



Clerk: Jennifer Nagy

Q: Why am I receiving this leaflet, and is it important to me?

A petition has been submitted to the determining authority - Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) - supported by 4 of the 9 current Worth Parish Councillors representing Crawley Down. MSDC are now mandated to perform a Community Governance Review (CGR) to consider the request to split Worth Parish Council (WPC) to give Crawley Down their own Village Council. This document aims to ensure that the full consequences of a split are understood and allow informed responses to the initial consultation, which are important to ensure a comprehensive view of both Copthorne & Crawley Down residents/electors is available to MSDC to make a fully informed decision.

Q: What is the Stance of Worth Parish Council?

WPC as a representative body is neither in favour nor against a split. Currently 4 of the 17 WP Councillors fully support the petition. There are concerns related to the lack of transparency and the way the petition came about - being submitted to MSDC without any discussion or case presentation to WPC. We have seen little evidence that the proposed change will deliver the claimed benefits and do not have the information required to determine whether the considerable cost, risks and impacts of a split are justified. Nobody should underestimate the complexity of splitting an existing Parish Council.

Q: What are the Cost Implications?

The petitioners encourage us to consider the 2006 split from Swanley Town Council to form a small Hextable Parish Council (about 10% of the original Council) as a comparable model. It is not a comparable example. A split of WPC would create a Crawley Down Council that would currently be larger than the remaining Copthorne Council. WPC also has a larger consideration of property and assets, a more competent and professional employee setup operating effectively across both villages. There have also been considerable changes to employment laws since 2006. It is not unreasonable to conclude the split could cost WPC residents circa. £150,000 (deflected away from current and future service provisions) and will almost certainly result in an increase to your Council Tax - at the very least to Copthorne residents.

Q: Why would we split Worth Parish Council?

The petitioners claim that the identity of Crawley Down village will be better protected. They favour meetings being held in Crawley Down, suggesting a separate Council will reduce bureaucracy and committees/meetings. We refute these claims absolutely. WPC have almost completed a full review of their structure and processes that has already achieved most of these goals. A separate Council will still be subject to the same governance and laws as WPC in any event. Each village has its own identities and everything WPC does is mindful of respecting both the similarities and the unique features of both villages. In summary, the claimed benefits are already being realised without the enormous upheaval and cost of a split. We remain to be persuaded that losing economies of scale of being a larger Council and having a strong voice as a substantial local authority is justified. Splitting is also counterintuitive to the anticipated direction of changes to local authorities.

Q: What Happens Next?

The Terms of Reference for the CGR are included in this information pack. WPC encourage all residents to familiarise themselves with the proposal and to respond to MSDC during this initial consultation. Please note that MSDC are particularly interested in views – supporting the proposal or not - so please do respond, but not just with yes/no answers. Use the opportunity to express your views which are important to our residents and the future of our villages.

Please note: The decision will be made solely by MSDC, ***there is no referendum***