

COUNCIL	
Meeting Date	19 November 2025
Report Title	Sign-off of Community Governance Review Terms of Reference for Swale
EMT Lead	Larissa Reed – Chief Executive
Head of Service	Larissa Reed – Chief Executive
Lead Officer	Stephanie Curtis, Strategic Policy and Communities Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	That Council agree the adoption of the Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Review in Swale.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the process by which the council has drafted the proposed Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Review (CGR) for Swale and asks for their agreement by Council.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (Chapter 3 of Part 4 of the 2007 Act) devolves the power to local authorities to take decisions about matters such as the creation of parishes and their electoral arrangements to local government and local communities in England. Before a Parish or Town Council can be created the Council is required to undertake Community Governance Review (CGR)
- 2.2 Community governance reviews provide the opportunity for principal councils (SBC is the principal council) to review and make changes to community governance within their areas. This may include creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes/town councils; their naming; their electoral arrangements; or grouping.
- 2.3 It was agreed at Council on the 30th July 2025 to undertake a Community Governance Review and also agreed the establishment and configuration of a Member Steering Group to lead on this piece of work.
- 2.4 The Member Steering Group has met and developed the draft Terms of Reference set-out within Appendix 1. It was felt to be very important by the Group that this was a Swale wide review that considers all proposals that could be taken forward within the scope of the review – as outlined in section 5 of Appendix 1.
- 2.5 A number of approaches have already been made by interested groups/parties for consideration within the review. These include:

- The establishment of a Town Council for Sittingbourne
 - The establishment of a Parish Council for Halfway
 - A name change for Warden Parish Council to Warden Bay Parish Council
 - Boundary changes for Bobbing and Iwade Parish Councils.
- 2.6 Existing Town and Parish Councils have also been contacted to invite them to put forward any proposals they would like considered as part of CGR.
- 2.7 These, along with those outlined in section 2.5 will be considered by the Member Steering Group as part of a wider assessment of which proposals will be taken forward to the first consultation stage.
- 2.8 Appendix 1 also outlines the timetable for the CGR. Under the act, we are required to complete the review, within 12 months of the start of the community governance review. The review begins when the council publishes terms of reference of the review and concludes when the council publishes the recommendations made in the review.
- 2.9 Policy and Resources Committee on the 5th November 2025 agreed the draft terms of reference and the onward recommendation for their adoption to Council.

3.0 Proposals

- 3.1 That Council agree the adoption of the Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Review in Swale.

4.0 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 Not to undertake a Community Governance Review. It would be possible to pause any Community Governance Reviews (except any which are the result of a petition). This has been discounted as it is a piece of work which is in the Corporate Plan.

5.0 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Section 93 of the 2007 Act allows principal councils to decide how to undertake a community governance review, provided that they comply with the duties in that Act which apply to councils undertaking reviews. Swale Borough Council as the principal council will need to consult local people and take account of any representations received in connection with the review. When undertaking the review we must have regard to the need to secure that community governance reflects the identities and interests of the community in the area under review, and the need to secure that community governance in that area is effective and convenient.
- 5.2 Under the 2007 Act the council is required to consult local government electors in any area under review, and others who may have an interest in the review. Other

bodies might include local businesses, local public and voluntary organisations - such as schools or health bodies.

- 5.3 The Officers along with the Member Steering Group for CGR are developing robust plans for the delivery of the consultation to ensure its reach is as far as possible.

6.0 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The work required to carry out Corporate Governance Reviews is in the Corporate Plan
Financial, Resource and Property	The cost of undertaking the CGR will be in the region of £10,000. Although we have no specific budget to undertake this piece of work, we have an officer working on Local Government Reorganisation and they will lead this piece of work
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (Chapter 3 of Part 4 of the 2007 Act) devolves the power to local authorities to take decisions about matters such as the creation of parishes and their electoral arrangements to local government and local communities in England
Crime and Disorder	There are no direct crime and disorder implications of this proposal
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	There are no direct Environmental Emergency implications of this proposal
Health and Wellbeing	Although there is not direct Health and Wellbeing impact of this decision, Town and Parish Councils are able to undertake work to improve Health and Wellbeing
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	There are no direct safeguarding implications of this proposal
Risk Management and Health and Safety	There are no direct health and safety implications of this proposal
Equality and Diversity	There are no direct Equality and Diversity implications of this proposal
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no direct privacy or data protection implications of this proposal

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Proposed Terms of Reference for Swale Community Governance Review

8 Background Papers

There are no background papers.