

# Appendix 18 – Draft Recommendations for Escrick Parish Council

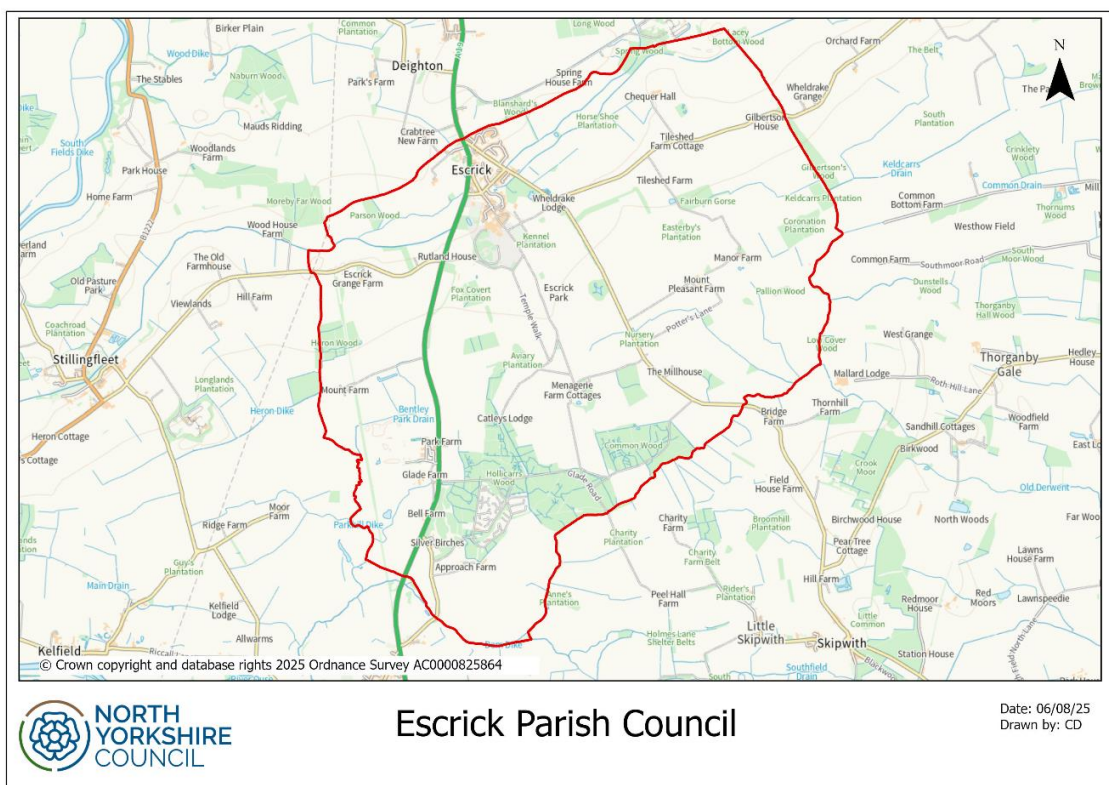
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## 1.0 Current governance arrangements and history of the area

### Current governance arrangements

- 1.1 Escrick Parish Council is situated within the Cawood and Escrick division and is part of the Selby parliamentary constituency. The parish is comprised of the village of Escrick.
- 1.2 Escrick parish currently has 764 electors and 407 properties.
- 1.3 Escrick Parish Council can be seen in the map below.



- 1.4 Escrick Parish Council is comprised of 11 elected parish councillors. In order to meet and take decisions and be quorate, at least 4 councillors must be present. Parish Councils must hold an annual meeting and at least 3 other meetings each year.
- 1.5 Parish councils can raise a precept to raise monies for spending for the benefit of the parish. Escrick Parish Council raised a precept of £22,560.93 for the 2025/26 financial year.

### History of the area

- 1.6 In June 2025, North Yorkshire Council (NYC) was notified of a Community Governance Review (CGR) request from Escrick Parish Council to reduce their councillor numbers from 11 to 9, in order to reduce the quorum from 4 to 3 councillors. Due to a lack of residents willing to become parish councillors, Escrick

Parish Council had been holding several vacant seats for some time. NYC was notified that parish council meetings were often cancelled due to not enough parish councillors being present.

- 1.7 After consultation with Democratic Services, it was suggested that a CGR be carried out for Escrick Parish Council. Following the Standards and Governance Committee on 20 June 2025, Full Council approved the terms of reference of the 2025/26 Community Governance Review, which included a defined list of parishes that would be reviewed on 16 July 2025.
- 1.8 As the request for a CGR of Escrick Parish Council was made after the Standards and Governance Committee report was finalised in June, Escrick Parish Council was not included in the terms of reference approved at Full Council. As one of the recommendations agreed was that authority be delegated to the Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Democratic Services to consider any further requests for a CGR and the terms of reference amended accordingly, the Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Democratic Services approved the addition on 6 August 2025.
- 1.9 As Escrick Parish Council has held vacant seats for some time, is not within the interest of the public to keep the current governance arrangements as meetings are often inquorate and therefore cannot take place. Reducing the councillor numbers from 11 to 9 will reduce the meeting quorum from 4 councillors to 3 councillors and will ensure that meetings are less likely to be cancelled.
- 1.10 The NYC Division Member for Cawood and Escrick, Councillor John Cattanach, was informed of the CGR request and has confirmed his support for a reduction in councillors.

### Five year electorate forecast

- 1.11 The electorate and 5 year electorate forecast for Escrick Parish Council is as follows:

<b>Parish</b>	<b>Electorate (2025)</b>	<b>Electorate prediction (2030)*</b>	<b>Predicted electorate increase</b>
Escrick	764	771	7

## 2.0 Assessment of consultation responses for Escrick Parish Council

2.1 The following table shows the number of households written to, with the number of consultation responses received, and response rate.

Households sent CGR consultation letter	407
Consultation responses received	31
Response rate	7.6%

2.2 Consultation letters were sent to households in the parish of Escrick as following the CGR request made by Escrick Parish Council to reduce their councillor numbers, this was the area under review.

2.3 A copy of the consultation survey can be found at Annex 18A. A summary of consultation responses received can be found at Annex18B.

2.4 For the avoidance of doubt, the free text comments received through the consultation process reflect the views of the individual respondents alone. These comments do not represent the views of North Yorkshire Council and should not be construed as being endorsed by the Council.

2.5 The response rate in the table above was calculated by comparing the number of consultation responses with the number of households directly consulted by means of a letter sent to all properties in the area under review. The total number of responses for Escrick Parish Council was 31.

2.6 Of the 31 respondents, 30 reported that they lived in Escrick, with 3 of these respondents also indicating that they were a representative of a community organisation in Escrick. An additional respondent advised that they were a representative of a community organisation in Escrick.

2.7 94% (29) of respondents indicated that they were aware that Escrick Parish Council had experienced difficulty finding residents to stand as parish councillors and was holding several vacant seats.

2.8 58% (18) of respondents were of the opinion that the current number of parish councillors, 11, was too many. 36% (11) of respondents thought that 11 councillors was about right and 7% (2) of respondents were unsure.

2.9 The majority of respondents chose to reduce the number of councillors from 11 to 9, as detailed in the table below.

Option	Number	Percentage
11 councillors	4	13%
10 councillors	2	7%

9 councillors	18	58%
8 councillors	1	3%
7 councillors	3	10%
Another option - please describe below	2	7%
I do not know	1	3%
Total	31	100%

- 2.10 Of the two respondents who choose “another option”, one suggest 12 councillors and the other made a comment about the lack of interest in previous Escrick Parish Council meetings.
- 2.11 Annex 18B summarises at page 2 the reasons people gave for supporting a reduction in the number of councillors. The most popular reason referenced was that it is difficult to fill vacant seats, which was supported by 21 respondents. 12 respondents gave the reason that the parish council is small and does not need as many councillors and 11 respondents supported the reason that meetings are often cancelled due to insufficient councillor numbers. 4 respondents provided another option which included the view that a reduction in the number of councillors will assist in the running of the parish council and meeting expenditure limitations. Two of these respondents made comments about the existing parish councillors. Such concerns relate to the membership of the parish council and should be addressed through the parish council election process.
- 2.12 Additional comments about the CGR review included further reasons in support of a reduction in the number of councillors such as enabling more meetings to be quorate and therefore ensuring effective decision making. Several respondents referenced difficulties in parish level community engagement as well as the fact that Escrick is a relatively small parish that attracts people with school aged children that may be unable to devote time to being a parish council member.
- 2.13 One respondent commented that they were unable to navigate to the online survey which was provided as a QR code in the letters sent to all Escrick households. This comment has been noted and will be taken on board ahead of the Stage 2 consultation. Individuals were invited to request a paper copy of the survey via email or telephone if required as explained in the letter.
- 2.14 One respondent who did not support a reduction in the number of councillors felt that reducing the quorum to 3 councillors was very low and undemocratic. In response to this concern, the majority of parish councils across North Yorkshire have 5 councillor seats and a quorum of 3, rather than a larger councillor body and therefore a quorum of more than 3 councillors.
- 2.15 Escrick Parish Council provided a consultation response advising that they support a reduction to 9 councillors as it is difficult to fill the vacant seats. The Escrick Parish Chair wrote *“At the last election we only had 5 people stand to be councillors which meant we lost our General Powers of Competence, meaning we have had limited powers of expenditure. We have tried many things to improve the councillor*

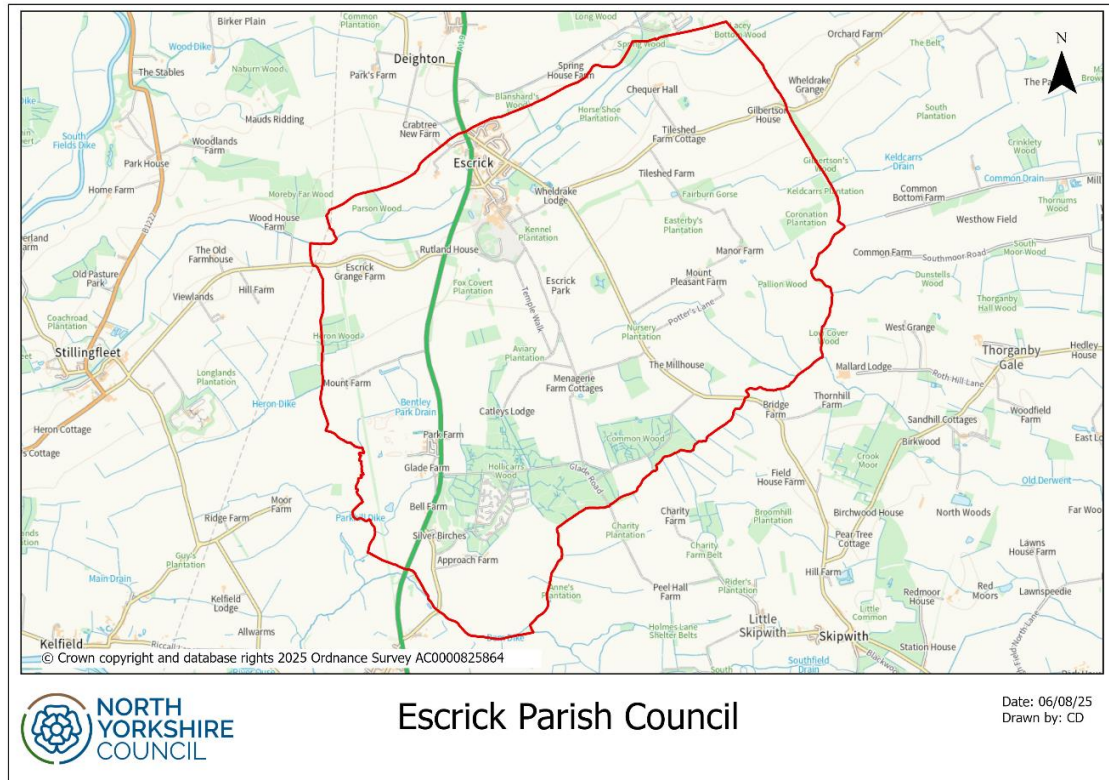
*numbers since the last election, we are up to 8 councillors after one person joined last month, but after the 2027 election we want to be in a position where we can spend significant money on problem areas that were identified in surveys carried out for our NDP process, plus resident requests received since.”*

- 2.16 The Division Member for Cawood and Escrick, Councillor John Cattanach is fully in support of reducing the number of councillors on Escrick Parish Council from 11, which is larger than other parish councils in the Cawood and Escrick division. Councillor Cattanach agreed that the number of councillors ought to be reduced to 9, although advised that he would also support a reduction to 8 councillors.

### 3.0 Final assessment and draft recommendations

3.1 The majority of responses (58%) indicated support for reducing the number of Escrick parish councillors from 11 to 9 which will reduce the quorum from 4 to 3 councillors. It is therefore proposed that the number of councillors on Escrick Parish Council is reduced from 11 to 9.

3.2 A map of Escrick Parish Council is shown below:



3.3 A list of recommendations can be viewed below:

**Recommendation 1 – the number of councillors elected to Escrick parish council shall be reduced from 11 councillors to 9 councillors**

**Recommendation 2 – implementation is recommended to take affect administratively on 1 April 2027 with elections to the new arrangements at the next scheduled elections in May 2027, and that changes to the electoral register required for the above take effect on the revised publication ahead of that election (planned for December 2026).**

3.4 The recommendations detailed above will form the basis of the Stage 2 consultation which will commence on 19 March 2026.

- Annex 18A – Consultation survey
- Annex 18B – Summary of consultation responses