

## **No. Draft Recommendations of the Community Governance Review of Langport Town Council and Huish Episcopi Parish Council**

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<i>Strategic Director:</i>	<i>Mark Williams, Chief Executive</i>
<i>Assistant Director:</i>	<i>Ian Clarke, Legal and Corporate Services</i>
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### **Purpose of the Report**

To report the outcome of the initial public consultation (Community Governance Review) which has taken place in the parishes of Langport and Huish Episcopi on the proposal to establish a single Town Council for Langport and Huish Episcopi (under the provisions of Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007).

### **Public Interest**

A Community Governance Review is a review of the whole or part of a district to consider one or more of the following:

- creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
- the naming of parishes and the style (i.e. whether to call it a town council or village council etc) of new parishes;
- the electoral arrangements for parishes – the ordinary year of election, the size of the council, the number of councillors to be elected and parish warding;
- grouping parishes under a common parish council, or de-grouping parishes.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, 2007, sets down the principal legal framework within which councils must undertake these reviews.

A valid petition of 250 signatures of electors within the parishes of Langport and Huish Episcopi was received in July 2010, requesting that the District Council conduct a consultation (Community Governance Review) of all the electors and local interested groups to ask if they would prefer the parishes to merge into one Town Council. Initial consultation within the parishes has now taken place and this report details the outcome of that consultation.

### **Recommendation(s)**

The Council is recommended to:

1. note the results of the consultation;
2. note that the majority of responses received were not in favour of the original proposals by Langport Town Council and therefore the draft recommendation for further consultation be: "To accept the vote from the people of Langport and Huish Episcopi and to reject the notion of a single Town Council for Langport and Huish Episcopi at this time".
3. agree to publish the results of the consultation;
4. note that a further period of consultation on the results of the initial consultation responses will take place;

5. note that a further report will be brought to Council in January 2011 in order that a decision may be made in respect of the final recommendations of the Review.
6. offer to mediate and arbitrate between Parishes indicating they wish to propose a Community Governance Review in future;
7. note that a letter has been sent by the District Council to the Department of Communities and Local Government expressing the Councils concerns at the costs associated with Community Governance Reviews and request that the costs be borne by the petitioning Towns and Parishes in future.

## **Background**

Council at its meeting held on 21 July 2010 (Minute 32 refers) approved the commencement of a Community Governance Review for the parishes of Langport and Huish Episcopi following the receipt of a valid petition from the electors in that area.

The outcome of the consultation process was discussed by District Executive Committee at their meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> October 2010, where Members felt that in future, the District Council should offer to mediate and arbitrate between Parishes indicating that they wished to propose a Community Governance Review to ensure an amicable outcome. They also expressed concern that there was no power to re-charge the costs involved to the Town or Parish Councils requesting such a review and they requested that a letter be sent by the District Council to the Department of Communities and Local Government to express the Councils concerns at the costs associated with Community Governance Reviews and request that the costs be borne by the petitioning Towns and Parishes in future.

The full minutes of this meeting are attached at Appendix B.

## **Proposal**

The proposal of Langport Town Council was that the review should consider abolishing both Langport Town Council and Huish Episcopi Parish Council and replace them with a single Council, operating as a Town Council and bearing the name of Langport Huish Town Council.

It was further proposed that:-

1. The boundary of the new parish should be as defined by the accompanying map.
2. The Parish is divided into 3 Parish Wards, namely Langport Ward. Huish Ward and Wearne Ward with boundaries as shown on the accompanying map.
3. The new Town Council comprise 15 Councillors split between the 3 Parish Wards as follows:
 

Langport Ward	–	8 Councillors
Huish Ward	–	4 Councillors
Wearne Ward	–	3 Councillors

The proposed allocation of 3 Councillors to Wearne Ward was recognition that the majority of future housing development was expected to take place within that Ward and so increase the number of electors requiring representation.

## **Consultation**

The initial consultation period was held from 6<sup>th</sup> August to 13<sup>th</sup> September. Consultation leaflets were delivered to all registered electors within the two Parishes (a total of 2,521 people) together with Ward Members, the two local Schools, Member of Parliament, Member

of the European Parliament, Somerset Association of Local Councils, Somerset County Council, the Police and local doctors surgery. Collection boxes were placed at 6 locations within the two parishes or could be sent direct to SSDC offices in Yeovil. Public comments were also received by e-mail.

A total of 712 responses were received (29% of the total electorate), of which 9 were treated as non-valid as the respondents were either not on the electoral register or lived outside of the parishes concerned. Of the 703 valid responses, 135 were in favour of the proposal and 565 were against it.

A public meeting was held on 8<sup>th</sup> September in the local school hall for residents to hear the views of the two Councils and to ask questions. This was attended by over 100 local people and a lively debate ensued.

Part of the consultation leaflet asked for any comments on the proposals and a broad range of over 200 responses were received. They varied from:-

- This is just change for change sake and would not benefit those living in Huish Episcopi.
- This merger is entirely financially driven, and would be better called a take over bid.
- The new council should be one area, without ward divisions.
- I feel a combined council would be more efficient and able to act more speedily. We all benefit from the facilities of this lovely old town

A full list of all responses are attached at Appendix C.

Having taken into account all consultation responses made during the first stage of consultation, and having regard to the need to ensure that Community Governance within the area reflects the identities and interests of the Community, and is effective and convenient, the draft recommendation of officers is: "To accept the vote from the people of Langport and Huish Episcopi and to reject the notion of a single Town Council for Langport and Huish Episcopi at this time".

### **Community Governance Review Timetable**

The draft recommendation of the Council on the outcome of the review will be published by 30 November 2010, followed by the commencement of a further 5 week period of consultation closing on 8 January 2011. Representations received on the draft recommendation will be submitted for consideration by South Somerset District Council at its meeting of the full Council on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2011 when the final decision on the review will be taken. Any changes which may result from this review will be implemented in time to operate at the next local elections in May 2011.

### **Statistics**

During the initial review period, 712 responses were received from local residents and interested parties. A statistical analysis of these responses are attached at Appendix A.

### **Financial Implications**

The cost of producing the consultation leaflets (2,550) and having them distributed by local students was £710. There has been a cost in staff time in the production of the consultation leaflets and the analysis of the responses and these costs have been absorbed within existing budgets.

The hiring of the venue for the public meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> September was £95

It is anticipated that the further consultation on the draft proposals will be through the SSDC Website, local press and posters. This cost is likely to be in the region of £500.

There is no specific budget for Community Governance Reviews and all costs have been absorbed within the existing Democratic Services budget for 2010/11. However, Langport Town Council have voluntarily contributed £500 towards the cost and distribution of the consultation leaflets.

There is no power to re-charge the cost of the review to any other Council, except by agreement. This is because the statutory power to conduct the review rests with this Council.

### **Corporate Priority Implications**

15. Increase to 65% by 2010 the people who feel engaged in and can influence decisions that affect their communities.
18. Eighty percent of residents and businesses satisfied with the quality of the local natural and built environment by 2012.

### **Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)**

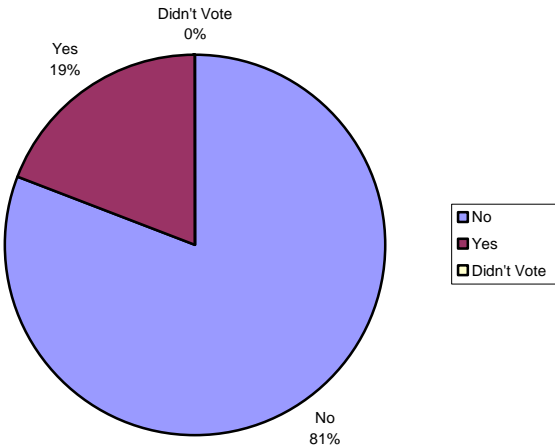
The public meeting was held in the local school hall which was within walking distance for the majority of local residents.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

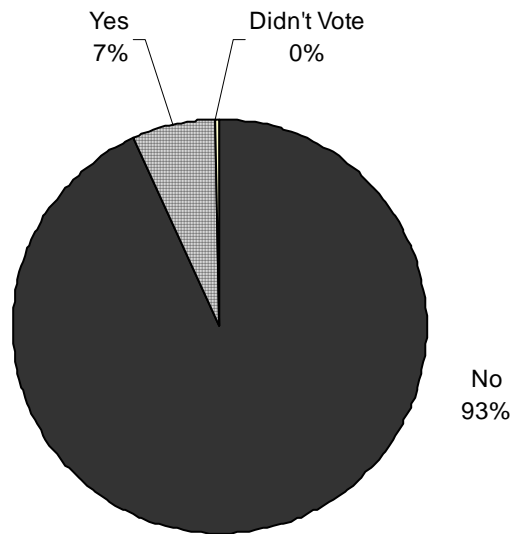
All local government electors within the parishes of Langport and Huish Episcopi have been consulted on the proposal and their views considered as part of the consultation process. The council must have regard to the need to secure that the community governance arrangements for the area reflects the identities and interests of the community in the area and are effective and convenient.

**Background Papers:** *Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007*  
*The Electoral Commission Guidance on Community Governance Reviews, April 2008*  
*Terms of Reference of the Community Governance Review of the Parish Arrangements for Langport and Huish Episcopi as agreed by Council on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2010*  
*Responses provided by local residents*  
*Report and Minutes of District Executive – 7<sup>th</sup> October 2010*

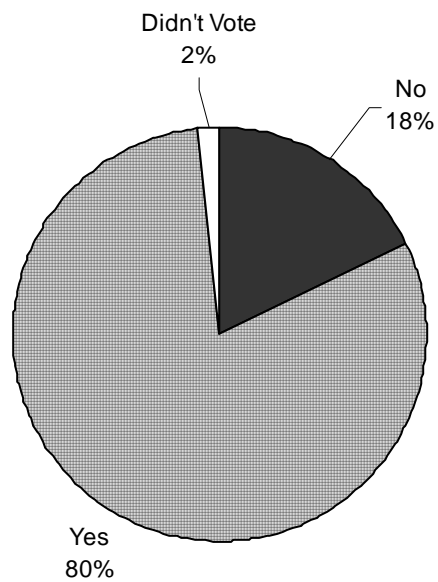
Overall Voting



Huish Episcopi Residents Voting: Total of 584 valid responses



Langport Residents Voting: Total 119 valid responses



Extract from District Executive minutes of 7<sup>th</sup> October 2010

**65. Draft Proposals of the Community Governance Review of Langport and Huish Episcopi (Agenda item 10)**

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Legal Services advised that following receipt of a petition from Langport Town Council, SSDC had been obliged to carry out a Community Governance Review of the Parishes of Langport and Huish Episcopi. The result of the initial consultation had rejected the proposal, however, SSDC were now obliged to consult further on this result.

The Assistant Director (Legal and Corporate Services) said that although the 29% response to the consultation was reassuring, the lesson learnt was that both Councils should have discussed the proposals before submitting the petition. He noted that in view of the result, the next stage of consultation would be a 'light touch'.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee said concerns had been raised over the amount of money in terms of SSDC officer time, that has been spent on the review and whether it had been worthwhile.

Councillor Patrick Palmer, who had Chaired the public meeting, said it was unfortunate that both Councils had not spoken beforehand and reached a common understanding on the proposal.

During discussion it was noted that in future, the District Council should offer to mediate and arbitrate between Parishes indicating that they wished to propose a Community Governance Review to ensure an amicable outcome.

Members also expressed concern that there was no power to re-charge the costs involved to the Town or Parish Councils requesting such a review and they requested that a letter be sent by the District Council to the Department of Communities and Local Government to express the Councils concerns at the costs associated with Community Governance Reviews and request that the costs be borne by the petitioning Towns and Parishes in future.

Members were content to agree the recommendations.

**RESOLVED:** That the District Executive recommends to Council:-

1. Note the results of the consultation;
2. Note that the majority of responses received were not in favour of the original proposals by Langport Town Council and therefore the draft recommendation for further consultation be: "To accept the vote from the people of Langport and Huish Episcopi and to reject the notion of a single Town Council for Langport and Huish Episcopi at this time".
3. Agree to publish the results of the consultation;
4. Note that a further period of consultation on the results of the

initial consultation responses will take place;

5. Note that a further report will be brought to Council in January 2011 in order that a decision may be made in respect of the final recommendations of the Review;
6. That the District Council offer to mediate and arbitrate between Parishes indicating they wish to propose a Community Governance Review;
7. That a letter be sent by the District Council to the Department of Communities and Local Government to express the Councils concerns at the costs associated with Community Governance Reviews and request that the costs be borne by the petitioning Towns and Parishes in future.

**Reason:** To report the outcome of the initial public consultation (Community Governance Review) which has taken place in the parishes of Langport and Huish Episcopi on the proposal to establish a single Town Council for Langport and Huish Episcopi (under the provisions of Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007).

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### Comments in support of one new Town Council:

- It would have been of interest to know why Huish Council are opposed. A blanket no (without an explanation seems like spoilt children squabbling in the playground)
- Huish & Langport form one urban area - all using the same facilities. It is ridiculous not to have one council managing it.
- I would like the 2 councils to put forward a better proposal. I do not agree with the suggested ward boundaries outline in Langport T C proposal but think that this should continue to be explored
- I am not fundamentally opposed to the idea - it would make sense - but not on the basis of proposal presented
- We consider it makes good sense to combine the two councils for the ease of administration and for the mutual benefit of both communities. We need to put an end to parochialism in these days of mobile and expanding communities
- One council will lead to savings in administration and hopefully lead to a closer community
- It makes perfect sense to me
- Why should resources be wasted on duplicating in two small councils when one council would suffice
- Should have been done years ago, odd that such a small area to have it separate
- In the coming years we would be better served by one council, not split by different precepts
- We are one community for which Langport has to support the majority of services - unfair and inefficient
- It doesn't seem fair that Langport has to support Huish. The money is in Huish the facilities in Langport.
- All the main services required by Huish residents are in Langport so if that is the case they should share decision-making
- Why wards? No need for wards, just one council. No need to change boundaries.
- I would like to see all ward boundaries go too, so that the council would represent the whole area
- Having lived here for 22 years I still cannot believe the animosity that exists between Langport and Huish Episcopi. I believe it is time to bury the hatchets and move forward together, for the greater good of the expanding area
- Langport is my local town, but presently I have no say in what happens there. I don't like the name - can we not keep Langport cum Huish Episcopi as other organisations do?
- I don't like the thought of paying more but I guess it makes sense.
- I would like to see them combined, but we must ensure Huish get a fair hearing.
- As we use all the amenities in Langport i.e Drs, Post Office, Shops, Chemist we have the sports centre & pub & school as long as we are not neglecting Huish in favour of Langport I say lets give it a go.
- The Langport/Huish parish boundary runs through this house, so I can see the benefits of a merger to provide a single stronger and more effective voice for the whole community. It is unfortunate that the Langport proposal (esp re warding) has sown confusion and mistrust in many Huish residents. The review should provide alternative warding/electoral arrangements for the new council
- I feel a combined council would be more efficient and able to act more speedily. We all benefit from the facilities of this lovely old town

- Langport's population is too small to support the services it is expected to provide. Judged independently this is an unfair and untenable situation. The councils should be joined.
- The two communities of Langport and Huish Episcopi are intertwined physically, on the ground, if not spiritually (at the moment). The boundary between them is artificial and should be abolished. The new council should be one area, without ward divisions.
- A good idea but I doubt residents of Huish Episcopi likely to agree. Langport Huish not acceptable as name as two elements incomparable - Langport and Huish Episcopi preferable
- It would more fairly spread the costs of running these areas. Also it surely must reduce the overall costs as well. Retain history and brings more efficient authority governorship
- I can't see any good reasons to keep them separate and a merged council may well be more strategic and attract very motivated councillors.
- Langport/Huish Episcopi Town Council makes absolute sense!! I can't believe this was not proposed years ago!
- We need one council to make sure all areas of Langport (roads and pavements) are kept clean and in a good state of repair not just selected areas! Fairer council tax charges for Langport residents is essential
- Voting yes as long as there are no ward boundaries. I continue to hope and pray that we can find a way to change the evident 'us' and 'them' approach and perception to just 'us together'. I believe internal boundaries only serve to exacerbate the us and them perceptions.
- Certainly a more efficient way of managing the area
- This is a vote for the principle, the detail i.e. name, number of councillors and the extent to which there should be any change to existing boundaries to be subject of consensus.
- I feel it would be more democratic and advantageous for all the people of the area, particularly the youth.
- Huish E is largely residential whereas Langport has more commercial interests. I would only support this proposal if a separate body was set up to look after commercial interests and the new council put residential concerns first.
- Fairer distribution of costs. Huish Episcopi residents have the benefits of Langport facilities without the same expenses! Fewer meetings, less bureaucracy (hopefully!)
- I would think it would save money and time on administrative costs and as numbers usually make an impact on voting - important issues together should be good
- Less bureaucracy, simpler decision making, lower costs and fairer distribution of the precept.
- The proposed 3 ward boundaries would only perpetuate the continued old antipathy between Huish and Langport. All councillors need to feel responsible for the whole new town as a unified community.
- If this option would prove to be more economic and save money it seems to be a good idea.
- I would prefer the new name to be Langport Episcopi.

## Comments against the proposal of one new Town Council:

- I would not like to see Langport take over Huish, they should stay as they are
- It would mean that the village of Huish Episcopi would lose its identity completely. The current boundary has never caused any problem before - why change it? Huish Episcopi will lose its church to Langport - will it then be known as St Mary's Langport? Also - I am not happy to pay extra money for something I don't want. NB. I was actually born in Langport itself but have lived in HE for 46 years.
- Why change for change sake? Leave things as they are
- Having read both statements very carefully, I am in no doubt Huish Episcopi Parish Council must be retained. Nothing to be gained by amalgamation.
- Langport advantages - financial and overall control. Langport disadvantages - zero, incredible inability to word petition correctly? Huish advantages - nil. Huish disadvantages - financial, loss of influence.
- This proposal has been ill conceived and has not got the approval of the majority of Huish Episcopi. The only people who would benefit is Langport and that's not fair.
- The proposal has been poorly handled by Langport Town Council with little or no prior consultation and lack of respect which has only served to alienate the people of Huish.
- 63% of Huish precept is plenty enough towards Langport and Huish suffers because of it. Langport has become a backwater and the most part people have to travel a round trip of 26 miles to get most of their shopping items
- We already pay 63% of Huish precept to Langport for joint responsibilities. I personally do not use Langport's services so our Parish Council is already contributing more than necessary. Our own parish needs more money spent on it i.e. churchyards, footpath clearing
- Our council tax is too high now, in our opinion, being pensioners. Our only service here is a refuse collection, nothing else!!
- We would see an increase in council tax, as a pensioner I'm looking for decreases not increases
- Big is not necessarily better, ask any other organisations that have joined forces! Disproportionate allocation of councillors - why do fewer residents have more? Why move boundaries? - not necessary
- The current economic climate should not allow you to even consider merging these councils. With the costs that this will involve and the lack of benefits that it will bring.
- We live in a lovely village with a unique and unusual name, which is exactly how I want it to stay. If we start by merging parish/town councils, how long before the two places merge and we lose our village heritage, as happened with Norton Radstock?
- We are all right as we are. No need for a change the suggested wards are useless all done for the benefit of Langport
- Why change it if it works OK. Think of the cost of a change.
- Would have supported the coming together if presented as one whole ward. The separation has caused the problem and alienated Huish E residents. I only lived here for 11 yrs
- Would have supported together but not with so many wards
- I am proud to live in Huish Episcopi and it would be a disaster if we lost our identity as would happen if this proposal went through.
- Don't mend what ain't broken!
- I have lived in Huish Episcopi most of my life and enjoyed it. Langport was once a good town but it is very sad to see it now from the Car park towards Curry Rivel its much like a Ghost town, monies been wasted
- We have lived here for over forty years and have every confidence in the Parish Council.

- There is an old saying 'if it ain't broke don't mend it'. I am quite happy with the present set up having lived here 44 years.
- You cannot suppose that Huish Episcopi residents would agree to increased tax. Allocation of cllrs needs revision - unfair advantage to Langport at present
- A Town Council runs a town with shops etc and a Parish Council runs a village such as ours and that's the way I want it to stay.
- There are no advantages that I can see for any Huish Episcopi residents to combine with Langport Parish Council.
- Why should we help Langport all of us live in the same country.
- Huish Episcopi is my home (not Langport)
- Born and live within 200 yards of the church, I strongly object to it being in Langport ward.
- This is a vote for a single Council not necessarily the proposal as drafted. Two page letter also received.
- Huish Episcopi Parish Council has dealt promptly with our issues. Also in a recession why should H.E. residents pay extra monies for something we do not want
- The old Parish Council has worked very well in the past and see no reason to alter things - more so as to the £35 increase in council tax
- Why? None of the submissions reflect a need for change. Langport T C fails to deliver, the town still suffer from HGV's illegal use, footpaths along the river bank go unmaintained
- The merger will cost more, deliver less and be yet more loss of democratic choice
- Lost identity why change and waste time and money. It works ok now it will not improve.
- As they have the advantages in Langport it is only fair they should share the burden of Langport residents
- I have lived in Huish Episcopi for over 50 years. The parish council has always done a good job and I don't see the need for any change.
- I have lived in Huish all of my life (77 years) and can't see any need for change. Langport only wants change for their own benefit
- We have been living on the Hill two doors up from the Dental Surgery for 14 years. We are not interested in any plans by a combined council until the traffic on the Hill are enforced (i.e. speeding and noise)
- I am not interested in any plans for a combined council unless and until something is done about the traffic on the hill is enforced.
- This proposal is only beneficial to Langport not Huish E. the word Gerrymander must be used here
- Not beneficial to Huish Episcopi
- No advantage other than to Langport T C and electors. New boundaries would unfairly group new councillors in Langport ward
- No advantage to this. Total cllrs reduced by 25%. An increase to our Council Tax. The only benefits appear to be for Langport T C
- We will end up with fewer councillors and it will cost more.
- Litter and dogs mess outside gate and hedges. Speeding traffic.
- Always dogs mess outside our gates, litter also. Speeding cars, motorbikes, very frightening at times.
- Huish Episcopi to stay as Huish Episcopi.
- Maps very poor, explanations re benefits difficult to understand. Unable to attend meeting due to work commitments.
- The only council to gain here is Langport, both financially and in representation. Their underhand tactics with their petition, which on investigation shows dubious anomalies means they can't be trusted.
- All benefits to Langport and hardly any to Huish

- I prefer to keep the traditional historic independence we continue to enjoy.
- The advice from SSDC to give indicative wards was ill judged as it caused ill-feeling and much misunderstanding
- No bus shelters.
- Langport is a scruffy, smelly place. So I prefer to be Huish and no bus shelters.
- The proposed merger, which Langport Town Council have been pressing for years, can only benefit Langport residents. The plan is for purely financial gain for Langport with no consideration for the residents of Huish Episcopi
- An unnecessary task that is going to cost homeowners in Huish more money, when Langport has all the amenities on their doorstep and they get a reduced council tax. There is no logic.
- Stay as Huish Episcopi.
- Huish Episcopi Parish Council have served us well over many years. Merger with Langport is not a good idea. Langport ward would be the top dog. Huish would have no say in any matter
- This village must stay a village. The underhand way that Langport council has brought this petition is unbelievable.
- The village must stay a village
- I moved to Huish E 3 years ago and I chose this nice, clean looking village because of the homely feel accorded me by the local residents
- The comments from HEPC Chairman puts the case against a proposed merger comprehensively.
- All previous approaches from Langport Town Council have been rejected by Huish Episcopi, why this further brow-beating? The motive is simply money.
- To employ a Parish Lengthsman. A letterbox in St Mary's Park. I feel the merger would not be of good viable sense.
- I feel that Langport is using this for their own material means, they will asset strip Huish Episcopi leaving a financial burden on the Huish Episcopi residents as already demonstrated by increase of Council Tax. Further to this Langport is a town in decline, it is not a progressive town/vibrant and shows all the signs of a town in decline, is this due to poor leadership, I feel that Huish Episcopi leadership will be worked down with few benefits to off Huish Episcopi.
- Nothing I have heard from Langport Town Council convinces me this is a good idea for Huish Episcopi residents. Hands off Huish Episcopi.
- I grew up in Huish and I feel it should stay as it is. I live in Langport and have done for 43 years but still love Huish
- No obvious benefit to Huish residents but a very obvious financial burden if this goes ahead (i.e. precept adjustments)
- I do not believe there would be any benefit to Huish Episcopi.
- This proposed merger is going to cost Huish Episcopi residents more council tax. Huish Parish Council has been excellent to this parish, therefore I say NO
- All they want is our money
- Do not take our identity or our church. The integration of Huish and Wearne seems driven by commercial interests, business aspirations and a probable extra levy of local taxes, especially on the parishes.
- Only benefiting Langport
- For over 40 years I have been pleased to live in Huish E. I definitely do NOT want to be merged
- Why change something that works well? Why waste money that could be better spent? No take over - which it appears to be.
- We will end up paying dearer Council Tax
- I do not feel that Huish Episcopi should merge and shoulder the financial burden of the business sector of Langport



- I would like things to stay just as they are.
- Why would anyone want to increase their outgoings with no apparent benefit?
- I object to paying more for the same service. I also cannot see how "my ward" will benefit if Langport ward is larger and has the majority vote.
- From the meeting last evening (Sept 8th) I got the impression that some residents were not wholly against the proposal, but would be happier to see the wards deleted
- Many pensioners in Huish, this 100%+ increase in the precept will put many pensioners into hardship. Langport chairman already talking about being able to raise no more money.
- The present Langport T C are devious and underhanded and the move is financially motivated to Langport's advantage
- I think it's an aggressive take over by a load of incompetent bullies.
- We chose to live in Huish Episcopi and like the way its run by Huish Episcopi Parish Council. We do not want to be swallowed up by Langport.
- LTC submission is biased, no PR for the other two wards. Increase in revenue seems to be LTC main reason for this review.
- Our Prime Minister is giving power to the people i.e Schools, GP's, Police. This to means that the Parish Council of Huish Episcopi should remain with its people. Residents of Huish Episcopi.
- As long as it costs more it will reduce support.
- Sadly, I think this is a waste of good time, effort and money. It is doing far more harm than good.
- Because of postcode, we are directed to the Taunton Hospital rather than Yeovil. If our prescriptions come from the surgery not the Boots pharmacy in postcode, Wearne should keep it's identity.
- All these proposals are stacked in Langport town's favour - Wearne & Huish would lose their individuality and voice. Field Road should stay in Huish especially with its associated school and housing.
- The balance of decision-making should stay with the individual wards and not over powered by another ward.
- Our parish precept has increased far too much over the last few years, merging with Langport would mean a further unnecessary increase with very little benefit.
- This suggestion is too heavily weighted on Langport side to be acceptable - needs revising.
- No wards, please. Too difficult to understand for the good people of Huish.
- The balance tips in favour of Langport. Huish Episcopi is an ancient village and to amalgamate is to illegally take the identity of the village.
- Langport Council seems to want all - there is no advantage to Huish Residents as the LTC has the unequal upper hand.
- The proposed changes leave this property projecting into Wearne Ward where the 'majority of housing development anticipated' with no say in electing councillors to represent me in planning discussions.
- I think that the parish of Huish Episcopi is best administered by an independent abling and not by a larger remote council
- The smaller councils are more community responsive. I am happy with the present arrangement.
- I agree with the point made by Cllr Shirley Nicholas
- This is an unnecessary and costly procedure by Langport councillors to empire build. Huish councillors do a sterling job and 'if it ain't broke why try to fix it?' Langport and Huish would be a better title should it happen.
- Responses and actions are slow enough already without the added pressure of extra homes, areas etc.

- This proposal is not in the best interests of Huish Episcopi which is well served by the Huish Episcopi Parish Council
- In view of the way in which Langport is being developed it is essential that both councils retain their separate identities.
- Langport is a town. Huish Episcopi is rural and should remain so. Any change is quite unnecessary and would involve more Council Tax for Huish Episcopi. Leave well alone.
- It appears to be working satisfactorily as it is and H.E. residents will be paying more to maintain Langport.
- This merger is entirely financially driven, and would be better called a take over bid. The proposed new Langport ward would out vote the rest. HEPC is most efficient and well run and should therefore remain a separate parish council.
- I would like to see a 'decent library' with at least 20 computers free to use, not the rubbish service we have at present.
- I fully support the facts and comments put forward by Cllr Shirley Nicholas
- Family Business interest in Huish - I am strongly opposed to this merger. It seems very wrong that a body of people who neighbour Huish Episcopi should be able to take away it's identity, control future decisions and alter historic boundaries. Huish Episcopi parish council should remain in it's own right and continue to work with Langport Town Council as other parishes do with neighbouring councils.
- Increase in Council tax. This is just change for change sake and would not benefit those living in Huish Episcopi.
- Because we chose to live in a rural community we feel we would not be represented correctly or fairly and the increase in council tax would see no increase in services to my family in this village. My increase council tax seems to be subsidising people living in Langport, who already have the vast majority of the local services and they would have the most to gain from any merger.
- In my opinion HEPC not served Wearne well. Not informed well about important issues, lack of consultation, parish cllr never informed us.
- With the last expansion of area of housing and newcomers it makes sense that Huish being the greater take over the rest and determine the new expansion in this area.
- As a Huish Episcopi parish Councillor, I fully concur with all the points made in the council's statement. I would want the Parish Council to remain independent whilst continuing to Langport financially
- HEPC and LTC should continue to work together, not merge, maintaining the individuality of the area. This proposal should not be seen as a recurring plan. Keep it as it is.
- As a pensioner I object to the rate increase proposed. From the discussion at the meeting it would seem that Langport and Huish Episcopi Parish Councils need more time to establish a clear and workable agreement.
- Don't try to fix that isn't broken. Don't spoil our lovely parish, whatever the reason. Just look at Langport.
- In the current climate when everyone is having to tighten their belt would it not be sensible to have just one council and save money.
- What are the overall efficiency savings which could be achieved by this merger?
- Huish Episcopi Parish Council is efficiently run and I feel best serves the interests of its parishes. I strongly oppose a merger with Langport which will be of no benefit to us. I do not wish our parish to lose its individuality.
- Why have 8 Langport Ward Cllrs and only 7 for Huish/Wearne? Why has St Mary's Church been relocated to the Langport Ward
- As a pensioner I would not like to see a rise in my council tax. I think Huish Episcopi would come off worse in this merger.

- Wearne has no gas, footpaths, public transport or shops so should not pay the same council tax as Langport.
- I do not want to pay more council tax to subsidise the financial failings of Langport Council. After 'reorganisation' Langport would always have majority of councillors to force 'their' policies through. Finally leave the present boundaries alone, it seems only Langport have a problem - financial reasons
- Huish is a rural area, not a town and parish charges must reflect this
- As I understand the differential in parish charges are to bring equity to diverse rural areas. Such is the case with the issue before us. Langport is a town with all the amenities a town has to offer. On the one hand Huish is in the main a rural area without basic amenities of streetlights and in some cases metal roads. I feel it is a retrograde step to increase charges for those who have less only to lower them for those with more. Equity must prevail.
- The status quo works so well so why change it?
- Why try and fix something that is not broken?
- Any changes invariably cause problems and additional costs to which the economy cannot withstand at this present time
- It is my belief that Langport has nothing to offer only higher council tax. No thanks
- If this goes through as Huish has the largest ward and only 4 councillors and Langport 8 who will win in any voting. No thanks.
- Not in the best interests of the residents of Huish E. Langport more concerned with looking after business interests
- Things are managed very well as they are at the moment by the HEPC. I do not see any benefits to me only disadvantages. I look forward to the public meeting.
- No positive outcomes from the proposed changes of boundaries only unfairly spreads the cost to rural areas.
- The boundary changes spread the cost of Langport to areas that are totally rural and are unfair and unjust. It is a blatant 'power grab'.
- Whilst existing arrangements are perfectly satisfactory, I see no reason for change and I think it appalling that such a proposal is being considered when that proposal is made by another ward for what appears to be selfish financial interests
- Proposal is unnecessary and undemocratic
- Wards are not needed for such a small council
- Langport have buses to Taunton and Yeovil and Huish Episcopi have none, no shops either.
- Discrepancies in map enclosed, no transport to Langport. Community Tax would it be by wards or post code. Would be detrimental to Huish
- It works well now - why do we need to change?
- There doesn't seem any need for the councils to merge - any advantages are for Langport only.
- In a climate with everyone's income decreasing, this is unnecessary extra expense. Focus should be on Council Tax cost reduction measures.

In addition to the above comments, made on the consultation response forms, there were 8 letters and 19 e-mails received, which can be viewed at the Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT