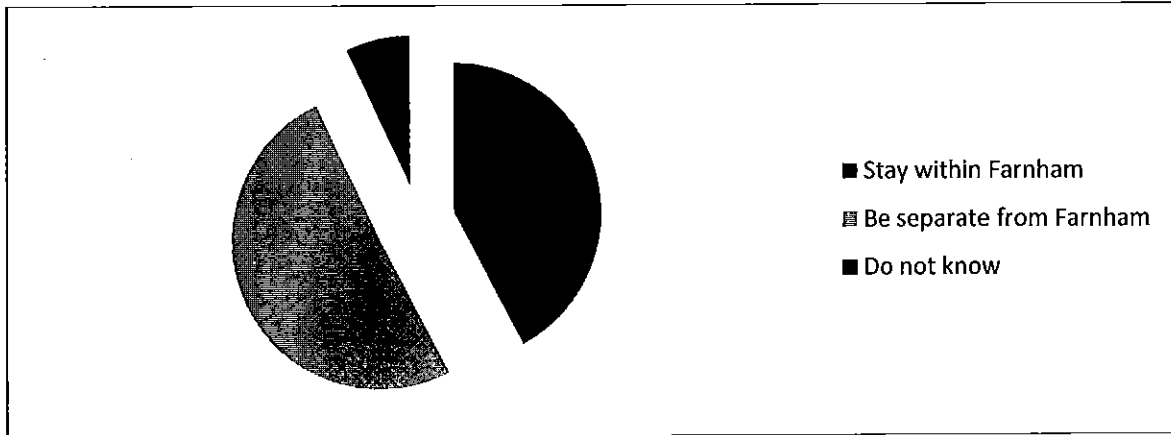
- (i) Representations received from households in the area to which the petition relates, including the village of Rowledge and excluding the area referred to as the Sandrock Triangle.
- (ii) Representations received from households in the area referred to as the Sandrock Triangle.
- (iii) Representations received from households in the area referred to as the Sandrock Triangle regarding the recommendation to alter the boundary of the existing Rowledge ward, to include the area referred to as the Sandrock Triangle.
- (iv) Representations received from households in the Farnham Town Council area outside the proposed boundary of the area to which the petition relates. For the avoidance of doubt this group of representations also excludes any received from those residing within the area referred to by the petitioners as the Sandrock Triangle.

4. **Analysis of responses from different areas within Farnham Town Council area.**

- (i) 125 representations were received from households in the area to which the petition relates including the village of Rowledge and excluding the area referred to as the Sandrock Triangle. Of these 125 responses, 44 (35%) thought that Rowledge should stay within Farnham Town Council, 77 (62%) thought that Rowledge should be separate and 4 (3%) did not know. A summary of these views is set out at Annexe 1.

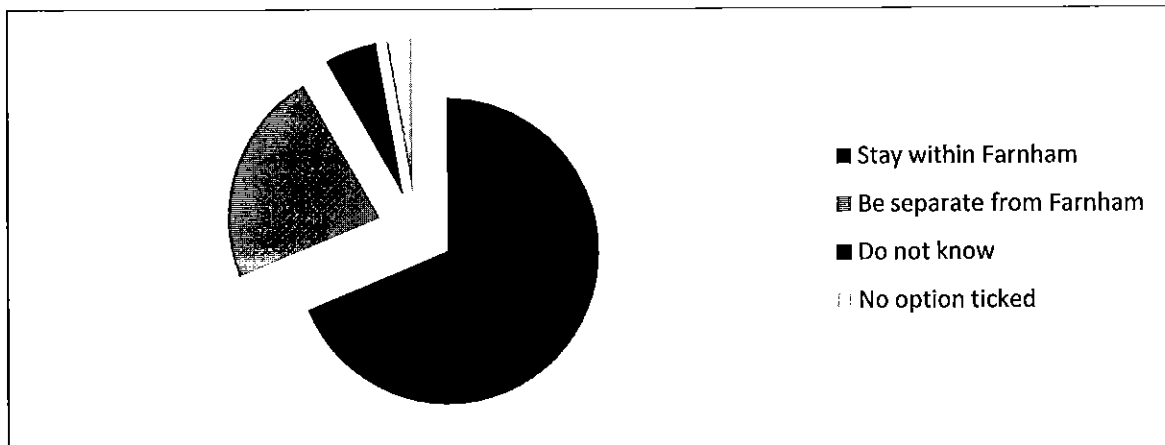


- (ii) 71 representations were received from households in the area referred to as the Sandrock Triangle. Of these 71 responses, 30 (42%) thought that Rowledge should stay within Farnham Town Council, 36 (51%) thought that Rowledge should be separate and 5 (7%) did not know.

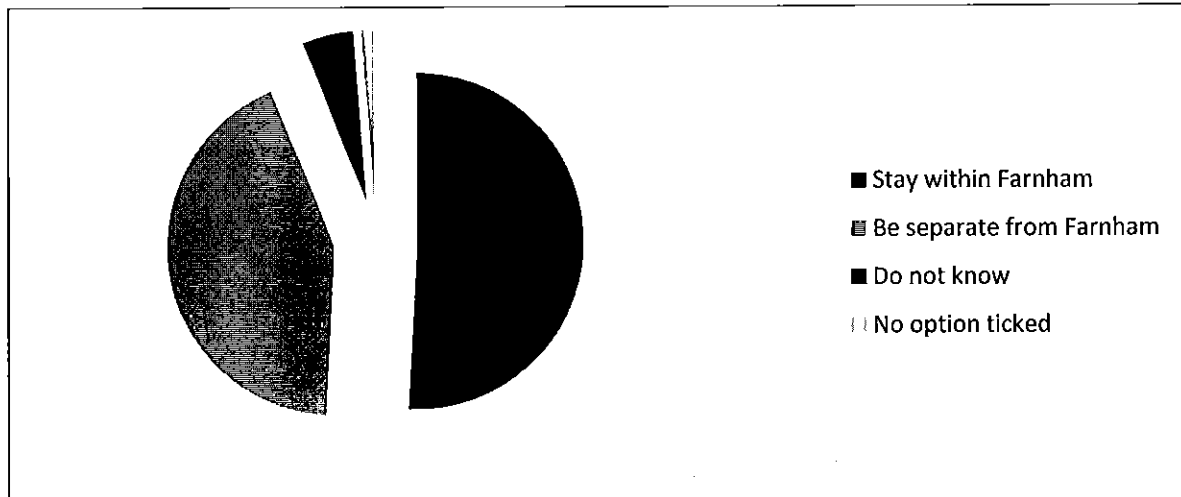


- (iii) Residents were asked at question 3 of the questionnaire what they thought about the recommendation to alter the boundary of the existing Rowledge ward, to include the area referred to in the petition as the Sandrock Triangle. Many respondents of the overall total received considered that the existing boundary should include the Sandrock Triangle area only if the residents of that area wished to be included. A summary of the responses from those residing in the Sandrock Triangle area are reproduced below at [Annexe 2](#).

- (iv) 144 representations were received from households in the Farnham Town Council area outside the proposed boundary of the area to which the petition relates. Of these 144 responses, 99 respondents (69%) thought Rowledge should stay within Farnham Town Council, 33 (23%) thought that Rowledge should be separate, 8 (6%) did not know and 4 (2%) did not tick any of the options. A summary of these views is set out at [Annexe 3](#).



5. **Summary of total of 340 responses received during the first consultation period from households.** 173 of the total respondents (51%) thought Rowledge should stay within Farnham Town Council, 146 respondents (43%) thought Rowledge should be separate from Farnham Council, 17 respondents (5%) did not know and 4 (1%) did not tick any of the options.



6. One copy of the same questionnaire was sent to all businesses that pay business rates within the Farnham Town Council area inviting responses by 21 June 2013. One copy of the questionnaire was sent also to organisations including sports clubs, schools, churches and village groups in the entire Farnham Town Council area. Around 1400 businesses and organisations were consulted. There was a very low response. A summary of the responses received has been included at Annexe 4.
7. Terms of Reference, together with an invitation to respond to the consultation, were sent to Surrey County Council and Farnham Town Council on 1 March 2013. The response received from Farnham Town Council has been reproduced in full at Annexe 5. No representations were received from Surrey County Council.

### Conclusion

8. A total of 340 responses were received following the issue of a questionnaire to all households paying council tax in the whole of the Farnham Town Council area. The second consultation period is due to commence on 2 September 2013 and conclude on 11 October 2013. The terms of reference for the review stated that "the second consultation period will allow for a questionnaire to be issued to those who appear to have an interest in the review." Local government electors should be consulted in the second consultation period. The options are for local government electors in the area to which the petition relates (including the village of Rowledge and the area referred to as the "Sandrock Triangle") to be consulted or for all local government electors in the entire Farnham Town Council area to be consulted. Further, the options for consulting with local government electors are by way of further questionnaire as set out in the terms of reference or for a referendum to be held. The latter option is being sought by Farnham Town Council and a very small handful of respondents. If a referendum were

conducted for all local government electors in the Farnham Town Council area, the cost would be in the region of £30,000.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that

1. agreement be given to local government electors in the area to which the petition relates, including the village of Rowledge and the area referred to as the Sandrock Triangle, being consulted during the second consultation period; and
2. the method of consultation be by way of questionnaire, as outlined in the Terms of Reference, sent to each local government elector falling within the area to which the petition relates.

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### **Background Papers**

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

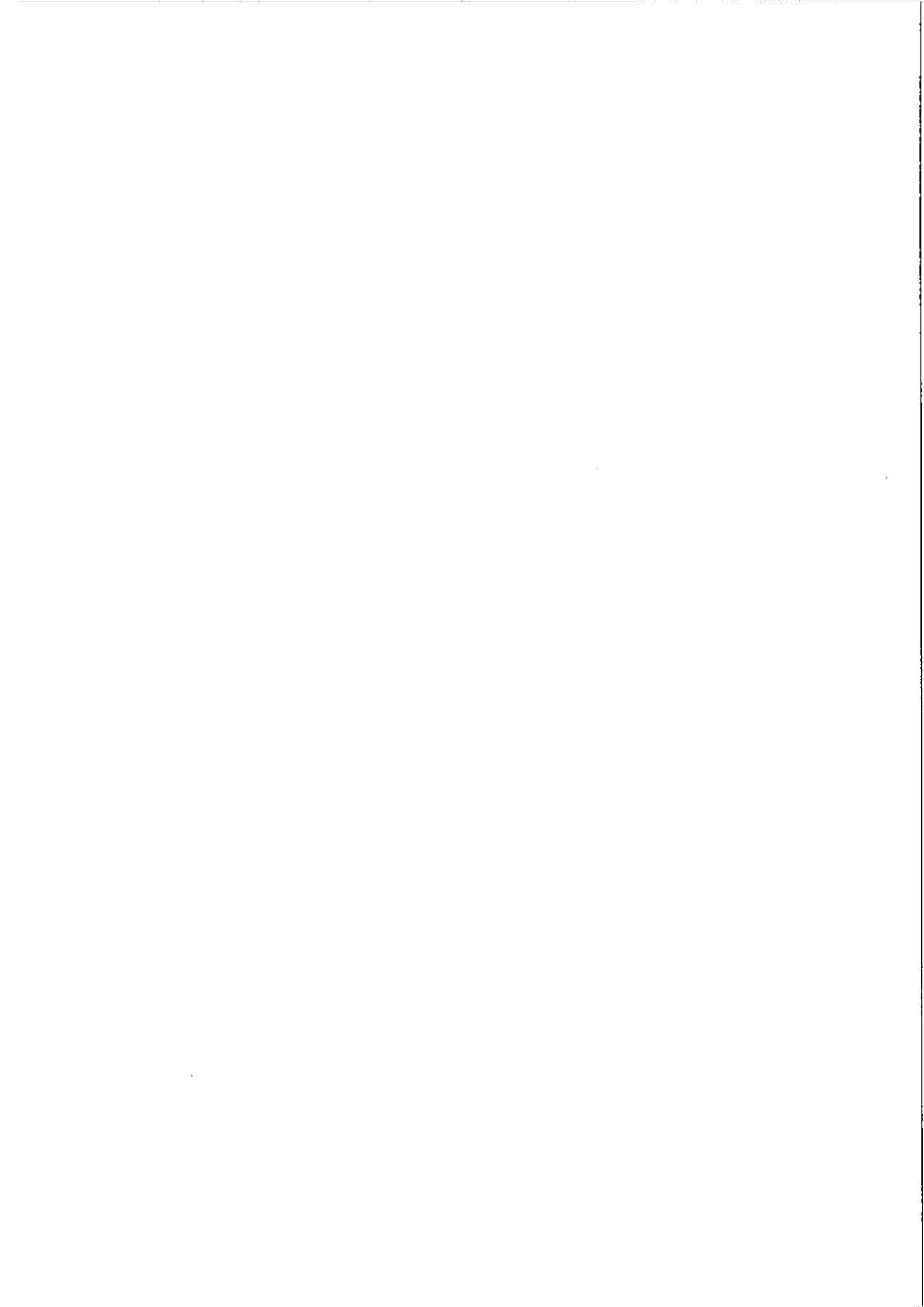
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**Annexe 1 Summary of views from households in the area to which the petition relates including the village of Rowledge and excluding the area referred to as the Sandrock Triangle.**

<b>Stay within Farnham Town Council</b>	<b>Be separate from Farnham Town Council</b>
No concrete facts have been supplied to indicate that residents would benefit.	Rowledge and Sandrock will be able to concentrate on more local issues.
I see no need for a further level of bureaucracy, which will only add to council tax bills.	We can make our own decisions on what is best for Rowledge.
Farnham Town Council provides adequate local representation.	If we join together in a parish council our collective voices will carry more weight.
I have never known an extra layer of bureaucracy cost less in the long run or prove to be more efficient.	The village would have more autonomy.
It is more effective to pool monies. Farnham Town Council does a good job and need their full precept. Farnham is growing in size and needs all of its districts.	Farnham Town council have repeatedly been ineffective in protecting the town from Waverley Borough Council's excessive, high-density re-development plans.
The current system works. Those that are proposing the new system are under the misconception that there will be lots more funding and I believe their energies in a new parish council will be short-lived.	Resources available to a local parish council can be used more effectively when they are allocated to specific needs identified by its residents.
I don't think the "area" is representative of Rowledge as it excludes the church, school and many residents due to the county boundary.	I would like Rowledge's distinct character and community spirit to be maintained and increased.
Rowledge is a lovely village but if larger would not retain its character and cease to be a "village". The school and surgery would be severely overloaded.	A distinct and recognisable community that is separate from Farnham.
I am proud to be a citizen of Farnham and have no wish to weaken its town council.	Likelihood of improved representation of our views, separate from Farnham Town council.
I think that some of the advocates of separation are doing it for personal reasons than for the benefit of the village.	Rowledge has a thriving local community that would be best served with a local parish council.
It would result in additional costs - elections, administrative and professional support - which is inappropriate in a time of austerity.	We would get more value for our financial contribution to the local taxation system.
Rowledge residents already have a voice through their elected representatives on Waverley Borough Council and Surrey County Council which are the authorities with the most important functions.	Government should be carried out closer to the people. It allows money received locally to be spent locally on areas divided by elected representatives.
I believe the group lobbying is interested in planning. They are called "Rowledge	Provided there are villagers who wish to serve on a parish council, we think the

village plan, planning and local government workgroup”.	village would benefit from a more focussed body.
Likely councillors will be older and non-representative of the younger community. This is less likely to arise in Farnham.	Local people understand the area and can meet the needs better.
Half of Rowledge is not in Farnham Town Council or in Waverley – it is in Binsted Parish Council and East Hants District Council. The signpost “Rowledge” is by the Bourne Stream in Fullers Road, Hampshire. This plan ignores half of Rowledge.	I believe a Rowledge parish council is the most effective way to ensure the long term survival of the village as a unique, rural community which is separate from Farnham and has different interests and aspirations.
Rowledge is reliant to a very large degree on the functions and facilities of Farnham and would be lost without what the town has to offer. As a result it is vital Rowledge is represented on Farnham Town Council.	Farnham Town Council covers too large an area/electorate. It focuses virtually exclusively on central Farnham. We see little benefit from our precept here in Rowledge.
By remaining within Farnham Town council, Rowledge residents will be able to continue to share in all the activities organised by them for the benefit of all.	I do not believe that Farnham Town Council has fairly represented the residents of Rowledge. The recent 30% increase in council reflects this.
It is a bad idea. Rowledge has cash and should contribute more widely.	Rowledge will benefit from a bigger share of the council tax raised from its residents.
Already too many boundaries – Surrey and Hampshire. The School is in Hampshire and my Local Education Authority is Surrey.	It is very telling about what Farnham Town Council thinks of Rowledge as there is no mention of us in the Annual Town Meeting of electors.
The new councillors are likely to take loans to rebuild the village hall, which I am against.	Elected members to the parish council will have a better idea of what is good for Rowledge than Farnham councillors.
At an information meeting I questioned the possible impact on total budget and was not given a satisfactory answer.	More effective and accountable use of the village’s share of the council tax for the benefit of the village.
I am strongly against the scheme and hope it will be quickly stopped before much time, effort and money has been wasted on it. I feel this is an idea cooked up by supporters of the scheme, to introduce high rateable values to the area and thus support their scheme.	Rowledge has a strong identity as a village and still has pubs, shops, garage, holds a fete, has a cricket team – all of which suggests a good community spirit.
We use facilities in Farnham so should expect to contribute to their upkeep.	There are prospective councillors available.

**Annexe 2 – Summary of responses from households in the Sandrock Triangle area regarding the recommendation to alter the boundary of the existing Rowledge ward, to include the area referred to as the Sandrock Triangle.**

Comments against inclusion	Comments in favour of inclusion
The money generated by the inclusion of the Sandrock Triangle is the prime driving force of the boundary change	I live in Broad Ha’Penny and feel much more a member of Rowledge Village than I feel for Wrecclesham.
Our address is Boundstone, Wrecclesham and we do not consider ourselves part of Rowledge	It would be a positive recommendation. It is a natural organic change to the boundary. The two wards are symbiotic and share its “green lungs”.
As a resident of Boundstone for over 30 years we are not in the Sandrock Triangle as it is not a place. Boundstone is a separate place. Rowledge should have had the decency if they had wished us to go in with them, for it to be named Rowledge and Boundstone Parish Council.	As a resident of the Sandrock Triangle we are part of Rowledge – the school, the parish church, the events within the village centre are all part of the “Triangle” and we should be included.
There is more connection to Farnham than to Rowledge.	Wrecclesham is a place with which I have no affinity and frankly try to avoid for safety reasons.
This area is part of Wrecclesham, not Rowledge.	This I consider to be a logical (and overdue?) tidying-up of boundary lines to give a clear boundary defined by roads.
I have never used any of the facilities in Rowledge, nor am I likely to.	The area has been a “no mans land” since it lost its shop, vet and travelling library so I support the proposal to extend the boundary.
We do not need the Sandrock Triangle. Rowledge covers enough area as it is.	Rowledge is our natural focus for all local needs and issues.
The residents of the Sandrock Triangle have been excluded from the Rowledge “white papers” deliberations. The cost of administering a new council will fall disproportionately on the Sandrock Triangle.	Excellent! This is an opportunity to reclaim some sense of identity.
We fear any plan to include the “Sandrock Triangle” would cause the triangle to bear the brunt of Rowledge’s share of new developments and would be regarded as attractive for builders and developers. We in Birch Close have formed a Resident’s Association as a means of efficient sharing of information and in particular to monitor developments such as the one proposed at Baker Oates.	We have close association with Rowledge, feel part of it, support activities and businesses. Wrecclesham means nothing and Farnham is driving shoppers out with car parking charges.

<b>Comments against inclusion</b>	<b>Comments in favour of inclusion</b>
<p>The 'Triangle' consists of a network of semi-rural enclaves which each have their own special interests and needs. If the 'new' Rowledge Parish needs to contribute more housing 'starts' it will have to look east of Fullers Road and the Long Road, to where Baker Oates and 10 Acre are the 'lungs' of Boundstone (and in particular the 'Sandrock Triangle'). Manna for 'get rich quick' developers. This potential opportunistic urbanisation of a semi-rural community will conflict with the paucity of suitable roads, transport and social infrastructure.</p>	<p>Boundstone and Sandrock have no identity and therefore regard Rowledge as the local centre and support Rowledge activities.</p>
<p>The area in question is currently part of Wrecclesham and Boundstone, has its own community which does not need to be subsumed into Rowledge and does not necessarily feel connected to it.</p>	<p>We feel isolated from Farnham Town Council.</p>
<p>There has not been adequate communication regarding the pros and cons of such a change in boundary.</p>	<p>The present ward and postcode list the Boundstone area as Wrecclesham but they share nothing in common.</p>
<p>Boundstone has more in common with Farnham than with Rowledge.</p>	<p>It makes geographic and economic sense – it significantly increases the population and hence income of the proposed new council.</p>
<p>It is a sad fact that no-one from Rowledge has even broached this matter to the people in my close before pitching to take control of the funds we pay into.</p>	<p>At the moment the area sits in almost limbo between Wrecclesham and Rowledge, but would be more appropriately aligned with Rowledge given its proximity to the Village.</p>
<p>I see no need for change and no great advantage to Boundstone residents.</p>	<p>This area already has more to do with Rowledge than the town. The configuration of the main roads naturally creates an area within the A325 and to the south of Echo Barn Lane.</p>
<p>Boundstone and Sandrock are separated from Rowledge by Manor Farm and Baker Oates and form their own enclaves. I believe staying linked to Farnham will provide a greater degree of transparency.</p>	<p>I think Waverley and Farnham forget us in the Sandrock Triangle. So if a parish council could help it would be a good thing.</p>

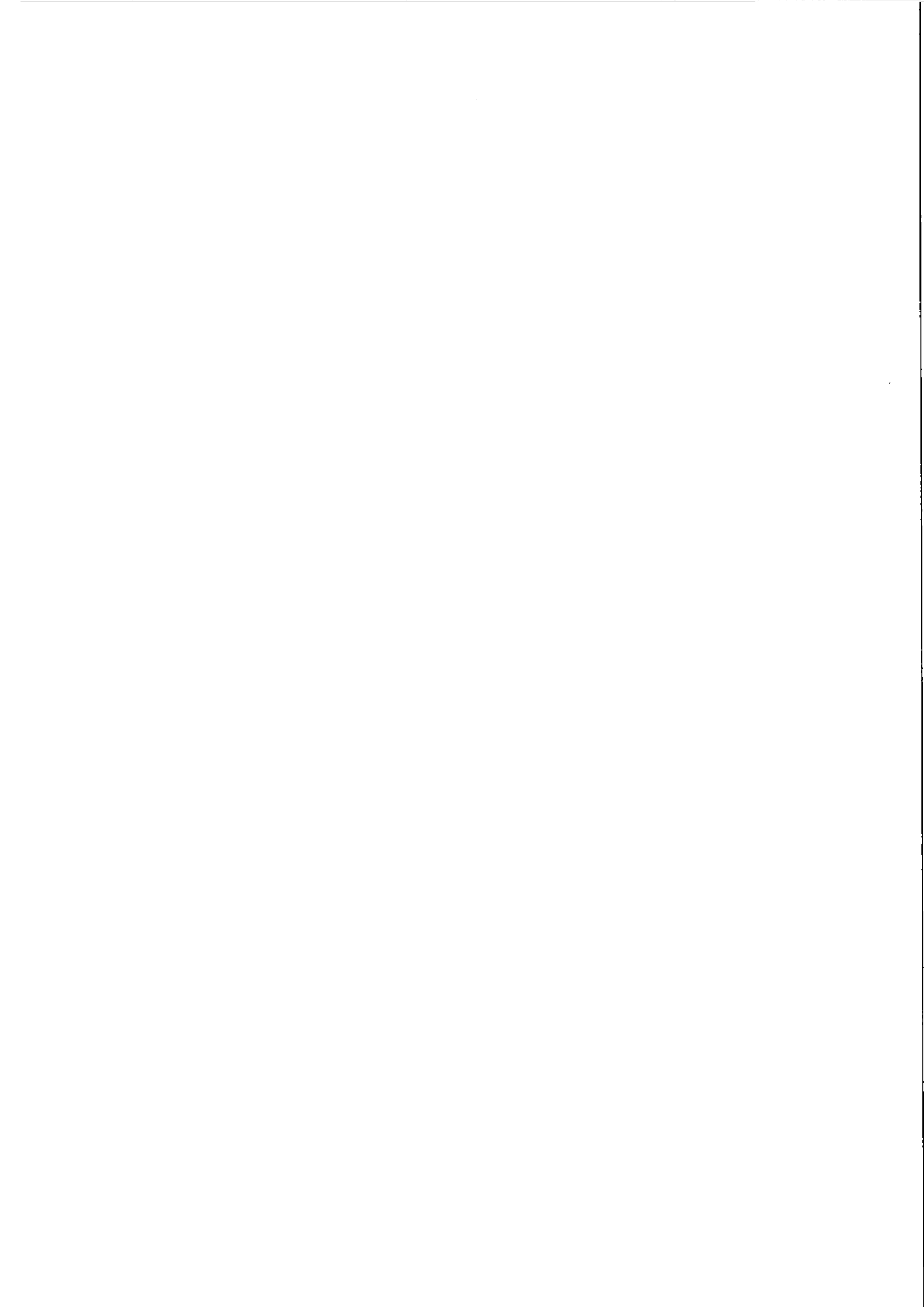
**Annexe 3 Summary of views from households in the Farnham Town Council area outside the proposed boundary of the area to which the petition relates.**

<b>Stay within Farnham Town Council</b>	<b>Be separate from Farnham Town Council</b>
Concerned about potential loss of revenue to Farnham Town Council and the cost of such a change at this time of acute fiscal austerity.	Rowledge is a village on the outskirts of Farnham and as such has different needs from the town.
Whatever funding is available will have to be split and therefore will be less beneficial to the towns' community.	Rowledge would have control of its' own income and expenditure.
It is important that all the parishes in Farnham should co-operate and contribute to the wider overall interests of Farnham Town. If Rowledge is removed, its residents will still have use of the Farnham facilities that the remaining parishes will continue to fund.	If the council tax income can be directed to Rowledge, then the people would have more say in directing resources in the care and maintenance of Rowledge.
A parish should "reflect a distinctive and recognisable community, with its own sense of identity". The proposed parish does not meet these two conditions because with the boundaries as shown on the map, territory and therefore, communities are being claimed that do not belong to Rowledge either naturally or historically. Moon's Hill belongs to Frensham, Echo Barn Lane belongs to Wrecclesham and Boundstone has its own identity. A parish that excludes both its church and its school – two pillars of village life - is no parish at all.	Rowledge has a clear and separate identity from Farnham and would be best served by having its own Parish Council so that specific Rowledge issues may be addressed rather than being swamped in the totality of Farnham Town Council as at present.
Rowledge is too small. The only way it can even start is if it combines with Boundstone. I suppose Wrecclesham will want to go next, then Hale etc.	Rowledge would be a large enough area to support itself and benefit its residents.
Rowledge is very much a part of Farnham and should not be treated differently.	They are a distinct, recognisable community, who many of the rest of Farnham do not know they exist.
This seems like a cynical attempt by Rowledge residents to retain wealth within their community while still expecting to use all the diverse facilities provided by Farnham Town Council.	Importantly the parish would be represented by villagers who would represent accurately the needs of residents and understand the issues specific to Rowledge.
No to yet another layer of bureaucracy.	Local affairs are best managed locally.
We should not be expanding council burdens upon rate payers. Extra time, staff and office = additional costs.	Spending by Farnham Town Council seems to be out of control and I guess Rowledge residents aren't seeing any of it spent in their part of the town.

<b>Stay within Farnham Town Council</b>	<b>Be separate from Farnham Town Council</b>
A cynical move to spend the council tax contributions of its wealthier citizens on itself rather than on projects that will benefit Farnham as a whole. Rowledge is not sufficiently distinct from the rest of Farnham to justify this move on the grounds of Rowledge having its own separate needs.	Farnham Town Council has not served its people particularly well in recent years. "Localism" is a good thing and if the people of Rowledge want to go it alone, they should be allowed to.
It is not sufficiently different or physically separate to justify a split.	It is a distinct village, not part of a town.
I don't want our services to be reduced, living outside of the proposed area, or costs to increase.	Farnham's council tax increase is the highest. Rowledge being separate will reduce this.
Rowledge is as integral to Farnham as all the other villages. Rowledge Residents use many Farnham facilities: station, main shops, secondary schools etc. There is no "green belt" separating Rowledge from Farnham.	Rowledge can give more personal and quick attention to local matters and give priority to things which are required locally.
The size of Farnham Town Council should not be diminished. I want to have a strong Town Council.	Farnham Town Council does not adequately reflect Rowledge residents' opinions/concerns.
Farnham Town council covers a very diverse area and must be treated as a cohesive whole not just lopping off the "up market" portions for independence.	Rowledge are motivated to deal with their own area and believe they can utilise the resources more ably than being directed by others.
There are far more important issues that local authorities and councils need to address.	Parish councils work better and more efficiently than Town councils.
The cost of all local government is already too fragmented – fragmentation drives up costs for all and adds unnecessary levels of bureaucracy. This might have a few enthusiasts not but it will pass.	Rowledge has a very different feel to Farnham and is a lovely self-contained village that deserves its own say on how things should be run.
Why waste more of our money on this stupid idea. These things only come about when certain groups feel they can gain an advantage – it's so wrong.	Rowledge is a very progressive community and would benefit from being independent. Rowledge has a number of persons well able to manage the village's affairs. The people of Rowledge could well get better benefit from any money spent from a precept rate.
If separated, other parishes are then likely to follow suit significantly impacting on Farnham Town Council.	People who know the needs would fight for the rights. There already appears to be a village spirit existing which could be built upon.

#### **Annexe 4 – Businesses and Organisations**

<b>Stay within Farnham Town Council</b>	<b>Be separate from Farnham Town Council</b>
Completely unsustainable and inefficient. Would duplicate provision and ignore the interdependency of the two communities.	It is a good idea as it is a logical area with a parish church. Farnham Town Council will have to reduce their costs so change does not impact on rates in Farnham.
I believe in a society that supports each other, ie. Financially rich areas should not keep all their funds for themselves but should share their resources. The smaller the parish councils the greater the divide between rich and poor areas.	Good idea. Rowledge has a thriving local community that currently seems to operate independently of Farnham. My only reservation is the potential for extra costs.
Rowledge should stay within Farnham and Farnham should break away from Waverley. The Council would be run and make decisions by locally elected people and not by councillors that mainly live many miles away from Farnham.	I am in favour as this will focus on the needs of the village rather than being an adjunct to the town. There is a world of difference between the needs of a town and that of a village. Rowledge is a village.
Rowledge may need the Sandrock area to form a parish council. This is no reason to accept.	There appears to be a logical geographical case for the proposed boundary.
It is important for Farnham as a whole that small areas within the town don't seek their own governance. It will lead to unnecessary bureaucracy and division.	The residents of Rowledge have the right to determine their own form of community governance and the local parish council should be made up of local people, who are committed to the well-being of their community and who are best placed to understand the local issues.
Completely irrelevant for Farnham businesses and a waste of money.	Will foster a greater sense of community in Rowledge
Rowledge would make sense as an entity only if a portion of the village now in Hampshire were in Surrey, ie. If the county boundary were moved.	We believe the residents of Rowledge have the right to determine their own form of community governance and that the local parish council should be made up of local people who are committed to the well-being of their community and who are best placed to understand the local issues.
I don't wish to be represented by Rowledge.	







**Farnham**  
Town Council

**Iain Lynch**

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20th May 2013

Chief Executive  
Waverley Borough Council  
The Burys  
Godalming  
Surrey  
GU7 1HR

Dear Sirs

#### **Local Governance Review Rowledge**

Farnham Town Council objects to the proposal for the creation of a separate Parish Council for Rowledge, splitting the existing Rowledge and Wrecclesham Ward. Farnham Town Council also objects to the annexing of part of the Shortheath and Boundstone Ward to be part of the proposed Rowledge Parish area.

Set out below are reasons why the Town Council holds this view.

#### **Rational Boundaries**

The current Farnham Town Council boundary is rational. The Town Council has recognised that the village of Rowledge itself is split by the County boundary, with part in Hampshire and part in Surrey. The splitting of the existing Rowledge and Wrecclesham Ward to create the proposed new Parish does not create the desired unification of the whole of the village into a separate parish nor does it fit with the historic or ecclesiastical boundaries. It would contain the Village Hall but neither the School nor the Church which are integral parts of the "Village" but situated in Hampshire.

The annexing of another part of Farnham, outside the Rowledge Ward boundary, also splitting the Shortheath and Boundstone Ward, has never been proposed previously and further complicates the separation of the 'recognised' village community and makes no practical sense (apart from adding extra financial resource for the new Parish from any additional precept).

In addition the proposed abstraction of Rowledge from Town Council area creates a chunk out of the current Town Council boundary which isn't logical. The natural line of the

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Town Clerk – Iain Lynch



existing boundary would be broken, with a noticeable tear in the fabric of the Town boundary. Similarly Echo Barn Lane is certainly not considered by Farnham Town Council nor its residents to be part of Rowledge.

Farnham Town Council invests councillor and staff time in supporting local communities who want to take responsibility for activities locally but this must be done in a framework which is meaningful and rational.

Overall the area selected is too small to be a viable entity which can properly represent the local people.



Map showing proposed boundary (blue) split of the shortheath and Boundstone boundary (purple) and ecclesiastical boundary (red) with the largest part of the Rowledge ecclesiastical Parish in Binsted (Hampshire).

### **Sandrock Triangle**

There is no evidence to suggest that residents living in the 'Sandrock Triangle' wish to be part of Rowledge, nor take part in or feel part of community activities in Rowledge. The area was annexed by the proposers of the scheme after the initial discussions and appears to be more about cartographical convenience rather than community will or enthusiasm. In fact, the Town Council has received representations from residents in the area concerned about the way this has been carried out and stating that there is no relationship between the Boundstone area and Rowledge. None of the Electors in the "Sandrock Triangle" signed the Petition and many are unhappy or hostile to their proposed annexation.

The Town Council believes that this proposal will fragment rather than create community cohesion.

The Town Council is concerned over the impact that splitting of the existing Shortheath and Boundstone ward will have electorally, representationally, and from a community cohesion point of view.

## **Cohesion, Community and Convenience**

At present, the Rowledge community is consulted and engaged with in relation to all Town Council matters, e.g. the Farnham Design Statement, the Neighbourhood Plan and other projects. The Town Council works closely with all local organisations and residents' associations, including those in Rowledge and there has been active participation by representatives of Rowledge in a wide range of activities in Farnham.

Waverley Borough Council has a responsibility to the whole of Farnham. The potentially detrimental effect on the rest of Farnham; financially, cohesively and community-wise should be paramount when considering whether or not to create a new Parish Council with the extra burden of administration for Waverley Borough Council.

The Town Council's area is made up of a large number of distinct communities both rural and urban including those in the Town itself. Each village has its own identity. Farnham as a whole has an identity that is strengthened by and permeates through its separate communities. In some ways Farnham is a microcosm of the Borough and both have strived to create synergy and cohesion whilst maintaining the individual characteristics of the separate communities that make up their respective areas.

A local governance review ought to seek to improve community engagement and local democracy. Farnham Town Council does not agree that the creation of a Rowledge Parish Council is a more effective and convenient way to deliver these goals. Rowledge residents would be no more empowered locally, by the creation of a separate Parish Council, than they are now as part of Farnham Town Council. The Waverley report on the proposals set out a number of different ways communities can be empowered, virtually all of which were for areas that were not already parished. The Town Council believes there are more effective ways of delivering a stronger voice and improved representation without creating a new Parish. These could include having community group representatives from Rowledge that would meet with Farnham Town Council to take up any issues or concerns locally. The Town Council would welcome an approach such as this.

## **Adverse Effects of Creating Rowledge Parish Council**

### **Fragmentation**

The issue of fragmentation has already been stated in relation to Shortheath and Boundstone, but there is a more significant issue of fragmentation for the Town Council area as a whole. Enormous efforts have been made in binding together the different villages in the Farnham Design Statement and the Neighbourhood Plan and through community recognition through activities such as the Services to Farnham Awards, grants and Farnham In Bloom. Whilst these activities can indeed continue over a smaller area, the Town Council believes there would be a significant loss for both sides. The Town Council has made representations on a number of more strategic issues such as mineral extraction, Farnborough Aerodrome, developments at Bordon, the A325 etc. which have been of direct interest and benefit of Rowledge. The Town Council can do this because it has staff capacity and can spread its resources over a larger area and address more strategic issues.

It is unlikely, as evidenced from smaller parishes elsewhere, that this same level of input could be delivered by staff in a smaller parish.

### **Financial**

The existing Town Council area brings with it economies of scale enabling a wide range of community services to be delivered. There is no doubt that if areas fragmented from the Town Council valued local services such as the Public Conveniences, Christmas Lights, Farnham in Bloom, CCTV provision, and the range of events and other services that help make Farnham an attractive area to live in, work in or visit would be under threat. The proponents of the scheme have estimated that the precept loss to the Town Council would be in the region of £53,000 if the households in Rowledge were incorporated into a new Parish Council and around £85,000 if the properties from Boundstone were added. This sum would represent just under 9.4% of the 2013/14 precept level which could see the rest of Farnham households face a precept increase of up to 15% if services were not cut or additional savings made.

Despite this impact, the proponents of the new Parish Council have subsequently indicated that there may well be no saving for the residents of Rowledge. They have quoted a minimum level of funding needed for year one of the Parish Council (£17,000) but acknowledged that this would not achieve the desired funding for a new Village Hall or much in the way of local services for the village and that a higher level was more likely. If the precept level were capped as the Government have indicated, the Parish Council may find itself in a very difficult position if its precept level were capped at this low level and residents are unlikely to see any financial benefit from the change. It appears as if some of the original financial arguments put forward by the proponents of the scheme when collecting signatures for the petition may have been misleading.

The arguments put forward for the creation of the new Parish seem to be largely financial in that the "new" Parishioners would be able to pay lower Council Tax but still benefit from all the Farnham Town Council provided facilities. Some have said this could be likened to saying "*I have no children so why should some of my taxes be used for Education?*".

The proposers of the scheme have argued that it will be easier for a small group to get loans for future projects such as the new Village Hall but the reverse is more likely to be true and Farnham Town Council has successfully supported the Wrecclesham Community Centre Trustees in obtaining grants for the Wrecclesham Village Hall.

### **Capacity**

Whilst a new Parish will be able to discuss directly with other tiers of local government and further afield, there is no evidence that this will be a stronger voice than being part of Farnham; on the contrary it may well be the case that the capacity to have an effective voice is reduced as a result of the proposed parish being smaller unit.

During the local workshop and in discussion with other residents of Rowledge, the Town Council representatives have posed the question "When has the Town Council failed to respond to an issue raised by Rowledge". To date, no specific examples have been raised with the only arguments being put back by the proponents of the scheme being based on the fact that Rowledge does not see all of the precept raised being spent in the village.

## Consultation & Referendum

Farnham Town Council believes that ALL electors of Farnham should be consulted on the formal proposal as all will be affected by the loss of Rowledge. It is particularly important that all the adjacent areas are included especially as the representation of Rowledge and Wrecclesham and Shortheath and Boundstone will be directly affected by the change. The Town Council is concerned that the Rowledge electors could potentially annex and outvote the "Sandrock Triangle" area by virtue of the fact that there is a 60:40 majority in the number of households for that area. If the area for the referendum were limited to the proposed new Parish area this would be deeply concerning.

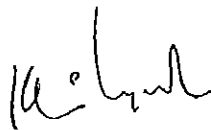
## Sustainability

Proposals for the creation of something new, including the creation of a new Parish can generate a lot of initial enthusiasm. However, concern has been expressed by a number of Rowledge residents about whether this enthusiasm will continue after the initial period. In their publicity material, the proposers have suggested that if this happened then Rowledge could rejoin Farnham, but if this were to happen it would seem to be an expensive and wasteful proposal. A smaller Parish would not necessarily have the capacity or economies of scale to undertake the services it may wish to provide.

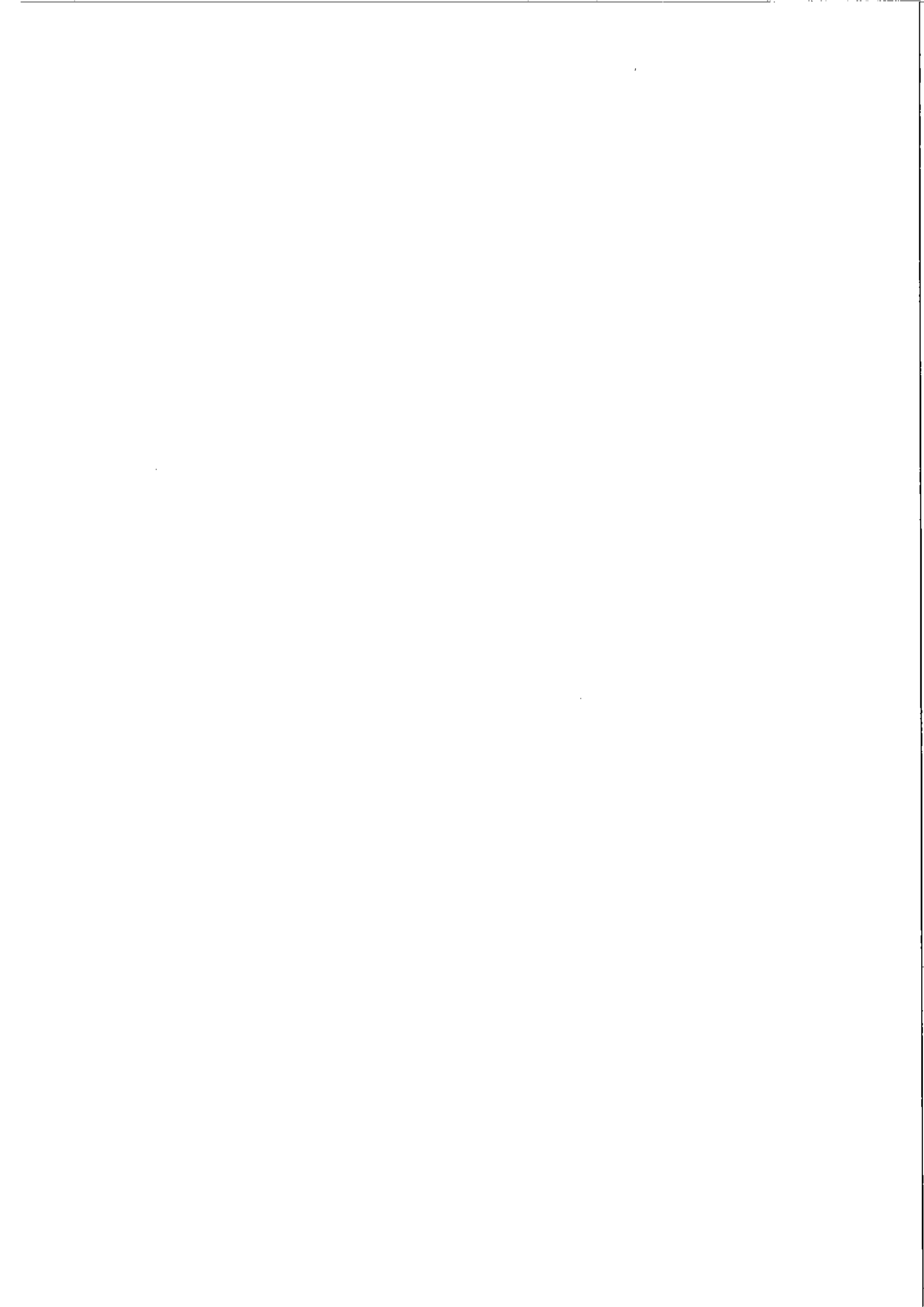
The Neighbourhood Planning process has brought people together across the whole of Farnham and the importance of protecting Farnham as a whole had been highlighted. The Town Council believes that some of the most vulnerable areas are at the edge of the Town Council area. The success of the Design Statement was that all the communities had worked together bringing greater strength. This would be lost if the proposal were implemented.

Overall, the Town Council believes that the wider perspective and the benefits of being part of a larger area with costs shared and benefits shared means that the proposal for a new Parish cannot be supported. The Town Council further believes that as the proposal could have a significant impact on every household in the Town Council area, then every elector should have the opportunity of voting for the eventual outcome.

Yours faithfully,



Iain Lynch  
Town Clerk



## ANNEXE 5

### MINUTES of the MEETING of the CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held on 22 JULY 2013 at 7.00PM

(To be read in conjunction with the Agenda for the meeting)

- |                                   |                                      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| * Cllr Paddy Blagden              | * Cllr Tom Martin                    |
| * Cllr Brian Ellis                | Cllr David Munro                     |
| Cllr Pat Frost                    | Cllr Elliot Nichols                  |
| * Cllr Richard Gates              | * Cllr Donal O'Neill (Vice-Chairman) |
| Cllr Michael Goodridge (Chairman) | * Cllr Chris Storey                  |
| * Cllr Tony Gordon-Smith          | * Cllr Simon Thornton                |
| * Cllr Peter Isherwood            | * Cllr Ross Welland                  |
| Cllr Peter Martin                 |                                      |

#### Co-opted Members from Waverley's Tenants Panel

Mrs Brenda Greenslade, Chair

Mr Adrian Waller, Vice-Chair

\*Present

In the absence of Cllr Goodridge, Cllr O'Neill chaired the meeting.

Cllrs Wyatt Ramsdale and Jim Edwards attended as substitutes.

Cllrs John Ward and Carole Cockburn attended the meeting and spoke in accordance with Procedure Rule 23.

Cllr Robert Knowles was present as an observer.

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Pat Frost, Michael Goodridge, David Munro and Elliot Nichols. Cllrs Wyatt Ramsdale and Jim Edwards attended as substitutes.

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

Cllr Ramsdale declared a non-pecuniary interest, as he lived in Rowledge and was a member of the Working Group seeking to establish a Rowledge Parish Council.

Cllr Ward declared a non-pecuniary interest as he was a Member of and Spokesman for Farnham Town Council, and Waverley Ward Member for part of the area under discussion (the Sandrock Triangle).

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## CALL-IN ITEM

### 3. ROWLEDGE LOCAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW – FIRST CONSULTATION FINDINGS (Agenda Item 3)

- 3.1 At its meeting on 2 July 2013 the Executive considered a report on the outcome of the first consultation on the Rowledge Local Governance Review, together with recommendations for the second stage consultation.

The Executive agreed that:

1. agreement be given to local government electors in the area to which the petition relates, including the village of Rowledge and the area referred to as the Sandrock Triangle, being consulted during the second consultation period; and,
  2. the method of consultation be by way of questionnaire, as outlined in the Terms of Reference, sent to each local government elector falling within the area to which the petition relates.
- 3.2 Following the Executive meeting, four members of the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Councillors Christopher Storey, Ian Sampson, David Munro and Paddy Blagden – had asked that the Committee scrutinise the decision taken at that meeting.
- 3.3 The Chairman first invited Mary Orton, the Chief Executive to outline the background to the Local Governance Review.
- 3.3.1 Mrs Orton began by explaining that in December 2012 [*sic* 19 November 2012], the Council had received a petition from electors in the Rowledge area calling for a community governance review. Such reviews used to be conducted by Parliament, but in 2007 the Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act was passed and brought into being the localisation to district councils of the right to make decisions about political representation and community representation in an electoral area. Thus, it was for Waverley as the borough council for the area in question to take the legal decision over this matter.
- 3.3.2 Local councils could trigger governance reviews of their own volition at any time, and had the legal responsibility and duty to respond to a valid petition. Rules for a petition were – in short – that a minimum of 250 electors on the electoral register for the area in question had to sign the petition. The petition received in December was a valid petition and was found to have been signed by 403 validly registered electors of the area.
- 3.3.3 On receipt of a valid petition, Waverley was obliged to respond to it; not acting was not a legal avenue open to the Council, and it was not in Waverley's



power to decide not to have a review. Waverley was legally required to carry out a review, and to decide terms of reference for the review. The terms of reference of the review were agreed by Waverley's Executive on 5 February 2013 and published, and Waverley was required to conduct the review within a 12 month period and to report back through the Executive to Council to make a decision consequent on the finding of the review. In effect, Waverley was taking a constitutional role and it was not necessary at this stage for the Council to have an opinion as to the substance of the question. It was the Council's legal duty to ensure the review was conducted in a manner that would stand up to scrutiny and be seen to be fair. The Council was aware that this was something that residents in the local area were watching closely, as they rightly had an interest in the matter.

- 3.3.4 The Terms of Reference were published on 1 March 2013, and there had been no challenge to the Terms of Reference. The Terms of Reference set out a two-stage consultation process during the course of the 12-month period. The first stage comprised, first of all, consultation with Farnham Town Council and Surrey County Council, which Waverley was legally obliged to do. At the same time, a leaflet with a survey form was sent to every household in the Farnham area, included with householders' council tax bill. The report considered by the Executive on 2 July reported the results of the survey. The Terms of Reference agreed in February said that there would be a second and more focussed stage of consultation with all the electors in the affected area. This was a legal requirement, and as far as the Council was aware no one had disputed that there should be a further consultation with electors in the Rowledge and Sandrock area. The Terms of Reference also stated that at the second stage Waverley would consult with anyone who appeared to show an interest in the matter.
- 3.3.5 Mrs Orton suggested that the focus of the call-in of the Executive's decision regarding the format of the second-stage consultation related to the electorate to be consulted and the method of consultation. The Executive had decided it would consult with electors in the Rowledge and Sandrock areas, and it had taken that decision on the basis that they had shown an interest by way of their response to the first consultation. In the stage-one consultation, from the Rowledge area there had been a response from 25% of households, and from the Sandrock area there had been a response from 14% of households. From the rest of the Farnham area, there had been a 0.8% response rate. The Executive therefore had been of the view that the second-stage consultation should focus on those people for whom this was of immediate concern.
- 3.3.6 The second part of the Executive's decision related to the method of the consultation, and whether it should be by postal questionnaire rather than a referendum with voting in person at a polling station. The Executive had considered the options, and had decided that a postal questionnaire would be more beneficial because it allowed the opportunity to impart more information to the electors. One of the very strong pieces of feedback received after the stage-one consultation was that a lot of people had said that they felt that they did not know enough about the subject to form a view. The Executive felt that

it was incumbent on the Council to respond to this feedback and to provide information on the matter to the people whose views were being sought.

- 3.3.7 A postal questionnaire would allow the Council to provide additional information, and it was proposed that the petitioners and Farnham Town Council, representing those with a different point of view, be asked to set out their statement of case in writing so that it could be sent to electors as part of the postal questionnaire. Unlike in a referendum, Waverley was not constrained by law or the Electoral Commission, and had the power to provide background information with a postal survey in order to seek an informed response from electors in the area that was the subject of the petition.
- 3.3.8 In summing up, Mrs Orton reminded Members that at this stage Waverley was not concerned with the subject matter of the petition, only the process of the review; and that the decision that had been called in for scrutiny, and therefore the focus of the debate of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, related to the scope of the second consultation; specifically, the electorate to be consulted and the method of consultation.
- 3.4 The Chairman asked the Electoral Services Manager to show maps of the Rowledge area that was subject to the petition, including the area referred to by the petitioners as the Sandrock Triangle, which lay within Waverley's Farnham Boundstone & Shortheath ward, rather than the Wrecclesham & Rowledge ward.
- 3.5 The Chairman then invited the Members of the Committee who had called in the decision to explain their reasons for the call-in. Cllrs Storey and Blagden were present at the meeting.
- 3.5.1 Cllr Storey advised that his reason for asking for the call-in was not specifically about Rowledge or its relationship with Farnham, but related to the way in which the Council gathered information and used it as the basis for decision-making. He was concerned that having sent out the first questionnaire to all households, Waverley was using the responses received as the basis for saying that 62% of the people in the Rowledge are believed they ought to be separate from Farnham. Cllr Storey reminded Members that any questionnaire that relied on recipients to send it back would be completely unrepresentative; anyone with strong views, positively or negatively on the subject, would respond, and this would cause bias in the responses.
- 3.5.2 Cllr Storey was concerned that in this consultation, people were also able to respond via the internet; and businesses and local organisations were also invited to respond, so there were various ways in which an individual could respond more than once. Mrs Orton explained that all respondents had been required to provide their name and address, so any duplicates or anonymous responses were discounted. Anyone responding on behalf of a local business or other organisation had to provide their own name and address as well as that of the organisation on behalf of which they were responding.

- 3.5.3 Cllr Storey noted these assurances, but felt that the survey only really showed that 25% of households in Rowledge had taken part, and that 11% of households in Rowledge responded positively to the proposed Rowledge Parish Council. It was not possible to say if this was representative of all the people in Rowledge, or not. Given that in this case, the Council could be making a legal decision of long-standing consequences for the borough, he felt that it was important that the survey should be conducted in a statistically valid way, with a known level of confidence in the responses and the potential variation. For the 1330 electors in the Rowledge area, a sample size of 90 electors selected at random would give a response with 95% confidence and +/- 10% variation; for a +/- 5% variation, the sample size would have to be 298 Rowledge electors.
- 3.5.4 In summing up, Cllr Storey asked that if a second-stage consultation was undertaken, that instead of a questionnaire being sent to all electors in the Rowledge area, that Waverley conduct a proper statistically valid survey that would provide real information which could be relied upon.
- 3.5.5 Cllr Blagden also questioned the validity of using the questionnaire responses as the basis for a decision on who should be included in the second consultation. He noted that the petition had been submitted with over 400 signatures, but only 125 questionnaire responses had been received from the Rowledge ward, with only 77 positive responses. This was the equivalent of around 5.7% of Rowledge electors; or, assuming an average of 3 electors per household, around 17% of electors responding positively. Either way, this was not a majority of electors in support of the proposals.
- 3.5.6 Cllr Blagden was concerned that no Farnham Town Council members had seen the original petition, and therefore he could not be assured that it included the Sandrock Triangle as part of the proposed Rowledge Parish Council area. Cllr Blagden also noted that the Boundary Commission may not agree to split the Boundstone & Shortheath ward to enable the Sandrock Triangle to move to Rowledge, which was a matter that had received very little consideration so far.
- 3.5.7 Cllr Blagden was concerned that electors in Rowledge and Sandrock had not debated in detail the full financial effects of separation from Farnham, and he also felt that by sending the first consultation out with Council Tax bills, there had been limited time for Farnham Town Council to provide information to its electorate about the financial implications of the establishment of a Rowledge Parish Council. The Farnham Town Council area was the largest area that would be affected by the proposals, and the whole of the Farnham electorate should therefore be allowed to vote in any ballot. It was clear that there would be a financial penalty to be paid by the rest of the Farnham Town Council electorate, and he and many other Farnham members believed the proposals needed further examination and should include the electorate of Farnham as a whole..

3.6 The Chairman then invited Cllrs John Ward and Carole Cockburn to address the Committee, having previously registered to speak in accordance with Procedure Rule 23.

3.6.1 Cllr Ward began by urging the Corporate O&S Committee to adopt a form of recommendation (C), and proposed that:

Firstly, the terms of reference and consequent decision on a review that affects the rearrangement of wards in the borough was sufficiently important to be debated at and decided by full Council, as happened with the creation of Churt Parish Council in 2003, and not slipped through as a Part III item (Brief summaries of other items dealt with).

Secondly, as the Local Government Boundary Commission for England guidance directed, the whole range of stakeholders affected and the interests of the wider community should be considered. It therefore followed that the entire Farnham electorate should be consulted throughout the process and have a proper voice in the final decision-making.

Thirdly, taking into account the very poor response to the consultation document, when only 340 replies were received from an electorate of over 38,000 (0.89%), the final consultation should be by way of referendum.

3.6.2 Cllr Ward was not convinced that the Executive report presented a proper analysis of the cases for and against. In particular, the conclusion outlining the process of the second phase of the consultation paraphrased part of the guidance by suggesting the questionnaire be issued to all those who appeared to have an interest in the review. Despite the fact that all the electors of Farnham would be significantly affected, it then recommended that only those in the potential breakaway area should have a voice: a very clear contradiction.

3.6.3 The report also recommended that the second-stage consultation should be by questionnaire – an already discredited method as less than 1% replied to the first questionnaire. The report cited as evidence that only a very small number of respondents sought a questionnaire [*sic* referendum], but this was not one of the questions asked on the form.

3.6.4 Cllr Ward went on to say that the original form had no information about the impact the proposal would have on the area. The [Local Government Boundary Commission] guidance referred to the inclusion in the area of the local centres for education and childcare, shopping, community activities and worship; but whilst the village hall was well within the area of the petition, the main doctors' surgery, the church and the school were not even in Rowledge and the latter two were in a different county and could not be included. The guidance also stated that principal authorities should decline to set up community governance arrangements such as the new breakaway council if to do so would not be in the interests of the local community or surrounding communities. How could this be judged if the surrounding communities were denied a voice?

- 3.6.5 Cllr Ward stated that he felt that a decision that would have a profound affect on the composition of wards within the borough, and would create a BQ 'mega-ward' with consequent un-balancing of other Waverley wards which may not meet with the approval of the Boundary Commission, was not a decision that should be taken by the Executive. The guidance consistently referred to the principal authority, not the ruling Executive; and he had been unable to find in the scheme of delegation, or anywhere else, any indication that the Executive was empowered to re-arrange the current ward boundaries.
- 3.6.6 In summing up, Cllr Ward pointed out that while 400 Rowledge residents signed the petition, only 77 on reflection had been sufficiently enthusiastic to return a questionnaire in favour, which cast great doubt on their enthusiasm for their original signing. Cllr Ward reiterated his request to the O&S Committee that they refer the matter back to the Executive, as set out in his opening statement (in para 3.6.1, above).
- 3.6.7 Cllr Cockburn stated that she had no problem with Rowledge going independent if that was what they wanted, but the way in which the wards would be changed would affect a lot of people beyond the Rowledge area, in the Bourne, Shortheath & Boundstone, and Wrecclesham. Rowledge was just one of a number of similar villages right around central Farnham, and the residents in all of these would be affected financially and in terms of what services Farnham Town Council would be able to provide. If the consultation was to have any validity at all then everyone who would be affected must be asked, and that had to be everyone in the Farnham Town Council area. Cllr Cockburn said that she was all for people having their say, but that must be all people having their say, as the implications were huge. Much more information needed to be given, to everyone involved, so that there could be a fair decision that everyone could live with.
- 3.7 The Chairman then invited the Committee members to consider the report and decision made by the Executive.
- 3.7.1 Cllr Ramsdale highlighted that the cost of extending the second stage consultation to the whole of Farnham, where only 0.8% of households had responded to the first questionnaire, would be in the region of £20,000. He also advised that residents in the Sandrock Triangle had asked the Rowledge Working Group to be included in the proposed Rowledge parish council area.
- 3.7.2 Cllr Gates emphasised that the merits of the proposal were not being debated, and in due course this would come before the full Council. In terms of the process, given the cost of extending the consultation to all of Farnham and the apparent level of interest shown in the first consultation, he was not in favour of consulting with the entire Farnham area at the second stage. Consultation by way of questionnaire had been set out in the terms of reference at the start of the process, and had not been challenged; and provided the opportunity to include some explanatory information, which would not be possible with a referendum. However, he felt that the Executive might want to consider if there was a more statistically robust method of canvassing the Rowledge and Sandrock electors.

- 3.7.3 Cllr Tom Martin made a comparison with Scottish and Welsh referenda for devolution, and the forthcoming Scottish Independence referendum, and the fact that English electors were excluded from voting. With this precedent, he had no objection to the second-stage consultation only involving electors of the petition area. He also felt that consulting by way of a questionnaire was preferable to a referendum, for which there could be a very low turnout which would then beg the question of what level of turnout was acceptable. Overall, he endorsed the approach for the second stage consultation agreed by the Executive.
- 3.7.4 Cllr Martin raised the issue of whether the proposed parish council could be established without changing Waverley's ward boundaries to be co-terminus with the parish boundary. Mrs Orton advised that Waverley had the power to create a parish council, which would be a decision of the full Council. The Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act also made provision for Waverley to make recommendations to the Boundary Commission on consequential changes to ward boundaries, although there was no obligation to do so, and this was not a consideration for Waverley at this stage in the process.
- 3.7.5 Cllr Blagden felt that the first consultation questionnaire had been very bland and had not provided information on the impact of the proposed changes, so many residents had not appreciated the importance of what they were being asked.
- 3.7.6 Cllr Gordon-Smith was sympathetic to the wishes of the petitioners to have a parish council, but if was concerned that if this was going to result in a financial cost to the wider Farnham population then they should have a say in the consultation. He recognised the shortcomings of various consultation methods, and suggested that it might be helpful to follow-up with a sample of households who had not responded to the first questionnaire. Overall, he supported Executive decision, subject to the proviso that if it became apparent that it was going to cost the people of Farnham more by having a Rowledge parish council, then they must have a say.
- 3.7.7. Cllr Ellis felt that the 403 people in Rowledge who had expressed the view that they would like to have some kind of say in their future gave a reasonably good steer as to what local people would like to do, and was content to endorse the Executive decision.
- 3.8 In summing up, Mrs Orton emphasised that Waverley had a legal duty to consult with all electors in the second-stage consultation, and therefore a more statistically robust sampling of views was not an option.
- 3.9 The Chairman then invited committee members to agree their observations and to put forward a proposal.
- 3.9.1 Cllr Martin proposed that the Committee endorse the Executive's decision regarding the format of the second-stage consultation.

3.9.2 Cllr Gates put forward an alternative proposal, to endorse the Executive's decision, but also to submit observations reflecting the points that had been raised in the debate which the Executive might wish to consider before proceeding with the next stage of the consultation.

3.9.3 Cllr Gates' proposal was seconded by Cllr Blagden, and the Committee RESOLVED to endorse the Executive's decision regarding the format of the second-stage consultation, but to submit observations which the Executive might wish to consider.

There being no further matters needing to be dealt with, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.00pm.

Chairman

