

SWT Special Full Council

Thursday, 29th September, 2022,
6.15 pm



Somerset West
and Taunton

The John Meikle Room - The Deane
House

[SWT MEETING WEBCAST LINK](#)

Members: Hazel Prior-Sankey (Chair), Richard Lees (Vice-Chair), Ian Aldridge, Benet Allen, Lee Baker, Marcus Barr, Mark Blaker, Chris Booth, Sue Buller, Norman Cavill, Simon Coles, Dixie Darch, Hugh Davies, Tom Deakin, Dave Durdan, Kelly Durdan, Caroline Ellis, Habib Farbahi, Ed Firmin, Andrew Govier, Steve Griffiths, Roger Habgood, Andrew Hadley, Barrie Hall, John Hassall, Nicole Hawkins, Ross Henley, Marcia Hill, John Hunt, Dawn Johnson, Marcus Kravis, Sue Lees, Libby Lisgo, Mark Lithgow, Janet Lloyd, Dave Mansell, Andy Milne, Chris Morgan, Simon Nicholls, Craig Palmer, Derek Perry, Martin Peters, Andy Pritchard, Steven Pugsley, Mike Rigby, Francesca Smith, Federica Smith-Roberts, Vivienne Stock-Williams, Andrew Sully, Nick Thwaites, Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Ray Tully, Terry Venner, Sarah Wakefield, Danny Wedderkopp, Brenda Weston, Keith Wheatley, Loretta Whetlor and Gwil Wren

Agenda

1. Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

To receive and note any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or prejudicial or personal interests in respect of any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting.

(The personal interests of Councillors and Clerks of Somerset County Council, Town or Parish Councils and other Local Authorities will automatically be recorded in the minutes.)

3. Public Participation - To receive only in relation to the business for which the Extraordinary Meeting has been called any questions, statements or petitions from the public in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 14,15 and 16

The Chair to advise the Committee of any items on which members of the public have requested to speak and advise those members of the public present of the details of the Council's public participation scheme.

For those members of the public who have submitted any questions or statements, please note, a three minute time limit applies to each speaker and you will be asked to speak before Councillors debate the issue.

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4. To receive any communications or announcements from the Chair of the Council

5. To receive any communications or announcements from the Leader of the Council

6. To receive only in relation to the business for which the Extraordinary Meeting has been called any questions from Councillors in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13

7. Somerset West and Taunton Council amended Political Allocation

This matter is the responsibility of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts.

The purpose of this report is to amend the Council's numerical political allocation due to the following changes since the last update in March 2022.

8. Audit and Governance Committee Terms of Reference update

This matter is the responsibility of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts.

The purpose of this report is to provide the Council with an updated version of the Audit and Governance Committee Terms of Reference.

(Pages 5 - 12)

(Pages 13 - 20)

9. Community Governance Review of the unparished area of Taunton and eight neighbouring parishes – report on second stage consultation and final recommendations

(Pages 21 - 318)

This matter is the responsibility of the Community Governance Review Working Group.

This report sets out the responses received during the second stage consultation and proposes final recommendations for adoption as the outcome of the review.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Pritchard', with a horizontal line underneath.

**ANDREW PRITCHARD
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Please note that this meeting will be recorded. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being recorded and webcast. You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 2018. Data collected during the recording will be retained in accordance with the Council's policy. Therefore unless you are advised otherwise, by entering the Council Chamber and speaking during Public Participation you are consenting to being recorded and to the possible use of the sound recording for access via the website or for training purposes. If you have any queries regarding this please contact the officer as detailed above.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussions. There is time set aside at the beginning of most meetings to allow the public to ask questions. Speaking under "Public Question Time" is limited to 3 minutes per person in an overall period of 15 minutes and you can only speak to the Committee once. If there are a group of people attending to speak about a particular item then a representative should be chosen to speak on behalf of the group. These arrangements do not apply to exempt (confidential) items on the agenda where any members of the press or public present will be asked to leave the Committee Room.

If you would like to ask a question or speak at a meeting, you will need to submit your request to a member of the Governance Team in advance of the meeting. You can request to speak at a Council meeting by emailing your full name, the agenda item and your question to the Governance Team using governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Any requests need to be received by 4pm on the day that provides 1 clear working day before the meeting (excluding the day of the meeting itself). For example, if the meeting is due to take place on a Tuesday, requests need to be received by 4pm on the Friday prior to the meeting.

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The meeting rooms, including the Council Chamber at The Deane House, are on the first floor and are fully accessible. Lift access to The John Meikle Room (Council Chamber), is available from the main ground floor entrance at The Deane House. The Council Chamber at West Somerset House is on the ground floor and is fully accessible via a public entrance door. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are available across both locations. An induction loop operates at both The Deane House and West Somerset House to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter.

Full Council, Executive, and Committee agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

For further information about the meeting, please contact the Governance and Democracy Team via email: governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

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Report Number: SWT 134/22

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Special Full Council – 29 September 2022

Somerset West and Taunton Council amended Political Allocation and Councillor Appointments to Committees

This matter is the responsibility of the Leader of the Council

Report Author: Amy Tregellas, Governance Manager and Monitoring Officer

1. Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to amend the Council's numerical political allocation because Councillor Chris Morgan has re-joined the Conservative Group.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Council approves the revised:

- a) Political allocation as attached (Appendix A)
- b) Councillor appointments to Committees (Appendix B)

3. Risk Assessment

- 3.1 There are no risks associated with this report

4. Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 The Council last agreed the political allocation at the Annual Council meeting on the 24 May 2022.

- 4.2 The purpose of this report is to amend the Council's numerical political allocation following the change set out in section 1.1 of this report.

- 4.3 As a result of this the political allocation has changed (attached as Appendix A) and there are some changes to the Councillor appointments to Committee (attached as Appendix B)

5. Links to Corporate Strategy – N/A

6. Finance / Resource Implications - None

7. Legal Implications - None

8. Climate and Sustainability Implications - None

9. Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications - None

10. Equality and Diversity Implications - None

11. Social Value Implications - None

12. Partnership Implications - None

13. Health and Wellbeing Implications - None

14. Asset Management Implications - None

15. Data Protection Implications - None

16. Consultation Implications - None

17. Scrutiny/Executive Comments / Recommendation(s) – N/A as this is a Council Report

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees –** No not applicable as Council function only
- **Cabinet/Executive –** No not applicable as Council function only
- **Full Council –** Yes

Reporting Frequency: Ad-hoc

List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)

Appendix A	The revised Political Allocation
Appendix B	Councillor appointments to Committee

Contact Officers

Name	Amy Tregellas
Direct Dial	01823 785034
Email	a.tregellas@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

POLITICAL ALLOCATION – 13 September 2022

	Totals	Liberal Democrats (LD) 32	Independent + Green (I+G) 14	Conservative (Con) 10	Labour (Lab) 3	
% based on membership of 59	100	54.24%	23.73%	16.95%	5.08%	
Committee Seats	80	43.39 (43)	18.98 (19)	13.56 (14)	4.06 (4)	
Committee	No on Committee	LD (43)	I+G (19)	Con (14)	Lab (4)	Total
Corporate Scrutiny	15	8.06 (8)	3.56 (4)	2.62 (3)	0.75 (1)	16 - <i>Need to reduce by 1 seat</i>
Community Scrutiny	15	8.06 (8)	3.56 (4)	2.62 (3)	0.75 (1)	16 - <i>Need to reduce by 1 seat</i>
Audit and Governance	11	5.91 (6)	2.61 (3)	1.92 (2)	0.55 (0)	11
Planning	15	8.06 (8)	3.56 (4)	2.62 (3)	0.75 (1)	16 - <i>Need to reduce by 1 seat</i>
Licensing	15	8.06 (8)	3.56 (4)	2.62 (3)	0.75 (1)	16 - <i>Need to reduce by 1 seat</i>
Standards	9	4.84 (5)	2.13 (2)	1.58 (2)	0.45 (0)	9
Total	80	43	21	16	4	84
		0	+2	+2	0	+4

Political Allocation following Group Leader consultation

	Totals	Liberal Democrats (LD) 32	Independent + Green (I+G) 14	Conservative (Con) 10	Labour (Lab) 3	
% based on membership of 59	100	54.24%	23.73%	16.95%	5.08%	
Committee Seats	80	43.39 (43)	18.98 (19)	13.56 (14)	4.06 (4)	
Committee	No on Committee	LD (43)	I+G (19)	Con (14)	Lab (4)	Total
Corporate Scrutiny	15	8.06 (8)	3.56 (4)	2.62 (2)	0.75 (1)	15
Community Scrutiny	15	8.06 (8)	3.56 (3)	2.62 (3)	0.75 (1)	15
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Licensing	15	8.06 (8)	3.56 (3)	2.62 (3)	0.75 (1)	15
Standards	9	4.84 (5)	2.13 (2)	1.58 (2)	0.45 (0)	9
Total	80	43	19	14	4	80
		0	0	0	0	0

The allocation that went to Council in May 2022, was based on 58 Councillors due to Councillor Chris Morgan leaving the Conservative Group and becoming an Ungrouped Member.

Committee Composition updated 24 May 2022 (approved at Annual Council)

Executive	Portfolio Holder
Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts	Leader of the Council
Councillor Derek Perry	Deputy Leader and Sports, Parks, Leisure & Phosphates
Councillor Benet Allen	Communications and Corporate Resources
Councillor Chris Booth	Community
Councillor Dixie Darch	Climate Change
Councillor Caroline Ellis	Culture
Councillor Mike Rigby	Economic Development, Planning and Transportation (Including Asset Management)
Councillor Francesca Smith	Housing
Councillor Andrew Sully	Environmental Services
Councillor Sarah Wakefield	Local Government Reorganisation (including Community Governance Review)

Corporate Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Simon Coles
Cllr Habib Farbahi
Cllr Ed Firmin
Cllr John Hassall
Cllr Nicola Hawkins
Cllr Marcus Kravis
Cllr Simon Nicholls
Cllr Danny Wedderkopp
Cllr Ian Aldridge
Cllr Sue Buller (Chair)
Cllr Loretta Whetlor
Cllr Gwil Wren
Cllr Norman Cavill
Cllr Nick Thwaites
Cllr Libby Lisgo

Community Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Simon Coles
Cllr Thomas Deakin
Cllr Steve Griffiths
Cllr Dawn Johnson
Cllr Richard Lees
Cllr Mark Lithgow
Cllr Martin Peters
Cllr Ray Tully
Cllr Janet Lloyd
Cllr Dave Mansell (Vice-chair)
Cllr Andy Pritchard
Cllr Roger Habgood
Cllr Andy Milne
Cllr Vivienne Stock-Williams
Cllr Libby Lisgo (Chair)

Planning Committee
Cllr Simon Coles (Chair)
Cllr Ed Firmin
Cllr Steve Griffiths
Cllr John Hassall
Cllr Marcia Hill (Vice Chair)
Cllr Mark Lithgow
Cllr Ray Tully
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Cllr Keith Wheatley
Cllr Danny Wedderkopp
Cllr Janet Lloyd (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Craig Palmer
Cllr Loretta Whetlor
Cllr Andrew Hadley
Cllr Trollope-Bellew
Cllr Brenda Weston

Audit and Governance Committee
Cllr Lee Baker (Chair)
Cllr Simon Coles
Cllr Thomas Deakin
Cllr Ed Firmin
Cllr Dawn Johnson
Cllr Marcus Kravis
Cllr Hugh Davies
Cllr Janet Lloyd (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Terry Venner
Cllr Andrew Milne
Cllr Steven Pugsley

Standards Committee
Cllr Lee Baker
Cllr Richard Lees
Cllr Mark Lithgow (Chair)
Cllr Martin Peters (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey
Cllr Hugh Davies
Cllr Terry Venner
Cllr Steven Pugsley
Cllr Anthony Trollope-Bellew
Independent Member
Independent Member
T&P Council Rep
T&P Council Rep

Committee Composition updated 13 September 2022

Executive	Portfolio Holder
Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts	Leader of the Council
Councillor Derek Perry	Deputy Leader and Sports, Parks, Leisure & Phosphates
Councillor Benet Allen	Communications and Corporate Resources
Councillor Chris Booth	Community
Councillor Dixie Darch	Climate Change
Councillor Caroline Ellis	Culture
Councillor Mike Rigby	Economic Development, Planning and Transportation (Including Asset Management)
Councillor Francesca Smith	Housing
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Cllr Andrew Hadley
Cllr Trollope-Bellew
TBC
Cllr Brenda Weston

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Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey
Cllr Hugh Davies
Cllr Terry Venner
Cllr Steven Pugsley
Cllr Anthony Trollope-Bellew
Independent Member
Independent Member
T&P Council Rep
T&P Council Rep

Report Number: SWT 133/22

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Special Full Council – 29 September 2022

Audit and Governance Committee Terms of Reference update

This matter is the responsibility of the Leader of the Council, Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts

Report Author: Amy Tregellas, Governance Manager and Monitoring Officer

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Council with an updated version of the Audit and Governance Committee Terms of Reference.
- 1.2 The reason for the update is to reflect changes recommended in the SWAP Baseline Fraud Maturity Report, which went to the Audit and Governance Committee meeting on 12 September 2022.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Council approves the updated Terms of Reference for the Audit and Governance Committee.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 Failure to have an up to date Constitution could result in a negative opinion and recommendations arising from Internal and External Audits, as well as an action being included in the Annual Governance Statement Action Plan.

4 Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 The Council are asked to consider and approve amendments to the Audit and Governance Committee's Terms of Reference. This report was considered and endorsed by the Audit and Governance Committee on 12 September 2022. The revised Terms of Reference are attached as Appendix A (with the proposed changes being set out in ***bold italics***).
- 4.2 The key changes are:
 - Adding in the Committee's responsibility for approving the Council's Annual Fraud Plan (as per the SWAP Baseline Fraud Report)

- Adding in the Committee's responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the Council's performance against the Annual Fraud Plan – half yearly (as per the SWAP Baseline Fraud Report)
- Reflecting that the Risk Management Strategy is now called the Risk and Opportunity Management Strategy
- Reflecting that the suite of Fraud Policies now includes the Anti-Money Laundering Policy

4.3 This come before Council as the Constitution sets out that the Council exercises the function of adopting and changing the Constitution.

5 Links to Corporate Strategy

5.1 Having a robust governance framework and Constitution overarches everything that the Council does, including the delivery of the Corporate Strategy.

6 Finance / Resource Implications

6.1 None arising from this report

Unitary Council Financial Implications and S24 Direction Implications

6.2 None arising from this report

7 Legal Implications

7.1 None arising from this report

8 Climate, Ecology and Sustainability Implications

8.1 None arising from this report

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

9.1 None arising from this report

10 Equality and Diversity Implications

10.1 None arising from this report

11 Social Value Implications

11.1 None arising from this report

12 Partnership Implications

12.1 None arising from this report

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications

13.1 None arising from this report

14 Asset Management Implications

14.1 None arising from this report

15 Data Protection Implications

15.1 None arising from this report

16 Consultation Implications

16.1 None arising from this report

Democratic Path:

- **Audit and Governance Committee – Yes, 12 September 2022. The Committee resolved to recommend that the Council adopt the amended Terms of Reference for the Audit and Governance Committee**
- **Executive – No**
- **Full Council – Yes, Next meeting**

Reporting Frequency: Ad-hoc

List of Appendices (background papers to the report)

Appendix A	Audit & Governance Committee Terms of Reference
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Contact Officers

Name	Amy Tregellas
Direct Dial	0300 304 8000
Email	a.tregellas@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Membership and Meetings

The Audit and Governance Committee will be composed of 11 elected Councillors, except any councillor who is a member of the Executive;

The Quorum for the Audit and Governance Committee shall be 4 voting members of the Committee.

The Committee will normally meet on a quarterly basis.

Scope

The Audit and Governance Committee will have overall responsibility for governance and audit matters as set out in the terms of reference.

Terms of Reference

The Audit and Governance Committee will have the following roles and functions:

A. Corporate Governance

1. Oversee the Council's use of risk management.
2. Approving the Local Code of Corporate Governance.
3. Approving the Annual Governance Statement.
4. ~~Considering and a~~ Approving the Council's Risk **and Opportunity** Management Statement and Strategy.
5. **Approving the Council's Annual Fraud Plan**
6. Monitor and review the Council's internal and external audit functions.
7. Monitor and review the Council's systems of internal control
8. **Monitor the progress on delivering Audit Actions on a quarterly basis.**
9. To make recommendations to the Council regarding any suggested major changes to the Constitution, particularly in respect of financial procedures and protocols, procurement procedures and guidelines.

10. Monitoring and reviewing the operation of the Council's Constitution, particularly in respect of financial procedures and protocols, procurement procedures and guidelines.
11. Reviewing any corporate governance issue referred to the Committee by the Chief Executive, the Section 151 Officer or the Monitoring Officer, the Leader/Executive or any other committee of the Council.
12. Considering the Council's arrangements for corporate governance and necessary actions to ensure compliance with best practice, together with any relevant issues referred by the Leadership Team or Statutory Officers.
13. Considering the Council's compliance with its own and other published standards and controls.
14. Considering the annual report regarding complaints about the Council referred to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
15. Approving payments or other benefits of a value greater than £5,000 arising from complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
16. Monitoring the effectiveness of the Council's policies and procedures that ensure sound governance arrangements, including:
 - a) whistle-blowing procedure;
 - b) anti-fraud and corruption policy;
 - c) anti-bribery policy and procedure;
 - d) **anti-Money Laundering Policy**
 - e) complaints procedure;

and making appropriate recommendations to the Executive.

17. ***Monitor and review the Council's performance against the Annual Fraud Plan. Updates to be provided to the Committee on a half-yearly basis.***
18. Monitoring and auditing of the Council's equalities and diversity policies.

B. Audit and Accounts

1. Agreeing the internal and external audit plans and monitoring delivery of the plans.
2. Review and challenge any significant issues and the action plans arising in the annual audit report and management letter for the Council.
3. Monitoring the implementation of significant audit recommendations.

4. Raising the profile of internal control within the authority.
5. Reviewing and approving the annual Statement of Accounts and Narrative Statement.
6. To regularly review the effectiveness of overall governance arrangements for the Hinkley Point Project and receive both internal and external audit reports including those undertaken by EDF.
7. Considering reports dealing with the management and performance of the providers of the internal audit function.
8. Considering reports from internal audit on recommendations agreed with service leaders as a result of an internal audit review which have not been implemented within a reasonable timescale.
9. Considering specific reports submitted by the internal or external auditors.
10. Commenting on the scope and depth of external audit work and ensuring that it gives value for money.
11. Considering any other matter referred by the Section 151 Officer.

Annual Report

The Audit and Governance Committee must report annually to the Full Council on its work undertaken during the year, its future work programme and amended working methods if appropriate.

Report number: SWT 132/22

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Special Full Council – 29 September 2022

Community Governance Review of the unparished area of Taunton and eight neighbouring parishes – report on second stage consultation and final recommendations

This matter is the responsibility of the Community Governance Review Working Group

**Report Author: Kevin Williams – Deputy Monitoring Officer SWT
John Williams – CGR Consultant SWT
Marcus Prouse – Specialist Governance SWT**

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 Taunton is the only area in Somerset that does not have a Parish or Town Council to represent its residents. For many years authorities have wanted to address this anomaly. The former Taunton Deane Borough Council resolved to do so in 2018 and its successor Somerset West and Taunton District Council ('the Council') restated this commitment in March 2021 when it established a Community Governance Review Member Working Group. On 19 October 2021 the Council considered a set of options presented by the Working Group and resolved to commence a community governance review of the unparished area of Taunton and eight neighbouring parish areas with the intention to implement a town council for all or part of that area and to consider any other changes that may be required to parish arrangements in the area under review.
- 1.2 The review began in November 2021 with a first stage of public consultation running until 12 January 2022. On 3 March 2022 the Council considered the responses to that consultation and adopted the Community Governance Review Working Group's proposals for draft recommendations of the review. Those recommendations were subject to a second round of public consultation from 14 June 2022 to 26 July 2022.
- 1.3 This report sets out the responses received during the second stage consultation and proposes final recommendations for adoption as the outcome of the review. The final recommendations include:
 - The creation of a new parish to cover the currently unparished area of Taunton as well as a number of areas of existing or proposed urban extension that are currently within neighbouring parishes;
 - The establishment from 1 April 2023 of a parish/town council to serve the new parish; and
 - A number of further changes to parish governance in the area under review and related electoral arrangements.

- 1.4 The report makes further recommendations in connection with the new Taunton Parish/Town Council's budget requirement for the financial year 2023/24; assets and services to be transferred to the new council and arrangements to oversee the establishment of the new council including the appointment of a Shadow Town Council from October 2022.
- 1.5 This community governance review and the proposed establishment of the new parish/town council is taking place at the same time as the wider reorganisation of local government in Somerset including the creation of the new unitary authority. In accordance with the Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) Regulations 2008 responsibility for making any Reorganisation Order to give effect to the final recommendations of a community governance review during the transitional period for local government reorganisation rests with the continuing/successor authority. This report therefore presents a draft Reorganisation Order for consideration by Somerset County Council.
- 1.6 **Note re: terminology:** A principal council may, following a community governance review, create, abolish, or alter the area of any parish within its area and may establish a parish council to serve a newly created parish. Once established a parish council in an urban area may resolve to be called a town council. It is thought likely that any council established to serve Taunton will do so. Therefore, this report uses the term 'parish/town council' when referring to the creation of a new Taunton Parish Council.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Council confirms that it has considered and taken into account the responses received to the second stage consultation on the community governance review of the unparished area of Taunton and eight neighbouring parishes together with the considerations and recommendations of the Community Governance Review Working Group as set out in this report and appendices as required by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 2.2 That the Council notes that in the context of local government reorganisation it is the responsibility of Somerset West and Taunton Council to agree the final recommendations of the community governance review and the responsibility of Somerset County Council to make any Reorganisation Order to give effect to those recommendations.
- 2.3 That Somerset West and Taunton Council seek Somerset County Council Executive's agreement in principle to use a phased approach to transfer the assets and services starting with those identified in Appendix I, where reasonable practicable on 1 April 2023.
- 2.4 That the Council adopts the Community Governance Review Working Group's proposals for the final recommendations of the community governance review as follows:

- A. That a new parish be created to include the currently unparished area of Taunton and that in addition:
- i) Comeytrove Parish Council be dissolved, and the entire area of Comeytrove Parish be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;
 - ii) The Killams Green area, currently within Trull Parish Council area, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;
 - iii) The part of the forthcoming development in the south-west corner of Taunton that falls within Trull Parish, including the whole of the development north of Dipford Road, should be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;
 - iv) The boundary of Trull Parish to the north-west of Cotlake Hill be altered to follow the green wedge around the Sherford urban area, with the small area to the south of that boundary that is currently within the unparished area of Taunton becoming part of Trull Parish.
 - v) The urban area within the Maidenbrook Ward of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish, including sites earmarked for housing development in the near future, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.
 - vi) The urban parts of Staplegrove Parish, including the entirety of the forthcoming development in the north-west corner of Taunton, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;
 - vii) The slim part of Staplegrove Parish jutting to the west of Silk Mills Lane be included within the boundary of Norton Fitzwarren Parish;
 - viii) The remaining area of the existing Staplegrove Parish be included within the boundary of Kingston St. Mary Parish;
 - ix) Staplegrove Parish Council be dissolved.
 - x) A small southern portion of the Kingston St Mary Parish area, representing that part of the proposed Staplegrove East development that falls within the parish, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.
 - xi) With the exception of Galmington Trading Estate and a small section south of the A38 near Rumwell, no part of Bishops Hull Parish be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;
 - xii) The small triangular residential area at the cross-section with Wellington Road, currently within the unparished area, be included within the boundary of Bishops Hull Parish;
 - xiii) The boundary between Norton Fitzwarren Parish and Bishops Hull Parish, just north of Mill Cottages, be amended to follow the route of the railway line;
 - xiv) The Hankridge Retail Park, Creech Castle and the associated Toneway Road, currently within West Monkton Parish, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish, which should run along the railway to the M5;
 - xv) With the exception of the above, no part of the existing area of West Monkton Parish be included in the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.
 - xvi) No part of the existing area of Norton Fitzwarren Parish be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.
 - xvii) the boundary between West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine parishes between Maidenbrook and Yallands Hill south of the Country Park be

amended to following the A3259 and new relief road westwards to Maidenbrook Lane.

- B. That the new parish be named 'Taunton Parish' and that a parish/town council be established to serve the new parish with effect from 1 April 2023.
 - C. That the first elections to the proposed new parish/town council for Taunton should be held on the ordinary day of elections (the first Thursday in May) in 2023.
 - D. That the proposed new Taunton Parish be divided into wards for the purposes of electing parish/town councillors.
 - E. That the total number of councillors to be elected to the proposed Taunton Parish/Town Council be 20 and the warding arrangements for the council and the number of councillors to be elected to represent each ward, be as set out at section 9.19 of this report.
 - F. That the electoral arrangements of certain other parish councils in the area under review be amended as set out at section 9.20 of this report.
 - G. That save as set out at A to F above, the existing parishes in the review area and the names, boundaries, council size and other parish governance arrangements in respect of those parishes remain unchanged.
 - H. That the budget requirement for the new Taunton Parish/Town Council for the financial year 2023/24 be set at £2.114m as set out at section 11.7 of this report.
 - I. That temporary parish/town councillors as listed at section 11.20 of this report be appointed to serve as members of the new Taunton Parish/Town Council from 1 April 2023 until the councillors elected on 4 May 2023 take up office.
 - J. That the Local Government Boundary Commission for England be requested to make changes to the boundaries of the relevant Somerset Council electoral divisions as necessary to ensure consistency between those boundaries and the revised Parish and Parish Ward boundaries made in this Community Governance Review.
- 2.5 That accordingly Somerset County Council be recommended to make the Somerset (Somerset West and Taunton) (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2022 as attached in draft form at Appendix 'A' to give effect to the above recommendations.
- 2.6 That a Shadow Taunton Town Council be established with effect from 14 October 2022 and with membership as set out at section 13.6 of this report, to lead and oversee the work to establish on 1 April 2023 the new Taunton Parish/Town Council.
- 2.7 That the Community Governance Review Working Group be wound up once the Reorganisation Order has been made, concluding the review.

- 2.8 That authority be delegated to the SWTC Chief Executive Officer and SWTC Monitoring Officer or Deputy, after consultation with the Leader of Somerset West and Taunton Council and the Chair of the Shadow Taunton Town Council (if any), to take any action necessary to conclude the community governance review in accordance with legislation and statutory guidance and to secure the implementation of the final recommendations of the review as set out in the Reorganisation Order.
- 2.9 That Council agrees Somerset County Council's S151 Officer will notify the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities of the request Alternative Notional Amount for Council Tax purposes, reflecting the transfer of costs from current district council budget to the budget of the new parish/town council.
- 2.10 A plan illustrating the proposed changes to parish and ward boundaries that would result from implementation of the final recommendations above is set out at Appendix 'B' to this report. In addition, full details of the Working Group's considerations, the reasons for each of its recommendations and detailed maps illustrating each proposed change are at Appendix 'C' to this report.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 Any risks associated with this review have been discussed with the Member Working Group as the meetings have proceeded so that the Councillors on the Group could take an informed judgement of the situation.
- 3.2 Risks arising from the Secretary of State's decision to bring forward the ordinary county and parish council elections in Somerset 2023 to 5 May 2022 and the Returning Officer's publication of the Notice of Election for those polls during the period initially scheduled for the second stage consultation on the review were mitigated by delaying the launch of the second stage consultation until after those elections.
- 3.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) is attached at Appendix 'E' to this report.
- 3.4 There are risks associated with the competing pressure on resources. Activity is needed to bring forward the work on asset transfers at the same time as undertaking the core business of the council and delivering on LRG workstreams. These risks have reduced by the proposed phasing of asset transfers and by starting with the least complex assets, those being parks and public toilets.

4 Community governance reviews

Background

- 4.1 Parish and town councils are the most local tier of local government. They are directly elected by local voters to represent their community and may raise their own precept (an amount added to the council tax in their area) and deliver services to meet local needs and improve community well-being.
- 4.2 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ('the 2007 Act') provides that a principal council may review and make changes to the governance

arrangements for parishes and parish/town councils in its area, by undertaking a community governance review. This is a review of the whole or part of the district with a view to making recommendations on one or more of the following:

- Creating, merging or abolishing parishes;
- Boundary alterations between existing parishes;
- The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes;
- The establishment of parish councils;
- Electoral arrangements for parish councils (the year of election; number of councillors; warding);
- Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes; and/or
- Other types of local arrangements, including parish meetings.

4.3 A community governance review may be triggered by a statutory petition or a formal 'application' in the terms of the 2007 Act, or the principal council may decide to undertake a review at any time, for example to address population changes, in response to a request from a town/parish council or other person(s), or as part of a periodic programme of reviews. Government guidance recommends that principal councils should undertake a review of their areas every 10-15 years. A community governance review offers an opportunity to address any parish boundary anomalies that may have arisen, for example due to new housing development, and to put in place clearly defined boundaries that follow enduring natural or built features and reflect community identities and interests.

4.4 Section 93 of the 2007 Act allows principal councils to decide how to undertake a community governance review, provided that they comply with certain duties including the need to publish the terms of reference and any recommendations of the review, to ensure that any proposals reflect the identities and interests of the community in the area and promote effective and convenient local government and to follow guidance issued by the Secretary of State and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) ('the guidance'). In undertaking a review, the principal council must consult local electors and other interested parties including any other local authorities in the area under review. The manner in which the council consults is not prescribed but any representations received must be taken into account.

4.5 At the conclusion of a review the principal council may give effect to the recommendations of the review by making a Reorganisation Order. Any changes to parish boundary arrangements will normally come into effect on 1 April in the year following the Order whilst any revised electoral arrangements take effect at the next ordinary parish elections (which in Somerset are scheduled for 6 May 2027) but in relation to a newly-created parish/town council, the principal council may decide that the first elections to the new council shall take place in an earlier year.

Making recommendations

4.6 Sections 87 to 92 of the 2007 Act provide that at the end of a community governance review the principal council must make recommendations as to:

- a) Whether (a) new parish(es) should be constituted and the name of any new parish;

- b) Whether any existing parishes should or should not be abolished or whether the area or name of any existing parishes should be altered;
- c) Whether any new or existing parishes should have, or should continue to have, a parish council; and
- d) What the electoral arrangements for new or existing parishes, which are to have parish councils, should be.

4.7 The principal council may also make recommendations about:

- a) The grouping or de-grouping of parishes;
- b) Adding parishes to an existing group of parishes; and/or
- c) Making related alterations to the boundaries of a principal council's electoral areas (see below).

Related alterations - recommendations to the LGBCE

4.8 Any changes to parish or parish/town ward boundaries made as a result of a community governance review do not automatically change the corresponding district ward or county division boundaries. In the interests of convenient local government, in the event that such changes are made the Council may make recommendations to the LGBCE that the Somerset Council division boundaries are realigned to follow the revised parish/parish ward boundaries. The LGBCE would require evidence that the Council has consulted on this as part of the review. Officers have been in consultation with the LGBCE since the commencement of this review.

Community governance review during Local Government Reorganisation

- 4.9 In addition to the primary legislation quoted in this report, two pieces of secondary legislation are particularly relevant to a community governance review taking place during a period of Local Government Reorganisation. These are any relevant structural changes order (in this case the Somerset (Structural Changes) Order 2022); and the Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) Regulations 2008.
- 4.10 Regulation 7(2) of the latter Regulations provides that where a predecessor council (i.e. Somerset West and Taunton) undertakes or has undertaken a community governance review but has not exercised its powers to give effect to the review's recommendations before the beginning of the transitional period, 'Sections 86 and 96 to 100 of the 2007 Act shall have effect as if the successor council were the principal council'.
- 4.11 This gives rise to a hybrid situation in which the District Council remains responsible for concluding the community governance review including adopting the final recommendations, but it will be the responsibility of Somerset County Council as the continuing authority to make any Reorganisation Order to give effect to those recommendations and to undertake subsequent duties including publicising the outcome of the review, notifying various statutory bodies and making any agreements about incidental matters between those public bodies affected by the reorganisation.

4.12 It is therefore important that both principal councils are involved in the development of the review's recommendations and in accord as to the agreed outcomes. Discussions at both member and officer level have therefore involved both authorities and the County Council's Constitution and Governance Committee and Executive have been kept informed of the developing proposals. The recommendations of this report include a draft Reorganisation Order (attached at Appendix 'A') which Somerset County Council will be invited to make at an extraordinary meeting of the County Council on 5 October 2022.

5 The criteria for making recommendations about community governance

5.1 Section 93 of the 2007 Act requires principal councils to ensure that community governance within the area under review will be:

- reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and
- effective and convenient

5.2 The guidance states that when considering these criteria, councils should take into account factors including the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish. The guidance further states that 'the general rule should be that the parish is based on an area which reflects community identity and interest and which is of a size which is viable as an administrative unit of local government'.

Community identities/interests and boundaries

5.3 In accordance with the above principles and the guidance, the Council has set out policies in the terms of reference for the review including the following:

- "The Council notes the Government's continued commitment to town and parish councils and its guidance that it 'expects to see a trend in the creation, rather than the abolition, of parishes'" (para 6.2);
- "It is important that the creation of any parish(es) should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity and that electors should be able to identify clearly with the parish in which they are resident. This information will therefore need to be gathered as part of the review." (para 6.3);
- "The Council will wish to balance carefully the consideration of changes that have happened over time, for example through population shifts or additional development and that may have led to a different community identity, with historic traditions in the area." (para 6.4); and
- "The Council notes that the boundaries between parishes will often reflect the 'no-man's land' between communities represented by areas of low population or pronounced physical barriers, either natural or man-made; and that ideally boundaries should be, and be likely to remain, easily identifiable." (para 6.6)

Effective and convenient community governance

5.4 The guidance states: ‘With local parish and town councils in mind, effective and convenient local government essentially means that such councils should be viable in terms of providing at least some local services, and if they are to be convenient they need to be easy to reach and accessible to local people’.

5.5 In accordance with the above principles and the guidance, the Council has set out the following policy in the terms of reference for the review:

- “The Council wishes to ensure that parishes should be viable as an administrative unit and should possess a precept that enables them effectively to promote the well-being of their residents and contribute to the provision of services in their area in an economic and efficient manner. Nevertheless, it is recognised that in a rural area a strong sense of community can prevail over a sparsely populated area” (para 6.5).

6 Community governance review of the unparished area of Taunton and eight neighbouring parishes

Background

6.1 On 19 October 2021 an extraordinary meeting of the Full Council resolved to commence a community governance review of the unparished area of Taunton and eight neighbouring parishes (Trull, Bishop’s Hull, Comeytrove, Norton Fitzwarren, Staplegrove, Kingston St. Mary, Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton). This followed previous resolutions on this matter by the former Taunton Deane Borough Council and Somerset West and Taunton District Council itself.

6.2 Somerset County Council has also previously indicated a wish to see a community governance review undertaken and within both unitary business cases there was the expectation that a town council would be created for Taunton to enable their proposals to work effectively, i.e.:

- One Somerset Business Case: “The unitary council Shadow Executive would request a community governance review during the transition phase to enable a Taunton Town Council to be created and in place by vesting day”; and
- Stronger Somerset Business Case: “We recognise the need to establish a Town Council for Taunton and commit to delivering this as part of our ongoing relationship with communities”.

6.3 The review began on 12 November 2021 with the publication of terms of reference (copy attached at Appendix ‘F’). The first period of public consultation ran until 12 January 2022, during which local residents and all interested parties were invited to make initial submissions on whether a parish/town council or councils should be established for Taunton and if so what area it/they should cover; any consequential changes to the eight neighbouring parishes included in the review and related matters; and any other points that they felt should be considered.

6.4 On 3 March 2022 the Council considered the responses to the first stage consultation and adopted the Community Governance Review Working Group’s preferred option as

the draft recommendations of the review. These draft recommendations are set out in full at Appendix 'G' and include the creation of a new parish to cover both the currently unparished area of Taunton and a number of areas of existing or proposed urban extension that are currently within neighbouring parishes; the establishment from 1 April 2023 of a parish/town council to serve the new parish; and a number of further changes to parish governance in the area under review and related electoral arrangements.

Second stage consultation

- 6.5 The draft recommendations were subject to a second round of public consultation that ran from 14 June 2022 to 26 July 2022. A range of methods and channels were used to publicise the draft recommendations and invite electors and others to respond including those used during the first stage consultation as well as a number of additional activities including:
- Notification to the relevant parish councils and to Somerset County Council, Somerset Association of Local Councils and the Taunton Charter Trustees;
 - Notification to elected representatives for the areas under review;
 - Information to businesses and local voluntary and community groups based in the areas under review;
 - A dedicated page for the review on the Council website with an online form for responses and periodic links from the home page;
 - Press releases and social media posts;
 - Paper-based consultation questionnaires available on request;
 - Face-to-face;
 - Attendance by officers and members of the Working Group at parish council/charter trustee meetings;
 - A post card delivered to all residential addresses in the area under review drawing attention to the consultation and providing a link to the online form and a telephone number to obtain a hard copy; and
 - Town Centre and parish publicity stands and drop-in sessions.
- 6.6 Responses were accepted by post, e-mail or via the online form or a hard copy version of the form available on request.

7 Responses to the second stage consultation - summary

- 7.1 A total of 501 responses were received to the second stage consultation. Of these 418 respondents completed the online consultation proforma, including 409 local residents and smaller numbers of local employees, business persons and representatives of community organisations.
- 7.2 In addition to the online respondents, 50 further persons completed paper questionnaires and 33 responses were received by email, from both individuals and organisations including seven of the eight parish councils included in the review, the Taunton Charter Trustees, Somerset Association of Local Councils and Taunton Labour Party. All of the responses received to the second stage consultation are set out in the consultation report at Appendix 'H' to this report. Information from other

councils that have undertaken community governance reviews suggests that the number of responses received is not untypical of rates achieved for this type of consultation elsewhere.

- 7.3 Based on postcode information provided by the respondents, at least 388 responses came from residents of, or persons connected with, the area under review. The largest single group (129) were from the currently unparished area but responses were received from residents of all parishes under review as well as from elsewhere in the district.
- 7.4 Information on the specific responses received to each question in the second stage consultation and the substantive issues raised by respondents from and in respect of each of the areas included in the review are set out in the following paragraphs.

8 Considerations and the Community Governance Review Working Group's recommendations

- 8.1 The second stage consultation responses were considered by the Community Governance Review Working Group on 16, 19 and 25 August and 6 September 2022 - The Working Group considered the responses in the context of the statutory criteria and guidance and the policies for the review as set out in the terms of reference.
- 8.2 The following paragraphs set out in turn the key issues raised by respondents in relation to each element of the draft recommendations, the Working Group's considerations and proposals in respect of the final recommendations of the review.

(a) A parish and parish/town council for Taunton

- 8.3 The draft recommendations propose that a single parish should be created to include the currently unparished areas of Taunton as well as areas of urban extension that have been developed over the years or are proposed within a number of neighbouring parishes. The new parish would be named 'Taunton Parish' and a parish/town council would be established to serve the new parish with effect from 1 April 2023.
- 8.4 Section 94 of the 2007 Act provides that where a council creates a new parish, if that parish has 1,000 or more local government electors the principal council must also recommend that a parish council be created to serve the new parish.
- 8.5 The Working Group noted that 79% of respondents to the second stage consultation answered 'yes' to the question 'Do you agree that Taunton should be represented by a town council?' and that 72% agreed that 'A town council for Taunton could help to promote a sense of community in the town and promote community cohesion.
- 8.6 The Working Group considered that the creation of a Taunton Parish and parish/town council would address the historic anomaly of part of Taunton being, since at least the reorganisation of local government in England in 1974 and the establishment of Yeovil Town Council in 1982 and Bridgwater Town Council in 2003, the only unparished area in Somerset and that the establishment of a parish/town council would enable the

residents of Taunton to be properly represented alongside other areas in negotiations with the new unitary authority on any devolution framework plans.

- 8.7 On the question of whether the new parish should extend beyond the unparished area to also take in the parts of neighbouring parishes identified in the draft recommendations, 54% of respondents to the second stage consultation answered 'yes' to the question 'If a town council is established for Taunton, do you agree that its boundary should reflect the current reality of the town and include areas where urban development has occurred or is under way extending beyond the historic boundary?'
- 8.8 In light of these responses and subject to further consideration as set out in the following paragraphs of the precise boundary of the new parish, the Working Group **resolved to confirm its recommend that a new parish be created to include both the existing unparished area of Taunton and further areas currently within neighbouring parishes as set out below, that the new parish be named 'Taunton' and that a parish/town council be established to serve the new parish with effect from 1 April 2023.**

(b) The boundaries of a new Taunton Parish

- 8.9 In relation to the detail of the areas to be included within the boundary of the proposed Taunton Parish/Town Council, the second stage consultation responses were mixed. Overall, 44% of respondents agreed with the complete package of proposals set out in those draft recommendations for changes at the parish level, whilst 49% did not agree.
- 8.10 Drilling down into the detail of the consultation responses and in particular those to the question 'Which aspects of the proposal do you think should be changed?' reveals that there were varying views on this matter on the part of respondents from different geographical areas.
- 8.11 The most common theme mentioned by respondents who did not support the proposal was the proposed inclusion of certain existing parished areas, which some respondents considered should not be included in the proposed Taunton Parish/Town Council area. In numerical terms, over half of the respondents who answered 'no' to the questions at paragraphs 8.7 and 8.9 above came from three parishes to the north of the unparished area – Cheddon Fitzpaine (the highest number), West Monkton and Staplegrove.
- 8.12 Some suggested additions to the proposed area of the Taunton Parish were put forward by a small number of respondents – in relation to the area under review, these included all or part of the parishes of Bishops Hull and Norton Fitzwarren as well as the Monkton Heathfield Urban Extension.
- 8.13 The Working Group noted that the guidance required that consideration be given to the statutory criteria of community identities and interests and effective and convenient local government as they applied to each of the communities within the area under review. The Working Group therefore looked in turn at each element of the draft recommendations in the context of the consultation responses and the statutory criteria

and considered in each case whether any changes to the draft recommendations should be made.

- 8.14 Decision sheets included at Appendix 'C' to this report record in detail the Working Group's considerations, its recommendations and the reasons for those recommendations in relation to each of the following elements (NB these are listed below in the order in which they appear in the draft recommendations).

(c) Comeytrove Parish

- 8.15 The draft recommendations proposed that Comeytrove Parish Council should be abolished and the entire area of Comeytrove Parish should be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.
- 8.16 This recommendation was based on the Council's judgement that the sense of place of those within Comeytrove as identified in the responses to the first stage consultation did not display strong feeling for local distinctiveness or local identity to the parish separate from Taunton. The Council had noted that the guidance was clear that parish areas should "reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government. For example, over time, communities may expand with new housing developments. This can often lead to existing parish boundaries becoming anomalous as new houses are built across them resulting in people being in different parishes from their neighbours" (para 84). Comeytrove was considered a strong example of such an area and the new development of two thousand homes would strengthen this expansion and further change the character of the area.
- 8.17 32 responses to the second stage consultation were received from respondents identifying themselves as residents of Comeytrove Parish. Of these, 78% agreed that a town council for Taunton could promote a sense of community and community cohesion, 63% agreed that the boundary of the town council should reflect the current reality of the town including urban extensions and 50% agreed with the package of proposals in the draft recommendations (with 41% disagreeing). Comeytrove Parish Council also responded, stating 'The Parish Council are not convinced of the reasons given or the case being made for the proposal, although the Parish Council understands the strategic benefit to Taunton, the Parish Council remains to be convinced that there is a creditable benefit to the residents of Comeytrove'.
- 8.18 On the basis of the responses received the Working Group did not consider that any compelling case had been made to vary the draft recommendation and **therefore resolved to confirm its recommendation that Comeytrove Parish Council be dissolved and the entire area of Comeytrove Parish be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.**

(d) Trull Parish

- 8.19 The draft recommendations included three proposals affecting Trull Parish:
- That the Killams Green area, currently within Trull Parish Council area, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;

- That the part of the forthcoming development in the south-west corner of Taunton that falls within Trull Parish should be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish; and
 - That the boundary of Trull Parish to the north-west of Cotlake Hill be altered to follow the green wedge around the Sherford urban area, with the small area to the south of that boundary that is currently within the unparished area of Taunton becoming part of Trull Parish.
- 8.20 Ten responses to the second stage consultation were received from respondents identifying themselves as residents of Trull Parish. In addition an email response was submitted by Trull Parish Council.
- 8.21 No specific adverse comments were received in relation to the Killams Green nor Sherford proposals. In respect of the Orchard Green development a majority of the ten responses did not support the proposal. The reasons given for this included the separate character and identity of village areas, Neighbourhood Planning and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) implications, the electoral calendar and the number of existing parish vacancies. One respondent suggested a number of alternative boundary options based around the Galmington Stream Green Space instead of the whole development being taken into the town council's area.
- 8.22 Trull Parish Council agreed to accept the proposal as it stands but was of the opinion that an additional area towards the south-east end of the Orchard Grove development, being the playing field and plots 42 to 47 to the north of Dipford Road, should stay within Trull rather than being included in the proposed Taunton Parish.
- 8.23 The Working Group noted its previous considerations that the new development at Orchard Grove would exacerbate the urban extension of the community in the Comeytrove area and that its residents, like those in Comeytrove, would be likely to look to Taunton for carrying out their activities in the pattern of their daily life. The Working Group had received advice from the Planning Policy officers on the expected timescale of the completion of the development as well as its effect on the electoral arrangements on Trull Parish. The size, population and borders of this development would have a large impact on Trull Parish governance arrangements and community cohesion if left as is.
- 8.24 The Working Group noted the relatively low number of responses to the second stage consultation from the Trull area. The Working Group considered the points raised by those persons who had responded but overall considered that these did not outweigh the logic behind the draft recommendations as set out above.
- 8.25 In relation to the amendment to the boundary proposed by Trull Parish Council, the Working Group expressed concern at the principle of splicing development and a desire to remain consistent in applying reasoning to the boundaries, feeling that the Parish Council's suggested boundary was more artificial than that consulted on. Members noted the Parish Council's concerns regarding delivery of the playing fields but noted that this would depend on the availability of CIL funding, of which the principal council was the main holder. Taking all factors into account, the Working Group considered that the draft recommendations should be confirmed and that these

would both reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government.

8.26 The Working Group therefore **resolved to confirm its recommendations in relation to the boundary between Trull Parish and the proposed new Taunton Parish as follows:**

- That the Killams Green area, currently within Trull Parish Council area, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;
- That the part of the forthcoming development in the south-west corner of Taunton that falls within Trull Parish, including the whole of the development north of Dipford Road, should be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish; and
- That the boundary of Trull Parish to the north-west of Cotlake Hill be altered to follow the green wedge around the Sherford urban area, with the small area to the south of that boundary that is currently within the unparished area of Taunton becoming part of Trull Parish.

(e) Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish

8.27 The draft recommendations proposed that the urban area within the Maidenbrook Ward of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council, including sites earmarked for housing development in the near future, should be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.

8.28 In coming to this recommendation, the Council had considered that whilst the rural parts of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish had a distinctive identity and sense of place separate from Taunton, the currently urban area of Nerrols Farm felt part of Taunton and in reflecting the identities and interests of these residents these areas should be included within the proposed Taunton Parish/Town Council area. The influence of development over the past twenty years in this particular area was an example whereby paragraph 84 of the guidance came into play with the urban growth of Taunton meaning that neighbours lived in different parishes. Absorbing this area into the proposed Taunton Parish/Town Council area would restore Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish back to its previous identity as a village parish.

8.29 112 responses to the second stage consultation were received from respondents identifying themselves as residents of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish. Of these, 85% did not agree that the boundary of any Taunton Parish/Town Council should take in areas of urban extension and 91% did not support the overall draft proposals.

8.30 Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council did not submit a formal response but had done so in the first stage consultation, when it had also provided the results of a separate survey which it had undertaken of local residents.

8.31 The Working Group considered the matters raised, noting that many of the responses from Cheddon Fitzpaine were blanket negative ones without detailed reasons given. A comment was made that the guidance had not been engaged for example when

questioning the viability of the Parish on a reduced electorate, when 150 was considered the minimum for a viable Parish.

- 8.32 The abolition of Cheddon Fitzpaine as a Parish was ruled out, as no response from the Parish had requested such a thing, bar a response requesting the inclusion of the whole Parish to ensure Hestercombe House was included. This was also considered and rejected.
- 8.33 The Working Group, having taking into account the consultation responses and the statutory guidance were in unanimous agreement with not amending the proposal. It was considered that the growth of Taunton had led to these new estates in Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish and they had no integral relation to the village centre, so the merit in that argument was considered weak. The proposal would revert Cheddon Fitzpaine as a locality to its status pre-2000. Specifically in discussion of the future maintenance of the country park which had been raised in responses, this was seen as an asset that any future Town Council would surely have some role in supporting even though it would remain in Cheddon Fitzpaine. It was stated that the maintenance agreement in relation to the park is proportionate so the reduction in electors would not harm the viability of a future Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish to play its role in supporting the Country Park.
- 8.34 The Working Group therefore **resolved to confirm its recommendation that the urban area within the Maidenbrook Ward of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish, including sites earmarked for housing development in the near future, should be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.**

(f) Staplegrove Parish

- 8.35 The draft recommendations included three proposals affecting Staplegrove Parish:
- That the urban parts of Staplegrove Parish, including the entirety of the forthcoming development in the north-west corner of Taunton, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;
 - That the slim part of Staplegrove Parish jutting to the west of Silk Mills Lane be included within the boundary of Norton Fitzwarren Parish; and
 - That if the proposed changes bring about a remaining Staplegrove Parish area of fewer than 150 electors, that area be merged with Kingston St. Mary Parish.
- 8.36 In coming to the above recommendations, the Council had noted that Staplegrove Parish included distinct urban and rural parts. In relation to the urban parts, including the forthcoming development in the north-west corner of Taunton, the Council had considered that the feedback from the first stage consultation did not demonstrate a strong local distinctive character in this area and that considering all of the evidence the sense of place, identities and interests and for local government to remain effective and convenient, this area would be better reflected in being within the proposed Town Council boundary. The application of paragraphs 83 and 84 of the guidance in terms of growth outside the boundary of the unparished area very much applied and this would be exacerbated by the new development of the urban growth.

- 8.37 In relation to the third of the above draft recommendations, electorate projections show that the proposed changes would reduce Staplegrove Parish's electorate to just 80 electors in 2027. This is not considered viable in terms of the guidance, which states '... [parish] councils should be viable in terms of providing at least some local services ...'
- 8.38 51 responses to the second stage consultation were received from respondents identifying themselves as residents of Staplegrove Parish. Of these, 72% did not agree that the boundary of any Taunton Parish/Town Council should take in areas of urban extension and 87% did not support the overall draft proposals.
- 8.39 Staplegrove Parish Council also responded, stating that the Parish Council supports the establishment of a Town (Parish) Council for the unparished area of Taunton but does not agree that Staplegrove should be absorbed into Taunton Town and its parish council abolished. The Parish Council's opposition is based on what it sees as a reduction in local democratic representation, uncertainty regarding the timescale for any future housing development, service delivery factors and inconsistency. The Parish Council suggested that Staplegrove could join the Taunton Council at a later date if this was deemed the best way for the residents to be represented.
- 8.40 The Working Group considered the matters raised by respondents and the Parish Council. Members felt the development was key in this context, and they had received assurances from officers on the development's progress. The argument put forward regarding the green space used as playing fields was considered not a strong one as it was of a similar character to many other areas in the town and did not create a divisible wedge between communities.
- 8.41 In relation to the area of bat mitigation on the edge of the area of development, that was proposed to be left within Kingston St Mary Parish, the Working Group received advice from Planning officers but concluded that there was no overriding case to vary the proposals.
- 8.42 The Working Group therefore **resolved to confirm its recommendations in relation to Staplegrove Parish as follows:**
- **That the urban parts of Staplegrove Parish, including the entirety of the forthcoming development in the north-west corner of Taunton, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;**
 - **That the slim part of Staplegrove Parish jutting to the west of Silk Mills Lane be included within the boundary of Norton Fitzwarren Parish;**
 - **That the remaining area of the existing Staplegrove Parish be included within the boundary of Kingston St. Mary Parish; and**
 - **That Staplegrove Parish Council be dissolved.**

(g) Kingston St Mary Parish

- 8.43 In addition to the proposed incorporation of the rural part of the existing Staplegrove Parish mentioned above, the draft recommendations proposed that a small southern portion of the Kingston St Mary Parish area, representing that part of the proposed

Staplegrove East development that falls within the parish, should be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.

- 8.44 In coming to this recommendation, the Council had considered that the rural nature of Kingston St Mary Parish – including the potential addition of the rural parts of Staplegrove Parish as proposed above - gave it a distinctive identity and sense of place and that therefore the parish and its council should remain a separate entity from Taunton. However, in relation to the forthcoming Staplegrove East development, the Council had agreed that the residents of this development were likely to identify more closely with Taunton than with Kingston St Mary. The recommendation was therefore based on the sense of place and to reflect the identities and interests of the area, and took into account Kingston St Mary Parish Council's own concerns about the impact of this development on the cohesion and character of the Kingston St Mary village.
- 8.45 Only three responses to the second stage consultation were received from respondents identifying themselves as residents of Kingston St Mary Parish. Although two of these did not support the proposals, the Working Group noted the low number of responses. Kingston St Mary Parish Council also responded, welcoming the draft recommendations that Kingston St Mary should remain a stand-alone rural parish and that parish boundaries should be re-drawn to exclude the part of the proposed Staplegrove East housing development which extends into Kingston St Mary. The Parish Council expressed surprise at the proposal to incorporate the rural part of Staplegrove Parish into Kingston St Mary and suggested an alternative scenario of using the A358 as the boundary between Taunton and Staplegrove, but undertook to proactively represent and welcome the residents of the rural part of Staplegrove should this be merged with Kingston St Mary. The Working Group considered this alternative proposal but did not support the change outlined, particularly in view of the assurance provided by Planning officers regarding progress of the Staplegrove East and West developments.
- 8.46 The Working Group **resolved to confirm its recommendation that a small southern portion of the Kingston St Mary Parish area, representing that part of the proposed Staplegrove East development that falls within the parish, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.**

(h) Bishops Hull Parish

- 8.47 The draft recommendations included two proposals affecting Bishops Hull Parish:
- That with the exception of Galmington Trading Estate and a small section south of the A38 near Rumwell, no part of Bishops Hull Parish should become part of the proposed new Taunton Parish, and the small triangular residential area at the cross-section with Wellington Road, currently within the unparished area, should become part of Bishops Hull Parish; and
 - That the boundary between Norton Fitzwarren Parish and Bishops Hull Parish, just north of Mill Cottages, be amended to follow the route of the railway line
- 8.48 In coming to these draft recommendations, the Council had considered whether some or all of the more urban parts of Bishop's Hull should be incorporated within a new

Taunton Parish/Town Council area. It was noted that Silk Mills Road ran from north to south through the urban part of Bishops Hull and would represent a clear and easily recognised boundary. However, Members had considered that this would not reflect the identity of the area as a whole and may divide rather than bring together the community. Having thus agreed that the urban part of Bishops Hull should not be divided between two parishes, Members had considered that there was an arguable case both for the whole of that area to become part of a new Taunton Parish and for it to remain separate. On balance, having heard evidence in relation to the services and amenities used by residents and the extent to which they identified with either Bishops Hull and/or Taunton, they had felt that the community interests and identity of the area would be better served by the whole residential area of Bishops Hull remaining as a separate parish.

- 8.49 The Council did however consider that the area south of Wellington Road (Galmington Trading Estate) had no sense of identification with Bishops Hull, and that in relation to a small triangle in the unparished area at the cross-section with Wellington Road and the current unparished area boundary, residents did feel part of Bishops Hull and not Taunton and the triangle was part of the county division so including it in Bishops Hull Parish would align with other electoral arrangements which had developed.
- 8.50 20 responses to the second stage consultation were received from respondents identifying themselves as residents of Bishops Hull. Of these, 70% supported the overall draft package of proposals. No adverse comments were received in relation to the Galmington Trading Estate or Wellington Road proposals. Bishop's Hull Parish Council responded, stating that the Parish Council fully supports the formation of a Town Council for Taunton. They confirmed their preference for Bishop's Hull to be excluded from the proposed Taunton Town Council, as well as noting and accepting the proposed revisions to their parish boundaries.
- 8.51 A number of respondents from other parts of the area under review referred to the proximity of the urban part of Bishops Hull Parish to the western boundary of the unparished area and suggested that this area should be included within the proposed Taunton Parish/Town Council area and/or that not to do so was inconsistent with the proposals in relation to other areas of urban extension. The Working Group considered this question but did not feel that any significant new information had been received that was not available during their consideration of the draft recommendations. On this basis the Working Group **resolved to confirm its recommendations in relation to Bishops Hull Parish as follows:**
- **That with the exception of Galmington Trading Estate and a small section south of the A38 near Rumwell, no part of Bishops Hull Parish be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;**
 - **That the small triangular residential area at the cross-section with Wellington Road, currently within the unparished area, be included within the boundary of Bishops Hull Parish; and**
 - **That the boundary between Norton Fitzwarren Parish and Bishops Hull Parish, just north of Mill Cottages, be amended to follow the route of the railway line.**

(i) West Monkton Parish

- 8.52 The draft recommendations included two proposals affecting West Monkton Parish:
- That the Hankridge Retail Park, Creech Castle and the associated Toneway Road, currently within West Monkton Parish, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish, which should run along the railway to the M5; and
 - That with the exception of the above, the area of West Monkton Parish Council be completely removed from further consideration of the review and its inclusion in any new Taunton Parish/Town Council.
- 8.53 These draft recommendations reflected the Council's judgement, based on feedback from the Parish Council and local residents, that the Parish of West Monkton had a distinctive sense of place and the existing arrangements reflected the identities and interests of the community in that area. However, in relation to the Hankridge Retail Park, Creech Castle and the associated Toneway Road, the Council had noted that this area was a key shopping area for the whole town due to its key location near the motorway junction. Members had considered that the governance of this area would be more effective and convenient were it to be included in the proposed Town Council area, especially when considering the proximity of the Halcon Estate just on the west side of the Toneway which was part of the currently unparished area. In terms of sense of place, the Council had considered that the Toneway was part of the town when travelling to or from the motorway.
- 8.54 24 responses to the second stage consultation were received from respondents identifying themselves as residents of West Monkton Parish. Of these, 58% did not agree that the boundary of any Taunton Parish/Town Council should take in areas of urban extension and 71% did not support the overall draft proposals. West Monkton Parish Council also responded, stating that they were supportive of the above draft recommendations. In relation to the separate proposal for the urban area of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish to be included within the proposed Taunton Parish/Town Council area, West Monkton Parish Council noted that this could impact on Cheddon Fitzpaine's ability contribute towards the costs and maintenance of the Country Park, but stated that with the help of volunteers West Monkton would continue to maintain this important community resource.
- 8.55 A number of respondents from other parts of the area under review referred to the proximity of the Monkton Heathfield urban extension to the unparished area and suggested that this area should be included within the proposed Taunton Parish/Town Council area and/or that not to do so was inconsistent with the proposals in relation to other areas of urban extension. The Working Group considered this question but did not feel that any significant new information had been received that was not available during consideration of the draft recommendations. On this basis the Working Group **resolved to confirm its recommendations in relation to West Monkton Parish as follows:**
- **That the Hankridge Retail Park, Creech Castle and the associated Toneway Road, currently within West Monkton Parish, be included within the boundary**

of the proposed new Taunton Parish, which should run along the railway to the M5; and

- **That with the exception of the above, no part of the existing area of West Monkton Parish be included in the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.**

(j) Norton Fitzwarren Parish

- 8.56 Aside from the proposal to tidy up the boundary between Norton Fitzwarren Parish and Bishops Hull Parish just north of Mill Cottages as mentioned above, the draft recommendations proposed that the area of Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council be completely removed from further consideration of the review and its inclusion in any new Taunton Parish/Town Council.
- 8.57 This draft recommendation reflected the Council's judgement, based on feedback from the Parish Council and local residents, that the Parish of Norton Fitzwarren had a distinctive sense of place and the existing arrangements reflected the identities and interests of the community in that area.
- 8.58 Only seven responses to the second stage consultation were received from respondents identifying themselves as residents of Norton Fitzwarren Parish. Of these, 71% agreed that the boundary of any Taunton Parish/Town Council should take in areas of urban extension although 57% did not support the overall draft proposals.
- 8.59 One respondent suggested that the village of Norton Fitzwarren should also be included in the Taunton Parish, stating that it is closely linked via housing developments.
- 8.60 The Working Group did not consider that any compelling case had been made to vary the draft recommendations and therefore **resolved to confirm its recommendation that no part of the existing area of Norton Fitzwarren Parish be included in any new Taunton Parish/Town Council.**

(k) The unparished area of Taunton

- 8.61 129 individual responses were received to the second stage consultation from respondents identifying themselves as residents of the currently unparished area of Taunton. Of these, 87% agreed that a town council for Taunton could promote a sense of community and community cohesion, 82% agreed that the boundary of the town council should reflect the current reality of the town including urban extensions and 68% agreed with the package of proposals in the draft recommendations.
- 8.62 The Taunton Charter Trustees also responded, stating that they believe that a single Town Council for Taunton should be set up to cover whichever boundaries are established, taking into account the results of the consultation.
- 8.63 The Council will note that if an outcome of the review is that the whole of the unparished area becomes parished, in accordance with the Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) Regulations 2008 the Charter Trustees for Taunton will

be dissolved as a body and their rights and responsibilities will be transferred to the new council on 1 April 2023. This includes the Mayoral Insignia and Charter which will transfer to the new council, with the Chair of the future town council assuming the role of Mayor of Taunton.

- 8.64 In the event that a new parish is not created covering the whole of the currently unparished area, Charter Trustees would continue in existence, acting for the area that continues to be unparished.

(l) Ancillary inter-parish issue

- 8.65 The draft recommendations also included a proposal that further consideration be given to whether the current boundary between West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine parishes between Maidenbrook and Yallands Hill south of the Country Park should be amended, for example by following the A3259 and new relief road westwards to Maidenbrook Lane, in the light of any comments from the parish councils.
- 8.66 West Monkton Parish Council supported the proposal in their response to the second stage consultation. The Working Group agreed that this would provide a more easily identifiable and clearly defined boundary in accordance with the guidance and accordingly **resolved to recommend that the boundary between West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine parishes between Maidenbrook and Yallands Hill south of the Country Park be amended to following the A3259 and new relief road westwards to Maidenbrook Lane.**

(m) Other forms of community governance as an alternative to a parish/town council

- 8.67 The 2007 Act requires a principal council in undertaking a community governance review to give consideration to other (non-parish) forms of community governance that have been made, or could be made, for the purpose of community representation or engagement in the area under review. The guidance states that these should be considered as alternatives to, or stages towards, the establishment of parish councils.
- 8.68 As part of the second stage consultation, all respondents who answered 'no' to the question 'Do you agree that a town council for Taunton could help to promote a sense of community in the town and promote community cohesion?' were then asked 'What other forum(s) or initiatives could do this more effectively?' 89 respondents answered this question although a majority of those responses made more general points reinforcing the respondent's support for or opposition to the general proposals and/or the inclusion of certain parish areas in the proposed Taunton Parish. Of the minority who did mention other specific forms, these included community centres, Local Community Networks, villages, focus groups, events, meet-ups, a people's assembly and local community activity or forums run by the unitary authority.
- 8.69 The Working Group considered the suggestions made but did not feel that any compelling evidence had been presented that these would provide a suitable alternative to a parish/town council for Taunton, especially in view of the further guidance that 'what sets parish councils apart from other kinds of governance is the

fact they are a democratically elected tier of local government, independent of other council tiers and budgets, and possess specific powers’ and that ‘their directly elected parish councillors represent local communities in a way that other bodies, however worthy, cannot since such organisations do not have representatives directly elected to those bodies’.

8.70 In relation to those parishes that are proposed to continue, no evidence was submitted to the review that any of those parishes should not continue to have a council.

8.71 The Working Group considers that its recommendations above reflect community identities and interests and will promote effective and convenient local government and community cohesion at the same time as addressing a number of instances where due to development the existing parish boundaries no longer meet the criteria in the guidance.

9 Electoral arrangements

9.1 Once the Council has determined whether it will recommend any changes to parish boundaries or councils, it must go on to consider the electoral arrangements for each of the proposed or continuing parish/town councils. This includes:

- The ordinary year of elections for the parish/town council;
- Council size (i.e. the number of parish/town councillors); and
- Warding (i.e. whether a parish should be, or should continue to be, divided into wards for the purposes of elections to the parish/town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish/town wards; and the number of parish/town councillors to be elected for each ward.

Electorate projections

9.2 When making proposals for the warding (if any) within a parish/town council area, the number of councillors to be elected for each parish or ward and the number of electors they each represent, the Council must have regard to the number of local government electors for the parish and any change in the number, or distribution, of the local government electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts.

9.3 The relevant electorate figures and projections - prepared using extant planning permissions and the Local Plan - for each of the parish areas that would be established in accordance with the draft recommendations are as follows:

Parish	Electorate 2022	Projected Electorate 2027 (Register published 1 December 2026)
Taunton (new)	37,700	43,487
Bishops Hull (amended)	2,839	3,000
Cheddon Fitzpaine (amended)	319	304
Kingston St. Mary (amended)	810	830

Norton Fitzwarren (amended)	2,804	2,912
Trull (amended)	1,828	1,758
West Monkton (amended)	4,190	4,400

Ordinary year of elections

- 9.4 Parish council elections are scheduled to take place in Somerset in May 2027 and every four years thereafter. However, Section 98(6) of the 2007 Act empowers a principal council in its Reorganisation Order to exclude or modify the application of (inter alia) section 16(3) of the Local Government Act 1972 Act to enable the first elections to a parish council to be held in an earlier year.

Council size

- 9.5 The Local Government Act 1972 specifies that each parish council must have at least five councillors. There is no maximum number, no requirement in legislation that the number of councillors should be proportional to electorate size and no legislative guidance on the ideal number of parish councillors.
- 9.6 In considering the issue of council size, the guidance states that the LGBCE 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. Nevertheless, having regard to the current powers of parish councils, [the principal council] should consider the broad pattern of existing council sizes. This pattern appears to have stood the test of time and, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, to have provided for effective and convenient local government. Principal councils should also bear in mind that the conduct of parish council business does not usually require a large body of councillors. [...]”
- 9.7 The statutory guidance goes on to state: “In addition, historically many parish councils, particularly smaller ones, have found difficulty in attracting sufficient candidates to stand for election. This has led to uncontested elections and/or a need to co-opt members in order to fill vacancies. However, a parish council’s budget and planned or actual level of service provision may also be important factors in reaching conclusions on council size.”
- 9.8 Although there is no statutory guidance on the number of parish councillors to be allocated, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has published recommendations on the matter. NALC Circular 1126 (1988) recommends that a council of no more than the legal minimum of five members is inconveniently small and that the practical minimum should be seven, to apply to any parish council with up to 900 electors. Further recommendations were made for parishes with larger electorates, up to a maximum of 25 councillors where the electorate exceeds 23,000.
- 9.9 It should be noted that in relation to any existing and continuing parish council or ward whose area is reduced, any proposed change to the number of parish councillors would take effect from the next ordinary elections, i.e. May 2027, as the Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) Regulations 2008 provide that “any person in office immediately before the order date as a parish councillor for an area

which is altered by the order (“an altered area”) shall, unless he resigns his office or it otherwise becomes vacant, continue as parish councillor for the area as so altered until the date on which he would ordinarily have retired had the order not been made” (Regulation 10).

Warding arrangements

- 9.10 Regarding whether a parish should be or should continue to be divided into wards, the 2007 Act requires the Council to consider:
- a) Whether the number, or distribution of the local government electors for the parish would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
 - b) Whether it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented.
- 9.11 If a principal council decides that a parish should be or continue to be divided into wards, the guidance states that it must have regard to certain factors when considering the size and boundaries of the wards and the number of councillors to be elected for each ward. Those factors are: the number of local government electors for the parish; any change in the number, or distribution, of the local government electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts; the desirability of fixing boundaries which are, and will remain, easily identifiable; and any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.
- 9.12 The Council should also have regard to existing levels of representation, the pattern of existing council sizes which have stood the test of time and the take-up of seats at elections.
- 9.13 There is no duty to ensure electoral equality between parishes or wards, but the LGBCE believes it is not in the interests of effective and convenient local government, either for voters or councillors, to have significant differences in representation and that that ‘each person’s vote should be of equal weight so far as possible, having regard to other legitimate competing factors, when it comes to the election of councillors’ (Guidance paragraph 166).

Recommendations in relation to electoral arrangements

- 9.14 The second stage consultation included the following proposals in relation to electoral arrangements:
- That the first elections to the proposed new parish/town council for Taunton should be held on the ordinary day of elections (the first Thursday in May) in 2023;
 - That the Council established to serve the proposed new Taunton Parish should have a council size of at least 20 councillors, with the final number to be determined in the context of the proposals to be developed in regard to the warding arrangements within the new parish;
 - That the proposed new Taunton Parish be warded based on the existing District Council wards within the unparished area, with additional wards for each of the significant additional areas currently within a neighbouring parish. The Council

noted that the unparished area was currently represented by 16 councillors across nine wards and did not think it would be practicable or convenient for a single election to be held for the whole of any new parish//town council for the area; and

- That a number of minor changes be made to the electoral arrangements of neighbouring parishes affected by the creation of a Taunton Parish with the boundaries proposed.

- 9.15 Over 75% of respondents to the second stage consultation agreed that any new Taunton Parish/Town Council should be divided into wards for the purpose of electing councillors to represent local people. On the specific proposal for 20 parish/town councillors to be elected across 12 wards, 43.16% agreed with the proposal whilst 37.39% did not. Those who did not agree were then asked what aspects of the proposal they thought should be changed. Two respondents submitted substantial proposals for alternative warding arrangements of the new parish/town council:
- 9.16 Firstly, Roger House (a local elector) provided a detailed proposal for revised ward boundaries and representation within the unparished area of Taunton. The Working Group considered this proposal and commended Mr House on the detail and quality of his work. They noted however that extending the scheme to cover the whole of the proposed parish/town council area at the same elector/councillor ration would result in a council of approximately 30 members, which was considered too high a figure.
- 9.17 Taunton Labour Party submitted a proposal for the new council to be elected on the basis of single-member wards. The proposal was illustrated by an example of how this could be achieved within the area of the existing Priorswood Ward. The Working Group discussed the relative merits of single- and multi-member wards in relation to factors such as effective representation of residents, member workload and covering where a member was indisposed. On balance, the Working Group did not favour re-drawing the entire scheme, but they did reconsider the proposal in relation to Priorswood itself, in particular because this was the only three-member ward in the draft recommendations.
- 9.18 Two alternative options were considered – firstly dividing the area covered by the district council ward of Priorswood into three single-member parish/town wards representing the areas of Pyrland, Obridge and Lyngford respectively as proposed by Taunton Labour Party; and secondly combining the Priorswood ward with the Maidenbrook area transferring from Cheddon Fitzpaine parish and splitting this combined area into two, two-member wards. Following discussion, the Working Group considered that the first of these options would best reflect community identities and promote effective local government.
- 9.19 Accordingly, the Working Group **resolved to recommend that the proposed new Taunton parish be divided into 14 wards for the purpose of electing parish/town councillors and that the ward names, area covered and number of councillors to be elected for each ward be as follows** (see also map at Appendix 'D'):

PROPOSED WARD NAME	AREA COVERED	PROJECTED ELECTORATE 2027 (Electoral register published 1 December 2026)	NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS
Blackbrook & Holway	Existing Blackbrook & Holway district ward.	4,646	2
Comeytrove	Existing Comeytrove Parish plus (i) adjacent part of the forthcoming development that is currently within Trull Parish; (ii) Galmington Trading Estate and small section south of the A38 near Rumwell, currently in Bishops Hull Parish.	4,629	2
Halcon & Lane	Existing Halcon & Lane district ward plus Hankridge Retail Park, Creech Castle and associated Toneway Road, currently in West Monkton Parish.	4,351	2
Lyngford	Part of existing Priorswood district ward as shown on the map at Appendix 'D'.	2,892	1
Maidenbrook	Existing Maidenbrook ward of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish, except for small section south of the Country Park and A3259 (to West Monkton Parish).	1,814	1
Manor & Tangier	Existing Manor & Tangier district ward minus the small triangular residential area at the cross-section with Wellington Road (to Bishops Hull Parish).	2,426	1
North Town	Existing North Town district ward.	2,130	1
Obridge	Part of existing Priorswood district ward as shown on the map at Appendix 'D'.	993	1
Pyrland	Part of existing Priorswood district ward as shown on the map at Appendix 'D'.	2,698	1
Staplegrove	The urban parts of the existing Staplegrove Parish including the whole of the forthcoming development in the north-west corner of Taunton, plus the small southern portion of the existing Kingston St Mary Parish included in the proposed Staplegrove East development.	2,455	1
Victoria	Existing Victoria district ward.	4,125	2
Vivary	Existing Vivary district ward	3,762	2

PROPOSED WARD NAME	AREA COVERED	PROJECTED ELECTORATE 2027 (Electoral register published 1 December 2026)	NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS
	(including Killams Green area currently in Trull Parish)		
Wellsprings & Rowbarton	Existing Wellsprings & Rowbarton district ward.	4,418	2
Wilton & Sherford	Existing Wilton & Sherford district ward minus the small area to the south of the green wedge around the Sherford urban area and to the north west of Cotlake Hill (to Trull Parish).	2,045	1
Totals:		43,487	20

9.20 The Working Group further **recommended that changes be made to the electoral arrangements of neighbouring parishes affected by the creation of the Taunton Parish as follows:**

PARISH	PROPOSED CHANGE (if any)	REASON FOR PROPOSAL
Bishops Hull	No change	Changes proposed to parish boundary do not significantly affect electorate or require warding.
Cheddon Fitzpaine	Parish to no longer be warded. Number of parish councillors to be 5.	Projected electorate 2027 for the proposed new parish boundary is 304.
Kingston St Mary	No change	Changes proposed to parish boundary do not significantly affect electorate or require warding.
Norton Fitzwarren	No change	Changes proposed to parish boundary do not significantly affect electorate or require warding.
Trull	Parish to no longer be warded. Number of parish councillors to reduce from ten to nine.	Once Killams ward is transferred to Taunton Parish Trull will have only one ward. Killams Ward currently elects one councillor to Trull Parish Council. The projected electorate 2027 for Trull Parish on its proposed new boundary is 1,758 and it is proposed that the number of councillors serving this area should remain unchanged.
West Monkton	No change	Changes proposed to parish boundary do not significantly affect electorate or require warding.

Related alterations to the boundaries of the principal council's electoral area

- 9.21 Any changes to parish or parish/town ward boundaries made as part of a community governance review will not automatically change the equivalent boundaries for principal (district, county or unitary) council elections. In the interests of clarity and elector convenience, the Working Group considered that in the event the recommendations of the review were confirmed, the LGBCE should be asked to change the relevant principal council ward/division boundaries to align them with any revised parish boundaries.
- 9.22 The second stage consultation therefore asked consultees 'If the parish and parish ward boundaries are changed as proposed, these will no longer match the corresponding district council ward boundaries or county/unitary council division boundaries in some places. In the interests of clarity therefore, if the proposed changes to the parish and parish ward boundaries go ahead do you agree that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England should be asked to amend the relevant district ward and county/unitary division boundaries where necessary to align them with the revised parish boundaries?'
- 9.23 51.07% of respondents answered 'yes' to this question, whilst 27.99% answered 'no'.
- 9.24 The Working Group **resolved to confirm its recommendation that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England be requested to make changes to the boundaries of the relevant District, County and Unitary wards/divisions as necessary to ensure consistency between those boundaries and the revised Parish and Parish Ward boundaries made in this Community Governance Review.**

10 Other comments

- 10.1 The final question in the second stage consultation asked respondents 'Do you have any other comments on parish/town boundaries or any other aspect of the arrangements for town/parish governance in the area?'
- 10.2 This was an open-ended question and a diverse range of opinions was expressed but many respondents used this question as an opportunity to restate previous comments. The main themes were (broadly ranked):
- Opposition to the proposal;
 - That the existing parished areas should be left alone;
 - General support for the proposal; and
 - Support for the creation of a parish/town council covering the existing unparished part of Taunton.

11 A parish/town council for Taunton - consequential matters

- 11.1 Where a Reorganisation Order includes significant changes to parish boundaries, the Order may cover consequential matters that appear to the Council to be necessary or proper to give effect to the order.

- 11.2 In particular the Order will need to include provisions to ensure that the proposed new parish/town council for Taunton is able to commence its work with effect from the vesting day of 1 April 2023. Key to this will be:
- The setting of a budget for the first year of operation of the new council; and
 - The appointment of temporary parish/town councillors to run the new council between the vesting day on 1 April 2023 until the first elected councillors take office on the fourth day after the elections to be held on 4 May 2023.

A budget for the new parish/town council

- 11.3 Parish and town councils may levy a precept – an additional amount payable by council tax payers in their area – to meet the net cost of running the council and any service provision and other activities. The level of the precept will depend on the budget requirement identified for the parish/town council which will in turn reflect the scale of service delivery and other activities that it wishes to undertake. Going forward these are matters for the new parish/town council itself to determine. However, in order that the new council is able to operate from day one, the Local Government Finance (New Parishes) (England) Regulations 2008 provide that the prospective billing authority (i.e. the principal council) shall anticipate a precept for the first year of the new council's operation by specifying an amount to be the maximum budget requirement for the council in that year.
- 11.4 In relation to the types of services typically provided by town councils and which the new council may decide to provide, over 92% of respondents to the second stage consultation answered 'yes' to the question 'Do you believe that services such as parks and open spaces, public toilets, control of litter, car parking and community events e.g. Christmas lights switch on are important to the place where you live?', with an overwhelmingly positive response to the follow up question 'If so, should parish and town councils consider providing such services if the principal council is unable to continue doing so?'
- 11.5 The Working Group noted that the new council's budget in its first year would need to be sufficient both to support the establishment and operation of the council as a legal entity and to enable it over time to deliver such services as may be agreed with the principal councils for transfer to the parish/town council or which it may determine are required to meet local needs.
- 11.6 The budget for the new council in 2023/24 will therefore be made up of several elements reflecting:
- Costs currently raised by Somerset West and Taunton District Council as 'Special Expenses' directly related and billed to households in the unparished area of Taunton.
 - Costs currently incurred by the neighbouring parishes included within the scope of this community governance review that would fall to the new Taunton parish because of boundary changes.

- Costs currently incurred by the Charter Trustees for Taunton currently billed to households in the unparished area of Taunton, related to the mayoralty and civic costs.
- Costs and income currently incurred by Somerset West and Taunton District Council for services that the responsibility for which are proposed to be transferred to the new Taunton town/parish council on 1 April 2023.
- New costs directly related to operating a new local council such as costs of democracy, administration, offices, compliance and regulatory responsibilities, etc.
- New spending power reflecting the Working Group’s ambition for the new Council to grow and improve local services, communities, and democratic representation.
- The creation of adequate reserves to ensure financial resilience of the new Council.

11.7 The table below provides a summary of the proposed 2023/24 Budget for the new parish/town Council totalling £2.114m. Further details supporting this budget estimate are provided in **Appendix ‘I’**).

New Taunton Parish Council Proposed Budget 2023/24	
	£000
Mayor and Civic Costs	17
Staff including NI and pension	170
Amenities and general maintenance	52
Administration, office and election Costs	139
Allotments	8
Parks	563
Public Conveniences	106
Events	101
Community Grants	75
Service Growth and Improvement	400
Contingency / Other Costs	100
Income	-38
Net Operating budget	1,694
Create Opening Reserves Balance	420
Total budget on which Precept calculated	2,114

11.8 For clarity, the Proposed Budget above does not include any future S106 or Community Infrastructure Levy (see section 14 below) receipts, which would provide additional funding to the parish/town council on top of costs above covered by the Council Tax precept.

11.9 The budget estimate includes an estimate of the net cost of services included in the 2022/23 SWTC General Fund Budget to be transferred to the town/parish Council from 1 April 2023. There is a presumption that such net costs are fully funded from Council Tax, and we therefore need to agree a council tax adjustment with the Secretary of State for local government to reflect the ‘transfer’ of this council tax requirement from the district council to the town/parish council. This adjustment is known as an **Alternative Notional Amount (ANA)** which resets the Council Tax precept baseline for 2022/23 for billing and tax increase measurement purposes. The above 2022/23 Budget includes £678,440 for current SWTC costs that will need to adjusted (removed)

from the Somerset Council budget and council tax requirement in 2023/24 as the council tax funding for these services will in future be raised by the parish/town council. This is explained further in Appendix 'I'.

- 11.10 Using available Council Tax data in May 2022, an indicative Council Tax Base for the new Taunton parish has been estimated as **approximately 22,500 Band D Equivalents** for 2023/24. The Council Tax Base – the number of households within the new Taunton parish boundary expressed as Band D Equivalents – is formally set by the Billing Authority in December each year. This will be a function of Somerset County Council for the 2023/24 budget, as the continuing authority for the purposes of transition and the prospective billing authority from 1 April 2023 onwards.
- 11.11 The 2023/24 Budget of **£2.114m** divided by the provisional Tax Base of **22,500** would result in an **approximate** Band D council tax rate of **£94** per annum in 2023/24. This is an **indicative figure only** at this stage – the actual Band D rate to be charged will not be determined until the 2023/24 Tax Base is approved in December 2022.
- 11.12 The following table provides some comparative parish/town precepts to provide some context.

<i>Parishes in scope of the Community Governance Review (2022/23):</i>	Band D Rate £
Bishops Hull Parish Council	29.16
Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council	40.97
Comeytrove Parish Council	12.06
Kingston St Mary Parish Council	28.67
Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council	26.56
Staplegrave Parish Council	16.37
Taunton (unparished) Special expenses	1.93
Taunton (unparished) Charter Trustees	3.85
Trull Parish Council	28.50
West Monkton Parish Council	30.34
<i>Other Precept Examples in SWT Area (2022/23):</i>	
Minehead Town Council	177.74
Watchet Town Council	156.13
Wellington Town Council	76.95
<i>Other Precept Examples in Somerset:</i>	
Frome Town 2021/22	201.69
Glastonbury Town 2021/22	133.28
Street Town 2021/22	123.80
Wells City 2021/22	151.59
<i>Other Precept Examples Elsewhere:</i>	
Salisbury City 2020/21	208.00
Weymouth Town 2022/23	185.69

Assets to be transferred to the new parish/town council

- 11.13 Certain assets will transfer automatically to the new parish/town council on vesting day in accordance with statute, including assets currently held by the Taunton Charter Trustees, allotments within the new council's area and property, rights, and liabilities of

any abolished or transferor parish council which relate to the area taken on by the new parish/town council. These may be set out in the Reorganisation Order.

- 11.14 In relation to any further assets currently held by Somerset West and Taunton or Somerset County Council that may be transferred to the new council to facilitate its operation and service delivery, these are subject to negotiation and agreement between the relevant authorities in the context of the legislation applying to local government reorganisation. This report seeks to establish this agreement when being considered by the Executive of Somerset County Council. A particular consideration is that the District Council will be dissolved at the point when the Parish/Town Council comes into being and will therefore not be able to transfer assets directly to it.
- 11.15 It is proposed that the Order should include a Memorandum of Understanding describing the process for those discussions and any commitments made in relation to assets that it is intended to transfer, the relevant date(s) and related matters such as commissioning of services between the councils.
- 11.16 In relation to the assets and services that might be included in the agreed list, the Working Group considered two alternative approaches. The first of these envisaged a two-stage approach to setting up the new parish/town council with only the statutory minimum of asset transfers (i.e. allotments and ceremonial items) taking place on day one, and any further transfers being subject to subsequent discussions between the new unitary and parish/town councils. This would imply a minimal level of service delivery initially on the part of the new parish/town council. The second of the alternative approaches envisaged a range of services and assets being identified for transfer to the new parish/town council on vesting day, to enable it to begin serving the community of the parish in a more tangible way from the start.
- 11.17 Following discussion, the Working Group considered strongly that the second of these approaches was preferable and that the new parish/town council should be provided with the means to make a difference to the quality of life of its residents from the start of its existence and to develop and deliver during its first year of operation such services as it may determine are required and/or may be agreed in discussions with the principal council.
- 11.18 Assets related to the current district services that the Working Group considers should be transferred from 1 April 2023 are summarised within the budget Appendix 'I'. These may be transferred either freehold or leasehold to the parish/town council as appropriate to best represent the interests of both the prospective unitary and parish/town councils to be determined through further due diligence and negotiations between the two parties.
- 11.19 Members of the Working Group were asked to consider the impacts of asset transfer decisions on the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) programme, specifically around the current Bridgwater Pilot. Members felt that the matters were unrelated as for Taunton this is an opportunity to put the current unparished area on the same footing as all other areas within the County. It was felt that holding assets and delivering services gave the Town Council a purpose and that the wider devolution of

responsibilities to Town Councils, Parish Councils, or Local Community Networks, would continue to be a future opportunity without a precedent being set.

Temporary parish/town councillors from 1 April 2023

- 11.20 The new council will be established with effect from 1 April 2023. However, the first elections to the parish/town council will not be held until 4 May 2023, with the councillors to be elected at those polls taking up office on the fourth day thereafter.
- 11.21 The principal council may make provision in the Order for the appointment of temporary parish/town councillors to run the new council during this interim period. It is proposed that the following persons be appointed to serve as temporary parish/town councillors for Taunton from the proposed vesting day on 1 April 2023 until the first elected councillor take up post on the fourth day after the elections to be held on 4 May 2023:
- The persons elected for the time being to serve as members of Somerset County Council for each division part or all of which includes any part of the proposed Taunton Parish;
 - The persons serving until 31 March 2023 as the Charter Trustees for Taunton;
 - Two persons to be nominated by Comeytrowe Parish Council before 31 March 2023;
 - One person to be nominated by Staplegrove Parish Council before 31 March 2023; and
 - One person to be nominated by Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council before 31 March 2023.

12 Draft Reorganisation Order

- 12.1 A draft Reorganisation Order, reflecting the recommendations in this report and incorporating the above matters, is attached at Appendix 'A'. Subject to the Full Council agreeing the recommendations in this report, the attached draft Order will be recommended for adoption by Somerset County Council in accordance with the Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) Regulations 2008 to give effect to the final recommendations of the review.

13 Parish governance changes – implementation phase

- 13.1 Once the Reorganisation Order has been made and the Community Governance Review is therefore complete, work will commence on implementing the agreed changes at parish level and the creation of the new parish/town council for Taunton.
- 13.2 The detail of this planning and implementation work will be the subject of further reports in due course to both authorities. However, it is appropriate at this stage to consider the most appropriate forum to take forward and oversee the implementation phase.

Proposed Shadow Town Council

- 13.3 An increasingly common approach where new town councils have been created is for a Shadow Town Council to be established ahead of the formal vesting date to lead and oversee the development of the new council. Examples include Weymouth (Dorset, 2019), Wellingborough (Northants, 2021) and Wickford (Essex, 2022). The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) advises in its publication 'Power to the People' (2015): 'A shadow council has no statutory powers, but it can be a good means of laying the ground for the new local council'.
- 13.4 It is suggested that this approach could be adopted in the case of the new Taunton Parish/Town Council. The role of the Shadow Town Council would be to focus the work to create the new council, working with the officers, external consultants, and interim town clerk (when appointed) to develop the various draft policies, procedures, infrastructure etc that will need to be in place as soon as possible after the new council is established, and to oversee the programme of work required to bring into being the new council. Prior to 1 April 2023 the Shadow Town Council would not have delegated powers to make decisions or commit expenditure but would act as an advisory body to the officers and others working on the implementation programme with any formal decisions required then being made under existing officer or member delegations.

Membership of a Shadow Town Council

- 13.5 The informal nature of a Shadow Town Council provides for flexibility in its membership. Practice varies and shadow town councils elsewhere have included the elected members of the principal council for the relevant area, members of the implementation executive, local campaigners and/or others according to local factors.
- 13.6 In relation to Taunton, particularly in the context of local government reorganisation and to ensure democratic representation of the whole area, it is proposed that the Shadow Town Council should be composed of the same persons proposed above for appointment as temporary parish/town council members from 1 April 2023, thus providing consistency and continuity in the development of the new council. Taking into account overlapping memberships this would give a total membership of approximately 24 shadow town councillors.
- 13.7 If the proposal for a Shadow Town Council is approved, it is suggested that the existing Community Governance Review Member Working Group of SWT, which was established on 30 March 2021 with a remit to make recommendations to the Full Council both at key milestones during the community governance review (CGR) and in relation to the implementation of the final review recommendations, would no longer be required and its 'implementation' remit would pass to the Shadow Town Council.

14 Neighbourhood Planning and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) implications

CIL Neighbourhood Proportion

- 14.1 Some parish councils have Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) in place and therefore receive 25% of the CIL collected from development within their parish (CIL Regulation 59A(3)). Those parish councils without NDPs in place receive 15% of the

CIL collected from development within their parish (Regulation 59A(5), up to a limit of £100 per dwelling (Regulation 59A(7)).

- 14.2 Where a parish council is abolished and entirely incorporated within the area of the new parish/town council, any unspent CIL receipts held by the parish council will be transferred to the new council on the date of vesting.
- 14.3 Where a parish council is subject to an alteration in its administrative area consisting of the loss of a transferred area, the Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 require that any property, rights and liabilities of the council which relate to the transferred area shall transfer to and vest in or, as the case may be, become rights and liabilities of, the council of the transferee parish.
- 14.4 Under CIL Regulation 59D, unless the councils agree on an alternative timetable for payment, a principal council must pay to the relevant parish/town Council the required neighbourhood proportion in respect of the CIL it receives from developers between:
- 1st April to 30th September in any financial year by 28th October of that financial year;
 - 1st October to 31st March in any financial year by 28th April of the following financial year.
- 14.5 Therefore if CIL is received by Somerset West and Taunton Council in respect of chargeable development wholly within the proposed boundary of the new Taunton Parish between 1st October 2022 and 31st March 2023, then the relevant neighbourhood percentage of those receipts would be paid by the Somerset Unitary Council by 28th April 2023, by which time the new parish/town council will be in existence and therefore will be the recipient council.
- 14.6 Where future development straddles the boundaries of parish or town councils' administrative areas, each council will receive a share of the CIL which is proportionate to the gross internal area of the development within their administrative area, up to the level of the annual limit for their area. Where future development crosses more than one parish or town council administrative area and where one or more of those areas has a Neighbourhood Development Plan in place (so receives 25%) and one or more of those areas does not, the parish or town council receives a proportionate amount of the levy payment based on how much of the gross internal area of the development is in an area for which there is a Neighbourhood Development Plan
- 14.7 There are statutory limitations on how a parish or town council can spend their CIL receipts. The money can only be used to support development of their area, or any part of that area, by funding infrastructure or anything else that addresses the demands development places on their area (CIL Reg 59C)
- 14.8 Subject to these limitations, unspent CIL receipts transferred over to a new Taunton Parish/Town Council on vesting day can be expended in any part of that council's area regardless of where the development generating that CIL is located i.e. the neighbourhood percentage does not have to be expended in the area that used to belong to the parish council.

- 14.9 Similarly, unspent or future CIL monies transferred or paid to the new council from development located within the boundary of a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) can be expended in any part of the new council's area i.e. it does not have to be expended in the covered by the NDP.

Neighbourhood Development Plans

- 14.10 In terms of the status of existing Neighbourhood Development Plans that fall wholly within or straddle across the proposed new Taunton Parish/Town Council area the following will apply:
- NDPs that have already been finalised and adopted cannot be revoked even if a new Parish is created within the area of the NDP.
 - NDP areas cannot overlap, so a new NDP area can only be designated if there is either no existing designation covering that area, or if an existing designation is withdrawn.
 - Withdrawing an existing designation and restarting an emerging plan to cover a new area will require re-consultation and a new evidence base.
 - Reviewing a made plan to change the NDP area will require all statutory processes to be repeated, including area designation, consultation, examination, and referendum.

15 Links to Corporate Strategy

- 15.1 This is a key project within the Internal Operations Directorate Plan and links to the Corporate Strategy.

16 Finance / Resource Implications

- 16.1 The budget has been drafted to include the costs of the Charter Trustees, the Special Expenses budget, the pro-rata budgets of the parishes moving within the boundary of Taunton, any costs expected to be incurred directly as a result of the formation of the Town Council, and income and costs currently incurred by Somerset West & Taunton Council relating to the services the new council will take over. These are identified in detail in Paragraphs 11.3 to 11.12 above and in Appendix I.
- 16.2 As referred above in 11.9, it is necessary to adjust the council tax precept baseline as net costs transferred from SWTC budget are presumed to be fully funded by Council Tax. Further information is also set out in more detail in Appendix I.
- 16.3 Set up costs for the new parish/town council incurred prior to first of April will need to be borne by SWTC (as the Authority undertaking the CGR). We have absorbed such costs to date within the Internal Operations Budget. For the period October 2022 to March 2023, it is anticipated a budget will be required for further set up costs in advance of 1 April (e.g. an interim clerk, website, IT systems etc). It is estimated a budget requirement of between £40k and £80k is needed to support these next steps if

the Reorganisation Order is approved. This amount will need to be added as a supplementary budget in 2022/23, funded from General Reserves, and is planned to be approved under delegated authority by the Director of Internal Operations and the S151 Officer.

17 People and TUPE Implications

- 17.1 The Strategic HR Lead for Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) has reviewed the position in relation to the application of TUPE and the proposed formation of the new Taunton Parish/Town Council. His assessment is that the only individuals likely to fall in scope for TUPE are any employed parish clerks whose activities will be amalgamated into that of the new Council.
- 17.2 It is unlikely that any SWT colleagues will be spending more than 50% of their time on activities that will be in future be in the scope of the new Council. That being the relevant test to decide if TUPE applies.

18 Legal Implications

- 18.1 The Community Governance Review is being conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and statutory guidance issued in 2010 by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).
- 18.2 In addition to the 2007 Act, legislation relating to parishes can also be found in the Local Government Act 1972 (in particular, provision about parish meetings and councils, the constitution of a parish meeting, the constitution and powers of parish councils and about parish councillors).
- 18.3 Also of relevance are certain provisions of the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Somerset (Structural Changes) Order 2022, the Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) Regulations 2008, the Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) Regulations 2008 and the Local Government Finance (New Parishes) (England) Regulations 2008.
- 18.4 In accordance with regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2000, functions relating to community governance reviews, including agreeing the recommendations of the review and making any Reorganisation Order, are not to be the responsibility of an authority's executive.
- 18.5 The relevant legal provisions and implications are set out where appropriate in the main body of the report.

19 Partnership Implications

- 19.1 Appropriate consultation has taken place with local councils and others as part of the community governance review process as set out in the Communications and Consultation Plan and this will continue. Discussions with the Local Government

Boundary Commission for England and Somerset County Council in connection with the review have taken place since July 2021.

20 Health and Wellbeing Implications

- 20.1 Effective and convenient community governance arrangements can contribute to the promotion of improved health and wellbeing for communities.

21 Asset Management Implications

- 21.1 The Member Working Group gave clear instruction that officers must include assets for transfer on day one. The Group's objective being to prevent the new Taunton Parish/Town Council from being a "paper council" with limited impact. The instruction also provided a list of assets that The Group considered to be a minimum; these are identified in Appendix I. These assets and services have been costed by officers at SWT and that cost has been provided in order to amend the council tax base for the new unitary council and the precept for the new Taunton Parish/Town Council.
- 21.2 Any assets proposed for transfer to a new Taunton Parish/Town Council will be set out in an appendix or schedule attached to the Reorganisation Order or subject to negotiation and subsequent agreement between Somerset West and Taunton Council, Somerset County Council and the shadow town council or new parish/town council.
- 21.3 Appendix I identifies a range of proposed services and assets for transfer to the Town Council on vesting day. This is the first phase of assets with future opportunities being established post vesting day. There are risks to both parties regarding the transfer of physical assets (building and land). Along with the change of ownership comes a transfer of all responsibilities and legal liabilities. This will include aspects such as: insurance, compliance, maintenance, capital investment, third party rights, landlord responsibilities etc. There are no proposed transfers of technical expertise from Property or Assets teams as it is assumed that the Town Council will commission some services from the Unitary Council from day one to ensure service delivery is not impacted. For parks this will include the maintenance works delivered by the current SWT workforce, and for toilets this will be the contracted works with IdVerde for cleaning of the facilities. There are no proposed TUPE transfers as a result of the transfer of assets and services on the basis of the buyback arrangements being formalised.
- 21.4 Current service provision within the SWTC workforce, and a commissioned contract is proposed to continue with a buy back arrangement secured in a side letter. This would see the new Town Council provided with the precept capability to fund the services of parks and public toilets. The Town Council would commission those services from the Unitary council, who would provide them through the existing workforce that transfers for parks maintenance, and the existing external contract that novates for toilet cleaning.
- 21.5 On this basis no immediate TUPE implications exist for the duration of these commissions. Whilst this is our position, TUPE legislation is complex and could be subject to challenge by the Somerset Council, the Town Council, or the employees

themselves. The buy-back proposal is proposed to avoid the complexities of TUPE transfers and the potential costs of disaggregating existing contracts.

- 21.6 The Town Council is potentially liable for TUPE transfers at the point these arrangements cease, this would always be the case regardless of transfers happening for day one or at a later date. In this instance if / when the Town Council change the delivery of services away from the buy-back arrangements the usual TUPE implications exist for the workforce of Somerset Council and the current contractor.
- 21.7 There are considerations for the Somerset Council, the proposed list includes assets within other land owned by the council, for example Cannon Street public toilets sit within the middle of Cannon Street car park. By handing over a freehold building in the middle of a council owned car park it limits opportunities to make changes to that car park in years to come, be that altering the layout or a complete change of use. A sale of that land would also be hindered by having more complex ownership arrangements. To mitigate this risk, it is proposed that the facilities impacted in this way will be transferred by way of a lease rather than a freehold transfer.
- 21.8 Asset information will be extracted from current digital systems and provided to the Town Council; this will include all current compliance certification. Historical information that is held in paper form may have greater resource implications in extracting but this can be arranged directly with the Town Council and does not have to be in place for day one.
- 21.9 There are other responsibilities within parks that will transfer, these go beyond service delivery and include matters such as ensuring compliance with previous grant awards, upholding any bylaws and land covenants. This information will be provided to the Town Council, and they will become responsible for any enforcement or data returns that are required.

22 Data Protection Implications

- 22.1 The Council has complied with GDPR in respect of the Consultation and Communications Plan for the community governance review.

23 Consultation Implications

- 23.1 Appropriate consultation has taken place with local electors, business, community and voluntary sector, local Councils and others as part of the community governance review process as described in the main body of the report.

Democratic Path:

- **Community Scrutiny Committee – No**
- **Executive – No**
- **Full Council – Yes (29 September 2022)**

Reporting Frequency: Ad-hoc

List of Appendices (background papers to the report)

Appendix A	Draft Reorganisation Order for adoption by Somerset County Council
Appendix B	The Map annexed to the Draft Reorganisation Order illustrating the Working Group's Final Recommendations
Appendix C	Decision sheets setting out the Working Group's considerations and proposals for each of the areas under review and minutes of the Working Group meetings.
Appendix D	Map illustrating proposed warding of Taunton Parish/Town Council
Appendix E	Equalities Impact Assessment
Appendix F	Terms of Reference of the Community Governance Review
Appendix G	Draft Recommendations of the Community Governance Review
Appendix H	Full report on responses received to second stage consultation
Appendix I	Taunton Parish/Town Council draft budget requirement calculations 2023/24

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007

The Somerset (Somerset West and Taunton) (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2022

Made (*insert date of SCC meeting that makes the Order*)

Coming into force in accordance with article 1(2)

Somerset West and Taunton District Council, in accordance with section 82 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ('the 2007 Act'), has undertaken a community governance review and made recommendations dated 29 September 2022. In accordance with section 93 of the 2007 Act, Somerset West and Taunton District Council has consulted with the local government electors and other interested persons and has had regard to the need to secure that community governance reflects the identities and interests of the community and is effective and convenient.

In accordance with Regulation 7(2) of the Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) Regulations 2008, Somerset County Council ('the council') has decided to give effect to the recommendations of the community governance review undertaken by Somerset West and Taunton District Council.

Somerset West and Taunton District Council and Somerset County Council, in accordance with section 100 of the 2007 Act, have each had regard to guidance issued under that section.

The council makes the following Order in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 86, 98(3), 98(4), 98(6) and 240(10) of the 2007 Act.

Citation and commencement

1. (1) This Order may be cited as the Somerset (Somerset West and Taunton) (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2022.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (3) and (4) below, this order comes into force on 1st April 2023.

(3) Article (*insert number of article amending the electoral arrangements of continuing parish councils*) shall come into force on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2027.

(4) For the purposes of:

- (a) this article;
- (b) article (*insert number of article setting the budget requirement of Taunton Parish Council*);
- (c) proceedings preliminary or relating to the elections of parish councillors for the parish of Taunton, to be held on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2023; and

- (d) proceedings preliminary or relating to the elections of parish councillors for the parishes of Cheddon Fitzpaine, Kingston St Mary and Trull, to be held on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2027,

this Order shall come into force on the day after that on which it is made.

2. In this Order-

'county' means the county of Somerset;

'district' means the district of Somerset West and Taunton;

'existing' means existing on the date this Order is made;

'map' means the map marked 'Map referred to in the Somerset (Somerset West and Taunton) (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2022 and deposited in accordance with section 96(4) of the 2007 Act; and any reference to a numbered sheet is a reference to the sheet of the map which bears that number;

'new parish' means the parish constituted by article (*insert number of article establishing Taunton Parish*);

'ordinary day of election of councillors' has the meaning given by section 37 of the Representation of the People Act 1983; and

'registration officer' means an officer appointed for the purpose of, and in accordance with, section 8 of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

Effect of Order

- 3.** This Order has effect subject to any agreement under section 99 (agreements about incidental matters) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 relevant to any provision of this Order.

Constitution of a new parish

- 4.** (1) A new parish, comprising the area outlined with a blue line on the map, shall be constituted within the county.

(2) The name of the new parish shall be Taunton.

(3) In consequence of paragraph (1) of this article, the areas outlined as follows on the map shall cease to be parts of the existing parishes shown:

- (a) The area outlined with a (*insert colour*) line on the map shall cease to be part of the existing parish of Bishops Hull;
- (b) The area outlined with a (*insert colour*) line on the map shall cease to be part of the existing parish of Cheddon Fitzpaine;
- (c) The area outlined with a (*insert colour*) line on the map shall cease to be part of the existing parish of Comeytrowe;
- (d) The area outlined with a (*insert colour*) line on the map shall cease to be part of the existing parish of Kingston St Mary;
- (e) The area outlined with a (*insert colour*) line on the map shall cease to be part of the existing parish of Staplegrove;

- (f) The area outlined with a *(insert colour)* line on the map shall cease to be part of the existing parish of Trull;
- (g) The area outlined with a *(insert colour)* line on the map shall cease to be part of the existing parish of West Monkton.

Transfer of areas between existing parishes

- 5. *(insert article setting out details of other boundary changes between parishes other than Taunton)*

Abolition of parishes

- 6. *(insert article abolishing the parishes of Comeytrowe and Staplegrove, and dissolving their respective parish councils).*

Calculation of budget requirement

- 7. For the purposes of Regulation 3 of the Local Government Finance (New Parishes) (England) Regulations 2008 there is specified in relation to the parish of Taunton the sum of £ *(insert budget requirement for Taunton Parish Council 2023/24)*.

Parish council for the parish of Taunton

- 8. (1) There shall be a parish council for the parish of Taunton.
(2) The name of that council shall be 'The Parish Council of Taunton'.

Elections for the parish of Taunton

- 9. Elections of all parish councillors for the parish of Taunton shall be held simultaneously on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2023.

Wards of the parish of Taunton and numbers of parish councillors

- 10. (1) The parish of Taunton shall be divided into *(insert number of wards from final recommendations)* wards which shall be named as set out in column (1) of Schedule number *(insert relevant schedule number)*.
(2) Each ward shall comprise the area designated on the map by reference to the name of the ward and demarcated by orange lines.
(3) The number of councillors to be elected for each ward shall be the number specified in respect of the ward in column (2) of Schedule number *(insert relevant schedule number)*.

Annual meeting of Taunton parish council

- 11. The annual meeting of the new parish council in 2023 shall be convened by the *Chief Executive Officer* of the Somerset Council. The meeting shall take place no later than 14 days after the day on which the councillors elected to the new parish council take office.

Alteration of parish areas and the areas of parish wards

- 12. Each area coloured and designated by a letter on the map and specified in column (1) of Schedule number *(insert relevant schedule number)* shall cease to be part of the parish

and parish ward specified in relation to that area in columns (2) and (3) of the Schedule and shall become part of the parish and where applicable parish ward specified in relation to that area in columns (4) and (5) of the Schedule.

Electoral arrangements of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish and Trull Parish

13. *(Insert article setting out changes to the electoral arrangements of Cheddon Fitzpaine and Trull Parish Councils (unwarded and reduction in number of councillors))*

Electoral register

14. The registration officer for the district shall make such rearrangement of, or adaptation of, the register of local government electors as may be necessary for the purposes of, and in consequence of, this Order

Transfer of property, rights and liabilities

15. The land, property, rights and liabilities described in column (1) of Schedules *(insert relevant schedule numbers)* shall transfer from the principal council or parish council specified in relation to that land, property, right or liability in column (2) of the Schedule to the parish council specified in relation to that land, property, right or liability in column (3) of the Schedule on the date specified in column (4) of the Schedule.

Charter Trustees of the Town of Taunton

16. (1) Any officers appointed by the charter trustees for the proper discharge of their functions who hold office immediately before the date of dissolution of the charter trustees ('the date of dissolution') shall by virtue of this Order be transferred on the date of dissolution and on the same terms and conditions of appointment to the employment of the parish council.

(2) Any powers to appoint local officers of dignity exercisable by the charter trustees immediately before the date of dissolution shall be exercisable by the parish council.

(3) Any functions that would have been exercisable in relation to the account of the charter trustees or as the case may be their responsible financial officer if the charter trustees had not been dissolved shall on and after the date of dissolution be exercisable by the parish council or as the case may be the parish council's responsible financial officer.

Transitional provision

17. Until the councillors elected to the council of the new parish of Taunton at the elections to be held on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2023 come into office, the new parish shall be represented by those persons who immediately before 1 April 2023 are the elected councillors for *(insert agreed persons to serve as temporary parish councillors – e.g. elected members for relevant SCC divisions, Charter Trustees, nominees of Staplegrove, Comeytrowe and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Councils?)*

Order date

18. 1st April 2023 is the order date for the purposes of the Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008.

Sealed with the seal of the council on the day of *(month)* year

[Date]

[Signature]
[Title of signatory]

SCHEDULE [1]

Article [number]

WARDS OF THE PARISH OF TAUNTON

NAMES AND AREAS OF WARDS AND NUMBERS OF COUNCILLORS

Column (1)	Column (2)	Column (3)
Name of Ward	Area of Ward	Number of Councillors
<i>Blackbrook & Holway</i>	<i>The district ward of Blackbrook & Holway</i>	2
<i>Comeytrowe</i>	<i>As indicated on map</i>	2
<i>Halcon & Lane</i>	<i>As indicated on map</i>	2
<i>Maidenbrook</i>	<i>As indicated on map</i>	1
<i>Manor & Tangier</i>	<i>As indicated on map</i>	1
<i>North Town</i>	<i>The district ward of North Town</i>	1
	<i>As indicated on map</i>	1
<i>Staplegrove</i>	<i>As indicated on map</i>	1
<i>Victoria</i>	<i>The district ward of Victoria</i>	2
<i>Vivary</i>	<i>As indicated on map</i>	2
<i>Wellsprings & Rowbarton</i>	<i>The district ward of Wellsprings & Rowbarton</i>	2
<i>Wilton & Sherford</i>	<i>As indicated on map</i>	1

SCHEDULE [2]

Article [number]

ALTERATION OF AREAS OF PARISHES AND PARISH WARDS

Column (1)	Column (2)	Column (3)	Column (4)	Column (5)
Area (as indicated on map)	Parish from which omitted	Parish ward from which omitted	Parish to which added	Parish ward to which added
'A'	<i>Comeytrowe</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Taunton</i>	<i>Comeytrowe</i>
'B'	<i>Trull</i>	<i>Killams</i>	<i>Taunton</i>	<i>Vivary</i>
'C'	<i>Trull</i>	<i>Trull</i>	<i>Taunton</i>	<i>Comeytrowe</i>
'D'	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Trull</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
'E'	<i>Cheddon Fitzpaine</i>	<i>Maidenbrook</i>	<i>Taunton</i>	<i>Maidenbrook</i>
'F'	<i>Staplegrove</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Taunton</i>	<i>Staplegrove</i>
'G'	<i>Staplegrove</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Norton Fitzwarren</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
'H'	<i>Staplegrove</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Kingston St Mary</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
'I'	<i>Kingston St Mary</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Taunton</i>	<i>Staplegrove</i>
'J'	<i>Bishops Hull</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Taunton</i>	<i>Comeytrowe</i>
'K'	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Bishops Hull</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
'L'	<i>Bishops Hull</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Norton Fitzwarren</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
'M'	<i>Norton Fitzwarren</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Bishops Hull</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
'N'	<i>West Monkton</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Taunton</i>	<i>Halcon & Lane</i>
'O'	<i>Cheddon Fitzpaine</i>	<i>Maidenbrook</i>	<i>West Monkton</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>

SCHEDULE [3]

Article [number]

MEMORANDUM of UNDERSTANDING RELATING TO LAND, PROPERTY AND SERVICES TO BE TRANSFERRED

As a matter of law and fact allotments and regalia will transfer automatically by virtue of statute (*Regulation 9 and 15 of the Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils)(England) Regulations 2008 No 625*).

In relation to other land, property and services held by Somerset West and Taunton District Council and services administered by them, which will automatically transfer to Somerset Council under the terms of the Somerset (Structural Changes) Order 2022.

There are discussions between Somerset County Council (the continuing authority) and Somerset West and Taunton Council, as to the transfer of certain land, property and services to the new Taunton Parish subject to its establishment from 1st April 2023. These assets will automatically transfer to the new Unitary Council on 1st April 2023 from SWT.

There are two options:

- a) In the event that the County Council Executive in its discretion, decides (on a date to be settled) that there shall be a schedule of Assets and Services to be transferred to the new Taunton Parish Council, then, this list shall be set forth in Schedule 3.

It will not form part of the Order to be made by the continuing authority since the transfer will be an Executive function reserved to the Executive of SCC. It will however, give a clear indication of the intentions of the continuing authority to transfer the assets subject to the making of the Order.

The decision making body for such transfer is the Executive of Somerset County Council.

Column (1)	Column (2)	Column (3)	Column (4)
Land and property to be transferred	To be transferred from	To be transferred to	Date
<i>To insert</i>	<i>To insert</i>	<i>To insert</i>	<i>To insert</i>

- b) In the event that the Executive of the County Council do not agree in principle such transfers prior to the of the Re-organisation Order being made, then the position will be as follows: The sole assets to be transferred shall be the

regalia and allotments. Such further transfers that may take place will be a matter for the relevant bodies.

SCHEDULE [4]

Article [number]

HISTORICAL AND CEREMONIAL PROPERTY TO BE TRANSFERRED

Column (1)	Column (2)	Column (3)	Column (4)
Historical and ceremonial property to be transferred	To be transferred from	To be transferred to	Date
<i>To insert</i>	<i>To insert</i>	<i>To insert</i>	<i>To insert</i>

SCHEDULE [5]

Article [number]

[OTHER MATTERS] TO BE TRANSFERRED

Column (1)	Column (2)	Column (3)	Column (4)
[Other matters] to be transferred	To be transferred from	To be transferred to	Date
<i>To insert</i>	<i>To insert</i>	<i>To insert</i>	<i>To insert</i>

SCHEDULE [6]

Article [number]

FUNDS AND BALANCES TO BE TRANSFERRED

Column (1)	Column (2)	Column (3)	Column (4)
Funds and balances to be transferred	To be transferred from	To be transferred to	Date
<i>To insert</i>	<i>To insert</i>	<i>To insert</i>	<i>To insert</i>

SCHEDULE [7]

Article [number]

MAINTENANCE [OR OTHER] RESPONSIBILITIES TO BE TRANSFERRED

Column (1)	Column (2)	Column (3)	Column (4)
Maintenance [or other] responsibilities to be transferred	To be transferred from	To be transferred to	Date
<i>To insert</i>	<i>To insert</i>	<i>To insert</i>	<i>To insert</i>

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

This Order gives effect to recommendations made by [name of principal council] for [the new parish of [name], created][the alteration of the area of the parish of [name]][the abolition of the parish of [name]][the creation of a council for the parish of [name]][the dissolution of the council for the parish of][the parish of [name] to be grouped under a common parish council with the parishes of [names]][the parish of [name] to be separated from the group of parishes under a common parish council][the common parish council for the parishes of [names] to be dissolved] within the [borough][city][county][district][London borough] of [name of principal area].

The parish of [name] will be [created][altered][abolished] with effect from 1 April [year]. The electoral arrangements apply in respect of parish elections to be held on and after the ordinary day of election of councillors in [year].

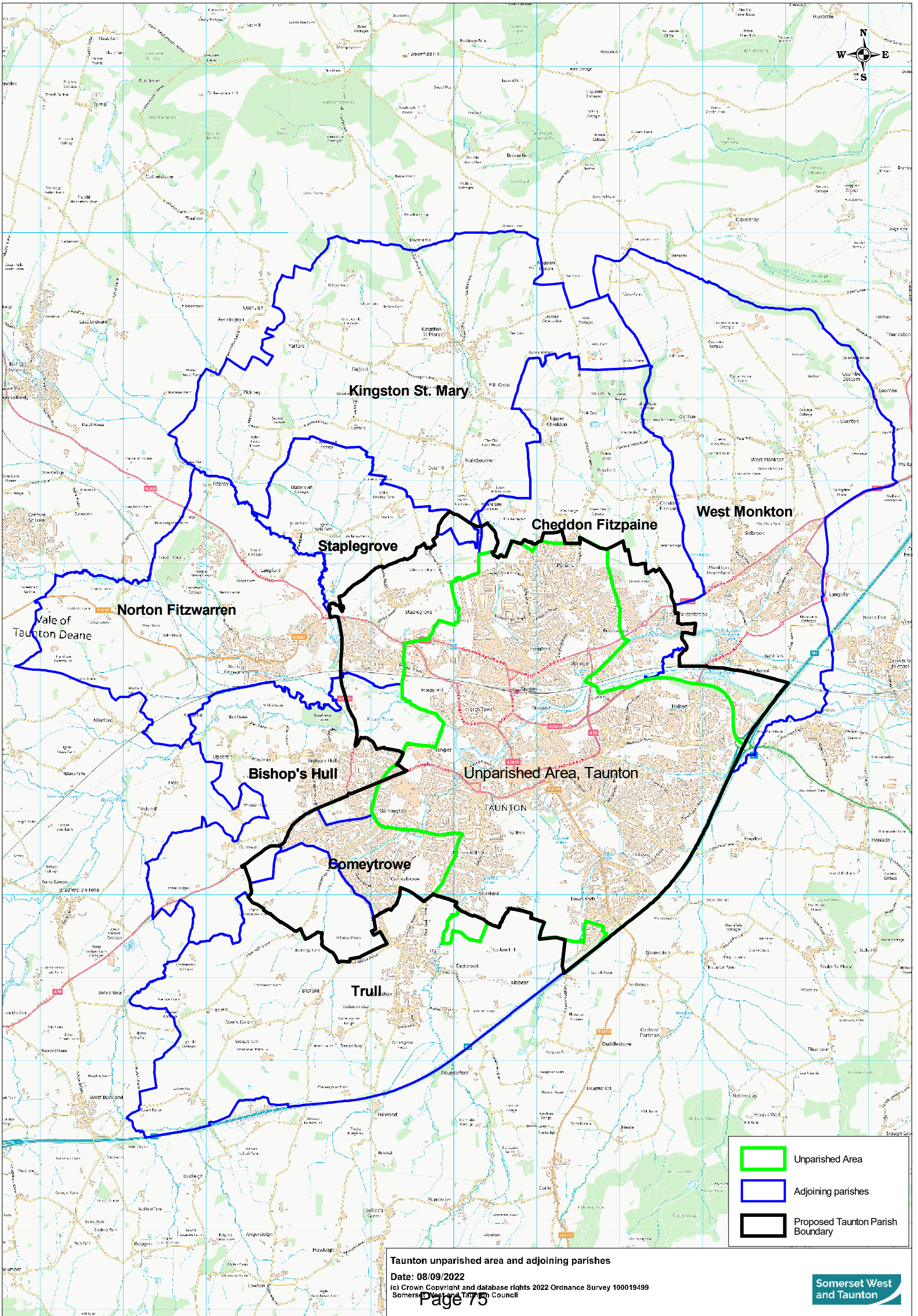
Article [insert article number] provides for parish elections in the parish of [name] in [year], and then to continue according to the established system of parish elections every four years.

Article [insert article number] specifies the numbers of parish councillors for the new parish of [name].

Article [insert article number] and the map establish the names and areas of the wards of the new parish of [name] and the numbers of councillors for each ward.

Article [insert article number] obliges the Electoral Registration Officer to make any necessary amendments to the electoral register to reflect the new electoral arrangements.

The map defined in article 2 shows the new wards of the parish of [name]. It is available, at all reasonable times, at the offices of [name of principal council].



Taunton unparished area and adjoining parishes

Date: 08/09/2022

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Somerset West and Taunton Council



Community Governance Review Working Group – 16/08/22 @ 1.30pm

Attendees: Cllrs Perry (in the Chair), N Cavill, S Coles, L Lisgo, L Whetlor, M Rigby
Cllr S Wakefield

Officers: J Williams, M Prouse, K Williams, R Williams, A Tregellas.

Apologies: Cllrs J Hunt & A Sully

1. Introductions

- The Chair introduced Cllr Wakefield who was in attendance in her new guise as the Portfolio Holder for Local Government Re-Organisation.
- The Chair asked Reg Williams, Consultant from Society of Local Council Clerks to introduce himself and his background in setting up Salisbury City Council.

2. Consideration of the Stage 2 Consultation Responses and Analysis

The Chair welcomed the Working Group and acknowledged that all Members had seen the emails with the collated responses and the associated analysis, which had also been sent via Hard Copy.

The Specialist in Governance took the Group through the analysis documentation and the key themes emerging from the Consultation responses question by question.

Questions and comments within the discussion are summarised below:

- An in-depth consideration of the Somerset Association of Local Council's (SALC) response was discussed.
- The Chair agreed SALC should be involved but in particular reference to their suggestion to re-do a CGR in five years time, leaving aside time and resources to do this again – their suggestion of the Unparished Area did not accord with the government guidance including amongst other issues that boundaries reflect the true boundaries of town.
- The response from SALC was acknowledged but their inclination for simplicity in parishing the Unparished Area only had been considered by the Working Group and the Council and dismissed, with the Working Group seeking to create an accurate community for the area in accordance with guidance.
- The forthcoming boundary review in 2023 was noted which would potentially want to align parish boundaries etc and this could impact that and led weight to proceeding with the proposal as is rather than delaying.
- Concern was raised that a number of residents had not responded to the consultation so it was difficult to gauge a true picture of public sentiment. It was stated that the Working Group was the body charged with making a further proposal to Full Council and the decision would be based not on superior knowledge but an understanding of the situation across the board

and a range of factors including submissions made to the consultation. It was stated that certain responses were from vested interests and this would not sway the consideration of a greater good. Consultation exercises were important but Councillors had to make judgements taking into account various factors.

- The Chair confirmed that whilst the response rate was low it was not untypical of other reviews that had taken place. Councillors needed to take account of everything said and treat it with care and in the round.
- The Electoral Consultant reminded Councillors of the criteria outlined in the Statutory Guidance. The Consultation was an important part of the process, with the response to question 5 giving a general endorsement of the approach the Working Group had taken.
- It was suggested that the Working Group considered each of the areas again, drilling down further into responses to question 6 and looking at the circumstances of the responses in each area.
- The Consultant from SLCC made the observation that in terms of development crossing boundaries, there could be substantial CIL monies accrued to Parish Councils to mitigate the impact of development.
- The Chair confirmed that the Working Group had not looked at the boundaries with CIL in mind but rather in a holistic way at any historic growth and based on community interest and identity rather than money.
- The Chair took a sounding from the Group and taking into account the responses it was:
- **AGREED** unanimously that the creation of a Town Council was supported with an in principle support for the proposition that the boundary is extended beyond the unparished area.
- The Group then moved to consider each area of the map in turn following the recommendation of the Electoral Consultant in understanding the responses received from each area to the proposal.

- **TRULL PARISH COUNCIL AREA**

- The suggested amendment made by the Parish Council was considered, including with the attached map showing the proposed revision above Dipford Road.
- Only six responses to the second stage consultation were received from respondents identifying themselves as residents of Trull Parish and four came in via email. Although a clear majority of the portal responses did not support the proposals, the Working Group noted the low number of responses. A strong view from the email responses was support for the Orchard Grove development going into the Town Council area.
- It was questioned whether there was any downside on the playing fields identified in the Trull response being outside of the Town Council area.
- It was commented that the CIL monies would enable the playing fields to be developed as a community asset for both Trull and Orchard Grove residents.

It was considered that the Parish Council had made a strong argument that the playing fields needed to be delivered as soon as possible and that there was a risk the developer may not deliver if left longer.

- Concern was raised about the principle of splicing development and a desire to try and remain consistent in applying reasoning to the boundaries, especially as Trull's suggested boundary was considered more artificial than the Working Group proposal consulted on.
- It was agreed to re-consider this at the next meeting for a final decision.

- **COMEYTROWE PARISH COUNCIL AREA**

- 33 responses to the second stage consultation were received from respondents identifying themselves as residents of Comeytrove Parish. Of these, 78% agreed that a town council for Taunton could promote a sense of community and community cohesion, 63% agreed that the boundary of the town council should reflect the current reality of the town including urban extensions and 50% agreed with the package of proposals in the draft recommendations (with 41% disagreeing).
- On the basis of the above and taking it into account the Working Group did not consider there was any compelling reason to vary the draft recommendation and that the final recommendations should include the proposed abolition of Comeytrove Parish Council and that the entire area of Comeytrove Parish should be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.

- **BISHOPS HULL PARISH COUNCIL AREA**

- It was agreed that there had been no responses disagreeing with the inclusion of Galmington Trading Estate.
- 20 responses to the second stage consultation were received from respondents identifying themselves as residents of Bishops Hull. Of these, 70% supported the overall draft package of proposals.
- A number of respondents from other parts of the area under review referred to the proximity of the urban part of Bishops Hull Parish to the western boundary of the unparished area and suggested that this area should be included within the proposed Taunton Parish/Town Council area and/or that not to do so was inconsistent with the proposals in relation to other areas of urban extension.
- Some members of the Working Group felt that it was difficult to justify the exclusion of Bishops Hull when looking at the map. It was considered that whilst the interpretation of guidelines supported this as a valid view, it was raised that the proposal consulted on had created a legitimate expectation that Bishops Hull in the main would not be included and the Council had received no fresh information through consultation to change this view, and to include the urban part entirely would probably necessitate re-consultation.
- It was agreed to defer a final decision until all Group Members could be present to discuss.

- **STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL AREA**

- 39 online responses to the second stage consultation were received from respondents identifying themselves as residents of Staplegrove Parish with 12 responses also made via email and paper copy. Of the online responses, 72% did not agree that the boundary of any Taunton Parish/Town Council should take in areas of urban extension and 87% did not support the overall draft proposals. Of the paper and email responses, 50% agreed that the boundary of any Taunton Parish/Town Council should take in areas of urban extension and 41% disagreed. 58% did not support the overall draft proposals whilst 33% did.
- The Working Group considered the responses but felt the development was key in this context, and members had received assurances from Officers on the development's progress. The argument put forward that the green space used as playing fields was considered not a strong one as it was of a similar character to many other areas in the town and did not create a divisible wedge between communities. Officers from Planning were requested to provide further detail on the area of bat mitigation left in Kingston St. Mary Parish.

- **CHEDDON FITZPAINE PARISH COUNCIL AREA**

- 111 responses were received to the second stage consultation from respondents identifying themselves as residents of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish. Of the online respondents, 85% did not agree that the boundary of any Taunton Parish/Town Council should take in areas of urban extension and 91% did not support the overall draft proposals.
- It was commented and agreed that a large number of the responses from Cheddon Fitzpaine were blanket negative ones without detailed reasons given. A comment was made that the guidance had not been engaged with e.g. questioning viability, when 150 is considered the minimum for a viable Parish.
- The abolishing of it as a Parish was ruled out, as no response from the Parish had requested such a thing, bar a response requesting the inclusion of the whole Parish to ensure Hestercombe House was included. This was also considered and rejected.
- The Working Group, having taking into account the consultation responses and the statutory guidance were in unanimous agreement with not amending the proposal.
- It was considered that the growth of Taunton had led to these new estates in Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish and they had no causal relation to the village centre, so the merit in that argument was considered weak. The proposal would revert Cheddon Fitzpaine as a locality to its status pre-2000.

- Specifically in discussion of the future maintenance of the country park which had been raised in responses, this was seen as an asset that any future Town Council would surely have some role in supporting even though it would remain in Cheddon Fitzpaine.
- It was stated that the maintenance agreement in relation to the park is proportionate so the reduction in electors would not harm the viability of a future Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish to play its role in supporting the Country Park.
- There had been no engagement with the responses to the suggestion of tidying up the boundaries between West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine south of the A3259 to tie it to the road in line with guidance on strong physical boundaries.
- **WARDING PROPOSALS**
 - The Working Group considered the responses in relation to warding.
 - The response and work undertaken by Mr House was commended.
 - One Councillor expressed a preference for single member wards to ensure parity across the piece and this would necessitate a recalculation.
 - It was agreed to defer this discussion until the next meeting.

The Chair closed the meeting and requested that for the next meeting further detail was provided on the following areas of discussion:

1. Trull Parish Council's suggested amendment.
2. An up to date map showing the new relief road and its intersection with the A3259 in Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish.
3. A further detailed look at the responses from Bishops Hull Parish Council
4. An update on the Staplegrove East Development particularly in relation to the Bat Mitigation section in Kingston St Mary Parish
5. Warding

The meeting closed at 3.45pm

Community Governance Review Working Group – 19/08/22 @ 9am

Attendees: Cllrs Perry (in the Chair), N Cavill, S Coles, L Lisgo, L Whetlor, M Rigby, Cllr J Hunt.

Cllr H Farbahi

Officers: P Fitzgerald, A Tregellas, J Williams, M Prouse, K Williams, M Bryant, S Fox.

Apologies: Cllr A Sully

1. To approve the minutes of the last meeting

The notes from 16/08/22 were approved by the Working Group as a correct record.

2. Assets discussion in relation to providing a budget amount as part of the re-organisation order

The Deputy Monitoring Officer commenced the discussion and stated that there had clearly been a differing view on the email which set out the staging for implementation and a de minimis position for Day 1, if created. Discussion at the Lawyers and Monitoring Officer LGR Group had suggested that the Working Group's aspirations would run into legal issues, firstly in terms of s24 consents and then that any Town Council would not legally exist until 1st April 2023. Any prospect of transfers being listed in a re-organisation order would be difficult, due to the time constraints. His overriding concern was ensuring the Council had a political and administrative way forward. It was not clear if the Executive at both Councils were on board with this approach.

The Chair of the Working Group responded that he was less worried about issues pertaining to s24, given the political make-up of both Councils. The Vice-Chair felt it was right that this had come to the group today but that the list of assets had been around for a while and derived from Salisbury City Council's list. A view was expressed that the re-organisation order did not have to have in it a detailed list of assets to be transferred. The importance between now and October as to what transfers will transfer and the effect on the precept was considered. It was recognised the consensus view at SCC was that when it comes to asset transfers and devolution that there should be a principle of cost neutrality. The Chair felt that the Council could set a budget in October with relative certainty as to that whatever followed would be cost neutral and the October budget would set parameters. The argument about the inability to transfer to a non-existent body was not considered strong as there was no gap in time between the dissolving of one and creation of another.

Questions and comments within the discussion are summarised below:

- Councillors agreed that there was an expectation that whatever set up was to be a going concern, and it was considered critical to Taunton that no advantage or disadvantage was given.
- A brief explanation was given by the Chair as to how, if passed, the assets and liabilities of those areas from existing parishes would transfer in response to a question on such.
- The s151 Officer clarified that in Year 1 the new Town Council would adopt and set its own budget by October 2023. The preparation had been driven to date by a position of focusing on the safe and legal establishment and then expanding from there. His fundamental point was in establishing which Tier 3 town and parish services transferring from the District Council's functions and responsibilities were being discussed. The Town Council needed to decide what it was going to do first, driven by function rather than solely focus on an asset, which often made up part of a service. The Council had to have capacity to deliver and that drove the budget calculation.
- The Officers required a clear steer as the intention was to conclude on the budget calculation work early next week, and there was not much time left.
- It was agreed that whilst Salisbury City Council had been discussed in relation to a wish list for some time, the detailed proposals had not been considered.
- The Deputy Monitoring Officer reiterated there was a need to prepare a re-organisation order that would get consent. The concern was that if anything in this caused upset this whole project might not be completed.
- It was posited that there could be a delineation between the asset transfer and the service delivery transfer, with the service delivery transfer concentrated on after Vesting.
- It was confirmed that the Re-Organisation Order was not a prescribed document and there was discretion as to what went in it.
- Concern was raised around the transfer of assets without a service. The complications arising around admitted body status meant there were implications that could lead to assets transferring first.
- It was posited that one way to avoid these complications in staff transfers would be that there would be a clear understanding for a specified period of time that the new town council commissioned and contracted with the Unitary to maintain its parks, which could be revisited over time.
- The s151 confirmed that the County Council is the authority that would approve the order and be the consenting body making the decision. The s24 process was thought not to be a crucial factor.
- It was raised that issues relating to this had been raised a year ago and there seemed to be gaps where progress had not been made.
- The Monitoring Officer confirmed that she had experience of being a town clerk where the Council commissioned services from the principal authority and paid the district council and this was a potential easier model to implement.
- There were several Parks in Taunton held in trust and there would be a legal view on whether they could transfer or not. The draft list of Assets provided by

the Vice-Chair was being analysed and he had requested it was not shared with the wider Working Group to ensure it made sense first.

- The view was expressed that the public would expect the Town Council to do something.
- It was felt that something like the Crematorium was too complicated to transfer and should be removed from consideration.
- In consideration of Allotments which would transfer to Tier 3 by statute, a number of these were managed by management companies with some leases coming to an end shortly. A request for details as to their income and exact dates had been made of the Assets team.
- In consideration of premises, an update was given on a site visit conducted by officers of both the Old Municipal Buildings (OMB) and the Market House. The OMB whilst it was considered from a historical perspective the logical home of any Taunton Town Council, did come with its own set of issues.
- There had been no planned maintenance on the building, but it was currently rented to the registrars/coroners by SWT Council for an income, with SWT only responsible for upkeep of the exterior. The repairs had been reactive rather than proactive. If that building was the preferred option then a condition survey would need to be undertaken at speed which would cost around £5000 and consequent to that a planned maintenance schedule prepared. The initial discussions with SCC had been around offering a transitional hire agreement rather than wholesale transfer of the building.
- A Councillor raised the point that the OMB would need to be fully brought up to code by the Unitary before it was transferred over to Taunton Town, if at all.
- Public Conveniences and the Fons George Car Park were also described on the list.
- The Working Group agreed that any County Council Assets would be out of the equation and the discussion related purely to District Assets.
- It was stated that for Town and Parish Councils the primary income generation method was that of Council Tax, and anything that transferred would have to do so fully funded.
- It was commented that whenever any transfers took place there would likely be a sharp increase in Taunton Town Council's precept regardless, due to its historical low starting point.
- Concern was raised at the arbitrary manner of these discussions and it was suggested a separate meeting was convened to reconsider the assets list in detail.
- Officers posited that asset transfers could be referred to generally in any report/order. This would be an indication of the broad areas upon which there may be consent to transfer. The words could be fashioned and then negotiations could continue between the decision and Vesting day.
- A further meeting was agreed to be scheduled to further discuss this matter.

3. Consideration of the Stage 2 Consultation Responses and Analysis

The Chair invited Simon Fox, Major Projects Officer in Planning to give the Working Group the further detail requested on both the Staplegrove scheme and the Orchard Grove development.

Questions and comments within the following discussion are summarised below:

STAPLEGROVE/KINGSTON ST MARY PARISH AREA

- The bat mitigation and area enclosed had been subject to representations in the SHLAA. The Chair stated that the Working Group had been cautious about setting a view that the boundary is set to indicate where development would be, however the bat mitigation is part of the development so for consistency there was a case to argue that it should have been included.
- In response to a query as to why the developer had not included any housing in that part when it was seen as likely, it was posited that there may have been a political calculation made when seeking approvals. There was considered a real prospect of this site coming forward for housing and under the emerging Garden Town stewardship elements, if houses were built in this area they would be paying a management fee and a parish precept to Kingston St Mary parish under the current proposals.
- The CGR Consultant cautioned that anything looking beyond 5 years was difficult to justify unless there was a realistic probability of it coming forward in that 5 year horizon.
- **The Working Group agreed to confirm its original proposal in relation to Kingston St Mary/Staplegrove Parish Area and not make any further amendment.**

TRULL PARISH AREA

- The Working Group re-considered the suggestion put forth by Trull Parish Council.
- The logic behind the expressed view of the Parish Council was suggested as coming from a place whereby if the council does not buy the land at independent valuation and it reverts back to developer, then there is a risk it does not come forward for open space, however it would be for the principal council to purchase the land proposed to be playing fields, not the Parish or a Town Council if it ended up in the area.
- It was suggested that as already discussed the proposal was considered arbitrary and a suggestion was made to include whole thing bearing in mind that the prospect of open space management was seemingly not in Trull Parish Council's desires.
- A view was expressed that in relation to the boundary and the three options discussed, Trull Parish Council's was the weakest proposal.
- A view was expressed that to take in the whole of the development would jut too far into Trull Village and that considering all of the evidence the view was

held that Dipford Road was the stronger proposed boundary in line with the guidance.

- **The Working Group agreed to confirm its original proposal in relation to Trull Parish and not make any further amendment.**

CHEDDON FITZPAINE & WEST MONKTON PARISH AREA

- Officers confirmed that a Legal Letter had been received on behalf of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council challenging the review. Officers would share the document with all Group Members and advise when a response had been prepared.
- In further consideration of the proposal on whether the current boundary between West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine parishes between Maidenbrook and Yallands Hill south of the Country Park should be amended, for example by following the A3259 westwards to Maidenbrook Lane was considered.
- Councillors raised that the guidance (Para 85) talks about an opportunity to put in place strong boundaries, which this suggested change did by tying it to the road.
- A Councillor raised that they had had informal conversations with Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Councillors who had had no issues with simplifying the boundary line.
- Concern was raised that the principal purpose of this review was to set a town council up and there had not been any positive consent by both parish councils to the suggestion, although West Monkton Parish Council had outlined their support in their written response.
- Members raised concerns around securing that land from future speculative development with a strong parish council to fight its corner.
- It was commented that as no one currently lived within that area identified the change could be justified under the guidance.
- **The Working Group took a vote and agreed with proposing to amend the ancillary boundary, following the context given by the local Member.**

BISHOPS HULL PARISH AREA

- An overview was given on the discussion that had taken place so far in relation to Bishops Hull.
- The Ward Member stated that objections were being raised by non-residents and the reasoning given was not logical, it was based on a view as to it being included because another area had been (Comeytrowe).
- The CGR Consultant stated that the Working Group needed to take a cautionary view as there had been no proposal for Bishops Hull to be a part of town council and further consultation would be required.

- An example was given that those Bishops Hull residents who didn't respond to the 2nd Stage who perhaps would have done if they had known there was to be a proposal for it to be included.
- It would be difficult to legitimately make such a large change at this stage of the review.
- A Councillor raised that at the first meeting of The Charter Trustees for Taunton in 2019 the Ward Member had raised points around the Mayor not representing the whole of Taunton.
- The Ward Member accepted that the Mayor of Taunton, if this proposal went through as is, would not then represent Bishops Hull.
- The Chair summarised that there were strong arguments for the inclusion of Bishops Hull, however, the Working Group had not received any further information as a result of the second stage consultation on this aspect which they didn't know when the decision was made to exclude Bishops Hull.
- The Ward Member caveated that there had been a large weight of opinion when they were canvassing in the Parish as part of the May Elections which informed them that the Working Group had made the right call with its proposal to exclude Bishops Hull.
- **The Working Group agreed to confirm its original proposal in relation to Bishops Hull Parish and not make any further amendment.**

The meeting closed at 12.05pm midday.

Community Governance Review Working Group – 25/08/22 @ 3.30pm

Attendees: Cllrs Perry (in the Chair), N Cavill, S Coles, L Lisgo, M Rigby, Cllr J Hunt.

Cllr H Farbahi

Officers: A North, P Fitzgerald, A Tregellas, J Williams, M Prouse, K Williams, R Williams, S Noyce, C Hall, P McClean, E Day.

Apologies: Cllr A Sully and Cllr L Whetlor

1. To approve the minutes of the last meeting

The notes from 19/08/22 were approved by the Working Group as a correct record.

2. To receive an update on any action points arising from previous meetings

The Governance Specialist had provided a copy of the legal letter to all Working Group members and the response was aiming to be sent out by the end of the following week. This would also be shared with the Working Group when finalised.

3. Consideration of the Stage 2 Consultation Responses and Analysis in relation to the proposals and finalise Warding

The Chair directed the Working Group in particular to the two submissions that provided a detailed response on the proposed Warding received by Roger House and the Taunton Labour Party.

Questions and comments within the discussion are summarised below:

- A view was posited that residents could sometimes play multi member wards Councillors off each other in terms of consistency of response as a negative.
- In terms of the specific proposals made by the Taunton Labour Party specifically in relation to Priorswood Ward, the names of the three proposed wards mean something to those who lived in those various areas.
- It was noted there can be problems if a councillor is not very good or dies in office.
- It was commented that Mr House's proposal was based only on the Unparished Area rather than engaging with the area consulted on and that if the principles of his proposal were taken forward you would be looking at a Council of nearly 30 Councillors, which was felt too high.
- It was noted that the naming and split of Priorswood had been independently proposed by both the House and Labour proposal, however, the Working Group had agreed to discount the House proposal from further consideration.
- It was commented that the number of Councillors (20) was considered ideal.
- Looking at the map, all of the single member wards were close to multi-member wards and so could conceivably lean on those in times of need.

- It was commented in response that this type of support could also take place if all wards were single member or if Maidenbrook was changed to a 2 member ward and Priorswood to a 2 member ward.
- An opinion was offered that single member wards sometimes was prohibitive to strong independent candidates coming through.
- The Electoral Services Specialist outlined that the least amount of changes would make things easier from a work perspective as Officers would have to do a polling station review once this proposal was firmed up.
- Councillors were cautioned that in considering polling stations, you couldn't always match stations to the relevant polling districts.
- The Electoral Specialist also stated that there was to be a Boundary Review under the new unitary in the next four years. When the last review was undertaken they have typically looked at town councils and made changes to those that are warded - e.g. Wellington and Minehead, so there could be opportunity to do tweaks to what was proposed later on.
- A vote was taken on the three options felt possible for the Priorswood and Maidenbrook Ward. No Councillors voted in favour of the existing map in relation to what had been proposed (3 Cllrs for Priorswood and 1 for Maidenbrook).
- Three Councillors voted in favour of the breaking up of the Priorswood into three single member wards and Maidenbrook remaining as a one member ward. Three Councillors voted for the alteration of Priorswood into a two member ward and Maidenbrook into a two member ward.
- It was agreed to defer the final decision on the Maidenbrook/Priorswood Ward issue until the Working Group next met when hopefully a full contingent of the Group could input. Those who had already voted today if they couldn't attend agreed their vote would go forward as was. Officers were requested to draw up the maps to showcase the two options discussed.
- It was agreed that all other wards were to remain as proposed.

4. Continuation of the Assets discussion in relation to providing a budget amount as part of the re-organisation order

The Chair then invited the s151 to give a brief presentation following on from the discussions begun at the previous meeting with the initial draft of a potential budget for the first year of the Town Council.

Questions and comments within the discussion are summarised below:

- Comment was made that the suggested staffing budget was too high in relation to the overall budget.
- A query was raised as to the relative number of those properties in Bands A, B and C.
- Officers had been working from an understanding that the budget was based on Phase 1 of a two-stage approach, with a primary focus on getting a Town Council off the ground.

- Officers cautioned that this needed to be a focused activity on essentially what would move into the parish precept from district to town.
 - Sympathy was offered to officers with what was felt to be a difficult task.
 - A question was raised on the political will for a dowry or other contingent form of fund to help the town council become what it would want to become.
 - Discussions had taken place on those features that transfer could be purchased as part of a service but we didn't have a detailed breakdown of those costs.
 - Concerns were raised around the Council Tax rising too fast and the sequencing of such.
 - Councillors expressed support for a two- stage approach.
 - The Chair stated that a view seemed to be forming that Parks and Open Spaces was the focus.
-
- The Working Group deputised Cllr Lisgo and Cllr Rigby to sit down with the s151 to do further work on a draft budget that would articulate the groups aspiration for a competent authority.
 - It was agreed to pencil in a further Working Group meeting on Tuesday 6th September 2022.

The meeting closed at 5.45pm

Community Governance Review Working Group – 06/09/22 @ 9am

Attendees: Cllrs Perry (in the Chair), N Cavill, S Coles, L Lisgo, M Rigby, Cllr J Hunt, Cllr L Whetlor and Cllr A Sully.

Cllr S Wakefield

Officers: A North, P Fitzgerald, J Williams, M Prouse, K Williams, R Williams, C Hall, P McClean, M Bryant.

1. To approve the minutes of the last meeting

The notes from 25/08/22 were approved by the Working Group as a correct record.

2. To receive an update on any action points arising from previous meetings

N/A

3. Continuation of the Assets discussion in relation to providing a budget amount as part of the re-organisation order

The Chair set the scene by outlining some of the work undertaken since the last meeting of the Working Group. The s151 gave a brief overview and presentation. The updated budget figures pulled in from different areas. The final numbers would be different from the notional indicative sum provided for public conveniences and parks which had been included for day 1 transfer. There had been the addition of a Service improvements and town improvements fund, which would enable the town council to do more on Day 1. A small amount of income will be generated with parks being transferred which can be reflected.

Questions and comments within the discussion are summarised below:

- The Chair outlined why Vivary Park was considered more strategic and made more sense to keep that with the unitary for a range of reasons.
- Members thanked Officers for their time into this, and it was felt that things were in a better position than they were when the process had started.
- The inclusion of the various Council tax bands was considered helpful and it was requested this was shown in the final report.
- Clarity was sought on some aspects of the budget e.g. play areas in parks.
- Comment was made that the reserves balance could be increased, which would necessarily include those of current parishes coming in.
- A request was made to include a section on s106 or CIL monies.
- It was confirmed that the statutory responsibilities would still reside with the unitary authority e.g. bins outside of parks.
- Comment was made that this budget would enable the Town Council to undertake activity.

- Concern was raised that the budget needed to include the possible provision of parish lengths man and the duties they undertook as well as Parish Grants being continued.
- Concern was raised that the income relative to the precept was quite small.
- It was confirmed that there was an element of set up costs that the District would have to fund.
- It was suggested the Shadow Council continued that work in looking at potential income generation opportunities.
- The Working Group re-iterated their desire for conversations to continue post approval of any order, particularly in relation to assets such as Fons George Car Park. A wish was expressed that the principle of flexibility on conversations going forward was included in the Working Group report.
- With that caveat, the Working Group were agreed that this budget proposal would go forward with their report.

4. Finalise Warding Proposals

The Working Group had considered the two proposals discussed at the previous meeting and had come to the view that the option that split the current Priorswood Ward into three single member wards was the preferred option.

The caveat to this was that the parity of numbers between the wards aligned with guidance. The Group were content that if the elector numbers did not align with guidance Officers would liaise with the Chair, Vice Chair and Cllr Lisgo as Ward Member in the first instance.

5. Approval of Draft Working Group Report and Recommendations to Council/ Overview of democratic approvals

The Chair and the rest of the Working Group confirmed they had reviewed the draft report written on their behalf by officers and were therefore content with it going forward to Council.

Questions and comments within the discussion are summarised below:

- It was hoped that an early meeting of the Working Group with the Shadow Town Council once created could be convened to share the knowledge.
- Queries were raised by the County Council officers as to whether the report would focus on the Order or cover the wider issues on transfers.
- It was confirmed that the County Council would consider the Order, for which there was no statutory formula. It was hoped there could be drafted with the report an explanatory memorandum of understanding on transfers of property and land.
- It was stated that both Councils would use their best endeavours to implement subject to general political consent.

The meeting closed at 10.40am

Recommendation Sheets of the Working Group – In numerical order matching the Full Council report

1. That the Council confirms that it has considered and taken into account the responses received to the second stage consultation on the community governance review of the unparished area of Taunton and eight neighbouring parishes together with the considerations and recommendations of the Community Governance Review Working Group as set out in this report and appendices as required by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

2. That the Council notes that in the context of local government reorganisation it is the responsibility of Somerset West and Taunton Council to agree the final recommendations of the community governance review and the responsibility of Somerset County Council to make any Reorganisation Order to give effect to those recommendations.

3. That the Council adopts the Community Governance Review Working Group's proposals for the final recommendations of the community governance review as follows:

A. That a new parish be created to include the currently unparished area of Taunton and that in addition:

- i. Comeytrowe Parish Council be dissolved and the entire area of Comeytrowe Parish be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;
- ii. The Killams Green area, currently within Trull Parish Council area, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;
- iii. The part of the forthcoming development in the south-west corner of Taunton that falls within Trull Parish, including the whole of the development north of Dipford Road, should be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;
- iv. The boundary of Trull Parish to the north-west of Cotlake Hill be altered to follow the green wedge around the Sherford urban area, with the small area to the south of that boundary that is currently within the unparished area of Taunton becoming part of Trull Parish.
- v. The urban area within the Maidenbrook Ward of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish, including sites earmarked for housing development in the near future, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.
- vi. The urban parts of Staplegrove Parish, including the entirety of the forthcoming development in the north-west corner of Taunton, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;
- vii. The slim part of Staplegrove Parish jutting to the west of Silk Mills Lane be included within the boundary of Norton Fitzwarren Parish;

- viii. The remaining area of the existing Staplegrove Parish be included within the boundary of Kingston St. Mary Parish;
- ix. Staplegrove Parish Council be dissolved.
- x. A small southern portion of the Kingston St Mary Parish area, representing that part of the proposed Staplegrove East development that falls within the parish, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.
- xi. With the exception of Galmington Trading Estate and a small section south of the A38 near Rumwell, no part of Bishops Hull Parish be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;
- xii. The small triangular residential area at the cross-section with Wellington Road, currently within the unparished area, be included within the boundary of Bishops Hull Parish;
- xiii. The boundary between Norton Fitzwarren Parish and Bishops Hull Parish, just north of Mill Cottages, be amended to follow the route of the railway line;
- xiv. The Hankridge Retail Park, Creech Castle and the associated Toneway Road, currently within West Monkton Parish, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish, which should run along the railway to the M5;
- xv. With the exception of the above, no part of the existing area of West Monkton Parish be included in the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.
- xvi. No part of the existing area of Norton Fitzwarren Parish be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.
- xvii. The boundary between West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine parishes between Maidenbrook and Yallands Hill south of the Country Park be amended to following the A3259 and new relief road westwards to Maidenbrook Lane.

B. That the new parish be named 'Taunton Parish' and that a parish/town council be established to serve the new parish with effect from 1 April 2023.

C. That the first elections to the proposed new parish/town council for Taunton should be held on the ordinary day of elections (the first Thursday in May) in 2023.

D. That the proposed new Taunton Parish be divided into wards for the purposes of electing parish/town councillors.

E. That the total number of councillors to be elected to the proposed Taunton Parish/Town Council be 20 and the warding arrangements for the council and the number of councillors to be elected to represent each ward, be as set out at section 9.19 of this report.

F. That the electoral arrangements of certain other parish councils in the area under review be amended as set out at section 9.20 of this report.

G. That save as set out at A to F above, the existing parishes in the review area and the names, boundaries, council size and other parish governance arrangements in respect of those parishes remain unchanged.

H. That the budget requirement for the new Taunton Parish/Town Council for the financial year 2023/24 be set at £x as set out at section 11 of this report.

I. That temporary parish/town councillors as listed at section 11.12 of this report be appointed to serve as members of the new Taunton Parish/Town Council from 1 April 2023 until the councillors elected on 4 May 2023 take up office.

J. That the Local Government Boundary Commission for England be requested to make changes to the boundaries of the relevant Somerset Council electoral divisions as necessary to ensure consistency between those boundaries and the revised Parish and Parish Ward boundaries made in this Community Governance Review.

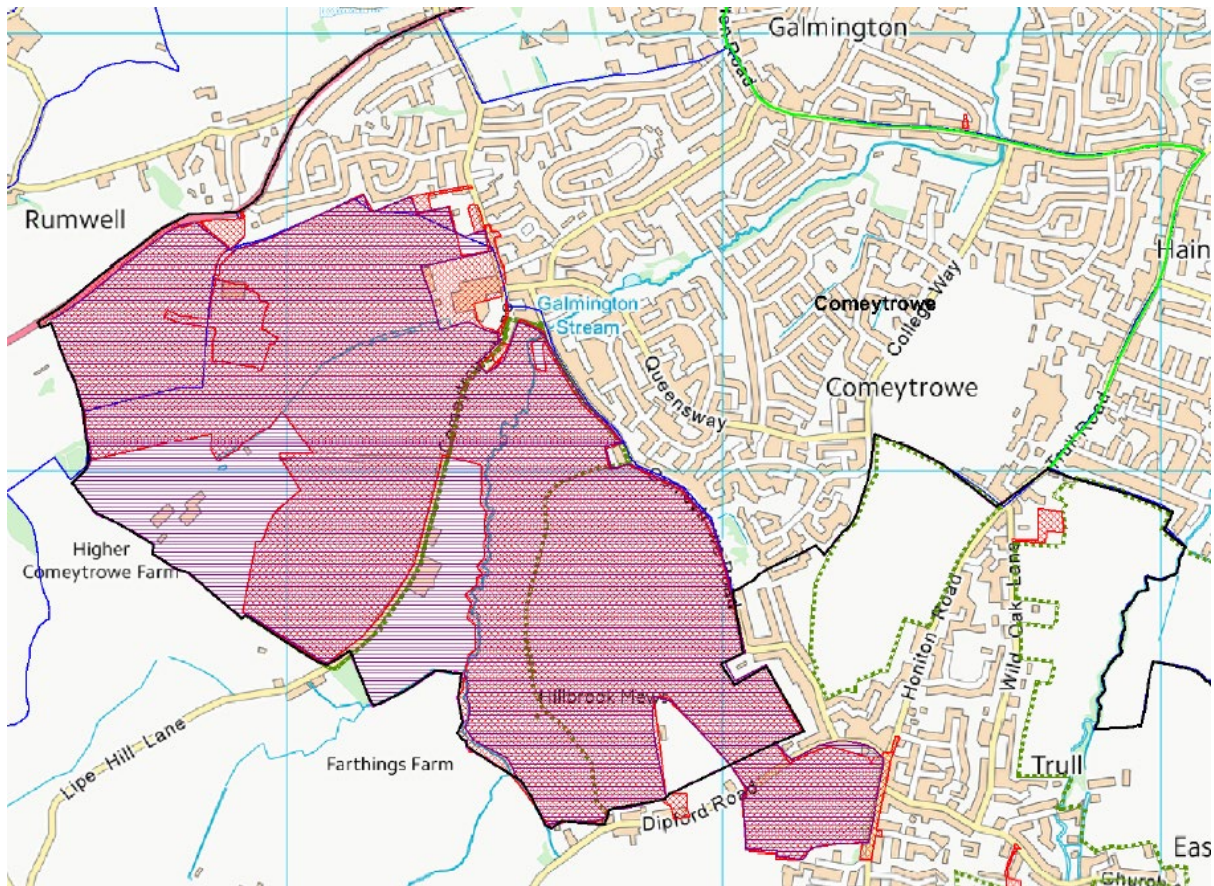
Recommendation #1 on boundary for Taunton Town Council area

Comeytrowe Parish Council be abolished and the entire area of Comeytrowe Parish be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.

Charter Trustee Ward area/Parish affected:

Comeytrowe Parish Council

Specific diagram of the previous/proposed boundary:



Reasons for the decision in accordance with the Statutory Guidance

- The sense of place of those within Comeytrowe as identified in the feedback and parish council response displays no strong feeling for local distinctiveness or local identity separate to that from Taunton.
- Also, the guidance is clear from Para 83 that the area should “*reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government. For example, over time, communities may expand with new housing developments. This can often lead to existing parish boundaries becoming anomalous as new houses are built across them resulting in people being in different parishes from their neighbours.*”
- Comeytrowe was considered a strong example of such an area. The new development of two thousand homes would strengthen this expansion and change the character of the area even further.

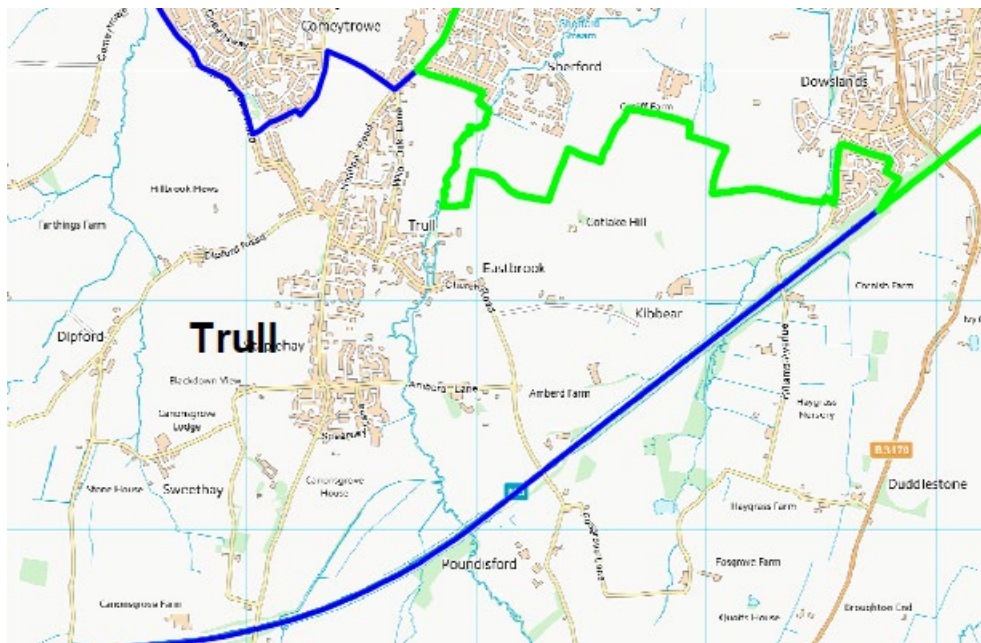
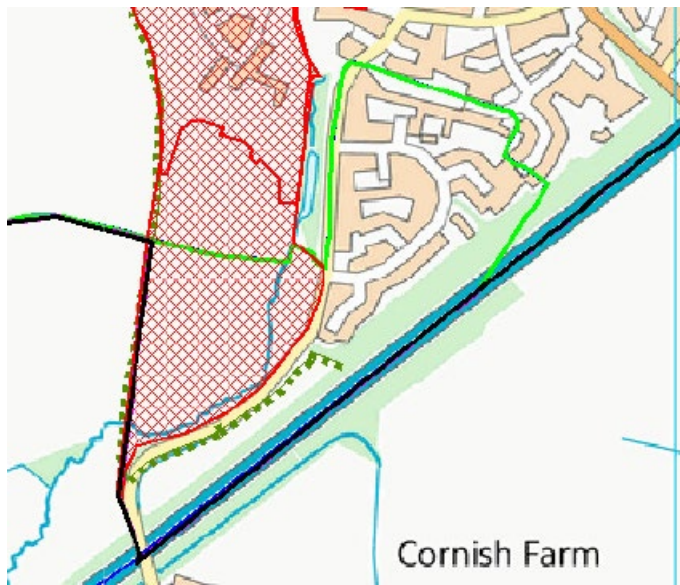
Recommendation #2 on boundary for Taunton Town Council area

The Killams Green area, currently within Trull Parish Council area, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.

Charter Trustee Ward area/Parish affected:

Trull Parish Council

Specific diagram of the previous/proposed boundary:



Reasons for the decision in accordance with the Statutory Guidance

- The area of Killams Green has no logical geographic connection/sense of place with the village of Trull and in terms of community cohesion would be better grouped with the rest of the Killams area.

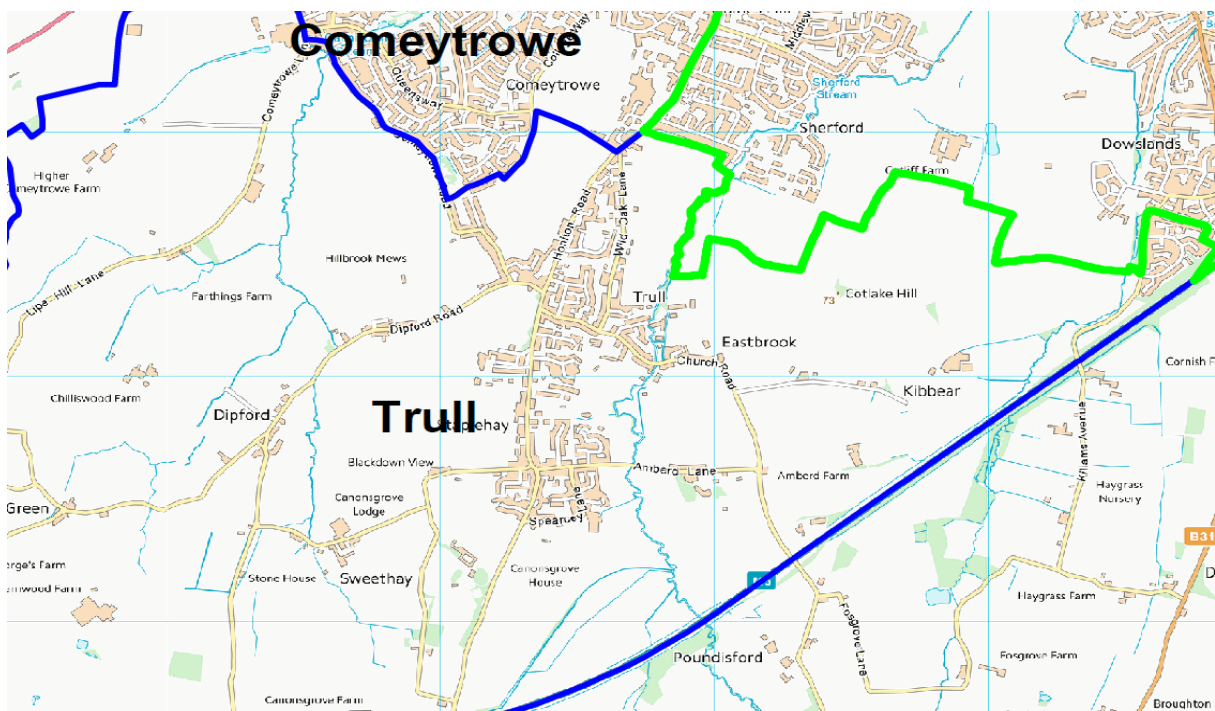
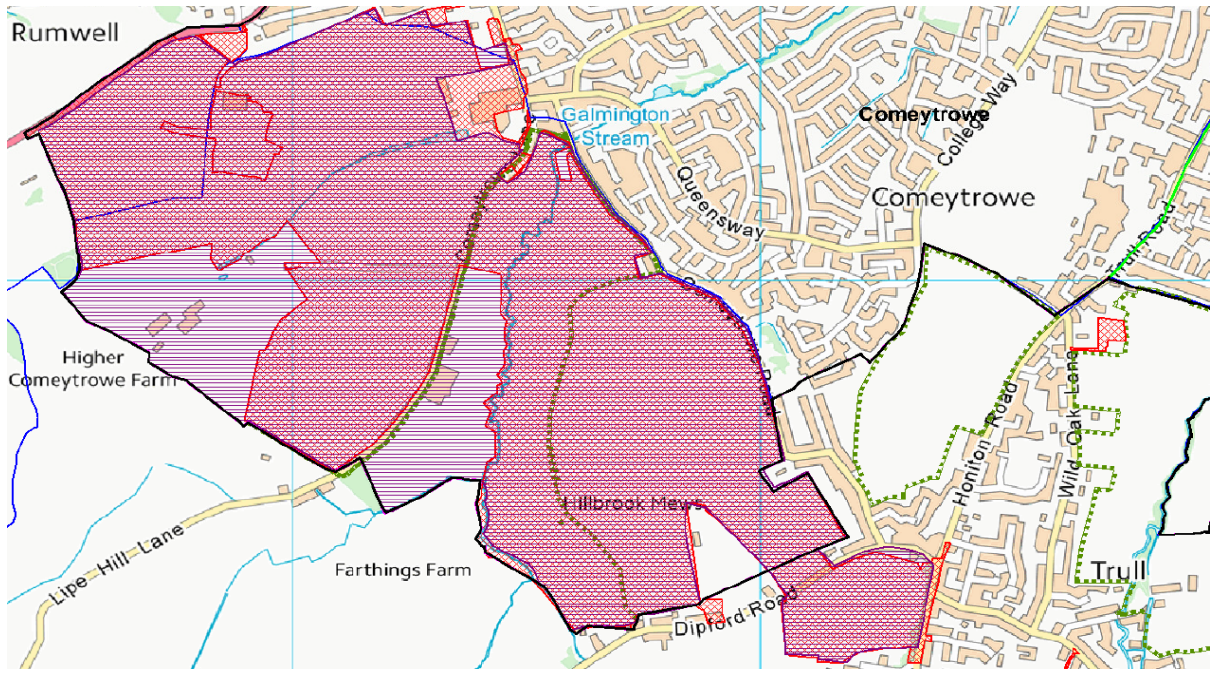
Recommendation #3 on boundary for Taunton Town Council area

The part of the forthcoming development in the south-west corner of Taunton that currently falls within Trull Parish should be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.

Charter Trustee Ward area/Parish affected:

Trull Parish Council/Comeytrove Parish Council/Bishop's Hull Parish Council

Specific diagram of the previous/proposed boundary:



Reasons for the decision in accordance with the Statutory Guidance

- Based on the considerations received the recommendation of the working group suggest that the boundary line was to be set on a sense of place, that of inclusion in Taunton and geographically contiguous and atypical of an urban area. The new development was considered to exacerbate the urban extension of the community in the Comeytrowe area and these residents, would like those in Comeytrowe, look to Taunton for carrying out their activities in the pattern of their daily life.
- Considered the detailed knowledge of the Planning Policy officers on the expected timescale of the completion of the development as well as its effect on the electoral arrangements on Trull Parish. The size, population and borders of this development would have a large impact on Trull Parish governance arrangements and community cohesion if left as is.
- The proposed change would be sufficient to reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government.

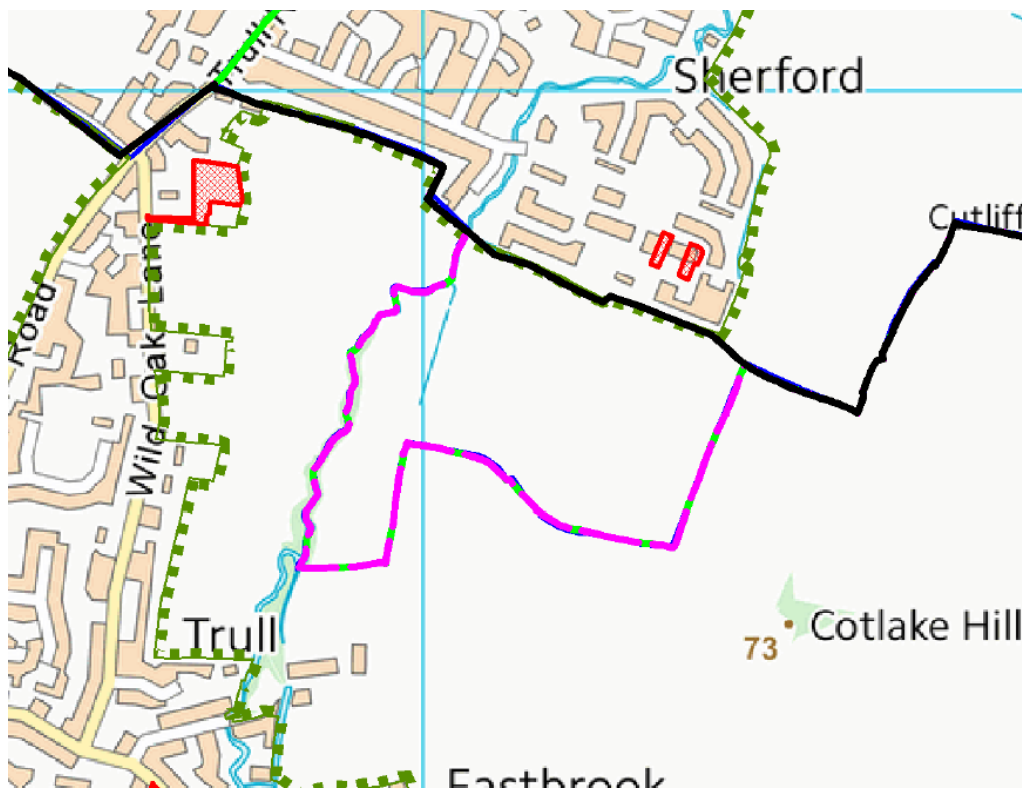
Recommendation #4 on boundary for Taunton Town Council area

The boundary of Trull Parish to the north-west of Cotlake Hill be altered to follow the green wedge around the Sherford urban area, with the small area to the south of that boundary that is currently within the unparished area of Taunton becoming part of Trull Parish.

Charter Trustee Ward area/Parish affected:

Trull Parish Council/ Vivary Ward

Specific diagram of the previous/proposed boundary:



Reasons for the decision in accordance with the Statutory Guidance

- By following the green wedge around the Sherford Urban area rather than following the Sherford Stream right up in to Trull village, this creates a clearer delineation of the boundary between Taunton and Trull that better reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area in a more logical boundary.

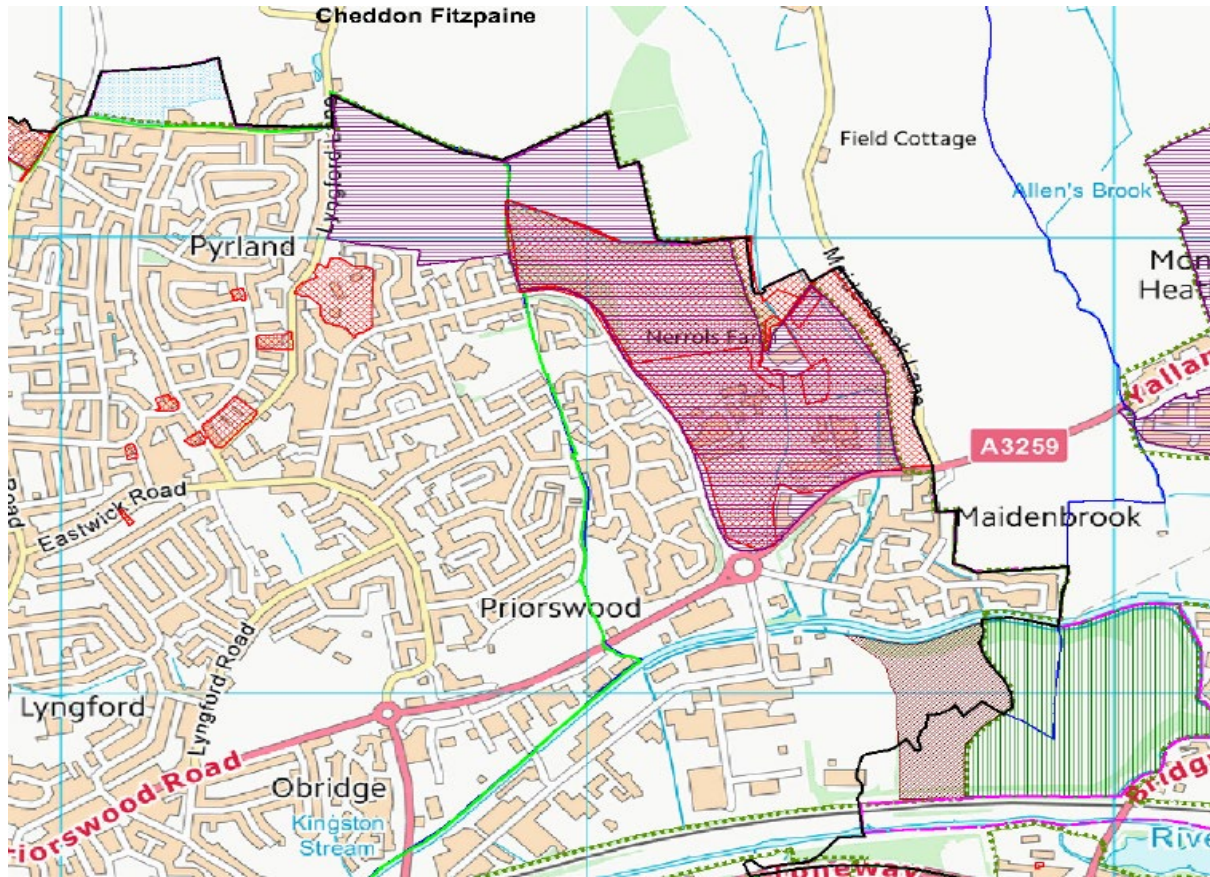
Recommendation #5 on boundary for Taunton Town Council area

The area covered by the Maidenbrook Ward of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council, including several sites earmarked for housing development in the near future, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.

Charter Trustee Ward area/Parish affected:

Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council

Specific diagram of the previous/proposed boundary:



Reasons for the decision in accordance with the Statutory Guidance

- Based on the criteria of sense of place, the currently urban area of Nerrols Farm felt part of Taunton and in reflecting the identities and interests of these residents these areas should be included within the proposed Town Council area.
- The influence of development in this particular area on the population of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council over the past twenty years would restore that Parish back its previous identity as a village parish. This was another strong example whereby the guidance around Para 83 came into play with the urban growth of Taunton meaning that neighbours lived in different parishes.
- Planning Policy Officers gave guidance on the detailed knowledge of the expected timescale of the completion of developments which would have an effect on Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish.

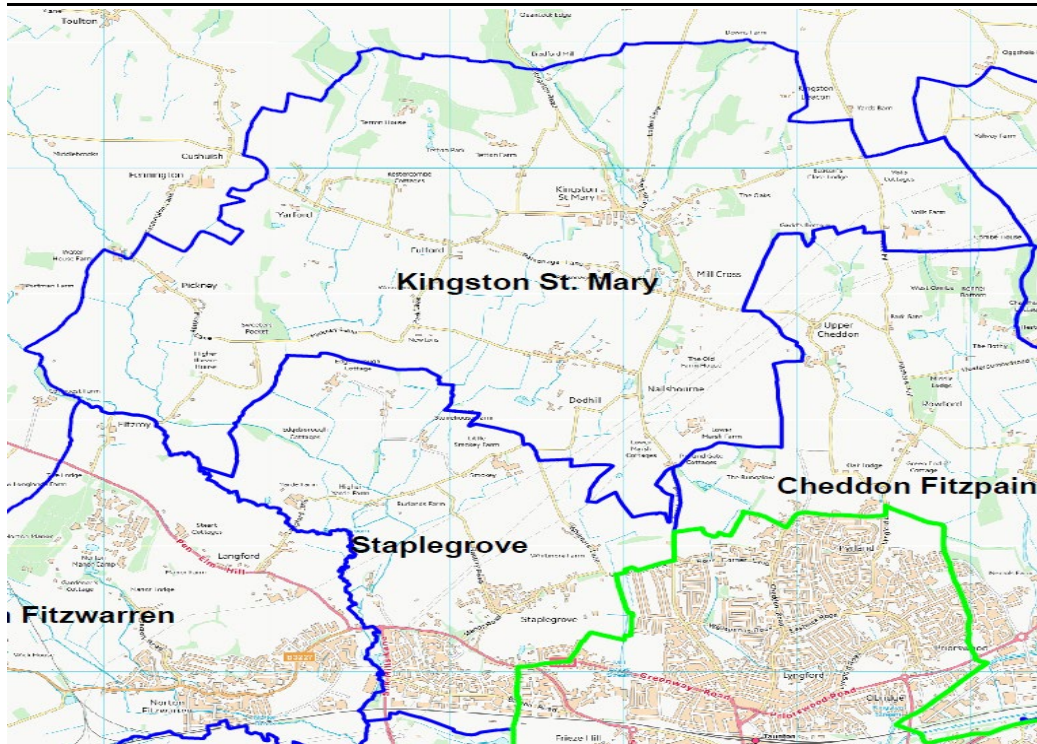
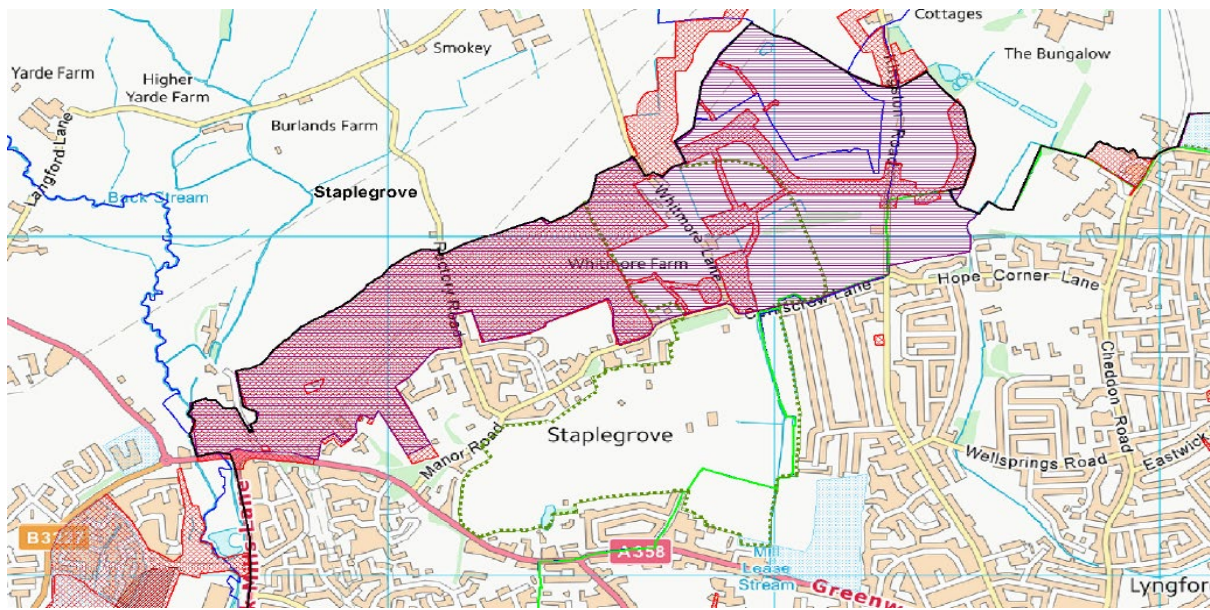
Recommendation #6, 7 and 8 on boundary for Taunton Town Council area

The urban parts of Staplegrove Parish, including the entirety of the forthcoming development in the north-west corner of Taunton, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish. The slim part of Staplegrove Parish jutting to the west of Silk Mills Lane be included within the boundary of Norton Fitzwarren Parish. If the proposed changes bring about a remaining Staplegrove Parish area of fewer than 150 electors, that remaining area be merged with Kingston St. Mary Parish.

Charter Trustee Ward area/Parish affected:

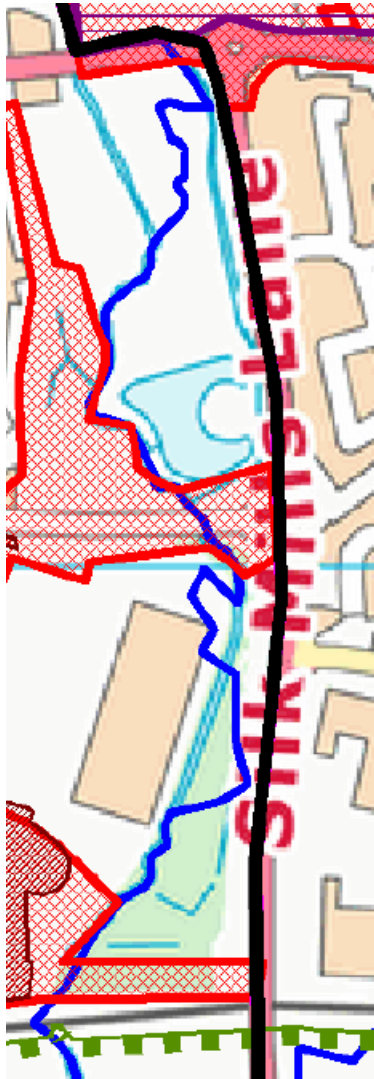
Staplegrove Parish Council/Kingston St. Mary Parish Council/ Norton Fitzwarren

Specific diagram of the previous/proposed boundary:



Reasons for the decision in accordance with the Statutory Guidance

- Through conducting the review and considering all of the evidence it was clear that the sense of place, identities and interests and for local government to remain effective and convenient, this area would be better reflected in being within the proposed Town Council boundary. The application of Para 83 in terms of growth outside the boundary of the UPA very much applied and this would be exacerbated by the new development of the urban growth.
- There was not felt to be a strong local distinctive character from the feedback in the response (which was very low in this area).
- The viability of Staplegrove Parish would be affected by this proposed boundary change and the recommendation to merge it with Kingston St. Mary was based on the more rural character of the remaining areas as opposed to the more urban Norton Fitzwarren settlement.
- As part of this proposal, the slim remainder of Staplegrove Parish jutting the other side of the Silk Mills Road would proposed to be included within the area of Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council (see below map).



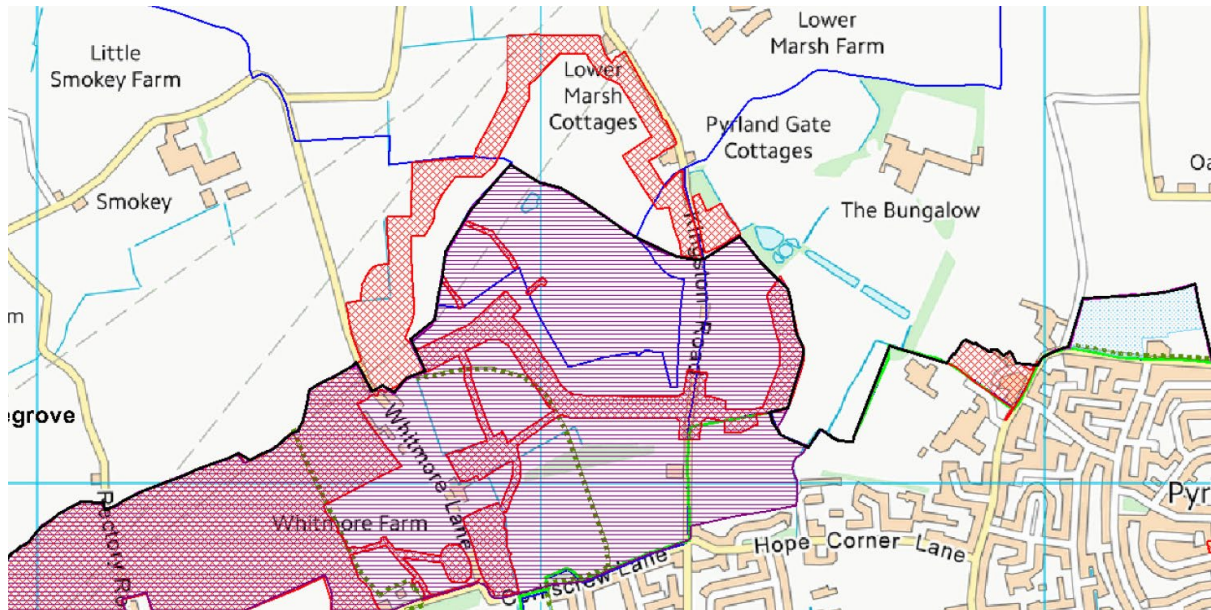
Recommendation #9 on boundary for Taunton Town Council area

A small southern portion of the Kingston St. Mary Parish area, representing that part of the proposed Staplegrove East development that falls within the parish, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.

Charter Trustee Ward area/Parish affected:

Kingston St. Mary Parish Council

Specific diagram of the previous/proposed boundary:



Reasons for the decision in accordance with the Statutory Guidance

- Based on the sense of place and to reflect the identities and interests of the area, this was recommended to be included within the Town Council boundary.
- The impact of the Staplegrove East development on the cohesion and character of the Kingston St. Mary village was considered as part of the feedback from the Parish Council and was agreed with in coming to a conclusion to include it within the Town Council boundary.

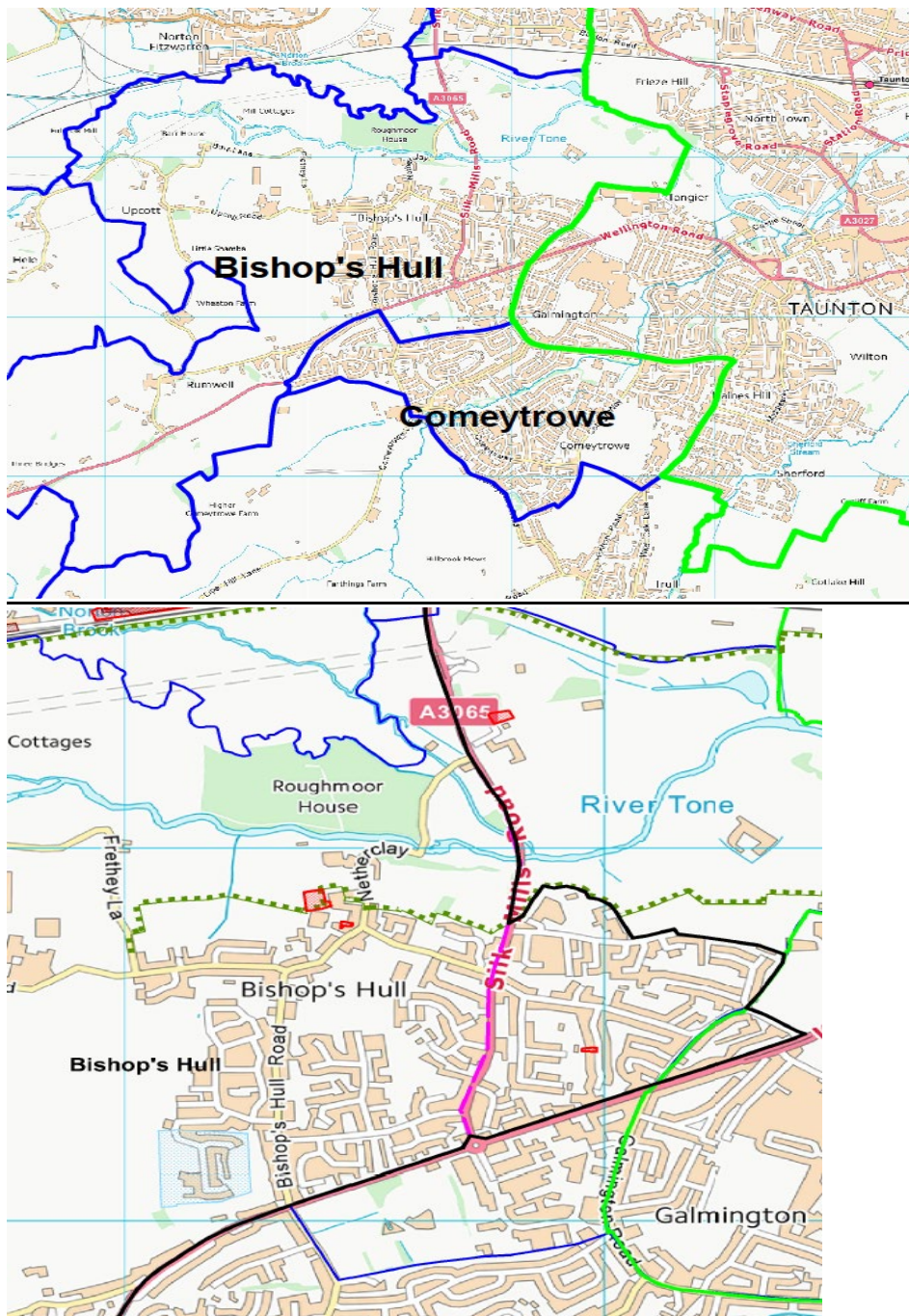
Recommendation #10 on boundary for Taunton Town Council area

With the exception of Galmington Trading Estate and a small section south of the A38 near Rumwell, no part of Bishops Hull Parish should become part of the proposed new Taunton Parish, and the small triangular residential area at the cross-section with Wellington Road, currently within the unparished area, should become part of Bishops Hull Parish.

Charter Trustee Ward area/Parish affected:

Manor and Tangier Ward/ Bishops Hull Parish Council

Specific diagram of the previous/proposed boundary:



Reasons for the decision in accordance with the Statutory Guidance

- Councillors discussed the inclusion of Bishops Hull within the area under review, with discussion held in particular regard to services and amenities residents used and the Silk Mills Road and its effect on the community. The splitting of the parish was disregarded as an option.
- It was considered that the area south of Wellington Road (Galmington Trading Estate) had no sense of identification with Bishop's Hull, yet at a small triangle in the Unparished Area at the cross-section with Wellington Road and the current Unparished Area boundary, these residents did feel part of Bishop's Hull and not Taunton and the triangle was part of the electoral ward for the County division, so this would also align with other electoral arrangements which had developed.

Recommendation #11 on boundary for Taunton Town Council area

The Hankridge Retail Park, Creech Castle and the associated Toneway Road, currently within West Monkton Parish, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish, which should run along the railway to the M5.

Charter Trustee Ward area/Parish affected:

West Monkton Parish Council

Specific diagram of the previous/proposed boundary:



Reasons for the decision in accordance with the Statutory Guidance

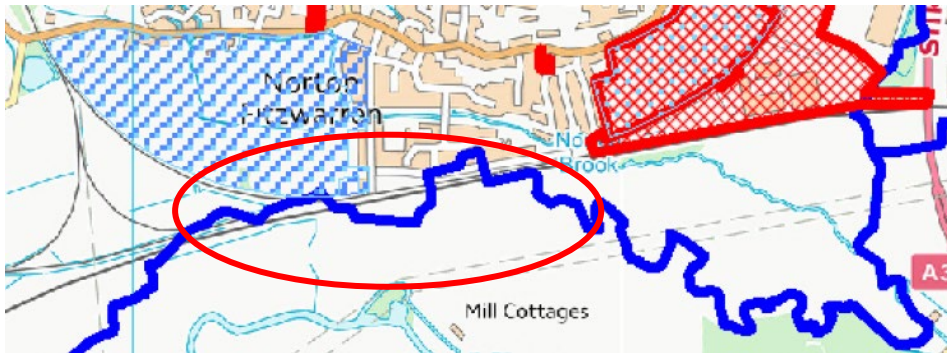
- This area was a key shopping area for the whole town due its key location near the Motorway junction.
- The Working Group considered that the governance of this area was felt to be more effective and convenient in being placed within the Town Council area, especially when considering the proximity of the Halcon Estate just on the left hand side of the Toneway, which was part of the Unparished Area/Town. In terms of sense of place it was felt that the Toneway was part of the Town when you left the Motorway.
- Whilst designated as an out of town shopping area for planning purposes, it was suggested that it was better to include both elements within the Town Council area.

Ancillary inter-Parish Boundary Issues discussed by the Working Group

12. Boundary between Norton Fitzwarren and Bishops Hull Parish Councils

- The boundary between Norton Fitzwarren Parish and Bishops Hull Parish, just north of Mill Cottages, be amended to follow the route of the railway line.

Specific diagram of the previous/proposed boundary:



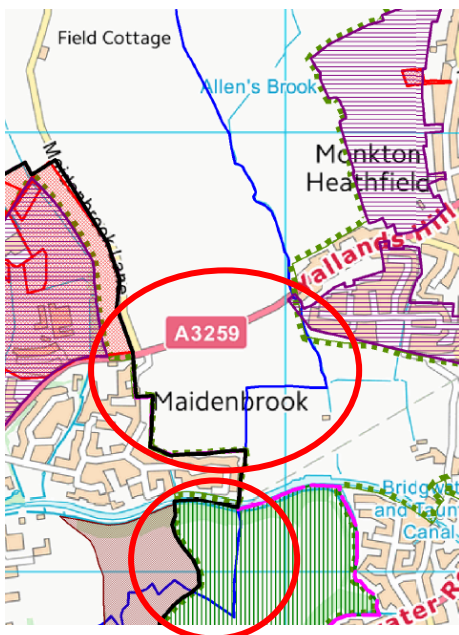
Reasons for the highlighting in accordance with the Statutory Guidance

- It was highlighted that the boundary of Bishops Hull Parish did not follow the logical boundary of the railway line but jumped over each side. It was felt that this should be corrected and made no sense from a community cohesion perspective.

13. Boundary between West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Councils-

Further consideration be given to whether the current boundary between West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine parishes between Maidenbrook and Yallands Hill south of the Country Park should be amended, for example by following the A3259 westwards to Maidenbrook Lane, in the light of any comments from the respective parish councils.

Specific diagram of the previous/proposed boundary:



Reasons for the highlighting in accordance with the Statutory Guidance

- It was considered that the boundary between West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish may wish to be revised to remove two anomalous zig-zags that had no relation to the geography of the area and for these two areas abutting the proposed Taunton Town Council area be transferred into West Monkton Parish.
- These minor revisions would be more effective and convenient to maintain and protect these areas for the future. It was agreed to request to write to Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council to include them in these discussions.

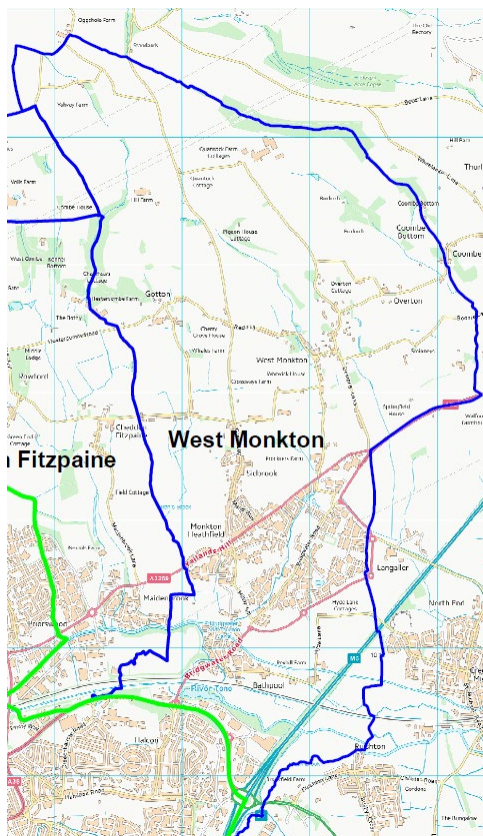
Recommendation C on boundary for Taunton Town Council area

That with the exception of the area described at Recommendation 11 above, the area of West Monkton Parish Council be completely removed from further consideration of the review and its inclusion in any new Taunton Parish/Town Council.

Charter Trustee Ward area/Parish affected:

West Monkton Parish Council

Specific diagram of the previous/proposed boundary:



Reasons for the decision in accordance with the Statutory Guidance

- Based on the feedback from the Parish Councils and local residents, it was clear that the Parish of West Monkton had a distinctive sense of place and the existing arrangements reflected the identities and interests of the community in that area.

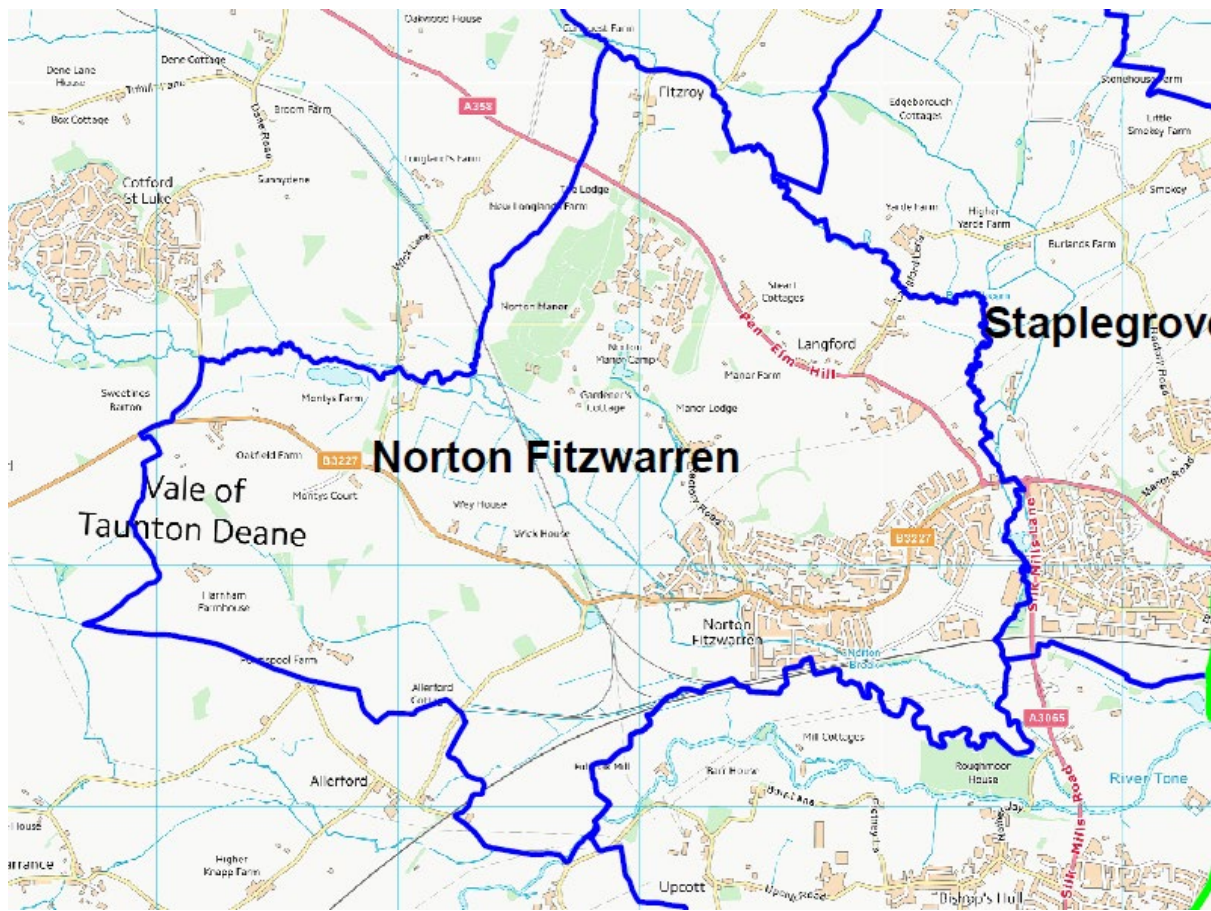
Recommendation D on boundary for Taunton Town Council area:

That the area of Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council be completely removed from further consideration of the review and its inclusion in any new Taunton Parish/Town Council.

Charter Trustee Ward area/Parish affected:

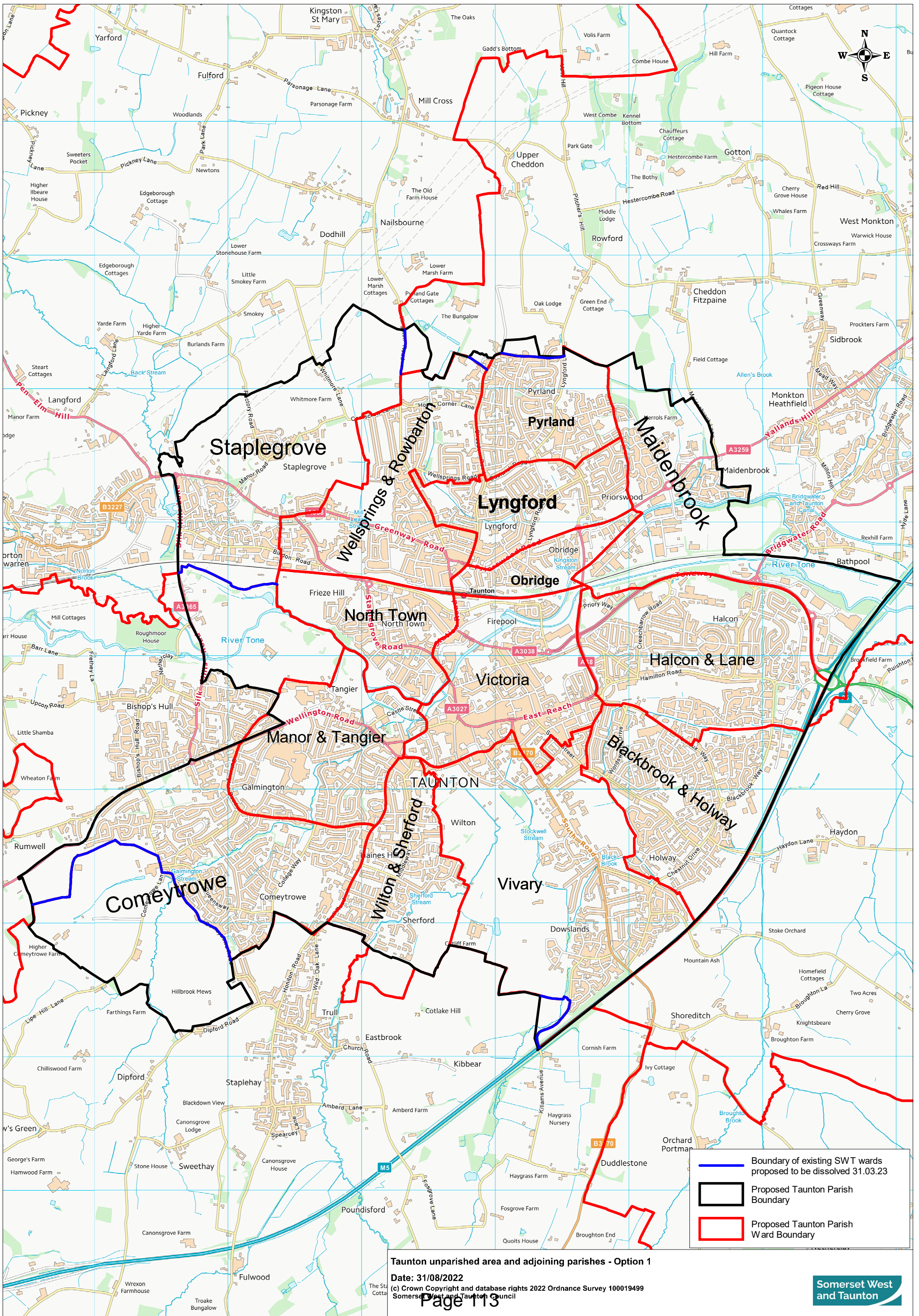
Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council

Specific diagram of the previous/proposed boundary:



Reasons for the decision in accordance with of the Statutory Guidance:

- Based on the feedback from the Parish Councils and local residents, it was clear that the Parish of Norton Fitzwarren had a distinctive sense of place and the existing arrangements reflected the identities and interests of the community in that area.



Taunton unparished area and adjoining parishes - Option 1

Date: 31/08/2022

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Somerset West and Taunton Council

Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

The [EIA guidance notes](#) will help you complete this assessment.
If you need help or advice please contact Paul Harding. P.harding@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Organisation prepared for	Somerset West and Taunton Council		
Version	1.1	Date Completed	08.09.22

Description of what proposed change or policy is being impact assessed

Community governance review of the unparished area of Taunton and adjoining parishes – results of second stage consultation and final recommendations

Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset’s Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#),, should be detailed here

- Area profiles,
- Census 2011
- ONS Neighbourhood Statistics

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

A six week second stage public consultation took place in June and July 2022. A range of stakeholders were directly approached as well as a direct mailshot to all residents and businesses within the review area.

Consultation should happen in advance of the proposed service change or policy being submitted for decision. You should allow at least 2 weeks for those you have consulted with to provide their response. [This directory](#) provides contact details for groups who

represent people with protected characteristics, to help you choose who to consult (you do not need to consult all of the groups but should make sure that those groups which have greatest likelihood of negative impact are covered).

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<p>There will be no negative impact on any particular age group as a result of the Community Governance Review.</p> <p>Should the creation of a new council go ahead, only those of voting age (18 years and over) will be able to take part in elections in line with current legislation, although the new council will represent the whole population of their area (including young and older people). In addition to be eligible to stand for election the person must be 18 or over on the day of nomination.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<p>There will be no impact on anyone with a disability as a result of the Community Governance Review. Public engagement and consultation for the Review will be carried out using a wide variety of methods and locations to ensure everyone has access to the same information and equal opportunities to engage and respond including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information as well as being online will be published in local media. • Printed copies of the consultation will be made available at Council offices for collection, and can also be posted to customers on request 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People with disabilities will be contacted through established routes via local groups to ensure inclusion and engagement with the review. 			
Gender reassignment	No adverse impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage and civil partnership	No adverse impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	No adverse impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race and ethnicity	No adverse impact, the establishment of a new town or parish council should give a greater focus on local issues affecting specific communities and this should be a positive impact. Provision for documentation other languages. People of different race/ethnicity will be contacted through established local groups to ensure inclusion and engagement with the review.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief	No adverse impact, the establishment of a new town or parish council should give a greater focus on local issues affecting specific communities and this should be a positive impact.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Sex	No adverse impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	No adverse impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public engagement and consultation for the Review has been carried out using a wide variety of methods and locations to ensure everyone has access to the same information and equal opportunities to engage and respond including; • Information as well as being online will be published in local media. • Printed copies of the consultation will be made available at Council offices for collection, and were also posted to customers on request • The creation of a new Town or Parish Council will introduce an additional precept which would be added to annual council tax bills. The amount payable per household would be dependent on the council tax band of the property concerned and households in receipt council tax reductions would pay a reduced amount, as well as those in receipt of other reductions such as single person. • The establishment of a new Town or Parish Council would increase local representation for local issues, and could bring funding into the local area which would be directed at local issues. An establishment of a local Town or Parish Council is likely to provide a great opportunity to focus on specific deprivation challenges in Taunton. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Negative outcomes action plan				
Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.				
Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
Prepare a comprehensive consultation and engagement plan ensuring that everyone wishing to engage with and/or comment on the Community Governance Review is able to do so through a wide variety of mechanisms eg online, in writing, in person. This is to ensure no one is disenfranchised from the process.	10/06/2021	Marcus Prouse/A. Tregellas	Ongoing basis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.				
The proposed Community Governance Review and Re-organisation Order creating Taunton Parish will have no adverse impact on any specific equality strands.				

Completed by:	Marcus Prouse
Date	08.09.2022
Signed off by:	
Date	
Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:	
To be reviewed by: (officer name)	
Review date:	

SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON COUNCIL

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH
ACT 2007**

**COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF TAUNTON AND
SURROUNDING PARISHES**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Somerset West and Taunton Council ('the Council') has resolved to undertake a community governance review ('the review') of the unparished area of Taunton and the surrounding parish areas of Trull, Bishop's Hull, Comeytrowe, Norton Fitzwarren, Staplegrove, Kingston St. Mary, Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton with a view to the creation of a parish or parishes and council(s) to serve all or part of that area.
- 1.2 The review will consider whether any changes should be made to existing community governance arrangements within the area under review, including whether any new parish(es) should be created and whether any new parish/town council for Taunton should cover only some or all of the currently unparished area or should extend to include also to take in urban areas of one or more adjoining parishes; and the electoral arrangements for the existing and any proposed parish/town council(s).
- 1.3 In undertaking this review the Council will have regard to the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued in March 2010 by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and will comply with Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ('the 2007 Act') as amended, the relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972 and regulations issued under those acts.
- 1.4 These terms of reference set out information including the reasons for the review, its projected process and timescale, the matters that it will address and principles that the Council considers should guide the review. The terms of reference will be published on the Council's website and in hard copy and will be made available at the Council offices and at other venues within the area under review.
- 1.5 Town and parish councils¹ are the most local tier of government in England. They are democratically elected and can play an important role in

¹ **Note re: terminology:** A principal (i.e. unitary or district) council may following a community governance review create, abolish, or alter the area of, any parish within its area and may establish a

representing their local community, delivering services to meet local needs and promoting community wellbeing. They are a statutory consultee on planning applications. They may exercise a variety of powers and duties including the delivery of some local services and may also enter into discussions with the principal councils (i.e. Somerset West and Taunton Council and the proposed unitary authority) about the transfer of services, budgets and assets subject to mutual agreement. Town and parish councils are funded principally through an annual precept – an additional amount added to the Council Tax in their area.

Reasons for the review

- 1.6 The Council is undertaking the review as it is a key corporate priority for the 21/22 municipal year. A resolution was made by Taunton Deane Borough Council on 19th March 2018, that a Community Governance Review (CGR) of the unparished area of Taunton is commenced with a view to creating a new Town or Parish Council(s) from 1st April 2023, and this was re-affirmed by Somerset West and Taunton Council on 30th March 2021.
- 1.7 On 19 October 2021 the Council resolved that the area to be covered by the review should include eight surrounding parishes as well as the unparished area.
- 1.8 The currently unparished area of Taunton is the only unparished area within Somerset. Any new town or parish Council could play a full and proper part, alongside town and parish councils representing all other areas in Somerset, in negotiations with the proposed Unitary Authority on any devolution framework plans.
- 1.9 Town or parish councils may promote community engagement and effective local government. Government guidance states that it is good practice for principal councils to conduct a community governance review every 10-15 years, except in areas with very low populations.

Community governance reviews

- 1.10 A community governance review is a review of the whole or part of a principal council's area to consider one or more of the following:
 - Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
 - The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes;
 - Whether a town or parish council should be established for a new parish area;
 - The electoral arrangements for parishes (the ordinary year of election; council size; the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and any parish warding); and/or

parish council to serve a newly-created parish. A parish council serving an urban area may resolve to be called a town council. There is no difference between a parish council and a town council in terms of powers or duties.

- Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.
- 1.11 In accordance with the 2007 Act the Council will have regard to the need to secure community governance within the area under review which:-
- Is reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area;
 - Provides for effective and convenient local government; and
 - Takes into account any other arrangements for the purposes of community representation or community engagement in the area.
- 1.12 In accordance with Government guidance, when considering the above criteria the Council will also take into account the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish; and will seek to make recommendations that bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

Responsibility for the review

- 1.13 As the relevant principal council, Somerset West and Taunton Council is responsible for conducting any community governance review within its electoral area and for deciding whether to give effect to the recommendations of the review.
- 1.14 In accordance with regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2000, functions relating to Community Governance Reviews are not to be the responsibility of an authority's executive.
- 1.13 The management of the review will be the responsibility of officers in the Governance team led by the Governance Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer. The review will be overseen by the Community Governance Review Working Group. The Council itself will agree the final recommendations and make any Reorganisation of Community Governance Order required to implement the outcome of the review.

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 In coming to its recommendations in the review, the Council will take account of the views of local people and stakeholders. Legislation requires the Council to consult the local government electors for the area under review and any other person or body who appears to have an interest in the review, and to take the representations that are received into account by judging them against the criteria in the 2007 Act.
- 2.2 In order to promote community engagement and transparency in the community governance review, the Council will:-
- Publish these terms of reference;

- Publicise the review as widely as possible including using electronic means and social media and seek to engage the local media in reporting the issues under review;
- Consult local electors and other residents, business organisations, community groups, other local organisations, political parties and elected representatives for the areas under review, the Taunton Charter Trustees, Somerset County Council and the parish councils in the area under review;
- Make key documents available at the Council offices and at other venues in the areas under review;
- Accept submissions by post or via e-mail or the Council's website;
- Take into account representations received in connection with the review; and
- Publicise the recommendations and outcome of the review.

2.3 The Council will consider each matter under review on its merits and on the basis of the information and evidence provided during the course of the review.

3. THE TIMETABLE FOR THE REVIEW

3.1 Publication of these terms of reference formally begins the review. The Council proposes to complete the review within twelve months, with a view to any changes to community governance arrangements in the area under review taking effect from 1 April 2023. An indicative timetable is attached at Appendix B.

4. THE AREA TO BE COVERED BY THE REVIEW

4.1 The review will cover the currently unparished area of Taunton and the surrounding parish areas of Trull, Bishop's Hull, Comeytrove, Norton Fitzwarren, Staplegrove, Kingston St. Mary, Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton.

4.2 The plan attached at Appendix A shows the area under review including the existing parish and district ward boundaries within that area.

5. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION IN THE REVIEW

Parish areas and town or parish councils

5.1 The review will consider whether any changes should be made to the community governance (parish) arrangements within the area under review , including:-

- whether or not a new parish or parishes should be created in areas that are currently unparished, or any other arrangements for some or all of those areas;

- in the event that a new parish or parishes are created, whether they should have a council or councils;
- whether any new parish/town council for Taunton should cover only some or all of the currently unparished area or should extend to include also to take in urban areas of one or more adjoining parishes; and
- whether any changes should be made to the boundaries of any existing parish(es) and whether any existing parish or parish council should be abolished or grouped.

5.2 In considering the above, the review will have regard to current and projected patterns of population, development, community identity and linkages in the area under review; to the viability of existing and any potential parish areas and the delivery of local services.

5.3 The 2007 Act provides that where a new parish is created which has 1,000 or more electors, the principal council must recommend that the parish has a council. Where a new parish is created that has between 151 and 999 electors the principal council may decide whether or not it should have a council.

5.4 In relation to previously unparished areas, the 2007 Act requires a principal council in undertaking a review to take into account other (non-parish) forms of community governance that have been, or could be, made for the purpose of community representation or engagement in the area under review. These might include community partnerships/forums, area committees, residents' and tenants' associations, neighbourhood management programmes or community associations. In accordance with Government guidance the review will consider whether such arrangements could be alternatives to, or stages towards, the establishment of town or parish councils. The Council notes however that the guidance also states 'what sets parish councils apart from other kinds of governance is the fact they are a democratically elected tier of local government, independent of other council tiers and budgets, and possess specific powers' and 'their directly elected parish councillors represent local communities in a way that other bodies, however worthy, cannot since such organisations do not have representatives directly elected to those bodies'.

Names and style of parishes

5.5 In the event that a new parish is proposed to be created, the review will make recommendations as to the name of the new parish and as to whether or not any council should be a parish council or have one of the alternative styles (community, neighbourhood or village). A council that is created as a parish council may decide that it shall have the status of a town council.

Electoral arrangements

5.6 The review will consider what electoral arrangements should apply to any new town or parish council that is created and whether any changes should be

made to the electoral arrangements of any existing parish council and/or the Taunton Charter Trustees. 'Electoral arrangements' means:-

- The ordinary year in which elections are held;
- The number of councillors to be elected to the council;
- The division (or not) of the parish into wards for the purpose of electing councillors;
- The number and boundaries of any such wards;
- The number of councillors to be elected for any such ward; and
- The name of any such ward.

5.7 In accordance with legislation², if the entire unparished area were to become parished, the Charter Trustees for Taunton would be dissolved and all their rights and responsibilities would be transferred to the new Council(s) on vesting day. Government guidance states that 'proposals to create a parish or parish council covering all or part of a charter trustee area need to be judged in particular against the following considerations:

- the effect on the historic cohesiveness of the area; and
- what are the other community interests in the area? Is there a demonstrable sense of community identity encompassing the charter trustee area? Are there smaller areas within it which have a demonstrable community identity and which would be viable as administrative units?'

5.8 In relation to the year of election, the ordinary election of parish councillors takes place in 2023 and at four-yearly intervals thereafter. However, a principal council may decide, following a community governance review, that the first elections to any new town or parish council shall take place in another year, with the councillors elected serving an adjusted term of office to bring future elections back into line with the normal cycle.

5.9 In relation to the number of town or parish councillors, legislation provides that the number of councillors for each council shall not be fewer than five. There is no maximum number. Government guidance is that 'each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and the pattern of communities'.

5.10 In relation to warding of a parish, the 2007 Act requires that in considering whether a parish should be divided into wards the Council should consider (i) whether the number, or distribution, of the local government electors for the parish would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and (ii) whether it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the council.

Electorate forecasts

5.11 When the Council comes to consider the electoral arrangements of the town or parish councils in its area, it is required to consider the number of local

² The Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008

government electors in the area under review, and any change in that number or the distribution of the electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts.

- 5.12 Current electorate figures for each of the parishes and polling districts in both the parished and unparished parts of the area under review will be published as soon as possible after the launch of the review.
- 5.13 Electorate forecasts for October 2026, taking into account information on developments underway or planned based on extant planning permissions and the local development framework, will also be published to inform the consultation process as early as possible during the review.
- 5.14 In accordance with legislation, population estimates will be used to apportion assets where significant changes, including the creation of new parishes, are recommended.

Service provision and council tax precept

- 5.15 As part of the consultation process the Council will outline the services that could be provided by town or parish councils and/or any assets or liabilities that it may intend to transfer to them.
- 5.16 The Council will make available information on the Band D council tax precepts currently payable by council tax payers in the parishes in the area under review, in the area served by the Taunton Charter Trustees and in town and parish council areas elsewhere in the principal council's area; together with the estimated level of precept may be payable by council tax payers in the first year of any new town or parish council's existence.

Other matters

- 5.17 The review will consider any other issues raised during the consultation process which are relevant to the review.
- 5.18 In the event that the review recommends the creation of any new council(s), the review will also consider what preparatory and transitional arrangements should apply to the establishment of that council or councils.

6. PRINCIPLES THAT WILL GUIDE THE REVIEW

Parishes

- 6.1 There is an evidence base which demonstrates that town or parish councils can play an important role in empowering and representing communities.
- 6.2 The Council notes the Government's continued commitment to town and parish councils and its guidance that it 'expects to see a trend in the creation, rather than the abolition, of parishes'.

- 6.3 It is important that the creation of any parish(es) should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity and that electors should be able to identify clearly with the parish in which they are resident. This information will therefore need to be gathered as part of the review.
- 6.4 The Council will wish to balance carefully the consideration of changes that have happened over time, for example through population shifts or additional development and that may have led to a different community identity, with historic traditions in the area.
- 6.5 The Council wishes to ensure that parishes should be viable as an administrative unit and should possess a precept that enables them effectively to promote the well-being of their residents and contribute to the provision of services in their area in an economic and efficient manner. Nevertheless it is recognised that in a rural area a strong sense of community can prevail over a sparsely populated area.

Boundaries

- 6.6 The Council notes that the boundaries between parishes will often reflect the 'no-man's land' between communities represented by areas of low population or pronounced physical barriers, either natural or man-made; and that ideally boundaries should be, and be likely to remain, easily identifiable.

Names

- 6.7 With regard to the names of any town or parish councils or town wards established, the Council believes that these should reflect existing local or historic place names and there will be a presumption in favour of names proposed by local interested parties.

The number of town or parish councillors

- 6.8 When considering the number of councillors to be elected for any town or parish council, in addition to applying the statutory rules described above, the Council will have regard to:-
- the recommended guidance issued by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and indicative national data on representation;
 - existing levels of representation, the pattern of existing council sizes which have stood the test of time and the take-up of seats at elections; and
 - the desirability of a broadly equitable allocation of councillors to town and parish councils across Somerset West and Taunton, whilst acknowledging that local circumstances may merit variation.

Warding

- 6.9 The Council will give careful consideration both to traditional community identities and to any changes that have happened over time, for example population movements or new development, that may have led to a different community identity in any part of the area under review.
- 6.10 The Council notes Government guidance that ‘there is likely to be a stronger case for the warding of urban parishes ... [where] ... community identity tends to focus on a locality ... [and] ... each locality is likely to have its own sense of identity’. The Council will seek to secure that any warding arrangements should have relevance for the electorate, be in the interests of effective and convenient local government and not be wasteful of a town or parish council’s resources.
- 6.11 In reaching conclusions on the boundaries between any wards, the Council will have regard to community identity and interests and will consider whether any particular ties or linkages might be broken by the drawing of particular ward boundaries. The Council will also have regard to guidance by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) that the principal council ward boundaries should not split an unwarded parish and that no parish ward should be split by such a boundary.
- 6.12 When deciding the number of councillors to be elected for any ward, the Council will take into account the view of the LGBCE that it is not in the interests of effective and convenient local government, either for voters or councillors, to have significant differences in levels of representation.

7. COMPLETION OF THE REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY DECISIONS

- 7.1 The review will be completed when the Council publishes its final recommendations. The Council will take steps to inform interested parties of the recommendations and outcome of the review. In accordance with Government guidance the Council will issue maps to illustrate each recommendation at a scale not smaller than 1:10,000.
- 7.2 If the review results in any changes to community governance, at the conclusion of the review the Council will make a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order. Copies of this order, the map(s) that show the effects of the order in detail, and the document(s) which set out the reasons for the Council’s decisions (including where it has decided to make no change following the review) will be deposited at the Council’s offices, published on its website, and provided to the clerk of any council affected.
- 7.3 In accordance with legislation, copies of any order and associated maps will be deposited with the Secretary of State and the LGBCE. Prints of the maps will also be supplied to Ordnance Survey, the Registrar General, the Land Registry, the Valuation Office Agency and the Boundary Commission for England.

7.4 Subject to the final recommendations of the review, the provisions of any order will take effect for financial and administrative purposes no later than 1 April following the adoption of the order. Any revised electoral arrangements for a new or existing town or parish council will come into effect in accordance with the provisions of any Reorganisation Order.

8. CONSEQUENTIAL MATTERS

8.1 A Reorganisation Order may cover any consequential matters that appear to the Council to be necessary or proper to give effect to the Order. These may include the transfer and management or custody of property, the setting of precepts for new parishes, provision with respect to the transfer of any functions, property, rights and liabilities and/or provision for the transfer of staff, compensation for loss of office, pensions and other staffing matters.

8.2 In these matters, the Council will be guided by the relevant regulations issued following the 2007 Act. In particular, the Council notes that the regulations regarding the transfer of property, rights and liabilities require that any apportionments shall use the population of the area as estimated by the proper officer of the Council as an appropriate proportion.

8.3 In relation to the establishment of a precept for any new town or parish council, the Council will comply with the requirements of the Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008, which provide that the principal council sets the precept for the new parish/town council for their first year, and requires the Reorganisation Order to include the budget requirement for the first year of the parish/town council.

Principal area boundaries

8.4 Any changes to parish or parish ward boundaries as a result of this review will not automatically change the corresponding principal council ward or division boundaries.

8.5 In the event of a Reorganisation Order making such a change the Council may recommend the LGBCE that the principal council ward/division boundaries are realigned to coincide with the revised parish or parish ward boundaries and it would be for the LGBCE to decide if and when these related alterations should be made.

8.6 The LGBCE would require evidence that the Council has consulted on the recommendations as part of the review. The Council will therefore seek to include any such draft recommendations for consultation at the earliest possible opportunity should they appear desirable.

Date of publication of these terms of reference: 9th November 2021

Date of amendment to these terms of reference: 23rd February 2022

Contact details for the review

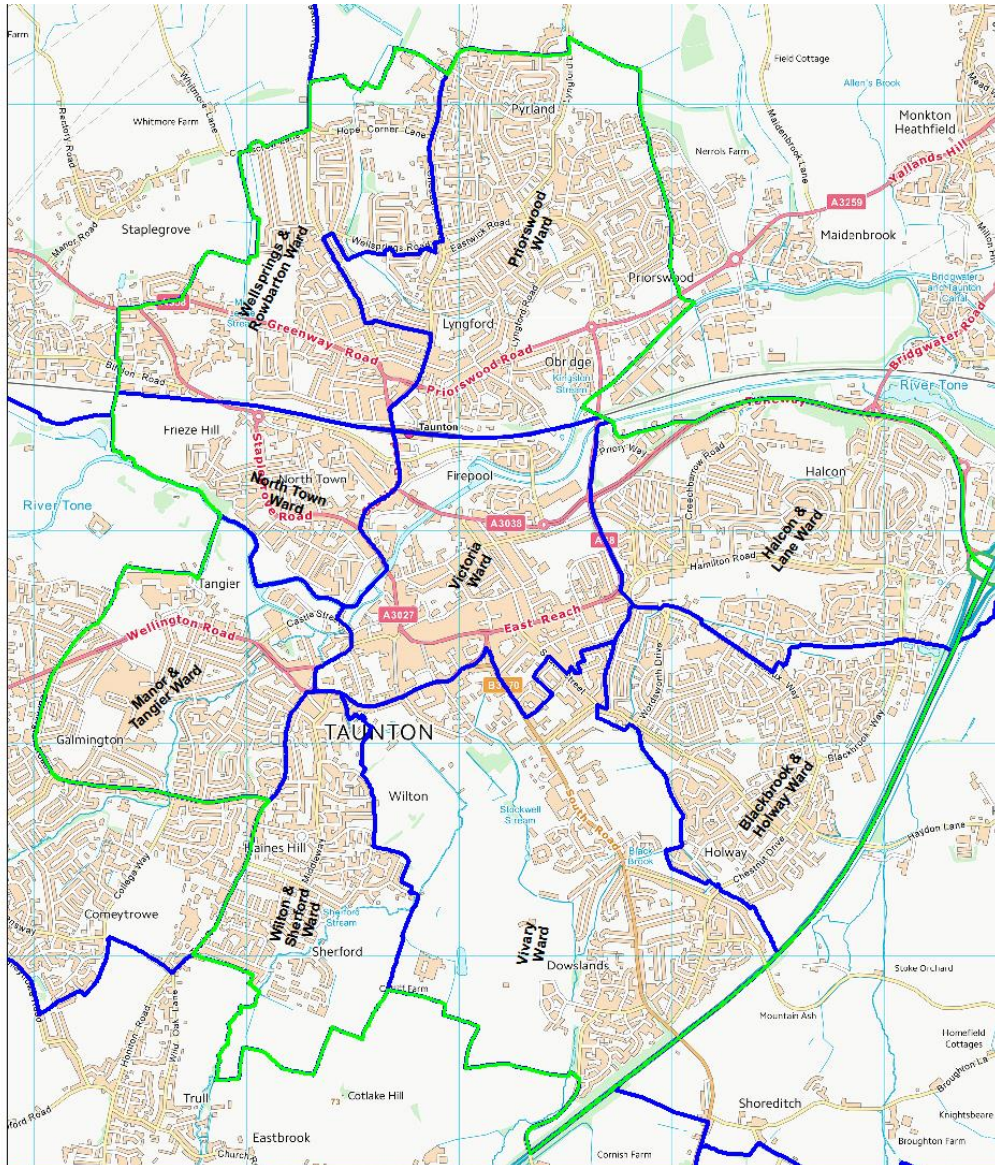
Enquiries regarding the review process and/or comments on the matters set out in these terms of reference should be directed to:

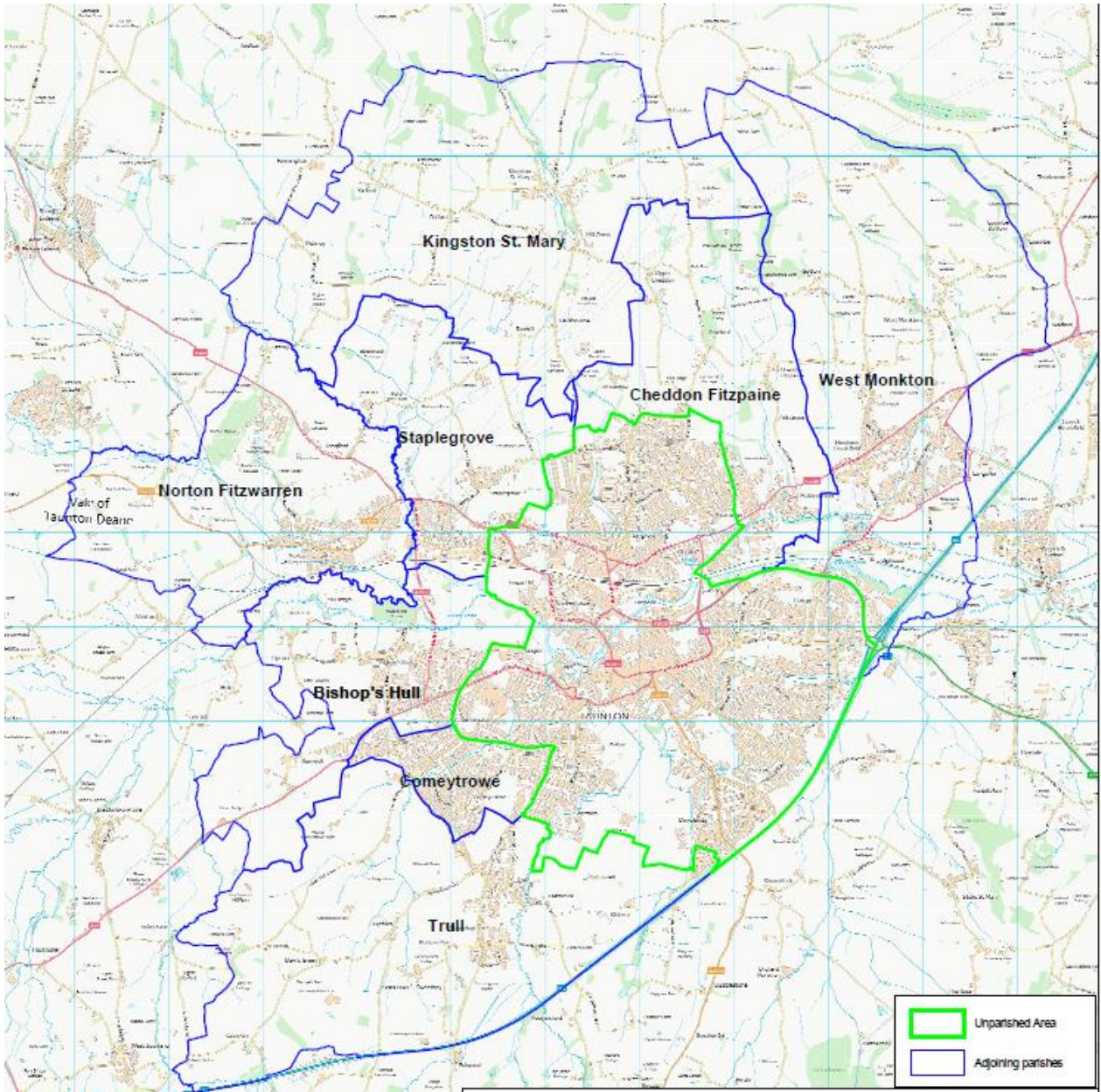
Marcus Prouse
Community Governance Review
c/o Governance Team
Somerset West and Taunton Council
PO Box 866
Taunton
TA1 9GS

E-mail: governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

APPENDIX A

The two maps below shows the existing Unparished Area Boundaries together with the Somerset West and Taunton Council Wards (revised with effect from May 2019) and the eight surrounding parishes included in the scope of the review area.





APPENDIX B

Community Governance Review for the Unparished Area of Taunton

Revised Indicative Timetable: Option 2C

Timetable for the Review

Report to Council	30 March 2021 (was presented to the Charter Trustees on 16 March 2021)	Council gave approval to set up the Member Working Group to commence the process
Scope of CGR Agreed.	Full Council 19 October 2021	Full Council decided to proceed with an Option 2C. Authority delegated to the Chief Executive Officer and Monitoring Officer or Deputy to approve ToR, after consultation with the Community Governance Review Working Group and the Leader of the Council for later publication.
Publish Terms of Reference (12 month clock starts)	12 November 2021	Publish as a delegated Officer Decision on the Council website as per the Council resolution of 19 th October 2021. The ToR will set out: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the matters to be considered;• the geographic area to be covered;• Notification of other local authorities which have an• Interest.
Draft Indicative Timetable for Consultation.	Publish on Council website prior to 17 November 2021	Member Working Group to finalise draft indicative timetable for a two stage consultation to be sent to All Councillors (alongside TOR and Consultation text) and in line with Council delegation.

<p>Commence Stage 1 Consultation on draft proposals and invite initial submissions</p>	<p>17th November 2021 - 12th January 2022 (8 weeks long - to give extra time in account of Xmas)</p>	<p>Submissions/representations invited. Consult with: Local government electors and other residents in the area under review SWT and County Councillors Somerset County Council Parish Councils in the Area under Review Somerset Association of Local Councils Member of Parliament Local Groups and Interested parties such as local businesses, local residents association, local public and voluntary organisations Publish proposals on the website and make available in hard copy on request</p>
<p>Consider submissions and draft revised option proposals</p>	<p>January/February 2022</p>	<p>Consider any submissions/ representations and prepare report of final options for Council. Member Working Group to agree final proposals based on analysis of submissions.</p>
<p>Decide upon preferred option for proceeding with CGR, if appropriate</p>	<p>Special Full Council 3 March 2022</p>	<p>Decide upon preferred option which will then go out for Consultation Stage 2.</p>

Commence Stage 2 Consultation on Preferred option and invite submissions	June 2022 – July 2022 (6 weeks)	Consultation Stage 2 to be undertaken.
Consider submissions and draft revised final recommendations, if appropriate	August 2022	Consider any submissions/ representations and prepare report of final recommendations for Council. Member Working Group to agree report to Full Council in August 2022 including final recommendations and draft Reorganisation Order (if applicable)
Publish final recommendations	September 2022 as part of FC report or earlier if possible	Publish final recommendations
Publish final recommendations	Full Council 6th September 2022	Full Council to agree final recommendations and consider any draft re-organisation order and its approval process which gives effect to the recommendations of the review (subject to the Statutory transitional arrangements and decision making framework therein.)
Make Reorganisation Order	October 2022	Reorganisation Order to be sealed once approval received.

		Budget completed by this point - precept can not be higher than as stated in re-organisation order.
Option to appoint Steering Group or create Shadow Council (in temporary format until Vesting Day).	Date TBC in the run-up to 1 April 2023	<p>Re-organisation order could appoint local elected Councillors representing the area to serve in a temporary capacity until the new local Council vests on 1 April 2023. The Full Council in its re-organisation order can decide who would be appointed to such a body.</p> <p>Laying the groundwork for the new Local Council including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding premises for the local council to meet • Creating a website for the new Council • Setting a Budget and Precept • Securing staff resource • Vesting and Statutory Asset Transfer of Allotments and Civic Regalia etc. • Drafting constitutional documents
Create Shadow Council	1 April 2023	Appoint temporary Councillors to serve from 1.4.23 to the first elections.
Elections to new Local Council	May 2023	

Appendix G – Draft Recommendations of the Community Governance Review

- 2.1 That the Council confirms that it has considered and taken into account the responses received to the second stage consultation on the community governance review of the unparished area of Taunton and eight neighbouring parishes together with the considerations and recommendations of the Community Governance Review Working Group as set out in this report and appendices as required by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 2.2 That the Council notes that in the context of local government reorganisation it is the responsibility of Somerset West and Taunton Council to agree the final recommendations of the community governance review and the responsibility of Somerset County Council to make any Reorganisation Order to give effect to those recommendations.
- 2.3 That the Council adopts the Community Governance Review Working Group's proposals for the final recommendations of the community governance review as follows:
- A. That a new parish be created to include the currently unparished area of Taunton and that in addition:
- i. Comeytrove Parish Council be dissolved, and the entire area of Comeytrove Parish be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;
 - ii. The Killams Green area, currently within Trull Parish Council area, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;
 - iii. The part of the forthcoming development in the south-west corner of Taunton that falls within Trull Parish, including the whole of the development north of Dipford Road, should be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;
 - iv. The boundary of Trull Parish to the north-west of Cotlake Hill be altered to follow the green wedge around the Sherford urban area, with the small area to the south of that boundary that is currently within the unparished area of Taunton becoming part of Trull Parish.
 - v. The urban area within the Maidenbrook Ward of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish, including sites earmarked for housing development in the near future, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.
 - vi. The urban parts of Staplegrove Parish, including the entirety of the forthcoming development in the north-west corner of Taunton, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;
 - vii. The slim part of Staplegrove Parish jutting to the west of Silk Mills Lane be included within the boundary of Norton Fitzwarren Parish;
 - viii. The remaining area of the existing Staplegrove Parish be included within the boundary of Kingston St. Mary Parish;

- ix. Staplegrove Parish Council be dissolved.
- x. A small southern portion of the Kingston St Mary Parish area, representing that part of the proposed Staplegrove East development that falls within the parish, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.
- xi. With the exception of Galmington Trading Estate and a small section south of the A38 near Rumwell, no part of Bishops Hull Parish be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;
- xii. The small triangular residential area at the cross-section with Wellington Road, currently within the unparished area, be included within the boundary of Bishops Hull Parish;
- xiii. The boundary between Norton Fitzwarren Parish and Bishops Hull Parish, just north of Mill Cottages, be amended to follow the route of the railway line;
- xiv. The Hankridge Retail Park, Creech Castle and the associated Toneway Road, currently within West Monkton Parish, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish, which should run along the railway to the M5;
- xv. With the exception of the above, no part of the existing area of West Monkton Parish be included in the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.
- xvi. No part of the existing area of Norton Fitzwarren Parish be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.
- xvii. the boundary between West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine parishes between Maidenbrook and Yallands Hill south of the Country Park be amended to following the A3259 and new relief road westwards to Maidenbrook Lane.

B. That the new parish be named 'Taunton Parish' and that a parish/town council be established to serve the new parish with effect from 1 April 2023.

C. That the first elections to the proposed new parish/town council for Taunton should be held on the ordinary day of elections (the first Thursday in May) in 2023.

D. That the proposed new Taunton Parish be divided into wards for the purposes of electing parish/town councillors.

E. That the total number of councillors to be elected to the proposed Taunton Parish/Town Council be 20 and the warding arrangements for the council and the number of councillors to be elected to represent each ward, be as set out at section 9.19 of this report.

F. That the electoral arrangements of certain other parish councils in the area under review be amended as set out at section 9.20 of this report.

G. That save as set out at A to F above, the existing parishes in the review area and the names, boundaries, council size and other parish governance arrangements in respect of those parishes remain unchanged.

H. That the budget requirement for the new Taunton Parish/Town Council for the financial year 2023/24 be set at £2.114m as set out at section 11.7 of this report.

I. That temporary parish/town councillors as listed at section 11.20 of this report be appointed to serve as members of the new Taunton Parish/Town Council from 1 April 2023 until the councillors elected on 4 May 2023 take up office.

J. That the Local Government Boundary Commission for England be requested to make changes to the boundaries of the relevant Somerset Council electoral divisions as necessary to ensure consistency between those boundaries and the revised Parish and Parish Ward boundaries made in this Community Governance Review.

- 2.4 That accordingly Somerset County Council be recommended to make the Somerset (Somerset West and Taunton) (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2022 as attached in draft form at Appendix 'A' to give effect to the above recommendations.
- 2.5 That a Shadow Taunton Town Council be established with effect from 14 October 2022 and with membership as set out at section 13.6 of this report, to lead and oversee the work to establish on 1 April 2023 the new Taunton Parish/Town Council.
- 2.6 That the Community Governance Review Working Group be wound up once the Reorganisation Order has been made, concluding the review.
- 2.7 That authority be delegated to the SWTC Chief Executive Officer and SWTC Monitoring Officer or Deputy, after consultation with the Leader of Somerset West and Taunton Council and the Chair of the Shadow Taunton Town Council (if any), to take any action necessary to conclude the community governance review in accordance with legislation and statutory guidance and to secure the implementation of the final recommendations of the review as set out in the Reorganisation Order.
- 2.8 That Council agrees Somerset County Council's S151 Officer will notify the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities of the request Alternative Notional Amount for Council Tax purposes, reflecting the transfer of costs from current district council budget to the budget of the new parish/town council.
- 2.9 A plan illustrating the proposed changes to parish and ward boundaries that would result from implementation of the final recommendations above is set out at Appendix 'B' to this report. In addition, full details of the Working Group's considerations, the reasons for each of its recommendations and detailed maps illustrating each proposed change are at Appendix 'C' to this report.

SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW STAGE 2

Key outcomes from survey of
residents and other
stakeholders – August 2022

Prepared by *Andrew Towlerton Associates* on behalf of Somerset West and Taunton Council

Introduction

Somerset West and Taunton Council agreed in 2021 to undertake a review (known as a Community Governance Review) to decide whether changes should be made to the local governance arrangements, including whether a new town council should be set up to represent Taunton, and if so, what areas should be included within its boundary, and whether any other changes should be made to the surrounding parishes.

A key stage in the consultation process undertaken as part of the review was the second stage of a survey of local residents, business people, local councils and other stakeholders. This built on and developed the findings of the first stage of the Community Governance Review.

Local residents and other stakeholders were invited to give their views on Somerset West and Taunton Council's recommendations by completing a consultation questionnaire. This could be done in either electronic or paper form.

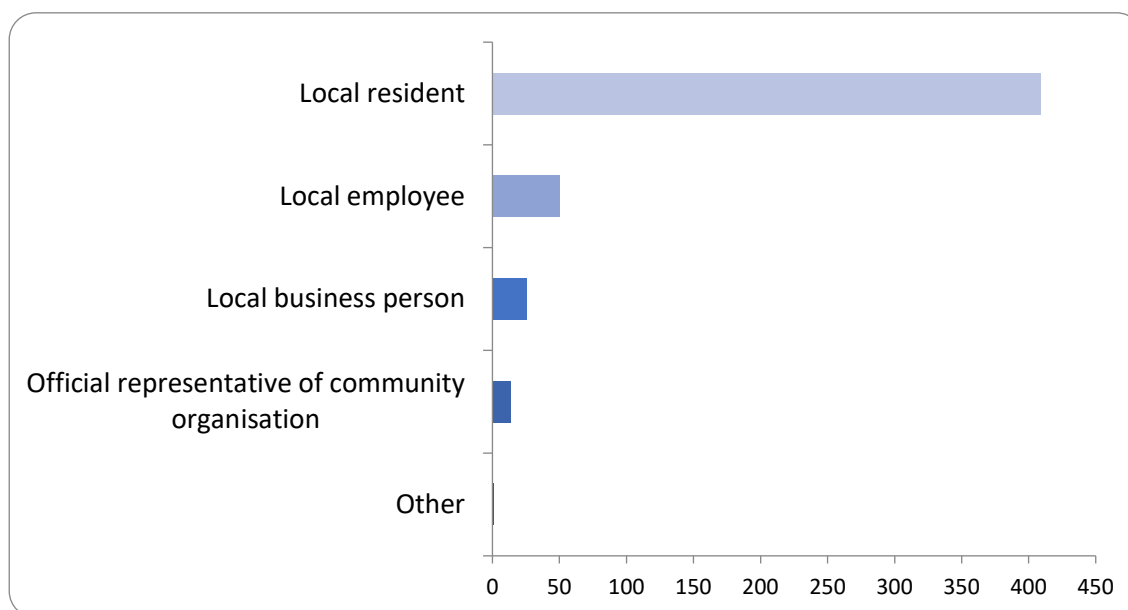
This consultation started on 14th June and ran for six weeks, closing on 26th July.

The questionnaire was circulated and publicised widely. This included officers and councillors who attended various public meetings, parish councils and drop-ins around the area over that time to listen to residents and encourage them to have their say. The Council also sent a postcard to over 44,000 residents and businesses promoting the consultation at the end of June.

A total of 468 completed questionnaires were received.

The following questions provide a summary of the key findings.

Q1. Please tell us whether you are a (tick all that apply):



Option	Total	Percent
Local resident	459	98.08%
Local employee	50	10.68%
Local business person	27	5.77%
Official representative of community organisation (please state)	15	3.21%
Other (please state)	1	0.21%

There were 468 responses to this question.

The overwhelming number of responses was received by 'local residents', at 459 responses (or 98.08%), followed by 'local employees' at 50 (10.68%), 'local businesses person' at 27 (5.77%), and 'official representative of community organisation' at 15 (3.21%). There was one response from 'other', who stated that they were a council taxpayer.

Please note that some respondents chose multiple options, for example, they ticked both 'local resident' and 'local employee'.

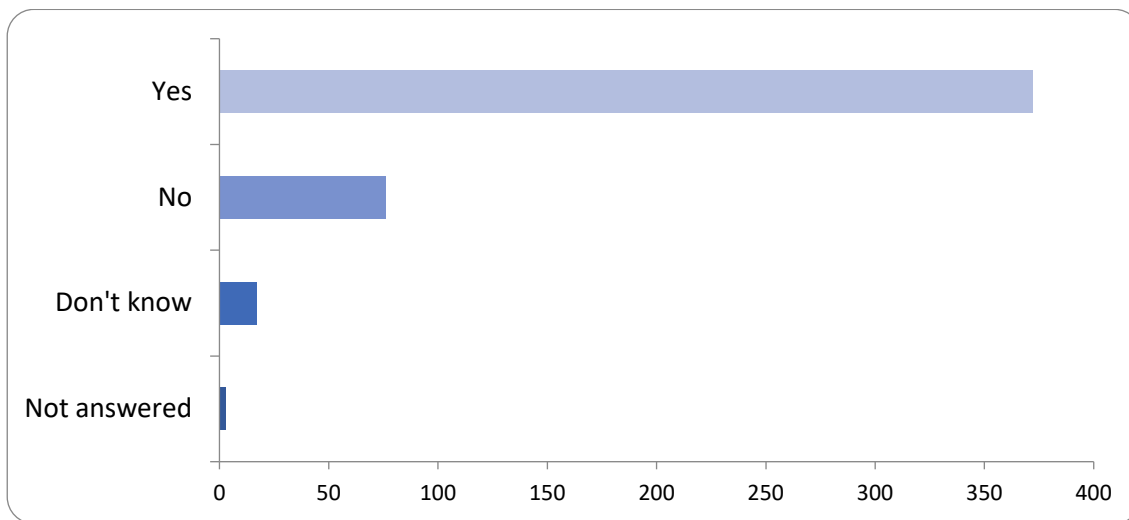
15 responses were received from 'official representatives of community organisations'. These were from a diverse range of groups and individuals,

including parish councils, voluntary and community groups and sector bodies such as those representing the local business community.

Q2. Please enter the postcode of your home (if a local resident) or work/other premises with which you have a local connection:

There were 468 responses to this question. All postcodes provided were from the Taunton area.

Q3. Do you agree that Taunton should be represented by a town council?

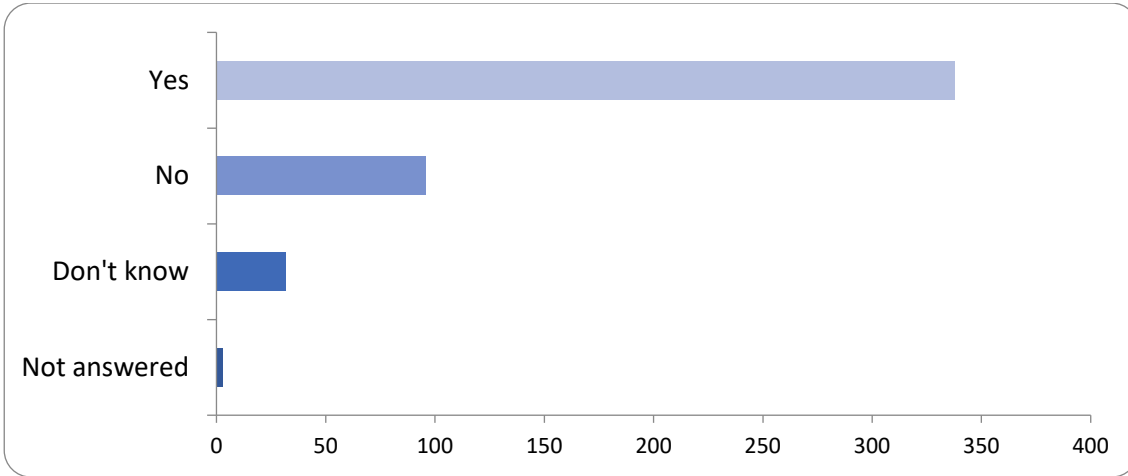


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	372	79.49%
No	76	16.24%
Don't know	17	3.63%
Not answered	3	0.64%

There were 465 responses to this question.

Just under 80% (372) of respondents said yes to the question about whether Taunton should be represented by a town council. 16.24% (76) said no. Of the remaining responses, 3.63% (17) said that they don't know, and 0.64% (3) skipped this question.

Q4. Do you agree that a town council for Taunton could help to promote a sense of community in the town and promote community cohesion?



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	338	72.22%
No	96	20.51%
Don't know	32	6.84%
Not answered	2	0.43%

There were 466 responses to this question.

Over 70% (338) of respondents said that a town council for Taunton could help to promote a sense of community in the town and promote community cohesion. 20.51% (96) of respondents said no. 6.84% (32) of respondents said that they did not know, and 0.43% (2) of respondents skipped the question.

The questionnaire also asked: ***If not, what other forum(s) or initiatives could do this more effectively?***

There were 92 validated responses to this question, which were broadly ranked by frequency.

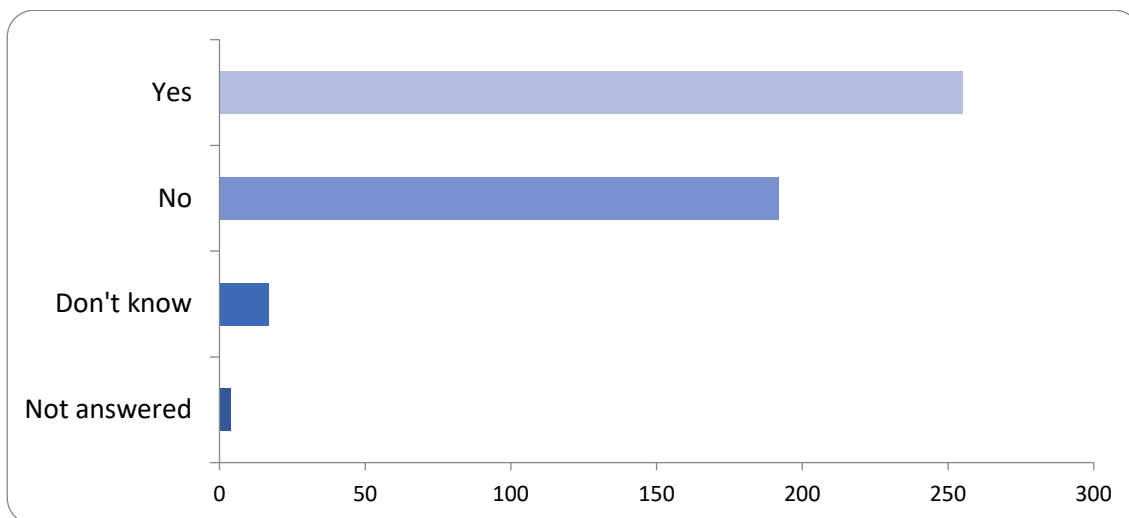
Most common response was that parish councils could do this more effectively, with many adding that the existing parishes should be kept.

Many respondents expressed concern about the cost of a town council and/or implementing another layer of governance.

Another common theme was that a sense of community and community cohesion already existed with the parish councils, with some suggesting that the proposal would diminish this.

A small number of respondents stated that this could be achieved through engaging with the local community activity, including active community groups and organising events. Other respondents suggested creating a community forum or building a community centre.

Q5. If a town council is established for Taunton, do you agree that its boundary should reflect the current reality of the town and include areas where urban development has occurred or is under way extending beyond the historic boundary?

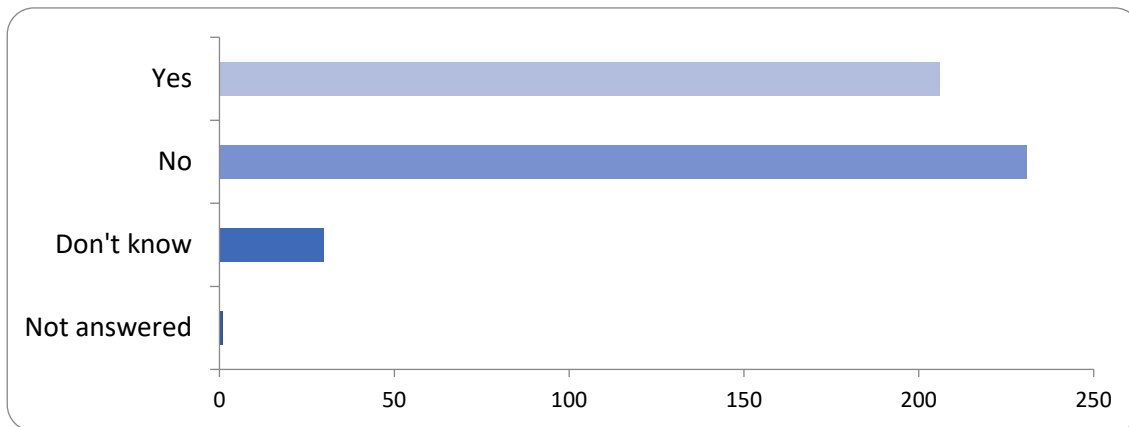


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	255	54.49%
No	192	41.03%
Don't know	17	3.63%
Not answered	4	0.85%

There were 464 responses to this question.

54.49% (255) said yes to this question and 41.03% (192) said no. Just over 4% (21) of respondents either stated that they did not know or did not answer the question.

Q6. Do you agree with the proposal made by Somerset West and Taunton Council for changes at the parish level including the establishment of a new Taunton Town Council covering the area shown in Map A, and consequential changes in a number of surrounding parishes?



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	206	44.02%
No	231	49.36%
Don't know	30	6.41%
Not answered	1	0.21%

There were 467 responses to this question.

Just under half of respondents (231) said that they did not agree with the question; 44.02% (206) said yes. 6.41% (30) responded that they don't know, and only one respondent did not answer this question.

If not, which aspects of the proposal do you think should be changed?

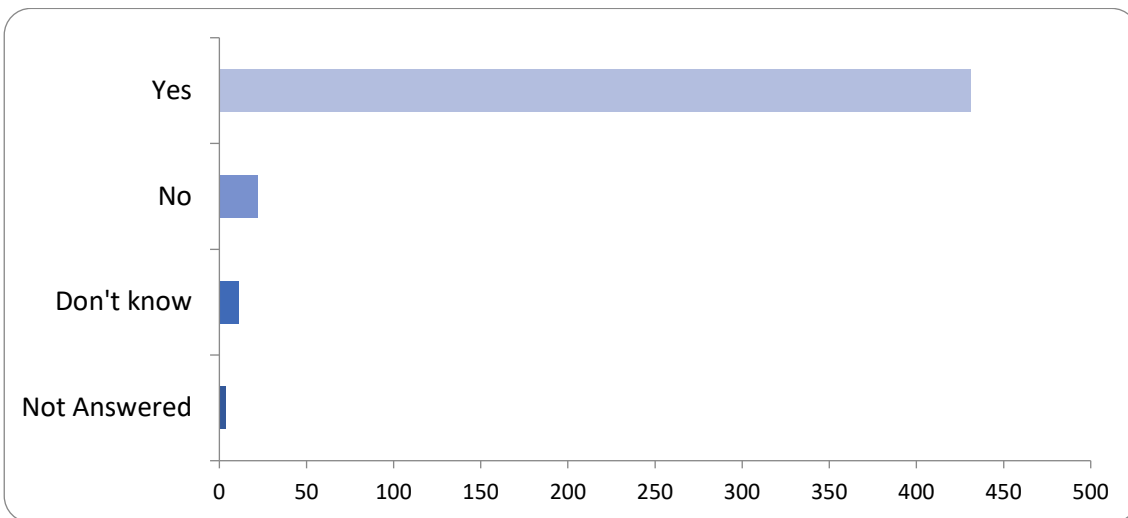
This was an open-ended question, and 192 validated responses were received.

The most common theme mentioned was about the proposed inclusion of existing parished areas. Many respondents considered that the proposal should be changed to exclude some or all of these.

Some additions to the proposed area were put forward by a small number of respondents. These included all or part of the parishes of Bishop’s Hull, West Monkton and Norton Fitzwarren as well as the Monkton Heathfield Urban Extension.

Several respondents used this question as an opportunity to emphasise their opposition to the proposal; others their general support.

Q7. Do you believe that services such as parks and open spaces, public toilets, control of litter, Car Parking and community events e.g. Christmas Lights Switch On are important to the place where you live?



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	431	92.09%
No	22	4.70%
Don't know	11	2.35%
Not answered	4	0.85%

*Due to rounding, final percentages may not add up to 100%.

There were 464 responses to this question.

An overwhelming 92.09% (431) of respondents said yes. About 7% of respondents said either no (22) or don't know (11). Less than 1% (4) of respondents chose not to answer this question.

The questionnaire also asked: ***If so, should parish and town councils consider providing such services if the principal council is unable to continue doing so?***

There were 268 responses to this question. The overwhelming response to this was positive.

The other theme commonly mentioned by respondents was that this was subject to funding being available and/or that it was cost efficient.

This was followed by respondents considered that this should be the responsibility of the principal council.

Illustrative examples of responses include:

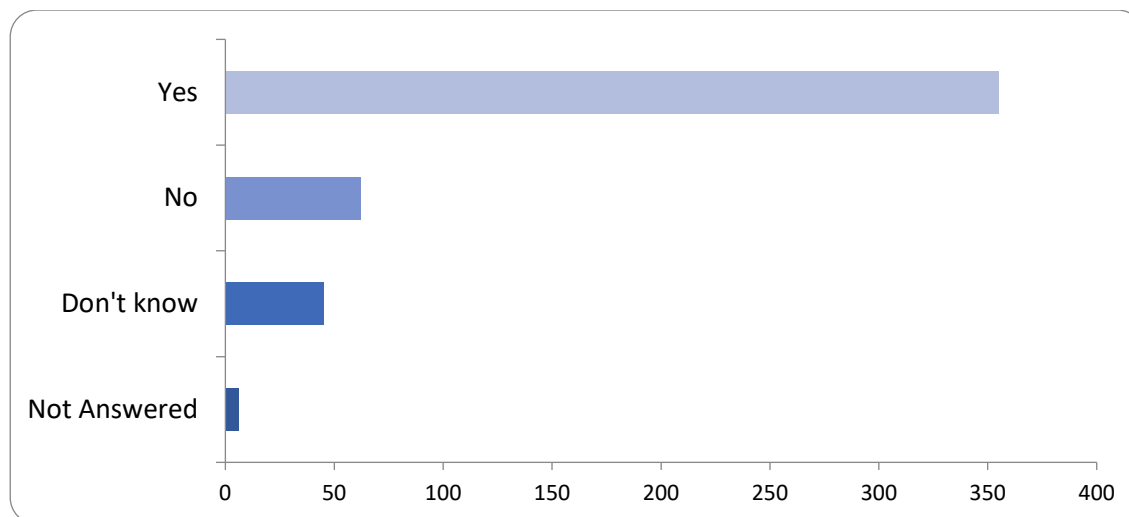
"Yes definitely, they boost the community feeling."

"No, I believe this should remain the responsibility of the principal council."

"Yes if feasible."

"Only if the parish and town councils have the resources and skills to do so."

Q8. Do you agree that any new Taunton Town Council should be divided into wards for the purpose of electing councillors to represent local people?

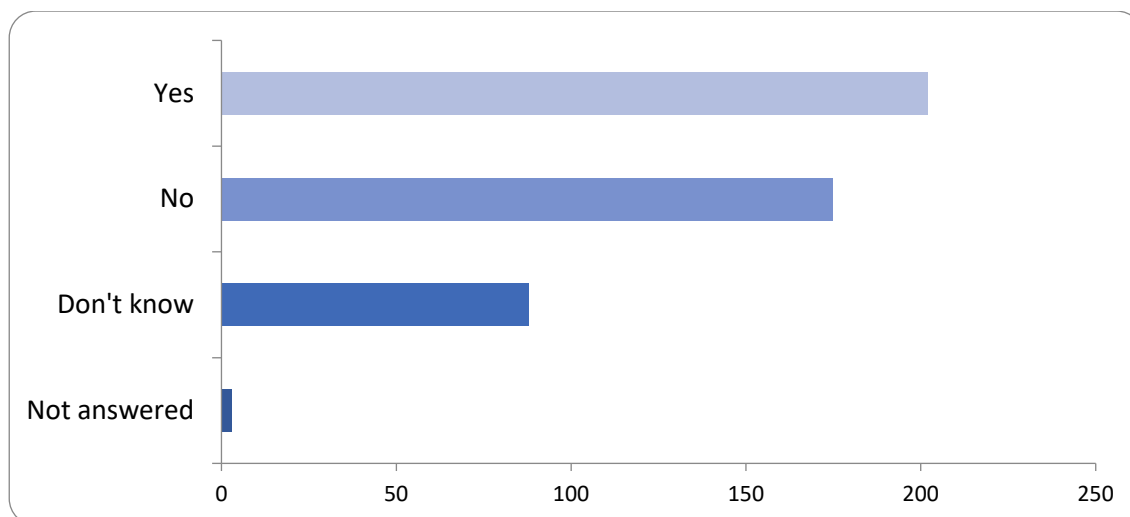


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	355	75.85%
No	62	13.25%
Don't know	45	9.62%
Not answered	6	1.28%

There were 462 responses to this question.

Over three-quarters (355) of respondents agreed with the question. 13.25% (62) did not agree. Almost 10% (45) of respondents did not know, and 1.28% (6) of respondents skipped the question.

Q9. Do you agree with the proposal by Somerset West and Taunton Council that the number of councillors to be elected to any new Taunton Town Council should be 20 and the ward boundaries and names should be as shown in Map B?



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	202	43.16%
No	175	37.39%
Don't know	88	18.80%
Not answered	3	0.64%

*Due to rounding, final percentages may not add up to 100%.

Of the 465 responses to this question, 43.16% (202) said yes and 37.39% (175) said no. Less than 1 percent (3) respondents skipped the question, and 18.80% (88) answered don't know.

The questionnaire also asked: ***If not, what aspects of the proposal do you think should be changed?***

164 respondents answered this open-ended question. Many responses related to the principle of the proposals, often re-stating, developing or emphasising answers to previous questions.

Where respondents answered more specifically to question 9, several (albeit small numbers) related to proposed number of councillors to be elected to any new Taunton council.

Some thought that 20 was too high and a smaller number would be better due to factors such as being more cost effective and efficient. Conversely, some thought that 20 was not enough.

Several comments were received about ward sizing. These included that there should be more equal representation by population size and diversity, and levels of deprivation that can be found in the proposed area should be taken into account.

A handful of respondents questioned the need for wards and whether there should be just one electoral area.

Several comments were received about ward boundaries, and various suggestions received about how these could be altered or amended.

A few suggestions were made about changes to the proposed wards, for example, Maidenbook name should be changed to Nerrols and Maidenbrook.

Illustrative responses included:

"Should be 12 councillors, 1 for each ward."

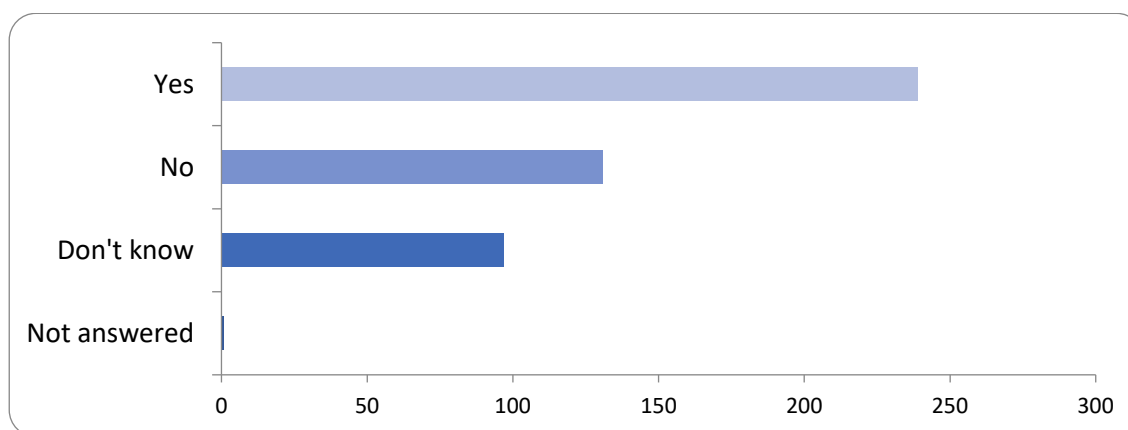
"It should have more equal representation by population numbers."

"One ward councillor is not enough to represent Staplegrove, the parish is currently represented by 6 parish councillors."

"The councillors should represent the whole town. By warding itwards with only one councillor will have no representation if that person is unable through illness or other reasons to represent."

"Leave Cheddon Fitzpaine and Maidenbrook alone."

Q10. Principal council ward boundaries: If the parish and parish ward boundaries are changed as proposed, these will no longer match the corresponding district council ward boundaries or county/unitary council division boundaries in some places. In the interests of clarity therefore, if the proposed changes to the parish and parish ward boundaries go ahead do you agree that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England should be asked to amend the relevant district ward and county/unitary division boundaries where necessary to align them with the revised parish boundaries?



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	239	51.07%
No	131	27.99%
Don't know	97	20.73%
Not answered	1	0.21%

There were 467 responses to the question.

Just over half (239) of respondents said yes, and over a quarter (131) said no. 20.73% (97) of respondents stated that they did not know, and one respondent skipped the question.

Q11. Do you have any other comments on parish/town boundaries or any other aspect of the arrangements for town/parish governance in the area?

This was an open-ended question, and the 249 validated responses were coded and grouped by theme frequency.

As to be expected to this type of question, a wide and diverse range of opinions was expressed.

Many respondents used this question as an opportunity to restate previous comments. The main themes were (broadly ranked):

- Opposition to the proposal.
- That the existing parished areas should be left alone.
- General support for the proposal.
- Support for the creation of a parish council covering the existing unparished part of Taunton.

Taunton town council: Survey results July 2022

Summary

- Respondents support the role of a Town Council in bringing positive change to Taunton.
- There appears to be strong opposition from certain parishes to the north of Taunton to proposals for the new town council to incorporate the wider urban area.
- Respondents from Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton disagree strongly with the proposals made by Somerset West and Taunton.
- Respondents in the current Taunton unparished area are mostly supportive of the SWT proposals and agree that a new council should incorporate the urban developments around Taunton.

Total number of respondents: 418

409 are local residents.

26 are local business people

50 are local employees

14 are official representatives of community organisations

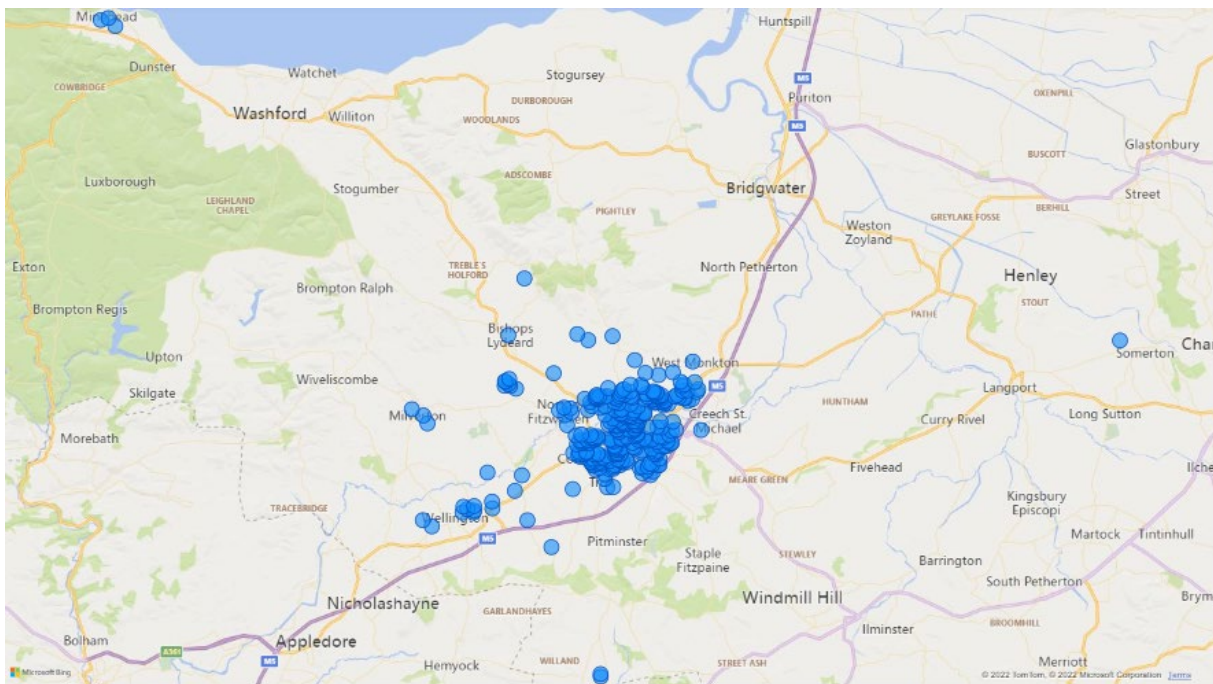
No. of respondents by location

Due to low numbers of respondents in many parishes, care should be taken when looking at percentages of respondents when broken down by parish.

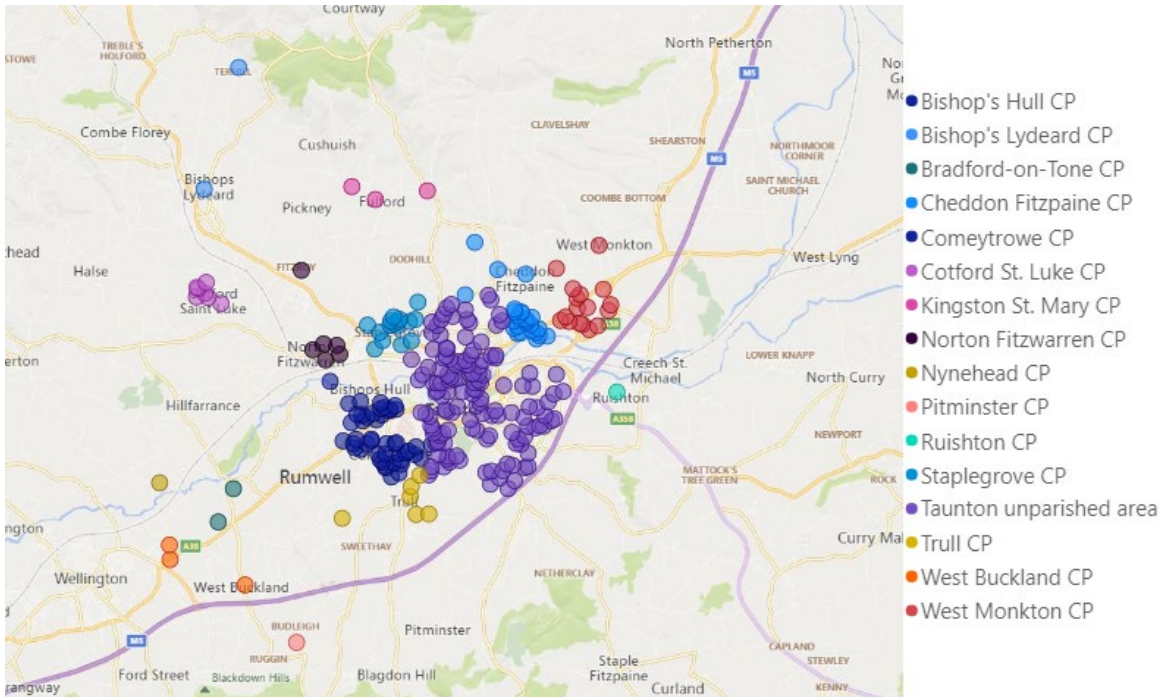
Parish	No. respondents
Taunton unparished area	116
Cheddon Fitzpaine CP	75
Staplegrove CP	39
Comeytrove CP	32
West Monkton CP	24
Bishop's Hull CP	20
Wellington CP	9
Cotford St Luke CP	8
Unknown / invalid postcode	8
Norton Fitzwarren CP	7

Trull CP	6
Milverton	5
Kingston St. Mary CP	3
Minehead CP	3
West Buckland CP	3
Bishop's Lydeard CP	2
Churchstanton CP	2
Bradford-on-Tone CP	2
Pitminster CP	1
Nynehead CP	1
Ruishton CP	1
Somerton CP	1

Locations of all respondents



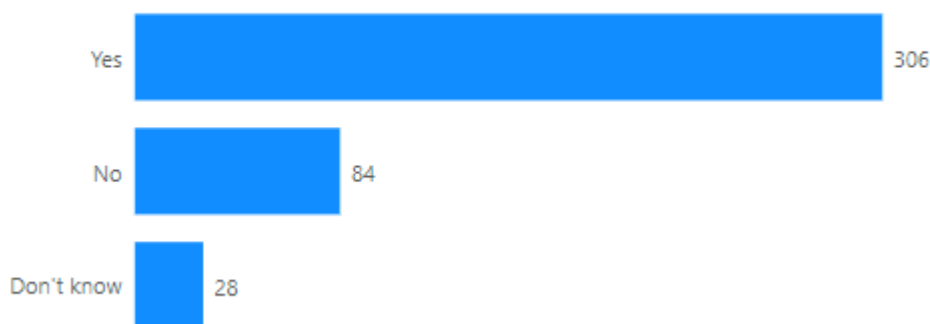
Taunton area respondent locations by parish



4. Do you agree that a town council for Taunton could help to promote a sense of community in the town and promote community cohesion?

A majority (73%) of respondents agreed that a town council for Taunton could help to promote a sense of community in the town.

4. Do you agree that a town council for Taunton could help to promote a sense of community in the town and promote community cohesion?



Yes was the most common answer in all areas except Ruishton which only had 1 respondent. 87% of respondents in the Taunton unparished area answered yes. Only 1

parish in the Taunton area did not have a majority answer yes – Cheddon Fitzpaine (45% yes), although this was still the most common answer for respondents in that parish.

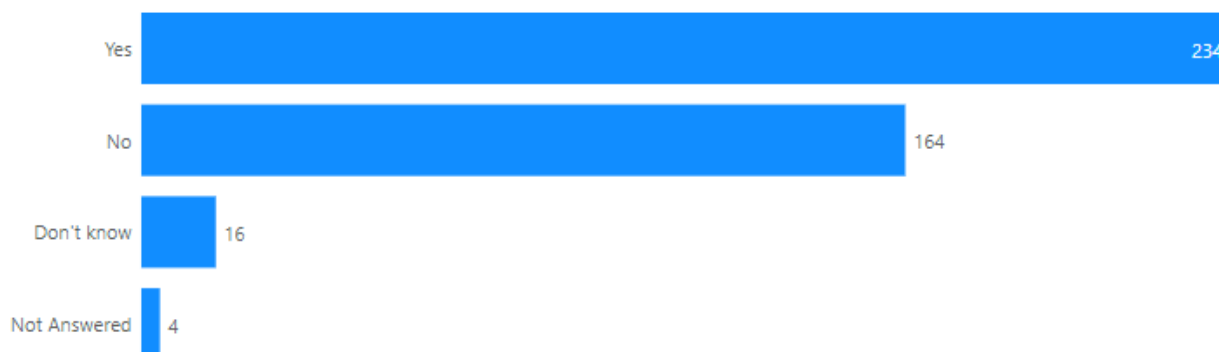
Q4 responses by parish:

Parish	Yes	No	Don't know
Bishop's Hull CP	80%	15%	5%
Bishop's Lydeard CP	100%		
Bradford-on-Tone CP	100%		
Cheddon Fitzpaine CP	45%	44%	11%
Churchstanton CP	50%	50%	
Comeytrowe CP	78%	19%	3%
Cotford St. Luke CP	100%		
Kingston St. Mary CP	100%		
Milverton CP	80%	20%	
Minehead CP	67%	33%	
Norton Fitzwarren CP	71%	14%	14%
Nynehead CP	100%		
Pitminster CP	100%		
Ruishton CP		100%	
Somerton CP	100%		
Staplegrove CP	59%	33%	8%
Taunton unparished area	87%	8%	5%
Trull CP	83%		17%
Wellington CP	56%	11%	33%
West Buckland CP	67%	33%	
West Monkton CP	67%	29%	4%

5. If a town council is established for Taunton, do you agree that its boundary should reflect the current reality of the town and include areas where urban development has occurred or is under way extending beyond the historic boundary?

A majority of respondents (56%) agreed that a new town council should incorporate areas of urban development around Taunton. 39% didn't agree with this. Those who answered 'no' to question 4 were overwhelmingly likely (83%) to also answer 'no' to this question.

5. If a town council is established for Taunton, do you agree that its boundary should reflect the current reality of the town and include areas where urban development has occurred or is under way extending beyond the historic boundary?



There are clear differences in responses to this question between respondents from different parishes. 64 of the 75 respondents (85%) from Cheddon Fitzpaine parish did not agree that a new council should extend beyond the historic boundary of Taunton. Some other areas on the outskirts of Taunton expressed similar sentiment: Staplegrove (28 of 39 responses, 72%), Trull (5 of 6 responses, 83%), Kingston St. Mary (2 of 3 respondents, 66%), West Monkton (14 of 24 respondents, 58%). Conversely, 82% of the currently Taunton unparished area agreed that a new council should include urban developments around Taunton.

Q5 responses by parish:

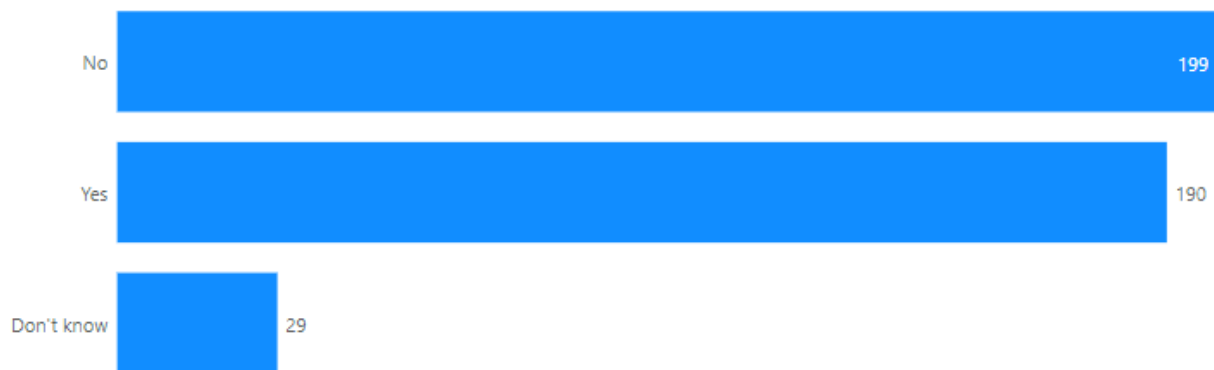
Parish	Yes	No	Don't Know	Not answered
Bishop's Hull CP	65%	30%	5%	
Bishop's Lydeard CP	100%			
Bradford-on-Tone CP	100%			
Cheddon Fitzpaine CP	12%	85%	3%	
Churchstanton CP	50%	50%		
Comeytrove CP	63%	31%	6%	
Cotford St. Luke CP	75%	13%	13%	
Kingston St. Mary CP	33%	67%		
Milverton CP	60%	40%		
Minehead CP	100%			
Norton Fitzwarren CP	71%	14%		14%
Nynehead CP		100%		
Pitminster CP	100%			
Ruishton CP		100%		
Somerton CP		100%		
Staplegrove CP	26%	72%	3%	
Taunton unparished area	82%	13%	4%	1%
Trull CP	17%	83%		

Wellington CP	78%	11%	11%	
West Buckland CP	67%	33%		
West Monkton CP	29%	58%	8%	4%

6. Do you agree with the proposal made by SWT for changes at the parish level including the establishment of a new Taunton Town Council covering the area shown in Map A, and consequential changes in a number of surrounding parishes?

Respondents were fairly evenly split on whether they supported the SWT proposal for Taunton Town Council as detailed in Map A.

6. Do you agree with the proposal made by SWT for changes at the parish level including the establishment of a new Taunton Town Council covering the area shown in Map A, and consequential changes in a number of surrounding parishes?



Again, sentiment against this was strongest in Cheddon Fitzpaine (68 of 75 respondents) and West Monkton (34 of 39 respondents) parishes. Those in the Taunton unparished area were mostly in favour of the proposals (68%).

Q6 responses by parish:

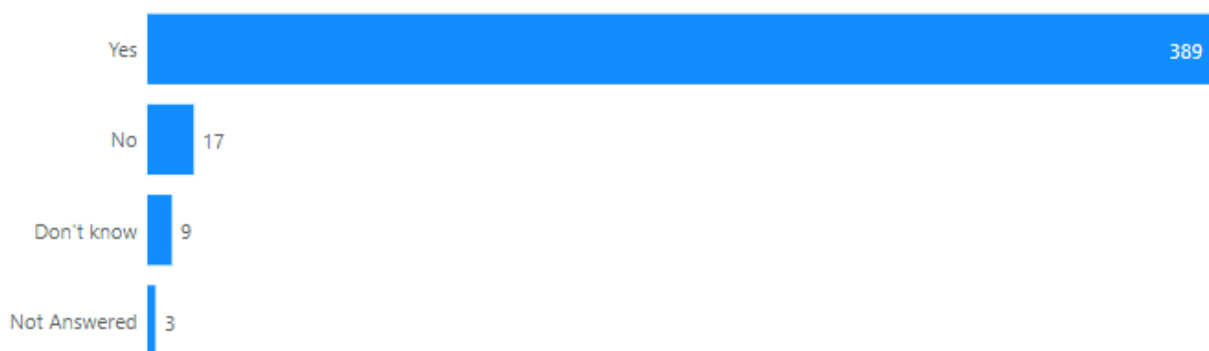
Parish	Yes	No	Don't know
Bishop's Hull CP	70%	25%	5%
Bishop's Lydeard CP	100%		
Bradford-on-Tone CP	50%	50%	
Cheddon Fitzpaine CP	8%	91%	1%
Churchstanton CP	50%	50%	
Comeytrowe CP	50%	41%	9%
Cotford St. Luke CP	50%	25%	25%

Kingston St. Mary CP	33%	67%	
Milverton CP	60%	20%	20%
Minehead CP	100%		
Norton Fitzwarren CP	43%	57%	
Nynehead CP		100%	
Pitminster CP	100%		
Ruishton CP		100%	
Somerton CP		100%	
Staplegrove CP	8%	87%	5%
Taunton unparished area	68%	23%	9%
Trull CP	17%	83%	
Wellington CP	67%	22%	11%
West Buckland CP	67%	33%	
West Monkton CP	21%	71%	8%

7. Do you believe that services such as parks and open spaces, public toilets, control of litter, Car Parking and community events e.g. Christmas Lights Switch On are important to the place where you live?

Survey respondents overwhelmingly agreed that public services and community events were important.

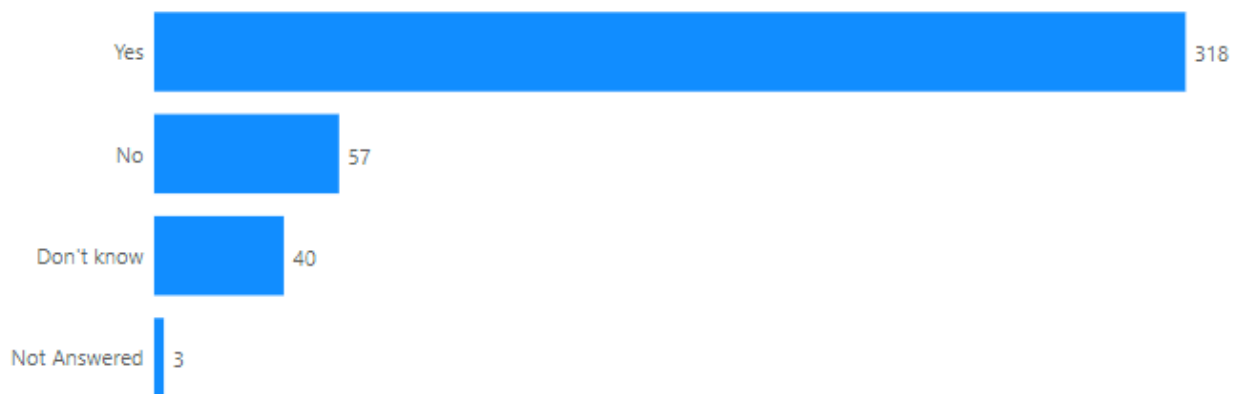
7. Do you believe that services such as parks and open spaces, public toilets, control of litter, Car Parking and community events e.g. Christmas Lights Switch On are important to the place where you live?



8. Do you agree that any new Taunton Town Council should be divided into wards for the purpose of electing councillors to represent local people?

The majority (76%) of respondents agreed that any new council should be divided into wards for the purpose of electing councillors. Only 14% disagreed with this, with 10% either unsure or not answering the question. Cheddon Fitzpaine was the parish with the most respondents who disagreed with this statement (18 of 75 respondents).

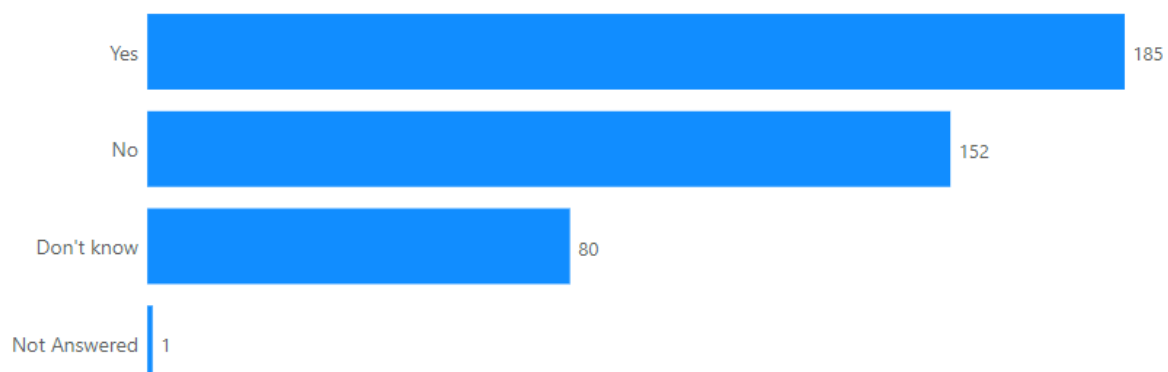
8. Do you agree that any new Taunton Town Council should be divided into wards for the purpose of electing councillors to represent local people?



9. Do you agree with the proposal by Somerset West and Taunton Council that the number of councillors to be elected to any new Taunton Town Council should be 20 and the ward boundaries and names should be as shown in Map B?

Respondents were more likely to support than oppose the proposal for 20 councillors in a new town council with the boundaries shown in map B. 44% supported the proposal, with 36% disagreeing and the remainder unsure.

9. Do you agree with the proposal by Somerset West and Taunton Council that the number of councillors to be elected to any new Taunton Town Council should be 20 and the ward boundaries and names should be as shown in Map B?



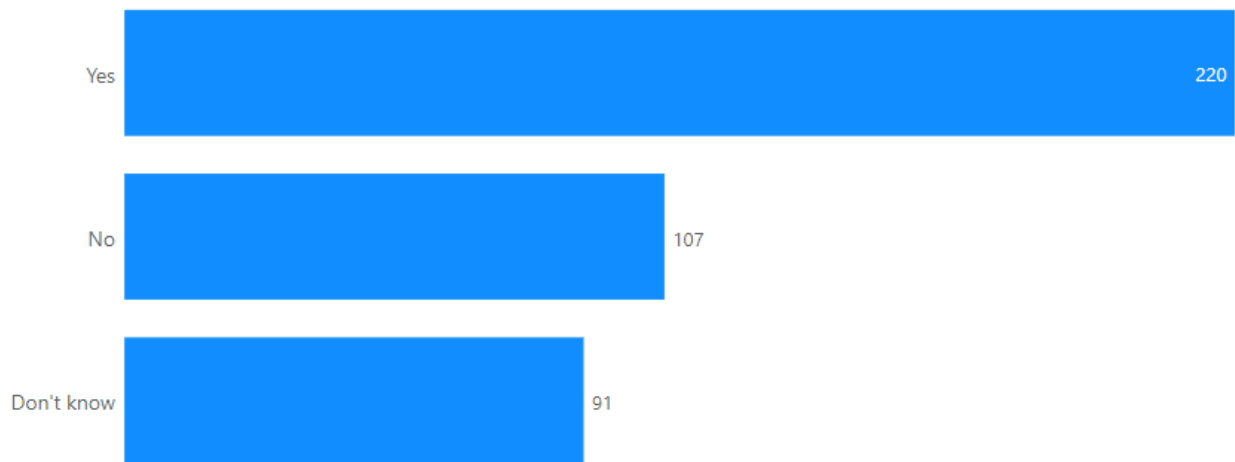
Again, respondents from Cheddon Fitzpaine, West Monkton, and Staplegrove were most likely to oppose this, whilst those in the Taunton unparished area mostly support it.

Parish	Yes	No	Don't Know	Not answered
Bishop's Hull CP	65%	15%	20%	
Bishop's Lydeard CP	100%			
Bradford-on-Tone CP	50%		50%	
Cheddon Fitzpaine CP	16%	72%	12%	
Churchstanton CP	50%	50%		
Comeytrove CP	59%	16%	25%	
Cotford St. Luke CP	38%		63%	
Kingston St. Mary CP	33%	33%	33%	
Milverton CP	20%	20%	60%	
Minehead CP	67%		33%	
Norton Fitzwarren CP	29%	43%	29%	
Nynehead CP		100%		
Pitminster CP	100%			
Ruishton CP		100%		
Somerton CP			100%	
Staplegrove CP	18%	69%	13%	
Taunton unparished area	64%	20%	15%	1%
Trull CP		67%	33%	
Wellington CP	33%	11%	56%	
West Buckland CP	67%	33%		
West Monkton CP	25%	54%	21%	

10.If the parish and parish ward boundaries are changed as proposed, these will no longer match the corresponding district council ward boundaries or unitary council division boundaries in some places. If the proposed changes go ahead do you agree that the Boundary Commission should be asked to amend the relevant district ward and unitary division boundaries where necessary to align them with the revised parish boundaries?

53% of respondents agreed that Boundary Commission should be asked to review ward/ED boundaries if the proposed changes to parishes go ahead.

10.If the parish and parish ward boundaries are changed as proposed, these will no longer match the corresponding district council ward boundaries or unitary council division boundaries in some places. If the proposed changes go ahead do you agree that the Boundary Commission should be asked to amend the relevant district ward and county/unitary division boundaries where necessary to align them with the revised parish boundaries?



Again, respondents from Cheddon Fitzpaine, West Monkton & Staplegrove represented the majority of those who did not agree.

Q10 responses by parish:

Parish	Yes	No	Don't Know
Bishop's Hull CP	75%	15%	10%
Bishop's Lydeard CP	50%		50%
Bradford-on-Tone CP	50%		50%
Cheddon Fitzpaine CP	20%	61%	19%
Churchstanton CP	100%		
Comeytrove CP	56%	6%	38%
Cotford St. Luke CP	75%		25%
Kingston St. Mary CP	100%		
Milverton CP	20%	40%	40%
Minehead CP	100%		
Norton Fitzwarren CP	71%	14%	14%
Nynehead CP	100%		
Pitminster CP	100%		
Ruishton CP	100%		
Somerton CP	100%		
Staplegrove CP	33%	46%	21%
Taunton unparished area	67%	10%	22%
Trull CP	83%		17%
Wellington CP	67%		33%
West Buckland CP	67%	33%	
West Monkton CP	21%	63%	17%

4. Do you agree that a town council for Taunton could help to promote a sense of community in the town and promote community cohesion? - agree that a town council for Taunton could help to promote a sense of community in the town and promote community cohesion?

The full list of Reasons/Comments given by respondents to Question 4 is listed below. Each row is a separate respondent's answer.

Reasons/Comments given by those who responded 'Don't Know'
Only theoretically. It would be too large to promote a sense of community outside of the limited existing boundaries of what most of us would perceive is the town.
Does seem sensible for Taunton residents to have a voice
It could if it was headed by a positive person like Trish from Taunton Matters.
Yes for the town, but the other parish councils do this now for their areas.
It concerns me that we have merged two local authorities on efficiency grounds only to create another one thereby creating two councils again.
Reasons/Comments received from those who responded 'No'.
Village Parish Councils
Would work for town centre but not cheddon fitzpaigne parrish.
I want to stay as we are.
Why amend what has worked. Villages are the heart and soul of country living. There is already a sense of community. We do not want a single parish council.
Possibly for town centre but there would be no sense of community by including Maidenbrook as we already have cohesion.
I believe that this proposal may only work for the town itself, in the centre. Where a strong sense of community exists, Maidenbrook and Cheddon Fitzpaine no need to change. What about the residents of new areas – have their views been taken on board?
It would work for the Town Centre but not for Cheddon Fitzpaine and Maidenbrook
Parish Councils better for promoting Parish Communities, as they are doing already.
More representation of Parish Councils
Keep the existing parishes and feed into the relevant Local Community Network for communicating and engagement with the Unitary.

We are doing fine without being added to a bigger area
If a community centre is available for those who want to use it, then that would be great, job done. Don't waste time and money promoting a sense of community - just make the space available.
Community cohesion doesn't form by electing more strangers to "represent" you. Events and meet ups trigger community, especially if they're at varied times of day/days of the week and have focal points - eg litter picks, clothes trading, scarecrow trails, front garden jumble sales etc
Local community activity, organised by the county authority
No to many councillors will have ulterior motives, it should be a joint focus group including councillors, business and residents
There is nothing wrong with the way things are currently, the grand plan is about generating more income for the town council as a whole.
I think there would be even less of a community feel if these proposals go through. Very happy being in our current parish.
Parish council
I see your spending thousands of pounds already on a door to door delivery of your leaflet for this consulting. Disgusting and shows you political arses spend our money to waste for your greedy political rubbish. We don't need another tier of local government. Leave it alone and stop your vile attitude.
Community forum run by unitary County
Get rid of 50% of the present councillors.
I like the existing arrangements and don't feel that adding an extra layer of governance would be particularly helpful. It would substantially increase council tax.
Just stop spending money on layers of representatives who just draw a salary and do nothing. Rouen Clerks are not elected and cost a fortune. I just want my council tax reduced not more spongers added. You are bleeding us dry with the high Council Tax and we get less and less for it. Please no more public officers.
It will just install another layer of management which the unitary council is intended to reduce
Stop wasting time and money on questionnaires for topics that people don't care about and "initiatives" that should be left to the private open market.
Community cohesion? You're kidding, right? Forceably aggregating existing parish councils (which are already cohesive communities) to create a town council that then has to be sub-divided into wards seems antithetical to community cohesion and more like former SWT councillors trying to hold onto some local significance. If there is a Town Council, it should only mop up the bits not covered by an existing parish council

More localised decision making power made at parish level. Full time employed civil servants reporting to the parish Council, with budget allocation.
We already have parish councils in place so just extend these to cover any unparished area rather than create a new council
Why does this have to be done at all? Is it another layer of bureaucracy and therefore more cost and higher council tax?
These are just talking shops for people playing politics and looking for self advancement. Reorganisations like this never achieve much and simply create unnecessary work, expense and confusion. You only have to look at the ones in the past e.g. the various reorganisations of Somerset where nothing changes except people get redundancy then reemployed by new authority, NHS just get more managers and high paid execs who mess up and get nice payoffs, etc. etc.
Not on its own. The new town council would have to work with other groups to create a sense of community which has been lost as the town has grown in size. There are also a number of churches in Taunton that have parish areas and are already creating a sense of community locally.
In the area I live, the existing Comeytrove Parish Council, has been doing a very good job, it would seem a shame to see this parish council disappear. However I am torn as Galmington, the area that currently includes Galmington Playing field is currently in an unparished area, and this would change under new arrangement.
Local parish councils dealing with local matters
A town of Taunton's size is too large (geographically and by population) to promote proper cohesion. This is better done at a local parish level as now, where people share the same facilities/open spaces etc.
Taunton area is already represented by local Borough Council and also county council. It doesn't need another tier.
It is supposed to be a unitary authority . The proposals mean that having removed local accountability it is being replaced by a talking shop which has no power. If the unitary authority is supposed to be more efficient why add something else which is bound to incur additional cost.
Promotion is not a role for the council. Rule and make Taunton a better place. Work and represent residents, and stop wasting time and money for PR stunts that only benefit companies that get taxpayers money
We have a wonderful community as Cheddon Fitzpaine parish. Enjoying the strength, care and events that are within our parish. Therefore there is no need to join another parish.
The existing arrangements work well and are better value for money than the creation of a New Democratic entity that we will have to pay for through an increased precept
In itself, no, but it could promote community groups and bring them together more effectively.
Keep our Parish Councils
We do not need another layer of so called democracy - expenditure is determined by central government with local government only seeing 7%. If we have more

counsellors that will mean more expensive local government pensions paid out of community charge which goes up beyond inflation every year
Getting rid of Staplegrove Parish Council (and Comeytrowe) is another example of the increase in the democratic deficit.
The communities already exist, what you are trying to do is break them up and stick them all together for the benefit of yourselves, not the communities. Bland and boring, and the sense of pride in OUR current communities will be lost. We will have less say in what goes on, and we all know that the standard of service and care here will decrease under this proposal.
Lowest level possible. Parish councils are best placed to represent people, so the existing system should remain.
A town council is good in principal but not at the expense of some areas losing their parish councils - especially Staplegrove. If Staplegrove loses its Parish Council it will lose its sense of community which in todays society is so important. Please rethink.
Re Question 3. I have ticked YES, in principal, but only as long the Parish Councils can remain and work as they are now for their local communities along side the town council.
I believe a unitary council.
Cheddon Fritpaine Parish Council works well as it is.
Anything that costs less is the most important thing at the moment. Creating a new town council is a waste of time and money. The lack of community is a result of Taunton become a souless commuter town. Where are the jobs?
This question is ambiguous. Yes, the town council (for the presently unparished area of Taunton), should promote community cohesion 'within' that previously unparished area, but it should not have any influence over existing parishes, which should not be fragmented in any manner. In respect of question 5 below - just leave the parishes as they are and use the current 'green' unparished boundary as the boundary of the new council-managed area.
The present parishes provide all of the community cohesion within those parishes. There is no need for the new Council to interfere in existing parishes. It should focus only on the area within the existing unparished area of Taunton.
We already have community cohesion in our parish
Through Parish Councils
Parish councils
HOW DO THE SUGGESTED CHANGES JUSTIFY THE COST OF THIS. In our view the creation of a Taunton town council will sever the links with individual communities. Communities' take time to establish, with alot of effort of it's residents and those that represent them. If areas become too big our view is that the "community" will be lost.

Our view is to retain the Parish councils, who the local residents know personally who their councilors are and the councilors know their area.

An example of this is we knew nothing of this review until the Parish Council delivered a flyer by hand to our home.

IF IT WORKS DON'T CHANGE IT!

Local parish councils are key to the concerns of local residents and cohesion within that direct community.

Being part of Cheddon Fitzpaine parish already provides us with a sense of community. This is highlighted by our various community groups and online forums. A good example of this is the Somerset Wood. This benefits all of the local residents. Funding is now in jeopardy as the money for the plans will likely be consumed elsewhere.

A parish structure allows for a greater sense of community and allows us to decide where the money is spent locally for all to benefit. If it goes into a Town Council then we will have no say on what happens locally.

I have no problem with Monkton and Cheddon parishes merging, as the benefits will still remain localised.

Taunton has no sense of community that I am aware of. 'Taunton Vision' is a joke in the community and enlarging the area of influence is not going to improve matters.

Somerset Unitary Authority should do everything, no Parish or Town Councils, its just costly and confusing

None as they too bureaucratic and create more layers of administration.

The previous Taunton Deane Borough Council (which had more authority and funding) never achieved a community cohesion/spirit for Taunton. It is unlikely that a larger (less well funded) parish/town council will achieve this. Demolishing current surrounding parish councils will however remove pre-existing community cohesion from these areas as well.

The creation of a town council may well benefit those that are resident in the centre of Taunton and perceive that areas as 'local' to them, but removing funding / tax income from Cheddon Fitzpaine would damage the community facilities and provision that the present parish boundary supports.

Not in our community in Staplegrove. In fact it could well diminish our community cohesion.

If Taunton needs a town or parish council, it is up to the residents of Taunton Town, not us at Staplegrove. Hence no answer to question 3.

Leave successful Parish Councils alone.

Local councils for local parish work well thanks

Separate, smaller, local parishes focusing on the needs of each small area.

This should not be a "them and us" scenario or question. It is not the case there is 'town' and 'not town'. The question seeks to promote division.

The new parish for the town centre, if limited to that area only, will of course help provide for the that area, and will help with its identity and cohesion. But the semi-urban areas around the edges of Taunton already have an identity based on this

semi-urban nature, and pushing them into an 'urban' parish will actually be detrimental to their identity.

I object to Staplegrove Parish council being amalgamated into one big town council. We will be overlooked and our parish council has worked well in looking after the needs of Staplegrove. They understand what is required and work hard for it.

Reasons/Comments given by those who responded 'Yes'.

How can we know – information on post may 2023 is very limited.

The size is very large in comparison to the other parish councils. Active community groups would also help to enhance a local community spirit.

Provided it does not drain off a disproportionate amount of money, or provide opportunity for self-aggrandisement or entertainment of individuals employed directly or indirectly by local government.

However I do not think the council does at present

A town council should work in conjunction with a people's assembly. People's assemblies are proposed by Extinction Rebellion as a part of the solution towards creating sustainable societies. A town council is likely to suffer from all the problems of small town power play where councillors spend much of their energy maintaining and trying to improve their positions. A people's assembly attached to those with actual influence and power might, hopefully, keep councillor's feet on the ground and in touch with the everyday folk who they're there to serve. (Every aspect of Taunton life needs to be a step towards resilience against and mitigation of the coming effects of climate change, as if we all fully accept and understand what the IPCC are saying.)

I've already made a submission mentioning Extinction Rebellion and people's assemblies. It's likely that my mention of XR flipped a switch in your brain stopping you from taking my comments seriously. So, to try and re-engage you ...

ps. <https://youtu.be/Ws1HTvWCjCM>

Stephen Fry/Extinction Rebellion

Any other forum would dilute the essential focus of restoring the status of Taunton as our county town. A town council must be front and centre of the initiative.

The key to any structure are the functions delegated to it by the Unitary authority. If it is to be credible it has to be more than a talking shop, by having a budget and the power to raise tax precepts itself.

The old Borough Council did this in the past. Getting rid of it was obviously a mistake.

There would be a sense of community if the local representatives actively engage with the community in the way that a Parish Council does. If it continues as it does now with the District Council being 'distant' from its local residents then it will achieve nothing. Parish Councils have local links, and people who go above and beyond their job remits.

But not at the expense of deconstructing current well established communities or disadvantaging areas by stemming their financial incomes or resources.

In the town but not the parishes.

BUT ONLY IN THE UNPARISHED AREAS OF TAUNTON

but only if done in the correct way to maintain a reasonable balance in urban/sub-urban and rural representation through Parish and Town councils.

The proposals appear to be a land-grab by councillors to re-invest a smaller version of the old TDBC and will potentially be divisive. It makes far more sense to restrict the Taunton Town Council to the currently un-parished part of Taunton Town.

With the correct remit and focus then I agree. I am sceptical that an enlarged boundary will achieve this and suspect that the interest of those on the fringes will not be best served. I think that a Taunton town council should be focused on economic growth in order to fund improvements in sustainability, community and services across the area.

Only by beginning with the current unparished area as envisaged by the One Somerset Business plan to which all current district councils are understood to have signed up.

The current proposals with their unrealistic approach of breaking up the integrity of existing parish councils is fundamentally undemocratic. It also is undemocratic in that it breaches the One Somerset proposals.

But not as currently promoted. The current proposals do more to destroy than create community cohesion. Community cohesion would be better observed in the enquiry if all affected parishes were equally represented on the Working Group. Important phrases used in the Recommendations such as:-

1. "The new development was considered to exacerbate the urban extension of the community in the Comeytrowe area and these residents, would like those in Comeytrowe, look to Taunton for carrying out their activities in the pattern of their daily life."

2. "The proposed change would be sufficient to reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government."
3. "Councillors discussed the inclusion of Bishops Hull within the area under review, with discussion held in particular regard to services and amenities residents used and the Silk Mills Road and its effect on the community. The splitting of the parish was disregarded as an option" and "these residents did feel part of Bishop's Hull and not Taunton".
4. "Based on the feedback from the Parish Councils and local residents, it was clear that the Parish of West Monkton had a distinctive sense of place and the existing arrangements reflected the identities and interests of the community in that area."
5. "Based on the feedback from the Parish Councils and local residents, it was clear that the Parish of Norton Fitzwarren had a distinctive sense of place and the existing arrangements reflected the identities and interests of the community in that area."

Where do 'local' residents in Bishop's Hull, West Monkton and Norton Fitzwarren do the bulk of their weekly grocery shopping, refuel their cars and see their Doctor? Like most of us, I suspect, at one of the local supermarkets, filling stations or surgeries within the current unparished area of Taunton. So they do "look to Taunton for carrying out their activities in the pattern of their daily life" like the rest of us and will continue to use many other facilities in Taunton such as Vivary Park.

6. Do you agree with the proposal made by Somerset West and Taunton Council for changes at the parish level including the establishment of a new Taunton Town Council covering the area shown in Map A, and consequential changes in a number of surrounding parishes?

The full list of Reasons/Comments given by respondents to Question 6 is listed below. Each row is a separate respondent's answer.

Reasons/Comments given by those who responded 'Don't Know'
There are three major urban extensions to Taunton, of which by far the largest is Monkton Heathfield, existing and proposed development. Clearly the panel considering the boundaries will have discussed this area and has reasons for not proposing it be included in the new Taunton Parish, hence I ticked 'don't know', but given the many thousands of residents in this area will be largely dependent on Taunton it does seem rather odd. I think the reasoning for the boundaries, where not obvious, should have been stated in this consultation. I would also suggest the new Nexus 25 development should be within the Taunton Parish.
I agree the proposals in principle, with the caveat that any addition to the current unparished area should be subject to the consent of the parish from which it is transferred.
Only include these areas if they themselves want it.
I personally would like to know more about the proposed changes before committing. Reason is the current council put out a referendum on the current proposed changes and the vote was against the change yet it's gone ahead. Press comments by councillors at the time said and quote, if the vote goes against our proposal we reserve the right to ignore it. Which was what happened it was a forgone conclusion the decisions had already been made and result was a lot of rate payers money was wasted again.
Can't understand map
Fully support the idea and most of the proposals. However, it's not completely clear why the urban areas of Bishops Hull and Monkton Heathfield (including remaining urban extension) and to a lesser extent Norton and Trull are being excluded? All of these areas function as part of Taunton and are considered as such as part of the Garden Town. Whilst they do have some separate identity for sure, there would be benefit in a consistent approach and governance for the whole area.
The town centre & any surrounding areas that are not parished should be included. If any area is already parished why change it?
I think the arguments made by Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council to retain its existing boundaries are persuasive. The review should take heed of its views.
Why is Bishop's Hull not included when the urban part should be - that's not consistent with your stated policy. Also West Monkton and Norton Fitzwarren are clearly urban extensions of Taunton - but aren't included when Staplegrove and Comeytrow are?
I am not convinced by the reasons given for the proposal. I understand, and am in favour of, the benefit to Taunton for an authority that is responsible for issues relating to the local area rather than one that covers the whole of Somerset (which

is an extremely large and diverse county). However, I am not convinced that it would benefit the residents of Comeytrowe to be absorbed into a larger authority. The area should probably be answerable to a Taunton Council, but should have some autonomy of its own.
It seems illogical that Bishop's Hull, which is contiguous with the built up area comprising the proposed Taunton Parish, is not included in the proposal.
Reasons/Comments received from those who responded 'No' and who were further asked - If not, which aspects of the proposal do you think should be changed?
Staplegrove should retain its parish council as it represents the community values and issues of our village
Staplegrove has a church/a school/a shop/ a p o/ and a village hall – It is a village, it is not part of Taunton and should keep its Parish Council.
Staplegrove Parish should remain as at present and proposed expansion should form part of Staplegrove parish.
Staplegrove village should not be included as it has a distinct identity
Only necessary to set up a new TC for the current unparished area.
Keep the parishes as they are!
Musn't be too large and take over the community function of west established Parish Councils such as Cheddon Fitzpaine. Any change should not destroy existing parish communities that work well.
Maidenbroke to remain a part of Cheddon Fitzpaigne.
It should not enclued Cheddon Fitzpain Parrish
Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish should be left unchanged.
Maidenbrook should remain part of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish
Maidenbrook should remain part of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish
Maidenbrook remain part of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish
I do not agree with any changes on Map A and the Parishes should remain in their present form.
Historical boundaries should be respected and remain under the oversight of current Parishes.

Do not change Parish Council sizes from current levels. Do not extend boundaries of Taunton.
None
I think the line should go down Silk Mills to encompass part of Bishops Hull Parish
Bishops Hull is as much a part of the town as Comeytrove and should be included.
Let Staplegrove continue as a parish. Use Nerrol's Drive as the boundary so Cheddon Fitzpaine keeps Maidenbrook and the new developments but the old Nerrol's Farm Estate becomes part of Taunton.
Too much of Bishop's Hull is actually very urban and should be part of Taunton.
I think new developments should be subsumed into their closest parish and the Parishes left as they are. If a development is sufficiently large and established then it should have it's own parish to give a sense of identify and purpose. Different Parishes have allowed certain developments to take place on the trust that any community benefit funding (I don't know it's proper name, sorry) be a reward for allowing the development. If you scoop up all the parishes and make a Town parish, you will inherit quite a bit of funding. I have the view that if SWT wants to do this, they will do it whatever - that seems to be the way it is, so if we do end up with a Taunton Town Council then as an absolute minimum, I would want absolute assurance that inherited funds are ringfenced from the parish area that they were secured from until they are all gone
None
My address is Cheddon Fitzpaine so I'm a bit confused why I wouldn't fall under the Cheddon Fitzpaine parish. I think being part of a large town council, whilst I'm sure having some benefits, will remove the ability to appeal to a smaller parish council that is focused on my particular area.
Stick to the unparished area only - it's plenty big enough. Consider making 2 or 3 smaller parishes more in line with the actual areas contained within. Bunching unrelated area together reduces representation. (for example, Blackbrook is quite distinct from Priorswood)
I don't see the point in this change. What's broken?
Town council not required- new county level authority is supposed to improve efficiency, adding extra bureaucracy won't help this
This looks like the council are land grabbing to obtain CIL money. Keep the parishes as they are and give the unparished area a town council.
Parishes should be left as they are as they have done a great job.
Been living 5 years within the Cheddon Fitzpaine parish. Paying parish rates within our council tax now you want to move the goal posts to suit the bigger ideas of the town council.

Smaller parishes should be left to manage their own affairs, not swallowed into the Town council
I generally agree that a large town council covering the mapped area would be very efficient, across all the services needs of the current population. However I am reminded of increasing efficacy do not always reflect the more specific needs of say Bishops Hull versus Galmington and so horse trading goes on and not always in the best interest of either sub population.
Leave it as one authority as it's cheaper and better. Waste waste waste is all you political lot do. While people are living in poverty and a cost of living crisis .
I don't agree with the proposal to create a new town council.
Bishops hill is no different to Norton and should be part of taunton.
The new town council should be focussed on encapsulating the currently unparished communities and tidying up small blips into the current parish boundaries (such as Killams sitting within Trull), the parishes currently established represent their local communities, extending the boundaries of the town council means that the individual identities of the parishes are lost, for example the Comeytrove and Staplegrove parishes represent their specific areas, both are different to each other and merging loses that identity and local focus.
The unitary council is set to run services in Somerset. Another layer of management will increase costs to citizens.
Bradford-on-Tone should be included
I lived in Comeytrove for 31 years. It had its own identity. Don't mix it with the more urban Taunton town.
If you take Comeytrove then include Bishops Hull too.
Leave existing parish councils be
Just be unparished area - "town centre" - not include local parishes
As above. Taunton in particular has been ruined by poor planning and infrastructure decisions. This is reflected in falling services and amenities.
As above
Current area of 'Taunton' should remain as it works. Expanding simply creates a large body where no one gets represented and you get to the stage of those areas who shout loudest win out
I think the existing parish council which are working well should stay in place eg Comeytrove, Staplegrove and Trull
My previous comment about Comeytrove area answers this. From appearance on Map Comeytrove Parish has a denser population than Bishops Hull, therefore should remain as a separate Parish.
Leave parish councils alone. Let them decide on local issues

I can only speak for the part of taunton that I know about and live in - galmington - I don't want us to become part of a high town council. We should stay as we are.
Leave the Nerrols estate in cheddon fitzpaine. Please leave the cheddon fitzpaine and Monkton parishes as they are.
Comeytrowe Parish Council should be retained as it is a separate community with different needs to a Town Council.
The parishes south of the motorway should be included to provide oversight by the town council of future growth and development
The main village of Norton Fitzwarren should also be included in the Taunton Parish - Norton Fitzwarren is so closely linked via housing developments now that it may as well be a part of Taunton rather than still continuing to be insisted to be it's own village by the selfish self interests of the parish councillors in Norton Fitzwarren.
I am against all additional levels of supposed local government once a unitary authority has been put in place. Why add to costs by having small local talking shops. The unitary authority has power to do things so anything else appears unnecessary. It is simply an attempt to suggest that locals have a say when they clearly do not.
Cotford St Luke must be included. We are a growing urban area. The area shown on the map has massive areas of barely populated rural landscape. Town Council means Town ie populus and tax payers.
I believe that the new housing developments in the current West Monkton Parish should be included. Or at least the parish name be changed to Monkton Heathfield (& Bathpool) as West Monkton village is a very small part of the existing parish following the housing developments.
I am very concerned that decisions (in particular planning decisions/recommendations) in areas that would previously have been under Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council would cease to take into consideration the impact they may have on the remaining residents of Cheddon Fitzpaine parish and their near neighbours.
I live in a new build of Nerrols grange we are part of cheddon fitzpaine our community very much feels part of cheddon fitzpaine. However you now want to change that. We only moved there because the area had its own small community feel and that's what we want!! Central Taunton is an embarrassment and would rather not be included in it. I agree central Taunton needs help but do not include our small area in that!
Taunton town has absolutely NO idea how a village and it's community run. We should maintain our separate Parish Council. We are a village NOT an add -on to the town.
There is no need for more red tape and political war. Start Rolling this follen town!
I think the current parish councils should be left as they are. They work well and support the communities. If the out lying areas are incorporated into Taunton town they will be forgotten about and all focus will be on the town centre
Keep the communities as they are.
Too large an area and town requirements will not be the same as village requirements.

It is too big and unnecessarily so
Council should include surrounding parishes
What about looking after Cotford St Luke for once someone? It's not all about Lydeard and Norton
We were asked for our views before and they have been totally ignored. Staplegrove has a strong well regarded Parish Council and a distinctive character and we do not wish to be part of a Taunton Town Council. This exercise is a waste of taxpayers money if the majority are not listened to.
Keep to the old unparished area. The existing parish councils are well established and in tune with local residents. The proposal would create much too big a parish.
Parish councils that represent their residents correctly and efficiently should remain in place and be properly funded
Unparished area only
I think the new boundary should include all existing parishes
The new Taunton Parish should only consist of the present un-parished areas of Taunton. The other areas are already ably represented by present parish councils and should continue to receive the CILL money from the new building developments in their areas. See my comments under 9.
leave existing communities alone - by all means establish a council for the un-parished area of Taunton. Existing parish councils for Comeytrove and Staplegrove work OK so leave them alone.
Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish needs to be removed from the current proposal to ensure viability of the parish and to ensure that the community built up over the last 20 years is maintained.
The rural bits of Trull, Kingston St Mary and West Monkton should join their neighbouring parishes. Keep it mainly urban areas.
Maidenbrook ward should remain in Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish, which it has been for a large number of years. Cannot see any benefit to residents in this ward to being subsumed into a large town council. Of course there is a benefit to the new town council in being able to grab additional income from this ward and potential SIL monies of any new housing. Bigger is not always better....
The proposal to abolish Comeytrove Parish which has helped to establish a real sense of community spirit is a backward step especially when Cheddon Fitzpaine, Bishops Hull, Trull, Staplegrove and West Monkton will all retain separate identities.
The proposal to abolish Comeytrove Parish which has helped to establish a real sense of community spirit is a backward step especially when Cheddon Fitzpaine, Bishops Hull, Trull, Staplegrove and West Monkton will all retain separate identities.
We are not prepared to lose our Parish council which has represented us so well. Tell bishops hull they are losing theirs!

Current parish council boundaries must be maintained. The Taunton Town Council boundaries should NOT encroach into the current parish boundaries. Taunton Town Council should be treated as an equal authority as the other parish councils that adjoin it, and not receive any preferential treatment or funding than the current parishes.

Taunton Town Council area should cover the unparished area only

Staplegrave has a well run parish council to which the local residents have easy access. I declare a personal interest in that my wife is one of our parish councillors.

It's curious that Bishops Hull is not included in the new Taunton Parish. This creates an anomaly on the proposed Taunton Parish boundary, which instead of being broadly circular now has a significant dent in the west side. The village is no more separate from the town than Staplegrave, which is being subsumed by the proposal. Apparently there is a member from Bishops Hull on the SWT committee involved in this plan. This surely negates the legitimacy of the proposal from the start and raises the question of conflict of interest.

Parish councils are voluntary and know the local issues better than another layer of bureaucracy

Shouldn't interfere with existing parish councils

Trull Parish Council have been making plans based on assumption that CIL money from Orchard Grove development would be provided to them. Its now proposed that the Orchard Grove Development is included in the new Taunton Town Parish so Trull Parish Council would lose out on this funding which is essential to them.

I think the boundary should be the current unparished area in order to reflect the identities and interests of the communities in the parished areas and promote effective and convenient local government for these parished areas

Staplegrave should NOT be included in any Taunton town council, we should be represented by a Staplegrave district council.

It is a good idea for areas close to Taunton town centre. However, as you move out it becomes a bad idea!

Leave the rural village councils to run independently

I don't think you should go against the wishes of the Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council who have worked very hard to create the sense of community in our area, and are of great benefit to the residence here.

The parish council leave the parish councils out of the scheme, leave them as is

As a church in Cheddon Fitzpaine we have worked really hard to include parishioners from the new "urban", new housing areas in into our parish community.

Most of the people buying houses in Cheddon Fitzpaine new housing areas have done so because they want to be part of a rural / semi-rural neighbourhood - and not just subsumed into a big town council. You will detract from the community by doing this.

Also - if you leave an electoral of a little over 300 in the remaining tiny parish - they will have no power / money / people to effect anything useful.

A requirement of the new One Somerset is that the delivery of services is directly or indirectly through Local Community Networks working in groupings of c.25k residents. The unparished area of Taunton comprises 34k electors and a town council (equivalent in power to a parish council) is already in embryo. However you are proposing to expand the town council to take in surrounding parishes who already function effectively. Our council tax will fund this unnecessary expansion and therefore impact residents already coping with the current financial situation. The voices of the current unparished areas will be lost in the proposed expansion.

I would not be happy with the new town council absorbing areas of any existing parish council unless that parish council was in agreement.

A town council should only cover those core urban areas not currently served by parish councils.

The existing boundaries of Staplegrove Parish should remain as existing, reflecting the separate village identity which is distinct from Taunton as a town. I am concerned that if they are combined, local Staplegrove issues will not be represented sufficiently within a wider Taunton Town Council area.

Don't change the boundaries to include parts of Cheddon Fitzpaine, Trull and Staplegrove, as it would leave them with too small a population to be viable. They are doing an excellent job at the moment: leave them to continue to do so. You aren't proposing to steal most of Trull, Norton Fitzwarren, Monkton Heathfield or Bishops Hull, which are all now part of the built up area of Taunton, so don't steal parts of Cheddon Fitzpaine, Trull and Staplegrove.

I would add the urban areas of Bishops Hull to the town council area.

Staplegrove should remain as a Parish with its own Parish council.

I wish to make a strong statement here, that the SWT consultation process is flawed: for the following reasons:
the postcard that was sent out has been misinterpreted as junk by some people;
it does not adequately say that by doing nothing they will lose the parish of Cheddon;
it does not advise that their council tax will go to the town, and not be specifically spent locally;
the request for responses online denies a large number of people from participating as many do not have computers, tablets, the technical ability, or knowledge of the scanning square (me included).
I believe the paper version should have been sent to each household in the SWT District area covered by the unparished area and the eight parishes in order that a full representation of ideas is sent back to SWT District Councillors so that an informed discussion can take place. As this has not happened, I challenge the consultation process as distinctly flawed, and provides an unbalanced response. I am also upset that there were no SWT District Councillors present at the Consultation event in Cheddon Fitzpaine Memorial Hall on Monday 11th July 2022 between 3-7pm (with the exception of Cllr Norman Cavill). Marcus Prouse was not able to answer our questions: this is not good enough.

I agree that the current unparished area should be Parished and to become a Town Council. I do not agree with the idea that the current parishes should be

abolished or altered unless they agree. It may be that Comeytrowe agrees to be abolished. It may be that Bishops Hull stays largely the same;

Q1: by what consultation method that took place did Bishops Hull escape being drawn into the proposed Town Council; the same should be applied to Cheddon Fitzpaine. It is an active, well functioning Parish Council that has evolved over the past eleven years to incorporate the new communities and is now well established. There is no need for it to be drastically reduced in size; work has been undertaken tirelessly by the Parish Councillors, Clerk, and volunteers to establish the current excellent status.

Q2: What more can the 'new town council' provide?

Q3: Will I get a written answer to my questions in this consultation?

Parishes whose rural character and strength of governance has been exemplified by a long-established, "made" Neighbourhood Plan (NP), approved via local referendum etc. should not be subject to boundary change under this plan.

The unparished area shown by the green line in the map takes into account existing parish governance structures borne out of long-standing, intimate knowledge of the areas concerned.

Whilst it is true to say that some of these areas have been/will be subject to major housing development, parish councils have adapted to the change and, through their NPs have defined a vision for their communities to balance the interests of "legacy" parishioners against the opportunities presented by new developments. These opportunities facilitate amongst other benefits a critical mass of residents which allows infrastructure and facilities within those parishes to be extended/improved for the benefit of both the indigenous and incoming populations.

Subsuming into Taunton Town Council large swathes of parishes which have strong identities and have been through this balancing exercise as exemplified by their NPs, with associated approval of residents, risks undermining their sense of place.

Moreover, the move to a Unitary authority in 2023 makes it imperative to maintain as much subsidiarity as possible to avoid local interests being overlooked.

As I recall there was a competing plan for "County level" governance which was looking to create two separate unitary authorities on the basis that a single one would be too coarse-grained.

If I am not mistaken, some of those who went to great lengths to support this latter two-authority approach are now the major proponents of reducing subsidiarity by increasing the reach of the proposed Taunton Town Council!

Whilst I have no problem with a Taunton Town Council per se, the unparished (green line) boundary provides the perfect demarcation for its reach. Apart from anything else, those 'made' NPs which legally cover areas which are shown within the black outlined area will, if this proposal goes ahead, need to be faithfully represented by the new Taunton Town Council, creating unnecessary overheads and inefficiencies in planning debates.

It makes far more sense for the organisations who created those NPs and who truly understand the basis on which they were developed, to be preserved. In this way, local people will continue to have their voice and make the most appropriate representation to the Unitary authority planners from a position of authority, as they are best able to take the wider views of the local populace into account.

If on the other hand, "made" NPs need to be revised to align with the proposed black boundary, this would be a ridiculous, unnecessary additional expenditure which can be wholly avoided. In short, it would be an example of Taunton Town Council wasting money, creating a reputation which will stick and provide a prism through which all future decisions will be viewed.

I think that the boundaries of the new town council should mainly conform to the existing unparished area boundaries. I can understand the theory behind extending it to include the new areas of development but that would seem to be to the detriment of the existing parish councils. Staplegrove will cease to exist in its present form which seems to be a retrograde step. It is also suggested that the proposed Staplegrove East and West should be included in the new Town Council area but none of that development has taken place yet.

All aspects, leave it as it is focus on what is in place already instead of changing things and potentially wasting money.

Staplegrove should stay as a parish council as it works well serving our community

My initial assessment from reading the available literature is that this local council are using this opportunity to land grab large areas with approved planning permission in order to benefit from CIL money to promote their town centre ambitions. The town centre is clearly in need of major improvements due to years of neglect, poor management and planning decisions. It is frankly unfair to just steam roller through years of unpaid work, dedication and future planning of the current Parish Councils that exist for the benefit of the current Parished areas. I have continued to give the proposals due consideration but I can't escape from the views I have expressed above.

The council are demonstrating bully boy, neanderthal tactics, the proposals are ill thought out, so I'd advise going back to the drawing board.

Cheddon Fitzpaine should not be reduced as planned

I do not agree that Cheddon Fitzpaine parish be mostly included in the Town council. As a Waterleaze resident I feel part of the Cheddon Fitzpaine community and it is evident that many others do. There was an excellent turnout for the events at the Maidenbrook Country Park to mark the platinum jubilee for example. The current plan would leave Cheddon Fitzpaine ridiculously small. I am very concerned about the effect on the Park and the Somerset Wood. Our parish and West Monkton have joint responsibility for the Park and it makes no sense to reduce one partner so much, particularly the one in which the Park is sited. There is no proposal to maintain funding at the level that would have been possible under the status quo and that is unforgivable. Leave Cheddon Fitzpaine parish as it is.

The proposed Town Council should also encompass the urban areas of Norton Fitzwarren, Bishop's Hull, and Monkton Heathfield, which are in substance part of the 'reality of the town'. Residual rural parts of these parishes should be

amalgamated into adjoining parishes as with the proposal for Staplegrave. There is in my view a case for retaining a separate parish for Trull and Creech St. Michael.

THIS IS A MONEY GRABBING EXERCISE BY THE LIBERAL DEMOCRAT COUNCILLORS, LEAD BY CLLR MIKE RIGBY WHO "HIGHJACKED" THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING WHERE THE PROPOSALS HAD BEEN BROUGHT FORWARD TO THE FULL SW&T COUNCIL FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE CLLRS TASKED AS A WORKING PARTY TO LOOK INTO THE UNPARISHED AREA. MIKE RIGBY'S PROPOSAL INCLUDED PARISHES ON THE OUTSKIRTS ADJACENT TO OPEN COUNTRYSIDE WHERE ALL THE NEW DEVELOPMENT IS TAKING PLACE PRODUCING CIL CONTRIBUTIONS. THE PROPOSAL IS DEVASTATING FOR CHEDDON FITZPAIN PARISH COUNCIL AND WITH QUOTED FIGURES WILL LEAVE THEM WITH ONLY 304 RESIDENTS IN 2027!

Taunton parish should include Taunton only, not already existing surrounding parishes.

Outlying villages need Parish Council status to understand and represent the specific needs of the local community. Taunton Council is not able to truly reflect these views.

No part of Staplegrave parish should be included in the area to be governed by the new council.

Staplegrave parish should include the planned new housing developments known as Staplegrave West and Staplegrave East, including the area which is currently within Kingston St Mary parish.

However, I agree with proposal (vii).

Cancel the whole idea. It's pointless.

I don't agree with any of the changes from the existing 'green' boundary of the unparished area of Taunton to the new 'black' boundary. Just leave the existing parishes unchanged and use the current 'green' unparished boundary as the boundary of the new council-managed area. We already have 'community cohesion' within our respective parishes and there is no need, whatsoever, to make changes to the existing parishes. In other words - don't try to fix what is not broken. In particular, I strongly object to Maidenhead (in which my postcode TA2 8PY sits) being removed from Cheddon Fitzpaine and put into a 'parish' with a completely different 'personality'.

Leave it as it was.

No need for Taunton Council to extend its reach to cover the outlying villages.

I don't agree with any of the changes from the existing unparished boundary area of Taunton to the new boundary that includes wards relocated from existing parishes.

Don't change any of the existing parish boundaries

None

Cheddon Fitzpaine should be left untouched, and Bishops Hull included in the new council. This would make better geographical sense.

It should only encompass the un-parished area of Taunton and not grab land and resources from Parishes.

Cheddon Fitzpaine (or any part of C.F.) should not be included in the new Taunton Town Council.

The new development at Nerrols Farm should remain within a separate Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council

The current Parish of Cheddon Fitzpaine, which includes Maidenbrook and Nerrols developments, should not be swallowed up into the new Town Council. They are now part of our community and are valued just as much as residents of the village.

Cheddon Fitzpaine should not be split up. Maidenbrook and Nerrols are within our parish and should remain so.

The proposal is unfair and will benefit only the new Town Council. It is threatening the existence of some successful historic parish, like Cheddon Fitzpaine.

If the town council is formed, surely it should just include the current un-parished area? Why would you dissolve existing parish areas and lump them into this?

The existing parish councils should be retained

Existing parishes of Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton to remain and could be extended to include new developments of Nerrols.

I do not agree with the proposal that the village of Staplegrove be incorporated into the new Taunton Parish Council and I do not want the Staplegrove Parish Council to be abolished.

In the review it is stated

6.2 The Council notes the Government's continued commitment to town and parish councils and its guidance that it "expects to see a trend in the creation, rather than the abolition of parishes" and

5.4 Parish Councils' "directly elected parish councillors represent local communities in a way that other bodies, however worthy [!] cannot.

The present proposition reduces the elected representation of the villagers of Staplegrove to 1 councillor, compared with the current 6 parish councillors, 3 district councillors and 1 county councillor. This is a retrograde step, not progress!

Staplegrove is a village. It has a village atmosphere and a community spirit. It is not, and never has been, an extension of Taunton; it grew around the Manor and the Church and the surrounding farms formed the community. Our TA2 postcode demonstrates this well; Kibby's Field is Green Wedge to mark the village's separation from the town and the Taunton Vale Sports Club was established here on the Green Wedge to continue the open space and separation from the town.

The planned 'merger' with a new Taunton council effectively means we will no longer have a voice for our community. Would our Recreation Ground and The Grove, (which is designated Village Green, for a reason!) be as well protected and nurtured by a larger, more remote council? The Recreation Ground was left in Trust to the children of the village of Staplegrove, and the Parish Council, in perpetuity, is the trustee, ensuring the field and its boundaries and the play equipment is all safely cared for. In recent years a new footpath has been

established along the wall of the Rec. to allow villagers to walk safely to the shop, Post Office and Church without having to risk life and limb by walking along the busy Manor Road. A hedge has been planted along the fence of Kibby's Field and additional trees planted, a look to the future and contributing to bio-diversity. Would a more remote council contribute to the continued care of the Rec. with such dedication and voluntary commitment?

We were told by our County Councillor at a recent Parish Council meeting that Trull has been omitted from being absorbed into the new town parish because it has a church, a village hall, a village school and a shop and is seen as a village. If these are the criteria for being a village we meet them fully. Staplegrove too has a church, a village hall, a village school, a Post Office and a shop. We also have a village Sports Club (as well as the Taunton Vale Club) and a Scout Hut with various levels of Scouting using the hut as their HQ. Surely we should be treated in the same manner as Trull and be excluded from this new town council since we can demonstrate that Staplegrove too is a village?!

Each week the parish Journal lists 10 or more clubs or activities taking place in the village, most, but not all, in either the village hall or the church. The Village Hall was built through the efforts of villagers in planning and fundraising for the excellent amenity we now have here, a hub for a host of activities. Similarly, the recently re-ordered Parish Church interior has made it more amenable for a variety of activities to take place within the village and in a familiar environment; the village hall, similarly, has a busy programme of events.

I do not agree with the proposal for Staplegrove to become part of a new Taunton Council and I wish us to retain our Parish Council.

You are downsizing the parish of Cheddon Fitzpaine and its rural environment and transferring the new properties into the suggested new town council.

Maintain the more suburban/rural identity which is different to that of the town

The Cheddon Fitzpaine parish must remain outside of the new boundary.

I am strongly against Parish Council's being reduced or abolished.

The proposed boundary with Trull parish through Orchard Grove. As proposed this part of the proposed Town Council region makes an erratic incursion into areas of Trull parish, encroaching close to the heart of Trull and is detrimental to the sense of parish cohesion currently experienced by several Trull properties.

With the Orchard Grove development designed with an east and a west region divided by the Galmington Stream green space, this green space would form a more natural/logical boundary to the revised Trull Parish and maintain current community cohesion.

If, after consultation and discussion, the above variation to the proposal is considered to be too drastic then an east-west boundary running west from Horts Cottages/Rose Cottage in Comeytrove Road to the Galmington Stream green space would similarly achieve the community cohesion sought.

A third, but less attractive, option would be to have the parish boundary continue across Comeytrove Road from near the south end of Comeytrove Neighbourhood

Park roughly WSW along one of the proposed Orchard Grove residential roads to the Galmington Stream green space.

The course of Galmington Stream would seem to be the natural boundary to incorporate for each of the above options, though Lype Hill Lane could serve this purpose if preferred.

Retain Staplegrove as a Parish Council.

In our view the creation of a Taunton town council will sever the links with individual communities.

We live on the edge of Staplegrove Village. We value the existing Parish Council which provides local knowledge of the area to provide information on local issues and help make decisions for this unique rural and historic area. This knowledge will be lost if we are included in the expanse of a Town Council, with representatives that do not know the area.

An example of this is we knew nothing of these review until the Parish Council delivered a flyer to our home.

We believe the boundary should retain our home as part of the Staplegrove Parish.

It may be a consideration to redraw the boundary between Taunton Town and Staplegrove along Staplegrove Road.

North Taunton development should NOT be included as part of Staplegrove Parish as it will be too big, with no historic link, but would benefit to be created into a new separate Parish which would encourage this NEW community to have an identity.

Abolishing parish of comeytrove and including in new town council. That is a community area by itself on outskirts of Taunton, doesn't make sense to 'grab' that parish, leave them be and focus on more central Taunton unparished areas.

It should not extend/take over existing Parish areas.

It shouldn't be proposed in the first place. Community issues and spirit can only be maintained with smaller councils that can reflect local residents and businesses concerns

Looking at the population density on the map it is clear where the majority of the funding will go. I am skeptical that outlying parishes will receive anywhere near the current funding. I also find it difficult to see how a centralised council will engage sufficiently or understand the particular needs or wishes of individual communities. Individual voices will be lost as a result of the plans.

I feel that it is reasonable for neighbouring parishes to merge if appropriate, but they should still maintain their individual identities.

Existing Parish boundaries should be maintained and the Parish Councils retained.
CHANGE IS NOT ALWAYS PROGRESS OR IMPROVEMENT.

Changes to the existing parish boundaries should be disregarded.

If it goes ahead then should stick to the current boundaries.

The new town council should be based on the old unparished area of the town as debated for the past ten years and as the earlier recommendation when Cllr Libby Lisgo headed the panel. I accept all minor amendments to boundaries, but not the

closure of three parishes. Comeytrowe extends way beyond Bishops Hull to Rumwell. Staplegrove is an establish parish in everyway they had new estates there before the 1974 government reorganisation. For Chedden Fitzpayne the balance of electors left is too small for a viable council. As an alternative I believe all the surrounding parishes to Taunton (with much lower band D tax costs) could by voluntary agreement contribute to Taunton Town costs example extending the Mayors role and by asking for contributions towards the regional Vivary Park. A council based on 34,500 electors can attract more voluntary councillors to share responsibilities.

Existing parishes should remain as they are.

Only the current unrepresented areas within Taunton Town itself should have a new town council to represent them. The current parish councils should be expanded to include any outlying new developments. All parish/town councils should consult one another and if minor changes reflecting specific new urbanisations are agreed then small transfers should be allowed by mutual agreement (and also if agreed by the communities affected). This does not preclude another larger consultation in say 10 year's time. Current successful parish councils such as Staplegrove should grow to encompass any outlying conurbations but should not be abolished on a whim to create some very large entity which may be a disaster.

I live in Waterleaze on the Maidenbrook Estate. Living here does not feel like part of Taunton. I feel too far out of the town and definitely feel very much part of Cheddon Fitzpaine whose Parish Council have been excellent in representing the needs and concerns of the residents. Therefore, I would wish to remain under Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council control as they know the area so well and have done a great job. Long may it continue.

Leave Comeytrowe Out

Not to include any of the houses in Cheddon Fitzpaine parish area.

Staplegrove.

The historic centre of the village, including the parish church, the Grove, village green, manor road, rectory road and surrounding roads would be lost and swallowed up by the proposed new town parish (council) with only one councillor to represent the area, which currently has 3 councillors on the SWT council.

This area should be represented by its own parish council to maintain responsibility for it's own unique needs of its residents.

I would urge the governance review team to consider redrawing the boundary between the new town council and Staplegrove, e.g. along Staplegrove road.

As a resident of Staplegrove I firmly believe that the existing Staplegrove parish council should remain in place and NOT be absorbed into a large and unrepresentative Taunton Town Council. The Parish council is doing an excellent job bringing the issues over transport, ecology, planning and development to the county council governance and beyond. A whole Taunton town Council will not have the time or knowledge to represent the Staplegrove parish effectively. The new developments will see Staplegrove expand and this should be included within the expanded Staplegrove Parish Council boundary.

However, I do believe all Taunton residents should be represented with a parish council or more appropriate individual parish councils.

The proposal should be the unparished area should form its own parish or town council if they want to. The already formed parish councils, so far as I can tell, are quite happy, and have not requested change. If there is different information we should be told which parish councils are unhappy with the way things are at present and why they are unhappy, before any decision is made. Of course, any new building in the Staplegrove Parish Area will naturally be incorporated into the Staplegrove Parish Council area.

Staplegrove should be excluded

Staplegrove should keep its current boundary and its parish council which is part of our local identity. I identify as a Staplegrove resident not as a Taunton town resident.

The Town Council should cover area outlines in Black on Map B. It should NOT include area outlined in Blue on Map A

Certain older developments, including our own (Maidenbrook), have been under the umbrella of existing parish councils for the past 20 years and would prefer it to stay that way. Maidenbrook, in particular, feels a village in its own right alongside Cheddon Fitzpaine and Monkton Heathfield and in no way feels part of Taunton town! We are also very concerned for the future of the country park, as several Maidenbrook residents have been and are heavily involved in the planning and development of this park.

The majority of respondents to the initial consultation wanted only the unparished area to be parished. On this basis alone you should be supporting that opinion.

Why else is it wrong to include parts of other parishes?

1. Given the utter lack of logic in the plan (eg letting Bishop's Hull retain its current boundary) then the driver behind it must be about taking the CIL funding from future developments - this is money that is owed to the Parishes to mitigate against the effects of the development that will still be occurring in their area. It is also likely that the money will then be taken away from the parish where it was generated and spent in the town centre (? at Firepool).
2. You are incorporating developments that have only outline planning permission at this stage - this means including large areas of field that won't be built on for at least 10 years - if ever! This is ludicrous.
3. A new Town Council is untested - why not at least start with the unparished area and if in 10 years (when more houses have actually been built) it has proved itself to be a good and effective council then at that point it could enlarge.
4. You have not consulted the Parish Clerks who will be losing their jobs as a result of this process.
5. If the goal is to increase the representation for the people of the unparished area - how can you justify making the representation worse for the people of Comeytrowe and Staplegrove?

Leave Cheddon Fitzpaine parish as it is. We do not need or want to be part of a new town council. Don't try to fix what isn't broke. You need to look at what is best for each distinctly different community.

How come Bishops Hull and Trull get exempted from this proposal and not Staplegrove? Staplegrove is a self contained village with Church, Post Office,

Manor, Village Hall, Hospital, Historic Grove (think Teddy Bear's Picnic) and Recreation Ground. How is this not a village?
What's more if the Parliamentary Boundaries Commission get their way Staplegrove will be included in the Tiverton and Minehead Constituency. So to be in Taunton Parish and Tiverton Constituency just doesn't make any sense.

The current parish councils should be left as they are.

Staplegrove should remain as a separate entity with its own Parish Council as at present.

West Monkton and Norton Fitzwarren, despite recent and current large scale housing developments, have retained their current Parish Councils. There is no reason why Staplegrove should not do the same.

This proposal will significantly reduce the councillor representation for local Staplegrove inhabitants from 6 current Parish councillors, and 3 SWT councillors to 1 Ward councillor. Staplegrove retains its area identity in the same way as West Monkton and Norton Fitzwarren.

Staplegrove has had a successful Parish Council. It would not serve any useful purpose to cut the area in two, in the way suggested. The area has a character of its own, which should not be destroyed.

Remove Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish from the review area and leave the parish as it is!

The proposal to change the current boundaries of Cheddon Fitzpaine parish.

Area too large with many differing needs

I think the current parishes areas should stay in place to represent the interests of the residents living in those areas

The reduction of Staplegrove.

The existing parish council boundaries should not be moved. The argument and process should not be a simple 'is it urban or not' with parishes aligned as such. Parishes can, and do, have a good working mix of the two - Bishops Hull being an example, and indeed one that these proposals intend to maintain. This approach needs to be consistent. Yes there should be a new town parish for the un-parished area, but the existing Parishes should remain as is, allowing them and their parishioners to retain historical identities and also allow the Parish councils to continue to fulfil their obligations and commitments to their parishioners as planned.

Maidenbrook should remain within the parish of Cheddon to ensure this parish with its strong sense of identity can continue to exist as a viability community. Cheddon sees itself as a rural parish with close connections to Kingston St Mary and West Monkton established over the centuries.

Likewise Staplegrove sees itself as a rural village separate from TAunton (I attended their Parish Council meetings for 20 years as a district councillor). It sees itself as separate from Taunton with a history and identity of its own.

I believe that SWaT should respect the already present communities and that any change in existing boundaries should be absolutely minimal. I cannot believe the

proposed changes are legal? It is divisive too - communities are happy and don't want to change, SWaT is creating a Brexit 'us and them' atmosphere, which is wrong.

No one is against Taunton Town having a new council, but how these further boundary changes came into play is wrong and probably illegal. It is also wrong and very arrogant to assume that existing communities want to change and become part of the town.

Post Covid, communities and networks within them have got even stronger - it cannot be right to split communities up.

I also think it is wrong that SWaT are considering grabbing areas that are proposed for development, which have not even been developed yet - this smacks of financial greed. It is also very short-sighted as development is ever changing.

There are many inconsistencies with how different parishes are being treated - for example, Bishops Hull, and West Monkton seem to escape altogether, or pretty lightly, from these changes - but Cheddon Fitzpaine has a strong community within it, yet over half of it is being taken by SWaT?

Cheddon Fitzpaine is one of the smaller communities, changing our area and the impact this will have on our resources, is frankly unfair and wrong.

It's absurd that CFPC are signing a lease to share the Maidenbrook Country Park with West Monkton, but if SWaT get their way in the CGR, we will not be able to meet our legal commitments in the MCP with West Monkton - this is setting Cheddon Fitzpaine up to fail? This cannot be right. It does also not sit well, or is comparable with the current Core strategy and Neighbourhood Plan either and creates further anomalies.

It cannot be right that SWaT are considering these boundary changes without giving substantial compensation or ongoing financial support to Cheddon Fitzpaine.

It seems clear from reading the CGR and studying the maps, that SWaT are simply concerned with creating a new strong Town Council, with no regard to the villages and communities already here.

Cheddon Fitzpaine is a village, with its own strong identity and community - we are not part of Taunton and we have always fought to stay as we are. We should remain untouched - if anything had to go, I can see the sense in perhaps making the parts of the industrial estate at Priorswood under one parish, but that is all.

Finally, the consultation held at Cheddon Fitzpaine was held on a weekday between 3pm and 7pm - this is when most families are doing school/college runs (rush-hour), and getting home to cook/do homework. This is the worst time SWaT could have chosen to do this consultation - it is clear this is simply a box ticking exercise for SWaT.

<p>The questions in these responses and information requested is very one sided and I do wonder of SWaTs market research information would stand the test of what is legal and fair.</p>
<p>The un-parished area of Taunton should become a parish. However, the already parished areas surrounding Taunton should remain as they are. The proposals significantly reduce the electoral voice of these parishes (Trull, Cheddon Fitzpaine, WM etc), as many will become engulfed by the new Taunton Town Council. The surrounding parishes will lose access to vital CIL, with funds diverting to the new Taunton Town Council and so will lose the ability to influence where their money is being distributed for their parishes. Each parish and community is different, so residents should have the ability to influence and know exactly where their funds are being spent.</p>
<p>Staplegrove parish council should stay. It looks after the needs of all living in this area. A large town council will not have same desire to look after all the separate villages as they are</p>
<p>The existing Cheddon Fitzpaine boundary should remain substantially unchanged with only very minor changes . This was the view of the majority of consultees living in the area in the first consultation. Unfortunately Somerset West and Taunton councillors seem to have ignored these views and put forward proposals that go against the wishes of the residents.</p>
<p>The view of the association is that, for the time being, a Town Council should be established using the geography covered by the existing unparished area. This should be followed, within a set period of about four/five years, by a Governance Review to consider extending the area of the Town Council to include the major urban developments which have, or will have, occurred outside of the present unparished area.</p> <p>The existing Parish Councils function well whereas the functioning of the proposed Town Council is yet to be tested.</p> <p>If proposals do proceed in line with, or similar to, the report the views of those parishes affected by the proposals should be taken into consideration as reflected, where appropriate, by the PCs</p>
<p>I don't think the whole of Staplegrove Parish should be included within the town council boundary. I think the Bindon Rd industrial estate should be within the town council.</p>
<p>It does not reflect all local residents who "look to Taunton for carrying out their activities in the pattern of their daily life."</p>
<p>Present parish councils should not be included</p>
<p>Leave the rural parishes to be run by people who know them best, local councils.</p>
<p>The view of the majority of Cheddon Fitzpaine residents in the first consultation was that they strongly opposed being incorporated into a new town council. Therefore, why have their views been ignored ?</p>
<p>Keep the original Parish boundaries</p>
<p>Reasons/Comments given by those who responded 'Yes'.</p>

the remaining cheddon fitzpaine parish being included within the new town council.

I do think that in future, the continued existence of Bishops Hull, Trull and Norton Fitzwarren as separate parishes should also be reviewed. Bishops Hull has been physically linked to Taunton since the 1970s, when the Waterfield Drive development next to the A38 was built. Major developments which are clearly part of Taunton's housing provision are taking place on the former Taunton Trading Estate in Norton Fitzwarren and at Ford Farm.

So whilst the basic approach seems right, the boundary extensions to encompass the totality of the urban area will still be lagging behind what has happened on the ground.

I live in Bishops Hull, so are not directly affected. I think the views of those living in the unparished area / affected areas should take precedence.

But I would also include Bishops Hull

Yes based on my understanding that the changes do not incorporate Bishops Hull

Agree in broad terms but some parts of BH and NF seem to be functionally a part of Taunton

7. Do you believe that services such as parks and open spaces, public toilets, control of litter, Car Parking and community events e.g. Christmas Lights Switch On are important to the place where you live?

The full list of Reasons/Comments given by respondents to Question 7 is listed below. Each row is a separate respondent's answer.

Reasons/Comments given by those who responded 'Don't Know'
Town Centre versus Community Parish. Of course mentioning costs here is more likely to have a shall we leave it Council.
Litter and car parking (important) are not comparable to a Christmas lights switch on (not important). This question is vague in its intention.
1. parks etc. - yes 2. WCs - yes 3. litter - yes 4. car parks - yes, if responsibly & gently done 5. events - only of local or national importance
town council should do town centre - parish likewise
Yes. Given they have the resources
The appropriateness of various responsibilities depends on the boundary scope. Christmas Lights Switch On is very much a town centre-specific "service" and should be the responsibility of the town council. The fact that such a niche service is specifically listed here highlights EXACTLY why the reach of Taunton Town Council needs to be limited. Clearly the focus will be on town centre activities to the detriment of requirements in the existing parished areas, who already hold numerous, well-attended, community events, but will be left with no community to attend them. This comes back to my point about subsidiarity in my answer to question 6.
You can't put on the same level essential services like car parking or control of litter and social events or Christmas lights.
The question that is being omitted is 'Where do you perceive that you live?' the answer to which depends on the service that is being discussed; Taunton or a much more local area. We don't see that Christmas lights in the centre of town will enhance the facilities of Cheddon Fitzpaine, whereas the provision of public open spaces, play provision, litter picks and community signage in the direct area where we live does enhance 'the area where we live' and creates a sense of community that the new plans will tear asunder.
These are really town things although we do have a local recreation ground which is important for local people. It's a real backwards step if the new county/district council can't provide any car parking and will be the nail in the coffin for the town centre. Litter is a problem locally and I regularly pick up litter when out on walks; I'm not aware of the councils doing this and litter bins are frequently overflowing. Parks are very important as shown during lockdowns especially as many people

live in accommodation with insufficient outdoor space so someone will need to sort park facilities out.
Reasons/Comments received from those who responded 'No'
Open Spaces are important and Parish events.
Parks and Open Spaces and Parish events.
Parks and Open Spaces and Parish events.
This question combines too many things together and is therefore pointless for actually gauging public interest in any one (or none) of these things.
Costs to much leave it to the unitary authority
This is another ambiguous and misleading question. Yes, all of those things are important to the individual parishes, insofar as they exist in any particular parish. However, the items described above are important only to the individual parishes, not to the other parishes. The reason I have answered No is that the services provided within the current Unparished 'green' boundary are specific to the land use and function of that particular area (or 'parish') and the particular needs and requirements of its 'parishioners', be they individual or corporate.
Not relevant to where I live
Reasons/Comments given by those who responded 'Yes' and thus were further asked - If so, should parish and town councils consider providing such services if the principal council is unable to continue doing so?
Funding this would be necessary as parish and town councils are under a strain as it is.
Our superb parish council should continue to do what it does by addressing the needs of the village.
Yes especially public toilets for equality issues.
Yes subject to cost being reasonable
If they are adequately funded and resourced.
Open Spaces most definitely and community events
The Council does not fulfil the service they provide

Yes
Yes if the risk is these local things fall down
Someone needs to provide those services, and it should be a public body that can raise a precept to pay for them. It is unfair that other Council Tax payers should subsidise services that are essentially Taunton based.
But it is for the new councillors to decide the priorities and value for money
Absolutely- this would support cohesion
Yes
Absolutely!
Yes
Most definitely, but the Principal council should have this in their remit even if it is then 'delegated'.
Places to go and things to do for children and young people
No
Yes
Yes. However, parking needs to be considered strategically. It would be damaging to undermine the park and ride scheme, located outside the parish at Taunton Gateway (should that be within the parish too?) by adopting parking pricing approaches that encourage town centre parking over use of park and ride. Controlling parking, on and off street, through pricing and other means such as CPZs is essential to achieving a better transport system for the town favouring public transport, walking and cycling. There is a danger that parking income concerns override wider public policy needs.
Yes.

The principal council should not be "unable to do so", it's their responsibility. Same as the fire service should not be unable to put out fires.

Provided that the total council tax for the unitary plus the town council precept are baselined to initially match the total council tax County Council plus Somerset West and Taunton Council plus the unparished wards levy.

Yes provided cost of provision does not fall fully on the new town council

Leading question but yes

Some parish and town councils have no idea what to do and think what's right for them and their friends everyone wants

Now this is an interesting question! I am aware that since a principal councils have be unable to increase the council tax beyond a percentage determined by central government (unless council taxpayers agree) the alternative has been to get local councils to provide such services. Local councils not being subject to capping. Hopefully the unparished area of Taunton's council taxpayers will, at last, from April 2023 be paying their fair share of services including the cost of administration.

Yes. Taunton is Somerset's County Town. It's status as such, and it's social, cultural and economic importance should be reflected in the establishment of a Taunton Town Council by making sure it is properly funded.

Yes but the council should remain responsible for them unless the parish actively wants to take them on.

Yes

Absolutely. Our open spaces are limited so need to be looked after properly.

Yes, provided that suitable funding is available.

Yes, providing funding is provided.

Perhaps the councils shouldn't waste so much money on daft ideas

Yes hence need for devolved powers

Yes, but why would the principal council not do this we will be paying tax to cover this?

Yes.
Yes because we are would benefit from focus on our area . We are the Cinderellas! We would love for our cycle paths and walk ways to be cleared regularly and to have cultural and social events..
Yes
Yes
I together with most people I meet, think that Taunton has given up on keeping the weeds from the gutters and it is very unsightly and doesn't help the flooding problems. Please don't say it's 'Back to nature' because that's a cop out for laziness .
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
It is important to have local control. The unitary authority has been imposed on us and SCC does not have a great reputation for providing services.
No, I believe this should remain the responsibility of the principal council.
Yes I think they should.
Yes of course!!! They are a very important element of the town culture and beneficial for engagement and positive wellbeing
yes
Totally agree the Town Council should play it's part.
I am very concerned and disappointed by the statement that the Principal Council would be unable to continue to provide these services! However, these are local issues and should be managed at the local level

Yes
Christmas lights no
Yes , if given funds
No
what public toilets we had lots a long time a go not now, the parks look a mess
Provision of public toilets, open spaces and parking should be the responsibility of the principal council and a minimum provision should be a legal requirement. If the local town council chooses to fund extra local initiatives like fairs, that is reasonable.
Yes if they are taking money from the residents. I now have to pay an annual sum for maintenance of the area around me but also have to pay rates to councils. I don't want to pay anything to Wellington Town Council as they are awful public servants. Don't let this happen in Taunton. The 2000 new homes in Orchard Grove will no doubt be the same. These maintenance fees are disgusting.
Yes
Yes.
Now we get to the money of it. Why would the council not be involved in parks, parking and littering? These functions are managed by SWT and failure to structure these into the new unitary Council would speak to a failure of previous bodies' ability to ensure all previous functions are incorporated.
Yes
I don't care who provides it but someone has to.
Yes but they will need funding
Yes

TAUNTON Towncenter and what public toilets as there isn't any there needs to be better facilities for disabled people

Only if it does not increase Council tax.

It works now so there is no need to create a larger and probably less efficient body. Large is not better and often not more cost effective

Yes - particularly public toilets. However I thought the whole idea of only having one Council was so that they did do everything.

Definitely.

the principal council should do this as we have seen that a local council fails to do this anyway

Council houses are more important especially cost of living is rising. Council houses are cheaper to rent compared to private landlords. Imagine a family earn 1500 a month and pays 650 to 850 rent on top of that is council tax 150, electricity and water, food, child needs. People are meant to live and enjoy life and not just live and work to pay bills. Families are not even able to have holidays. Additional council would just mean additional cost on tax payers money. So, no..Taunton has more retirement homes than affordable housing for working people and families. This should considered first.

Yes

Yes of course

Yes, provided they have the funds and it's clear they also have the RESPONSIBILITY as well.

Yes

If the principal council are unable to provide the basic essentials, what on Earth is going on?

I lived in areas with local town and parish councils and they did nothing I could see to improve the local area.

Yes all Parish and Town Council's should contribute.

Yes, as long as it is properly funded
So long as the principle council don't use this as an excuse to renege on there responsibilities.
Yes
Yes
Yes if feasible. These are all essential to the health and prosperity of any town.
The parish council should have control over this if the county council does not; it's goals should be to do innovative forward thinking schemes as well, such as reducing the amount of parking within Taunton so that cycling, walking and urban development can be encouraged over dead space where the space is wasted/underused on nothing more than parking cars.
It is a unitary authority let those who really have the powe to take full responsibility for all activities and actions that is the premise that unitary authorities were sold to us on.
Parking on the pavement is getting ridiculous. Xmas lights are pathetic. They are better displays in smaller places. The amount of empty shops is increasing and so are the number of people on the street asking for money. The bridge looks disgusting. The county town of Somerset looks more like the forgotten dump of Somerset
Yes The town needs promotion and expansion. It is falling behind with services compared to Bridgwater now
With all due respect to our hard working Parish Council in Cotford they do not have the band width to stretch beyond their present remit.
Yes but with the proviso that the budgets currently expended by SW&T Council on these services are transferred to the parish and town councils as their base budget service and increased each year are by the Unitary in line with any budget increase it wishes to apply Itself.
The parish and town Council can then apply any changes it wishes through its own council tax precept.
Yes
Yes

Yes.
Yes
I'm sure all small parishes would be happy to come together to help
Parish councils for their own area. They know it , and they know the locals.
Yes, you her so much council tax money that tow should be spotles, clean and architecturally pleasing. Instead we ha concrete, dirty town centre full of junkies and unkept green wedges by each road - obstructing drivers view!
Yes
Taunton Deane struggle to provide these services at present. Which is why as a community Cheddon Fitzpaine have stepped up - local people seem to clean the parks of litter! (Us included)
Yes.
No removing these services will reduce economies of scale, add to bureaucracy, and cost the tax payer more
Yes, especially for bins, parks, litter etc. as they know the area much better!
Yes
Yes
Very high it's one of the only visual indications that the local government are doing anything. At the moment my views are this is being done poorly. Two areas for concern from my perspective 1) roads condition very poor and dangerous (lawn road) 2) parks and Verges kept in a poor and dangerous state (please don't tell me it's to help the bees)
No, because parish councils do not usually have the staff to cover these duties which should be provided by the main council.

Yes of course. Funding should be removed from the new unwanted Somerset council and given to town and parish councils who will provide the services
no
Yes
Potentially. Careful thought needs to be given. Car parking in particular can be a very hot topic locally and sometimes having a slightly removed body may assist in objectivity and strategically sound decisions being made and avoid parochial issues stymieing progress towards a more sustainable future.
It is essential for the wellbeing of the community that such environmental work is done including the trimming of public pathways throughout the town.
Yes, the proposed Town Council should have resources and be authorised to influence community and cultural matters, including car parking, parks and issues relating to the street environment and ambience of the Town Centre area.
It depends on funding - at present I believe both parish and town councils are either underfunded or inefficient with funding as Taunton and it's surrounding area is deteriorating. I think Taunton town centre is dying, the current car parking strategy is adding to its death. Taunton is no longer a nice place to live and as a consequence I am moving away from Taunton and Somerset as a whole in the autumn.
Yes these are vital local services
Yes
Yes Parish and town councils should provide the services as indeed the parish councils are already doing.
possibly: but they MUST be mindful of cost, other priorities and serving the whole community
These community services should be delivered together by the relevant authorities and the 'not our responsibility ' attitude avoided. Thus us when we end up with issues such as those seen now with overgrown hedges encroaching on footpaths. Working together with local land owners who may have responsibility has to be a good thing improving the situation for residents, the tidiness of the area and hopefully in turn, residents pride in their town. Currently the is such a poor view of the town being run down, untidy and uncared for. Maybe community involvement in tidy up sessions such as those on some of the authority owned estates, would help to improve residents engagement in improving the town and their opinion of it. This is only one example of how providing a service could improve the all round view if the town.

<p>It is important that matters such as parking charges, on- and off-street parking management and bus shelters, ultimately remain under the overall control of the statutory Transport Authority, and are not devolved. Otherwise, there is a risk that the lack of a joined-up approach that has characterised the two-tier County/District framework since 1974, will be perpetuated.</p>
<p>No, this sounds like budget off-loading, drop it onto the lowest common denominator, parks are best done collectively, individual park upkeep can be prohibitive.</p>
<p>The proposed Town council should provide all of the above</p>
<p>Somebody needs to have clear responsibility as at the moment there are alot of areas not being cared for. People need to know who is responsible and who to contact.</p>
<p>This should be taken on by the existing Parish councils and is nothing really to do with these proposals.</p>
<p>Yes but only where the principal council is unable or unwilling to provide them.</p>
<p>Yes but only where the principal council is unable or unwilling to provide them.</p>
<p>Yes</p>
<p>Transfer of these assets from District to Towns and Parishes has been contentious in other parts of Somerset West and Taunton. This has largely been due to the poor condition of some assets and the major change in precept and responsibility involved for existing councils. In the case of Taunton, provided that a new administrative structure is created with the resource to support such services, it seems appropriate for this transfer to occur, given that local people would, possibly with the exception of the crematorium, expect such services to be provided as locally as possible.</p>
<p>Yes</p>
<p>Somebody needs to own them. Taunton's parks, open spaces and river are some of its most enjoyable parts (unlike the through traffic which ruins it). I think the town has the potential for more pedestrianisation with maybe an electric shuttle bus service running around all the shopping areas (railway station, North Street, High Street, East Reach). I would have thought that anything like this would be more appropriately controlled locally. However, I am not in a good position to judge as to which ownership would be most efficient / cost effective.</p>
<p>Only if there is an increase in the allocation of funding, based on the resident population of that area.</p>

A new town council ought to have the opportunity to take on additional facilities which fall within it's boundaries.
Rather a silly question. With the associated money coming from new developments the use of these funds should obviously include services such as those mentioned. The inclusion of the proposed developments at Staplegrove and Comeytrowe in the new Council area will presumably provide a big boost to the council's income.
Community action on litter is key as should fines for those who litter - local action groups better at dealing with this
The parish council should have devolved powers do so anyway
Yes but only if proper funding is made available to them - I would like to see a funding model before saying this is a good idea!
No
Only if Somerset Council is unable to provide these services, which seems inconceivable. It would obviously be cheaper and more flexible and efficient to provide them from county management
The community where I live already does things like Christmas lights themselves.
It is all a matter of who pays for it (and the benefits of scale)
Yes
if I understand the question properly... yes. Of course these things are important... who would say otherwise in a county town?!
Yes definitely, they boost the community feeling
Open space management needs to be a somerset wide venture to ensure that the ecological emergency is addressed.
Yes
Yes
There is an increasing role for parish and town councils in delivering local services where it makes sense to do so, particularly around parks and open spaces...

Christmas lights switch on there is also a role for local businesses in supporting this too

Yes

What is the principal council you are talking about??

This could only be done if you increase their precept which again will impact residents tax burden.

Yes although they must be fully funded to the level they have been historically under Taunton Deane and Somerset West and Taunton Councils

Yes

I am concerned at the ability of Town and Parish Councils to be able to pay to provide these services.

Yes

Yes

All of the above services mentioned are very important to Taunton as a town with the existing parishes continuing as they are.

Yes.

The discussion as to who provides the above services will be made by Councillors for Unitary and District, with the best possible outcome for the local residents. That seems to be common-sense.

Yes, but only so long as sufficient extra funding is allocated to the town and parish councils to enable them to provide these services.

Yes

I am confident in saying that the residents of Summerleaze Close, Hale Way or Stoney Furlong will not receive the same level of service from the proposed town council than they currently do, regarding their complaints and concerns on matters such as road signage, local parks and bus stops.

Simply put the newly formed town centre parish council, the town council will have far too many other priorities to cope with.

I have not heard to date, any sound arguments as to why the new PC cannot be

set up to include at the start just the unparished area. This would allow all the Town Centre priorities to be tackled before there is a need to look at adjusting and amending the current borders. Or as per my suspicions outlined in para 6. you have no way of financing it.

There are also a number of other unconvincing arguments the proposal makes such as why Bishops Hull PC remains relatively unchanged, it doesn't make sense?

Yes

Yes. Cheddon Fitzpaine should provide such services

No, the principal council should discharge its responsibilities.

Yes

TAKING IN ALL THE NEW DEVELOPMENT AREAS ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TAUNTON IS DELIBERATE IN ORDER TO "PROP UP" RUNNING COSTS FOR THE CENTRE OF TAUNTON. THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS IN TAUNTON TOWN CENTRE ARE PATHETIC AS IS THE TOWN CENTRE ITSELF, IT NEEDS MILLIONS SPENDING ON IT TO BRING IT INTO THIS CENTURY AND BECOME A CLEAN, MODERN AREA LIKE EXETER TOWN CENTRE. MONEY WILL NOT GET SPENT IN THE PROPOSED OUTER AREAS AS THE LIST ABOVE ONLY APPLIES TO THE CENTRE OF TAUNTON.

If the Somerset Council is unable to provide help with these services then a Town / Parish Council should be in place to do so.

If Somerset Council is unable to help with any of these problems then a Town / Parish Council would be able to hopefully.

yes

YES

Absolutely but it must be funded appropriately.

Yes

Yes, clearly

You have not explained the circumstances whereby the Somerset West and Taunton Council would be 'unable to continue doing so'. If the principal council failed to provide such services, the council taxes paid by parishioners would either have to be given to the parish or town councils or paid directly to those councils.

Somerset West and Taunton Council are responsible for providing all services

Yes, but obviously this would be finance dependant.

providing the funding is in place but there should be clear demarcation between the responsibilities of different layers of local government.

You need to ensure we do not end up with multiple tiers of local government which will frustrate the clear benefits of a Unitary Authority.

This must not be used as a excuse to re-invent either SWT or TDBC - they are defunct and their responsibilities will be assumed by the Unitary Authority.

This should be the responsibility of unitary authority and not used as an excuse to reinvent TDBC.

As long as it can be adequately funded.

Parish Council to provide

Yes, but this would have to be financially dependant.

PERHAPS, IF IT CAN BE PROPERLY FUNDED.

Yes

If funding is provided.

Yes

This should be part of the principal councils to service.

Yes indeed. The voice of the local community in these areas is vital for an appreciation of the needs of the area

Yes
Only if they are given the finances to do this.
Yes, but only after the reasons for the principal council's inability has been interrogated adequately, eg. if due to finance then an appropriate increase in Council Tax would be preferable to hiving these services off to parish councils which don't have the same access to professional departments.
This is all to do with building a common community spirit. Bringing all the smaller "communities " together in one place. All of these should continue to be provided by the principle council, if they are seriously wanting to promote a sense of community in the town and promote community cohesion?
yes
If funding allows
If funds allow but this smacks of passing the buck down to local areas when the principal council should maybe be managing it's budgets more effectively
Yes, we pay a lot of money towards council tax and basic amenities should be provided. Public parks are good for everyone. With regards to community events, this is different. I feel that Christmas lights, markets etc are all good for the town and should be provided. It should be up to individual communities as to which events they wish to hold and pay for in their areas.
There will need to be a mechanism so that car parking in the town centre doesn't compete with park and ride
Many local services such as recreation grounds, litter control etc. are already well provided with Parish Council involvement
No, the Somerset Council should do it all.
Yes
Yes
The consultation totally ignores the precedent of a new Weymouth Town Council in the Dorset Unitary change April 2019. There should have been a clear description of the transfer of assets there. A major cost for green spaces now with their own works depot. public toilets, community rooms and litter collection. I have reworked

the 2022/2023 Weymouth budget with SW&T budget amounts plus logical parish overheads and a 10% addition to build up the new councils financial reserves. It reveals a £1.3 million cost transferred from the district council to the new town council and a £2.25 million precept , It greatly helps show the scale of change a new council will make. See separate submission comment two Roger House .

Yes

Yes but where would funding come from?

Yes

Yes

Yes

This should, however, be the responsibility of the principal authority. To do otherwise just provides the principal authority with an excuse to 'pass the buck' and reduce public services. Parish councils should retain the responsibility only for areas they have accepted responsibility for (e.g. assets which have been left in trust to such parishes and to their immediate local communities).

Don't understand what is meant by principle council.

Yes where applicable

yes, and it may be a good idea for for such services to be provided by the Town or Parish council under Devolved Services

Yes, but sufficient funds required.

Yes

Yes.

Depends where the funds have been allocated, how is the council tax divided?

Yes, if this is properly funded
Several of the questions are phrased to enable a positive to be counted in the final assessment. Of course people feel services are important! and are therefore unable to say No. Currently in Staplegrove we have a well maintained area including all the facilities mentioned at the end of this questionnaire. Our excellent Parish Council looks after all our local needs extremely well. I am not clear as to the intent behind this change. Maybe you could let us know.
Yes
Yes. As stated above, we are concerned about the future of the country park as if the new smaller Cheddon Fitzpaine parish loses most of its finances because of the boundary changes, what would happen to it? Was this even considered by the Working Group? and are there any other Parish projects affected by these boundary changes?
Yes
Community events held within the town, are important to the residents of Taunton
yes
Yes they should and raising the precept to do so. If standards drop (or drop further) then the sense of place, ownership and pride in community drops further. This in turn leads to more crime and anti social behaviour
The town centre is in such a poor state that anything that encourages people to visit, spend money etc is welcome. Would like money spent on keeping Taunton clean and tidy and therefore welcoming - the current state of open land, verges etc is creating an eye sore for the town.
yes
Yes.
Yes, these should be provided - they are integral to the sense of 'community cohesion' that the proposal is seeking to deliver
Local services should be split between the appropriate authorities.
Yes

Yes
Yes
Yes
Provided the financial balance allows this.
Yes, but councils with more financial resources should always support/subsidise smaller neighbouring parishes - ethically and morally.
The services that relate to this village are already well looked after.
In order to provide a sufficient base of income for the new Town Council without overburdening reliance on Council Tax we believe that the Car Parks within Taunton should be transferred to the Town Council. We think that it is inevitable that if they are to continue some of the services which are at present provided by the District Council (and perhaps some at present provided by the County Council) will have to be provided by locally based organisations. We are of the view that local councils are best placed to take over these services providing that finance follows function.
Only if the parish and town councils have the resources and skills to do so
Only if there is an economic case for doing so and is fully and fairly funded.
parish councils should
Yes

9. Do you agree with the proposal by Somerset West and Taunton Council that the number of councillors to be elected to any new Taunton Town Council should be 20 and the ward boundaries and names should be as shown in Map B?

The full list of Reasons/Comments given by respondents to Question 9 is listed below. Each row is a separate respondent's answer.

Reasons/Comments given by those who responded 'Don't Know'
The ward sizes do not seem to match the populations
Twenty seems an excessive number.
Some of those areas are very populated and others sparse, some very wealthy and others deprived - the representation for these areas and needs will be very different
If it's a maximum of 20, then OK. Who cares about the boundaries. I suggest the name 'Wellsprings and Rowbarton' (like Sometsandtauntonwest) is ridiculously long, a waste of ink and other resources. So just call it 'Chan'. If boundaries are being changed (see next question), that's just a bloody nuisance. Keep them the same.
As stated, the inclusion of Cotford within the plan
To be successful I believe town and parish Councillors should not also serve on the unitary Council thus avoiding a clear conflict of interest.
The town centre & any surrounding areas that are not parished should be included. 2 per ward sounds reasonable but Wilton & Sherford is very small.
I find this a bit confusing! How many areas are there? If as many as 20, that would be only one representative per area. That isn't really enough. By keeping some of the parish councils, there would be more representation on each of these and one representative could bring the views of the parish (rather than just their own, personal views) to the town council.
Understand the logic for coverage for each ward but also about having the right people with the right skills from the local area and so a mix is arguably more important but understand this would have other implications
I think I've already made my views clear about the boundaries. As to numbers, I have no view.
Too little information to decide whether the ward boundaries are sensibly arranged or if it is convenience which was the determining factor.
It seems reasonable
I agree with the ward boundaries as shown. I wonder about the number of councillors.
Has the number been worked out on the number of constituents they will serve in any one ward?

Is there an argument for more councillors in wards with greater social need?
The ward names are fine, why not only have 10 CLLR
would like the number of councillors to be reduced as a cost cutting exercise. It is very difficult to understand what work they do and does it have an impact on the town?
This question covers two different aspects. Firstly the figure of 20 could about right. Bridgwater with a smaller population has 16, Yeovil 24 and Wiveliscombe 18. We think that 20 could be appropriate to cover the unparished area but accept that depending on the workload of the Town Council it might be enough to cover a wider area. We have no comment to make on the names and the boundaries of the wards suggested in the report.
Reasons/Comments received from those who responded 'No' and who were further asked - If not, which aspects of the proposal do you think should be changed?
Staplegrave parish council must be retained
I do not agree with Map B
Leave Parish Councils as is
Far less Cllrs needed. If only the present unparished area is made into a new TC wards unnecessary?
Hands off our parrish
Think 15 Councillors would be plenty
Taunton Town should be for the centre of Taunton not extended out to more rural parishes.
Too many Councillors.
It has worked perfectly satisfactorily. Re-Parishing will be highly unsuccessful! The requirements of residents in the town are totally different to that of residents in the countryside.
Want to remain as part of Cheddon Fitzpaine and Maidenbrook.
20 Councillors? Making decisions for a huge population with diverse needs from area to area.
Leave Cheddon Fitzpaine & Maidenbrook alone
I do not agree with Map A or B.

My answer to Question 8 & 9 is NO because I do not agree Proposals on Map A or B
I want Parish Councils to be kept as they are currently Boundaries for parish kept as they are currently
Left as it is
Priorswood ward is too big. Some should go into Wellsprings & Rowbarton. Maidenbrook name should be changed to Nerrols & Maidenbrook. Hankridge Farm should go into Halcon & Lane.
As expressed earlier, my address is Cheddon Fitzpaine and I'm happy for that to stay the same. I can't see what benefit there would be to being removed from that parish council. I think being part of a large town council, whilst I'm sure having some benefits, will remove the ability to appeal to a smaller parish council that is focused on my particular area.
Stop encroaching on areas that already have parish councils.
Town wide proportional representation would be better
See answer to question 6. Would these councillors be paid? Would they live in the local community? Would Council Tax increase due to this? Leave the village parishes as they are.
None. Waste of time and MONEY
Stop your wasteful and unjustified attempt to waste our public money just so your mates have another level of power at our cost.
Don't want to be in Priorswood
The number reduced to 10 max.
I do not agree with the whole proposal.
I agree with the number of councillors and I, in principal, agree with the wards, I whole heartedly do not agree with the abolishment of several of the surrounding parishes already in existence, this completely undermines the purpose of local representation to the unitary authority.
More politicians mouths to feed. Reduce costs now. Where is your cost benefit analysis and project plan for this proposal. It is clearly a vanity project for local politicians
Should be 12 councillors, 1 for each ward.

<p>Councillors only represent local people on paper. Sorry, but most people have either no idea of who their councillor(s) is/are, or if they know the name, would walk past them on the street without a flicker of recognition.</p> <p>A website allowing residents to vote on issues would be more representative than the existing system which this proposal mirrors</p>
<p>Map A does not match B? town council should just be town centre.</p> <p>Town centre should have its own council - with parishes having input, but separate remit.</p>
<p>As above. We don't need more councillors</p>
<p>Number increased to 24</p>
<p>The map is illogical why exclude Bishops Hull, Trull & Norton (other than they have District Councillors) all 3 are urban areas on edge of Taunton with no break between. BH in particular becomes a salient into Taunton. The map has clearly been drawn for political reasons to gather local 'reps' support</p>
<p>no new taunton council should be set up, waste of taxpayers money</p>
<p>Leave Cheddon and Monkton Heathfield as they are</p>
<p>Affordable houses to rent or buy for working families or middle working class people.</p>
<p>No town council</p>
<p>Comeytrowe Parish should be identified as a separate Parish.</p>
<p>Norton Fitzwarren should be included as well, and have it's own ward within the parish council.</p>
<p>New town councils with no power are simply unnecessary all levels of supposed local government below the unitary authority are an unnecessary cost burden that simply give the illusion of local control..</p>
<p>It should be just 1 area not wards. This will simply increase expenses</p>
<p>It would make more sense for Trinity Road to be included in the Victoria area rather than Vivary. The boundary lines seem unnecessarily complicated and convoluted in the Trinity area. Why not have a simpler and more logical boundary?</p>
<p>WTF do you need 20 people for? 2 per ward is enough, unless these 20 will warm salary free. I am sick of lazy bureaucratic pen pushers wasting money and time to self serve.</p>
<p>Don't destroy the current parish councils</p>
<p>No changes required</p>
<p>I don't agree there is a need for a town council and certainly not one of the proposed scale</p>

Monkton Heathfield not included in boundary
Leave out Comeytrull
My view would be to reduce the number, it's an over head that could be spent on my concerns above. They clearly do nothing now so increase the number from something to something will still give me zero return on my investment.
Keep to the old unparished areas, do not include existing parish councils in it.
Parish councils should be left in place if they are doing the job that their residents want and are happy with. Not removed to be replaced by power hungry people who would not have any interest in the small villages now being well represented by parish councils.
reduce the number of councillors
The overall number of councillors is too high, 10 to 16 would be a better number, reduce costs and improve focus. Too any leads to a talking shop and group think.
Far too many councillors for the actual unparished area or indeed the proposed new area. There will never be a concensus of opinion. The new parish councillors should NOT BE POLITICAL. Parish councillors are in place to represent their parishioners not follow political parties. The new Parish Councillors should NOT BE PAID or be able to claim expenses.
see answer above
Maidenbrook Ward should be removed from the council area, otherwise Ok
It should have more equal representation by population numbers.
If its one council why do you need wards? Why can't a smaller group of people cover the whole area. Probably more efficient as less people to communicate with and less money as not as many wages.
Don't agree with the overall proposal so why would I wish to comment in detail in the proposal.
The wording is 'at least 20', not '20' as stated here. Compared with the NPALC recommendations this is a paltry number of councillors, producing a very high electorate to councillor ratio. To be truly local and personal, parish councillors need to know their constituents and local issues, but these proposals leave levels of representation exactly where they are with the Charter Trustees - at district level, making it almost impossible to achieve the close network of relationships found in Parishes across SWT. One reason that parish councils are special is this powerful place-based relationship. In my own ward, Victoria, the communities of Firepool and Trinity have little in common with each other, for instance, and indeed, part of the Trinity community is shaved away into other wards. Were this another parish, each would have its own ward councillors. Through the eyes of district councillors

and charter trustees, the proposals may seem local, but as an ex-villager in this area, trust me, they are not.
Should be an uneven number of councillors so there is less chance of a tied vote and Chairman having to use a casting (2nd) vote
Keep Staplegrove Parish council
Current parish council boundaries must be respected and maintained. Taunton Town Council should divide it's area of responsibility accordingly.
Wards should only include the Taunton Town Council unparished areas
I don't agree with the council expanding to include already parished areas. The town council boundaries should only cover the i parishes area.
You are assuming in this question that one agrees with the proposals on Map A. So I refer you to my answer to question 6.
Reduce what seems an excessive cost unless all are prepared to work on voluntary basis
Can not impose limit on no of representatives.
Orchard Grove Development should remain within Trull Parish Council, it is too far away from town to be considered part of 'Central' Taunton
Keep to the present unparished area wards
Why are you leaving Cheddon Fitzpaine so small? What benefits will residents feel where we live when you make us Taunton, rather than Cheddon Fitzpaine? Please support the country park between West Monkton and Nerrols. It is a area enjoyed by many.
As previously stated Staplegrove should be a separate district council.
To repeat, the more you move out from the centre, the more you increase the democratic deficit and decrease sense of belonging.
Priorswood would seem to have a much larger population than Maidenbrook has this been taken into account?
I do not agree with you subsuming Maidenbrook and Cheddon Fitzpaine into the larger town council as above.
Don't alter the boundaries!
As above, adding Bishops Hull would need either a further ward or name change if added to a neighbouring, existing ward.
Why change Parish councils when they are doing an excellent job for their own area, Somewhere they know and have an interest in ; ie living in the area.
Q4: How can one District Councillor serve 1500-2000 people (Nerrols Grange development is ongoing so numbers continually increasing), and leave five Parish

Councillors for 304 residents of Cheddon village? This imbalance has not been thought through. The current six Parish Councillors of Cheddon Fitzpaine work tirelessly for the whole parish, and have local knowledge gleaned over time which can not be recreated at the drop of a hat.

No; I do not agree that Maidenbrook Ward is included in this proposal. It is well served by the Parish Council of Cheddon Fitzpaine as at present, and should remain so and outside this proposal.

CFPC has its own identity, it's own sense of belonging, and does not belong to the Town Council. Parish Councillors live on the doorstep, and are the local representatives. It has its own parish website, monthly Link Up Church magazine, and bi-monthly newsletter to keep residents informed of events etc.

Q5: What will be the benefits to the Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish provided by the Town Council?

Q6: How will future CIL monies be spent and split with the Town Council and Parish Councils? This question requires an answer prior to the vote on this serious matter for Cheddon Fitzpaine in particular.

On Page 9 of the Stage 2 Consultation suggests:

"Reflect the identities and interests of the community in the area, and Promote effective and convenient local government"

Q7: What do the current District Councillors propose that can better the current arrangements for Cheddon Fitzpaine.

Q8: How will SWT provide a bi-monthly local newsletter put together by volunteers and hand-delivered?

Q9: Why change a local Parish Council community that works fine?

The local Parish has no party politics which enables it to function for its residents. This is not true of the current District SWT.

Q10: The Maidenbrook Country Park is run as a joint enterprise with West Monkton Parish Council, with a joint Neighbourhood Plan; this has worked efficiently for the past five years at least. By removing Maidenbrook Ward, this disruption negates the positive work by volunteers that have provided an amenity space that is valued by locals and Forces Veterans in particular with the Somerset Wood.

a. How will this be run from the Town Council?

b. How will the precept be raised to fund the operations? This is a very short-sighted view that has not been thought through.

c. How will the new Town Council run events in the MCP such as Remembrance Day, Falklands 40th anniversary Service, Jubilee Beacon lighting, Jubilee Picnic in the Park with Military Wives? This took countless hours by both Parish Councillors and local volunteers to unite a very close community. This cannot be destroyed at the stroke of the SWT vote.

Q11: The current Precept for CFPC for 22-23 is £40.97; this is £6.82 more than the SWT District average, proving value for money for the CFPC community.

How can SWT deliver this level of excellence, costings are required to show that the abolishment of Cheddon Fitzpaine PC will benefit from the new Town Council?

Q12: I question as to how the new Town Council will work as there are examples of inefficiency that are outstanding: viz: the Adoption of the Public Open Spaces of Waterleaze (Maidenbrook Ward) from the developers Bovis & Taylor Wimpey: This goes back 22 years and has not been formalised, or commuted which may well have expired now. This matters as there is been a long held view that the CIL money could be used for the benefit of residents in a 'changing room facility by the football pitch land. Until legal formalities are completed, no future plans can be made. How can SWT promise a better environment, when the current Officers are clearly lacking in a sense of purpose and direction?

Q13: If 304 residents are left in Cheddon village, and they have all served on the Parish Council, Church, Hall, and School committees, how do you propose that these institutions are run in future? Many residents have 'done their share' and have now retired.

Q14: Community engagement was demonstrated by the Church Commissioners paying to provide a house and Pioneer Ordinand to engage with the new community in Northwalls Grange and subsequently Nerrols Grange. This was seen as vital by the Church that new communities were supported; this is pioneering work and has greatly enhanced the new close relationship between the Parish and the new estates.

Do SWT Councillors understand that they will be destroying this valuable work by incorporating these estates into the new Town Council?

I do not agree with the black boundary line, which appears to be already taken as decided by an unelected Taunton Town Council.

Clearly some areas of the town such as Priorswood and Halcon, plus the town centre probably need more representation than others, so the numbers (within the green boundary) should be determined by population density and socio-economic need.

All aspects, leave it as it is focus on what is in place already instead of changing things and potentially wasting money.

Cheddon Fitzpaine should remain unaltered, so the boundaries and appropriate number of councillors need to be reviewed

Existing parishes to remain.

As per 6 above,so number of councillors should be 19 (and so less likely that a leader's second vote will be required).

Cancel the whole thing, waste of money.

I gave my views in the 'first round' and my views remain the same. There is no need to change any of the current ward boundaries. It is only the area within the existing 'green' boundary area that needs to be divided into new wards and given new ward names. In particular, Maidenbrook (within which my postcode TA2 8PY is located) should not be removed from Cheddon Fitzpaine and should not be included as a ward in the new Council 'parish'.

Ypou speak of one cohesive council then suggest splitting it up into more peices than the current parishes.

You're trying to have your cake and eat it.

While breaking up the existing unparished area of Taunton into new wards makes sense, it makes no sense to incorporate wards presently in other parishes. Clearly, if the present boundary of the unparished area of Taunton were to remain, being a smaller area, the number of councillors would be less. I certainly do not want Maidenbrook removed from Cheddon Fitzpaine.

Don't change any of the existing parish boundaries and don't incorporate parts of those parishes into the new area. Only the previously unparished area should be have new ward boundaries

None

I cannot agree with this as I do not approve the map. Please see my answer to question 6.

See my previous answers - this should not be a way to re-invent TDBC whatever the motives for doing so may be.

I do not agree with the map boundaries. Maidenbrook and part of Nerrols should remain in the parish of Cheddon Fitzpaine

Please refer to my answer to Q6. The Parish of Cheddon Fitzpaine should remain as a whole, including Maidenbrook and Nerrols. There are more suitable urban parts that could and should be included in the new Town Council. The most obvious one being Bishops Hull.

What is wrong with just including the unparished areas into the new Town Council?

Please refer to my answer to Q6.

Cheddon Fitzpaine should not be split up. Maidenbrook and Nerrols are within our parish and should remain so.

The new built areas east of Priorswood and the country park should remain under Cheddon Fitzpaine.

As above

The councillors should represent the whole town. By warding itwards with only one councillor will have no representation if that person is unable through illness or other reasons to represent.

Retain existing parishes

You have removed the parish of Cheddon Fitzpaine therefore totally disagree.

Priorswood and Maidenbrook should be one ward particularly as the new building programme has the country park as its nucleus

The removal of the Cheddon Fitzpaine parish

Because some parishes will not be represented as now.

We do not agree with the introduction of a new Town council. So no.

to not abolish and include cometrowe area
Boundaries, the town council should be those areas not in a existing ward. Why would it need 20 councillors.
The Maidenbrook Parish would be very small compared to cheddon fitzpaine currently. This may negatively impact the parish/ward. I would rather see a merge with Monkton Heathfield.
Staplegrove should not become part of a Taunton Town Council but should retain its Parish status and Parish Council. If the Staplegrove boundary is to be changed, serious consideration should be given to creating it along Staplegrove Road, leaving the rural village area intact.
The number should not exceed 12 which is the normal size for any board as per the charity commission.
the ratio of electors for the 16 councillors for the unparished area is around 1 Councillor for 2150 electors, massively higher than leading Somerset towns and the three closest County Towns in a Unitary area Council. Pro-rata Weymouth Town Council the most recent formed with 29 Councillors our unparished area should have 25 Councillors. Separately given details (Comments One Roger House) of a simple adaption of electoral map B to return 25 Councillors. Important reuse of map B as we are running out of time to form a new Town Council to be operational and elected next spring.
Too many councillors. Should be a much leaner structure to be effective. otherwise too many agendas.
Per my response to question 6, above, I believe that a new Town council should be smaller than proposed (representing unparished areas within the town itself) and hence restricted to say 10 councillors.
The boundary is wrong. Where I live in Waterleaze feels part of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council and not part of Taunton.
Why are you not using existing ward boundaries??
The ward boundaries as proposed should not include the currently existing parish of Cheddon Fitzpaine
The proposed ward of Staplegrove be abolished, and added to the parish council of Staplegrove.
How are you expected to promote the town centre area as a county town when the ward allocation appears to be counter productive?
See my comments in Q 6 regarding Staplegrove remaining as a separate Parish Council
It is up to Taunton Town Council to decide what councillors and wards it needs, not Staplegrove to interfere in another Council's wishes. It is up to them how they work it out.
Staplegrove like Bishops Hull should be excuded
I think Staplegrove should retain its identity and still be a parish in it's own right. I am unable to comment on other areas as I don't know how they identify themselves as communities.

If Staplegrove parish goes we will have less elected members representing us.

Monkton Heathfield is still able to be it's own parish according to the map so Staplegrove should be too.

20 is not enough.

Minehead (population 12,000) has 16 councillors. Salisbury (on which this has been modelled apparently) has a population of 45,000 and 24 councillors. Given that the expected population of this enlarged council area will have around 47,000 parishioners it need to be more than 20.

Taunton Parish should be the previously unparished area only.

We do not agree that Staplegrove should be incorporated into the unparished area. Bishops Hull, West Monkton, Norton Fitzwarren, and Trull, all retain their Parish councils and identity; why should Staplegrove be dissolved into Taunton? The Ward boundary between Staplegrove and Wellsprings/ Rowbarton should be along Staplegrove Road.

Staplegrove should remain more or less as is.

The warding in and around Cheddon Fitzpaine parish should remain unchanged.

Leave well alone

All aspects affecting the current parishioners of Cheddon Fitzpaine parish.

Keep to the current parished and unparished areas

The new Taunton parish should only cover the current unparished area and therefore any new wards should only affect this area and nowhere else.

Take out Maidenbrook, Staplegrove and Comeytrowe.

The proposals should respect the work on LCNs to date which suggest that the optimum size for them should be in the region of 25K residents. The current unparished area already an embryonic town council comprises c. 34K which given the population density and connections is probably just about the limit for an effective LCN. Anything larger whould require two LCNs which will militate against the sense of togetherness and community that is proposed

See Q6 - what we already have works...

Stay with what we have

Maidenbrook should remain as part of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish.

One ward councillor is not enough to represent Staplegrove, the parish is currently represented by 6 parish councillors.

current parish councils should not be included in proposal

I do not agree that part of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish should be included in a new town council and so Maidenbrook should remain as part of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish.

Reasons/Comments given by those who responded 'Yes'.

But on proviso that boundaries reflect historical links and that by merging some boundaries create parish level of equal numbers

we need new councilors, not the ones,s we have now, new blood is needed ,

Yes, so long as the new boundaries aren't created to increase the likelihood of a certain political party gaining more influence!

+ Monkton Heathfield & Bathpool!

But the councillors should actually live in the ward they represent.

subject to my comments in answer 6 above

THE NAMES SHOWN ARE "LOGICAL" BUT PEOPLE'S PROPERTY'S DEED DOCUMENTS ARE REGISTERED AT LAND REGISTRY AS "CHEDDON FITZPAINE", AS ARE POST CODES AND I AM SURE THE SAME APPLIES TO OTHER NEW DEVELOPMENTS!

11. Do you have any other comments on parish/town boundaries or any other aspect of the arrangements for town/parish governance in the area?

The full list of Reasons/Comments given by respondents to Question 11 is listed below. Each row is a separate respondent's answer.

<p>Staplegrave is a village with its own atmosphere and community spirit. It is not an extension of Taunton with its own postcode and green wedge separating. We want to remain in control of our community with our own dedicated and committed parish councillors.</p>
<p>How can the proposed 3 carry out the work done by Staplegroves present very active 11 representatives! Staplegrave should remain an independent Parish at least until the nature of Taunton Town Council is less of a mystery.</p>
<p>New developments make changes necessary</p>
<p>I agree with Map A and we have no change to Staplgrave and are parish council</p>
<p>I have faith in Somerset West and Taunton Council and whatever they propose I will go along with.</p>
<p>A town public run bus to link all necessary venues Musgrove Pk NHS Hosp. Hangeridge – retail, bowling, cinema. Transport hub at Railway St. PLUS route running a circular route linking main car parks and supermarkets central area included.</p>
<p>Would like to see a commitment to environmental protection built into Taunton Town Council Terms of Reference</p>
<p>I sincerely hope that a Taunton Town Council will be a step towards cleaning up the town, and keeping public areas with far less litter and an appearance of being unkempt.</p>
<p>At last a Taunton Central TC is on the horizon but, please keep it simple!</p>
<p>Anything being proposed has to be better than west somerset and taunton council. Although the main problem is the staff in the managerial roles, not being as good as they should be.</p>
<p>This would make the town council the biggest of the parish councils with the best potential to secure developer contributions. It must liaise with other Parishes affected by development to ensure cohesive and fair use of such money for all affected.</p>
<p>Important to have a focused town council with clear targets and minimum bureaucracy, should include town centre manager re-introduction. Not at all supportive of new proposed central govt boundaries putting norton fitzwarren with tiverton!</p>

I think some of the questions are very leading and therefore unsuitable to fully gauge the views of the community.

These changes will only benefit the town centre and not our parish and community

We should keep Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council.

The town council can't look after the town, so you won't look after the parish council.

Do not redraw parish boundaries to create a larger unmanageable town council

I would prefer things to remain as they are. I want to remain part of cheddon fitzpaine parish council.

No, only that the whole suggestion is 'mind blowing'. I have lived in villages most of my life now living on the outskirts of town, but this area has a lovely community atmosphere. The project at Maidenbrook Country Park is a prime example of Community spirit.

We have a real village community and do not need to be included as Taunton Town Centre.

Maidenbrook remain part of Cheddon Fitzpaine parish

It seems the proposed changes are just a money grabbing exercise to benefit the town, Please leave our Parish alone **HANDS OFF OUR VILLAGE COMMUNITY**

I think a local Parish Council would do a better more personal job for the Parish

We hope to have our say within our Parish.

The proposals on Map A and Map B will reduce the influence of People living in the Parish of Cheddon Fitzpaine on future proposals in the Historic area of Hestercombe and Cheddon Fitzpaine.

Should be left alone. Need to let local Parish Council do Local Council duties as they should do what is needed by local community.

Parish Councils more concerned with local issues. Leave Parish Councils as they are with current financial arrangements. Leave Parish Boundaries as they are currently.

I would like to know more about the costs of this town council
I very much support the abolition of Comeytrowe Parish Council. The establishment of a Taunton Parish /Town Council should be the first stage in a bid for a City Council
We need a Town Council for Taunton. Hope it happens as soon as possible!
None
My point about preserving any monetary gains the Taunton Town Council might get by inheriting hard won funds from development and ringfencing them for spending in the area they came from would be the only way this change would be palatable to me. I can see it being very likely that all the funds be scooped into a pot and put towards projects that are favoured by new representatives.
Have you thought about asking children and young people what they'd like? A youth town council perhaps?
It is bizarre that villages surrounding Taunton have a local voice when the urban area of Taunton does not. The sense of community that exists in villages should be replicated in Taunton so that residents can feel a sense of pride and control of their neighbourhoods.
Personally I think unparished areas of Taunton should have a town council but I do not agree that existing parish councils should be changed. This seems pointlessly and potentially politically motivated to make the town council as large as possible.
The purpose of a Taunton Town Council is to represent those not currently within a parish council area, not to annex parts of other parishes in a power grab.
The West Monkton parish boundary should be changed to the M5, with the area south of the M5 transferred to the neighbouring parish(es). The Nexus 25 and Gateway park & ride should be within the Taunton parish, both being crucial to future transport arrangements for the town.
If electoral boundary changes are in consideration then it needs to be proven that this is not to benefit any particular political party's electoral prospects.
It is vital that when the unitary is formed and the County Council and Somerset West and Taunton Council are dissolved that there are fair distribution of key budgets ie any devolved services are supported by sustainable devolved budgets. The new Taunton Town Council needs to have delegated planning powers and the ability to create and maintain a Local Plan with adequate staffing, expertise and resources incl staffing budgets. A fair share of the Community Infrastructure Levy needs to be devolved to the new Taunton Town Council so that the new Taunton Town Council can create new infrastructure eg paths, cycleways, leisure, arts etc.

No
I do not agree with wards for parish and town councils. I live in a town in West Somerset. I should be free to vote for any candidate who wishes to be elected. Warding therefore prevents me from voting for a candidate standing in a neighbouring ward.
Please make sure the new Town Council is properly funded! Remember, Taunton is the County Town of Somerset. It deserves a high degree of autonomy from the 'Mother Ship'!
Parish is very important to me and I would not wish to see it go.
The whole thing is a pointless money wasting exercise.
More important things to worry about at this time.
None
It is important for Taunton to have a Town Council, a strong voice is needed at a local level that focusses on it's residents, communities and businesses A body that understands the needs of the local people, brings communities together and will hopefully contribute to giving Taunton an increased sense of place - we all want to take pride in the place in which we choose to live / work.
Complete waste of time and money. Taxpayers money at that
See previous notes
The town council should act purely in the interest of the town, and promoting businesses, events, and making the town amazing. Should work like a BID, and the town centre manager should actually listen to businesses and actually get out of the office regularly and walk around chatting to shopkeepers, vendors, pedestrians to get an actual idea of what real people feel and want
It is my hope that the creation of the town council for Taunton will be able to deliver it's anticipated purpose for residents and business alike.
Why are existing boundaries not being used by town council proposal? Seems odd to make existing boundaries change to fit someone's new plan
Will be glad to get rid of West Monkton NIMBY council whom have not accepted us in the new developments. We are a problem to them.
Leave it all alone you control wasteful freaks. It's our public money paying for your political bollocks.

<p>Taunton needs to go back to its garden town routes. More investment in litter picking and blooms and a sense of community. Historical features such as The Bridge need revitalising and having its own parish could help to improve people's opinions of the town. "Reinstatement of the "rose" garden in front of the market house would help</p>
<p>Fix the potholes and finish fire pool and other developments Also do something with Debenhams and can we please have some time off from road works. Thanks</p>
<p>Our local democracy has been ignored and broken up by the central administration. Taunton does need valid representation with sufficient monetary powers to make a difference. This solution is obvious but probably too large.</p>
<p>Not sure how cost effective having 20 councillors will be.</p>
<p>No</p>
<p>Yes. The LGBCE will in due course revise the new Unitary Wards so the new parish/town Wards should await same and align so no parish ward is divided between 2+ Unitary wards</p>
<p>It's about time. Taunton should have its own Town Council.</p>
<p>I agree with a town council for the unparished areas of Taunton and cannot believe it has taken this long to resolve. I do not agree with the erosion of other local representation and, apart from tidying up small discrepancies with the boundaries, strongly believe the current surrounding parishes are maintained to ensure the different areas of Taunton are properly represented</p>
<p>Just do something about Council Tax. Stop spending public money on reorganisation for the sake of it. Consult me on proposals to CUT Council Tax not ways of spending more.</p>
<p>Parish councils are very important to local communities and should remain in place.</p>
<p>Bit early to propose something before the unitary council stands up. See what the unitary council will do & then put together a business case (if required) should a town council be required to fill the gaps.</p>
<p>I feel that a local councillor should live in the ward that they represent and would not want that to change.</p>
<p>Stop these lower level councils having any input to planning decisions, They are not qualified to be involved in these decisions. Leave it to Somerset and the Planners.</p>
<p>Can we please have a council which puts Taunton first, for far too long my town has been run down. Lack of businesses, lack of investments, lack of a coherent strategy have allowed the town to stagnate, even degenerate. It's time that the local council started looking after the interests of Taunton business and residents.</p>

I assume the councillors for the new Taunton parish will be unpaid volunteers. Like other parish councils?

Leave the existing boundaries as is. Just fill in the blanks.

Just concerned that my current parish of Cheddon Fitzpaine is very proactive, and has done a lot of work addressing local concerns in my area - will the new council be as proactive given the much larger area covered?

Keep well alone

This entire exercise is a waste of time other than attempting to continue the justification of SW&T after the Somerset Unitary Authority. I would rather see much more local representation with more power devolved to the Parish Councils rather the creation of a larger town council.

Roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined so that residents know who to consult about particular services - i.e the Parish or the Unitary authority.

Everybody should be treated the same whether or not they live in a parish or not

Prioritize cost savings.

The whole of this is an unnecessary time wasting expense looking like change for the sake of change and deflecting peoples attention from the more important issues.

It will not result in improved representation simply a more politicised body. Local parish councils do a reasonable job in a largely independent manor for their local community. What is proposed is not going to achieve this as the proposed area is not a 'community' in the same way Swindon, Bath, Exeter, Bristol are not single communities.

I agree that Taunton should have a parish and I like to have the role of Mayor retained.

However I do not see the need to break up parishes that are working well, and have that sense of community in order to create an artificial town council that will start with nothing from which to create a community feel.

I'd also like to see improved methods of engagement with residents and businesses, and audit of that communication and response.

No

the fewer councils the better.

Leave things as they are
No
Just that councillor's need to support the residents in their wards better, the support to residents has slipped and they just don't seem to care, staff that work for the council are rude or don't even reply to emails, customer service training needs to be taken by many staff.
Basically we love our parish council, they do a great job and really care about local matters. I just cannot see a larger town council caring about (or having the capacity to deal with) such a large area. Micro-policies should be done at parish level.
Priority one in every aspect of governance must be continuous and urgent progress towards a sustainable society.
This survey is not easy to understand and confusing. And I consider myself of a higher than average intelligence. Make it shorter and sharper and you might get better engagement results.
Keep Comeytrowe Parish Council.
no
No
Take responsibility for improving Public transport services.
I simply wish to say that with there now being one Somerset Council (from May 2023!) there is a need for local decisions to be made. It is also an anachronism that Taunton is an unparished area, so I agree with proposals for change.
Use one boundary idea and apply it across the whole area
All the current areas should stay the same I 100% disagree with all the current proposals.
Please endeavour to include Norton Fitzwarren in the new parish council, I believe it would be bad for Norton if it was not included and is left out of schemes that are organised by the parish council to benefit the rest of Taunton. The Parish council should also be allowed to draw on funding to implement people friendly schemes such as better cycling/walking infrastructure - why must most of Taunton be prioritised for car drivers? Who lest I remind here, don't contribute to

local businesses anywhere near as much as people walking/cycling due to all they care about is driving through the town at the expense of everyone living here.

Not only would a positive forward thinking mindset like this be good at encouraging people to walk/cycle, it'd be good for the environment and the density of the town - with less space wasted on drivers, there could be more housing without Taunton needing to sprawl out into the countryside so much, encouraging less driving (and environmental issues) should be one the key priorities of a parish council.

The whole change to a unitary authority appeared designed to move power away from local councils. What is the point in setting up local bodies with little or no power. It appears to be a thinly disguised effort to spread the blame if things go wrong.

Stop talking and start saving Taunton. Actions speak louder than words. Get on and do something practical

I live at the north end of the current Priorswood ward and have long felt it odd that the village of Cheddon Fitzpaine, which is jut north of where I live, has an active parish council which can represent the interests of the relatively few people living there, whilst there seemed to be no equivalent body representing those of us who live in Priorswood. So I am in favour of the proposed changes, but it is important that they are implemented in such a way that they still make it possible for the little things which can have a big impact not to be swallowed up in the bigger organisation. For example, Cheddon Parish was very active in joining those of us in Lyngford Lane who had objections to the planning application for land adjoining Lyngford Lane.

Taunton needs to offer more for the new residents from these massive housing estates. There is no leisure facilities such as a decent swimming pool open to the public to use at all times. There is no decent retail park attracting big names. The road infrastructure for all the horrendous delays and congestion on the toneway have not significantly improved anything. 3 lanes in and out would have been a good use of tax payers money.

It is essential that localism and local representation is recognised within the money eating monster that the Unitary Authority will prove to be. Can we please have a County Town in which we have can have some pride

I believe that success here will hinge on the town and parish councils being independent from the unitary Council and and that they are all politicised as little as possible.

In my experience SW&T Council has performed disappointingly since it was recently formed whereas Somerset County Council has performed well.

I have already made the point about Monkton Heathfield & Bathpool. I cannot see the logic considering the proposed MH2 development. We are part of Taunton, the County Town. The ancient village of West Monkton is not the heart of our community any more and the parish demographic demands we be part of Taunton.

I am very pleased that West Monkton Parish Council will be independent of any new Taunton Council.

I am concerned that if the new Taunton Council takes "control" of the proposed extended areas and, in particular, proposed planning applications for those areas, that this will be to the serious detriment of the people living just outside the proposed boundaries.

<p>Just leave all the parishes as independent it is nice to have the small community feel.</p> <p>Sort central Taunton out as a separate matter. It needs serious help</p>
<p>Please keep the villages separate. Their Parish councils know what they want. They do not want a town representative who has absolutely no idea of what a village wants or needs. Also , what little money a parish council gets is for that Parish, not Taunton town.</p> <p>Please do not keep invading our villages with horrendous new housing schemes. If you have to build build on brown field sites FIRST. In Taunton.</p>
<p>Clean the tow as it is FILTHY, plant some trees in town centre, start cutting overgrown grass obstructing veiw by roundabouts and junctions. Start investing in town, as for now you are completely useless.</p>
<p>Please leave the current parishes alone. Don't destroy what works well to make jobs for people in a new Taunton council. Our parish council works well and supports the local community</p>
<p>I think we need to be saving money for Somerset and allow all communities to flourish - i believe the little parish's would be forgotten as all the money will be spent in our depleted town centre - which has not been invested in, due to poor management from those looking to keep a job</p>
<p>Common sense should be used in deciding boundaries. Once decided, guarantee no further changes for 50 years</p>
<p>Unnecessary additional cost, scrap the whole idea</p>
<p>Coverage of local needs i.e. recycling, noise reduction</p>
<p>How about looking at the wider picture and not parochial interests ... Taunton is the County town and a jewel in Somerset but petty local councillors with parochial interests have let it decline and lost the identity the town should have. So whatever you overpaid local officials do please do try and think bigger and wider and stop wasting opportunities and our town.</p>
<p>It is important not to allow Taunton to swallow up smaller areas such as Comeytrull as they need to maintain individual identity</p>
<p>I think Holway and Blackbrook could be split into two (it serves two areas and is due to return two councillors). I just want someone to care about our very local issues (neighbourhood parks for example).</p>
<p>Yes</p> <p>The fact that someone within Somerset west and taunton has decided to stop cutting grass areas and grass verges is actually beginning to make it dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists and children in all areas. I live in Galmington and have a dog which I walk twice daily, the grass height is now waist high in most places as some halfwit decided it would be good for nature to let the grass grow. Dog walkers can't find there dogs mess in most areas now which is causing most people to vacate all public areas.</p> <p>Great decision!</p>

We all know it's because of cut backs to staff that will be used as an excuse but seriously if you look outside Taunton you will see that it is surrounded by fields so I believe there is plenty of Nature there.

Absolutely disgusted with the lack of care shown in galmington and the other areas

The idea is to give the unparished areas of Taunton a voice via a parish - this is not meant to be a land grab or empire building for the proposed new parish.

Yes, I am disgusted by the way the current government is bulldozing these changes through to suit themselves and have total disregard for the people who pay their wages and pay for the services that are supplied by those in local government. Yet another case of public consultation gone MAD. Ask people what they want and then tell them they can't have it. But they can say they did consult with the public of course they won't tell anyone that the totally ignored the outcome. The question to ask is this yet another tick box consultation that the government and the new Somerset council will give no credence to and ignore it just as previously? What complete idiot thinks that Staplegrove should be in the same constituency as Tiverton, we are not even in the same county, or is that the next thing, are we going to redraw the county boundary?

No.

What happens to the people in the Trull parish?

Move with the times!

I would like to make the following comments:

1. Had it not been for the mention on the Trull Community Facebook I would not have been aware of the meeting or indeed of the proposal to create a Taunton Parish Council.
2. The representatives were at pains to point out that this meeting was held as an advisory meeting, with a view to listening to the parishioners' comments.
3. They also made the comment that the original plan had been for a much wider area to be incorporated into the Taunton Parish but on listening to comments the area had been reduced.
4. Actually, I was told back in the Spring 2022 the area originally being considered was for the un-parished areas of Taunton to be involved because otherwise they would have no representation.
5. Mention was also made that none of the Parish Councils in the affected areas were happy about the proposals - particularly Comeytrove was mentioned although few parishioners attended the meeting. I wonder if it was well publicised?
6. However, when I asked Mike Rigby at the end of the meeting about the proposals he specifically stated that he and his colleagues were not interested in what Parish Councillors had to say commenting that 'they only wanted to keep their positions'. However, if parishioners objected these objections would be taken into consideration.
7. Whether the CILL money will be used to the betterment of the areas it is supposed to be used in remains to be seen. I have my doubts.
8. One question that was not satisfactorily addressed was which Parish will actually

have the CILL money when the Comeytrowe development encroaches more on the Trull Parish Council area. Legally it should go to Trull but actually it will probably be appropriated by Taunton Parish by it adopting the new area into that parish.

9. I feel that the inclusion of the parishes which now have large new estates being built appears fortuitous for the proposed new Taunton parish which will be able then to appropriate the CILL money. I am not convinced that this money will be directed back to the new estates for their improvement etc. merely it will be appropriated by the new parish councillors for their own pet schemes.

Unfortunately I had the distinct impression that the whole evening was an exercise that had to be carried out to tick a box but anything parishioners say in the concerned areas will not be taken into account as the decision to create the new Taunton Parish has already be determined.

This 'consultation' is very poorly designed. It is full of leading questions clearly designed to get the answer that you want, eg questions beginning 'Do you agree...' are clearly steering the respondent into a particular view point in the way that 'Do you agree the weather has been nicely recently?' is clearly trying to illicit a particular response. Rather than "How would you rate the weather recently? Good/average/poor etc".

Why is there no question about the cost of such a change. At a time of rising prices the Council Tax (even the parish precept) needs to be controlled and well spent.

Key that the funding for the Cheddon Parish is maintained to ensure that the proposals in the parish including the Maidenbrook Country Park can be delivered.

The town centre & any surrounding areas that are not parished should be included. If an area is already parished why change it?

Whilst the proposals seem reasonable given where we now are, I am not actually in favour of a Town Council because I do not agree in the first place with the creation of a unitary Somerset Council. Research published by the Electoral Reform Society suggests that in other western democracies, there is typically 1 councillor per 800 - 1300 residents, whereas the Somerset Council is hyper-centralised at 1 per 5500. The District Councils in Somerset should have been made unitary authorities; certainly the former Taunton Deane Council, with 110,000 population and about 1 councillor per 2000 residents, would have been considered large enough in many other countries to have the full range of powers - and there would thus have been no reason to have a separate 'town' council with - actually - very few statutory powers.

I'm very pleased that Bishop's Hull, is not part of the new Town council.

Taunton is turning into one great sprawling monstrosity anyway so the council may as well be the same.

I fully support creation of the Taunton Town Council. However I am against it grabbing areas from other parishes, it should be set up for the existing unparished areas and leave the existing parishes alone.

No
<p>I would like to know:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How SW&T plans to persuade residents in the proposed Taunton parish area to engage with the the creation and the business of the new parish council, to encourage people other than the usual suspects to stand for election? I suggest you organise a series of community assemblies; 2. How and when will nominations for the new Taunton council be invited? 3. How will the results of the 2nd round of consultation be disseminated to residents? 4. How are the views of residents in the current unparished area currently being represented in the work currently being carried out to establish the new Somerset Council? 5. Has SW&T published a revised timetable for Governance Review? I note there is slippage in the one published in the review's terms of reference. <p>Thanks.</p>
Very much needed and a well thought through proposal
While it seems an excellent idea to include Longrun Meadow as part of the new Taunton Parish, were responsibility for this public space to devolve to Parish level, it would mean that the closest communities to this fantastic asset would live in a different Parish from the decision-making body. I have no solution - I believe the green space should be part of Taunton not Bishop's Hull, and would not dream of overturning the identification of local people with the latter Parish.
No
It's a disgrace that you are swallowing up Staplegrove, we are independent of Taunton , have always done a good job. Shame on your just so you can justify your existence!
Whatever is the outcome of this we must encourage housebuilding AS LONG AS THE AMENITIES match the building . . . i.e. doctors, schools, local shops etc . .
SW&T District Council must respect the current parish boundaries and not form a Taunton Town Council that steals land from the adjoining parish councils.
Do not like the way the new Taunton Deane Council has replaced the former one when it was run by the Tory Party and not the Lib Dems
Leave the parishes as they are and just cover the unparished area of Taunton
The new unitary cllrs should have automatic seats on the town council, to help the ground themselves in the demands of the community.

<p>Important that outlying villages still have their independence and governance, including parish councils.</p>
<p>Pleased that the proposed boundaries make sense so that smaller rural settlements which happened to have urban extensions on their edges concede these to the town council and retain the rural remainder as a separate parish.</p>
<p>This is labelled as the Second Consultation, the first finishing on the 12th Jan 2022 - don't know who was consulted but the residents here weren't, so where the "responses" came from is interesting.</p> <p>This latest consultation is for six weeks up to July 26th. There has been very little notification of this, with only a brief mention in the County Gazette. In theory there has been a direct postal notification to Staplegrove residents but most that we know have received nothing. It all rather smacks of trying to push the proposal through with minimal notice. Presumably when the matter has been discussed again in Council, without the conflicted input of the Bishops Hull member, to make it more legitimate, a new proposal will be sent out at that point with more adequate notification of consultation with residents.</p>
<p>After yet another merger after a demerger = please not more changes under the cost of living crisis. No more nice to have initiatives just look to cut community charge which hits those on low fixed incomes the hardest as a regressive tax</p>
<p>So, at the moment the urban part of Staplegrove is planned to be within the parish of Taunton but the parliamentary constituency is planned to be Minehead and Tiverton - that is crazy! How has that happened if the thought processes being attached the Taunton parish concept I don't hold out much hope of it being successful</p>
<p>Parish councils are true local democracies and should be left alone and not up for grabs by power grabbing political parties.</p>
<p>Please consider the affect on the residents of Trull of not including Orchard Grove within the Trull Parish Boundary which will significantly affect the future plans of the parish council which were based on receiving CIL money from the orchard grove development.</p>
<p>Taunton does not have a town council because it had been considered it would be too powerful in comparison to the surrounding parish councils.</p> <p>The town now needs leadership but not at the expense of the suppression of democracy for these parishes which would lose their identity and voice.</p> <p>The town council must also fit reasonably into the new Local Community Networks in comparison with other Somerset town and parish councils and not be too powerful.</p>
<p>This is an odd proposal from a party with 'democrat' in its title, which could be considered a power grab. It could lead to unfair political unbalance in our area.</p> <p>The proposers have a record of increasing our debt and consequent debt interest when council tax is already so very expensive compared to income tax.</p> <p>Independent adjacent parish councils that keep costs down would highlight increasing borrowing by a new town council.</p>
<p>A larger Taunton district council will not have the interests of Staplegrove as shown by the councillors passing the development to the north of Staplegrove.</p>

My fears are that the TC will be little more than a talking shop with little power, and over time maybe dominated by people who do not really represent the communities.

It is far more efficient to have small areas represented by parish councils who can put their views forward to a larger council. Somerset is an extremely large and diverse county and a council that is responsible for the whole area is going to be very unwieldy.

money grab....that's all it is.

Disappointed to see that Bishops Hull very strongly opposed to joining the new Town Council. If the town has responsibility for parks and recreation areas how do we get areas like Bishop Hull to pay for the upkeep of Vivary Park, and flower displays in the town centre? The unparished areas at present include the poorest parts of the town.

no

The existing parishes and boundaries should be left as they are. This is land grabbing for financial purposes.

Tis questionnaire seems to be written in a way that assumes you have already decided on the boundaries I do not agree with the new housing in Maidenbrook and Cheddon Fitzpaine being subsumed into the a bigger council.

I believe the Somerset and West proposal is simply an asset grab from the current Parish Councils

It is vital that clear explanations of what is decided are published in a variety of locations to educate all the residents affected

A town council will not serve the wider community as well as the existing parish councils and should only serve those parts of Taunton's urban area which do not have representation at present. Areas like Staplegrove, Trull and Bishop's Hull, for example, have existing parish councils and should be omitted from any town council plans.

Also, any new layer of bureaucracy such as the one being proposed will without question generate a greater council tax burden for every member of the community. That is a fact based on precedent.

Don't be greedy and steal parts of the adjoining parishes. Leave them as they are. Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council does an excellent job for the local area. Leave them to do it with the current boundaries.

None.

This is all great, and not before time!

Staplegrove Parish council are trustees of our own play area opposite the Church. They regularly litter pick, check the play equipment and take an interest in the park. I can't see this happening if Staplegrove no longer has its own parish.

The Grove is a wonderful area for wildlife, again checked by the Parish Council with them taking a personal interest in the planting and encouraging of wildlife. Who will be interested or take care of this area in the future if your plans go ahead. I think you will have received lots of comments on how much the local community would like Staplegrove to remain as it is and not to be 'swallowed up' and overseen by people who have no interest in the area. This would certainly be a backward step.

Why will Bishops Hull and Norton Fitzwarren be allowed to stay as Parish Councils?

Bishops Hull is joined to the town along with Norton and all of its new development.

The Town Council should be set up to run in a similar way to the Parish Councils, ie agenda, minutes, actions for the community, and a place where residents may go to question or make statements to the Council. At present, this 'local' representation does not exist for the unparished area representatives. There should be local notices publicising these meetings and transparency involved. It is very hard at present to follow what is going on.

Footpaths and cycleways: one main task that is urgently required is that ALL paths within the Town/Parished areas are kept in a better state of maintenance. The current policy of 'no cutting' while the birds are nesting, does not allow for pedestrians or cyclists to move in safety along footpaths. Brambles and hedges jut out inhibiting progress; if the Council is to work for us, then we need better services in this regards. The policy of getting people out of cars has to be supported by improved pavements everywhere. This requires two or three trims throughout the summer, as one would with grass in the garden.

The policy of No Spray has to be reversed: It is an airy-fairy policy that may be great in idea, but in practice just allows ragwort, docks and other plants to run riot and out of control. The increase of ragwort is harmful to animals, and should be pulled out; as there is so much now, selective spraying is the only way to combat this increased presence. Taunton Town and environs is currently shoddy compared to the excellent maintenance of Minehead. How come? How is one area managed and the other not?

NOTE:

I have spent considerable time responding now to three consultations: my first comments were listed at page 149 of the consultation that ended on 12.1.2022, and were not heard/dismissed/or listened to.

My second form of words were shortened to the three minute speech on 3.3.2022 for the first formal debate. I am gratified that the word 'listen' was acknowledged, and some District Councillors stood out as saying that Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council was being treated unfairly, and should therefore be 'heard' prior to the second vote on 5.9.2022. I strongly hope this will happen. Listening is one thing; fully understanding the consequence of SWT Cllrs voting to destroy Cheddon Fitzpaine is another. I really hope everyone reads these comments and digests them. This is a serious matter and not one to be voted through lightly.

There is a perfectly reasonable boundary for Taunton Town Council which is shown in green on Map A.

I do not understand why the Boundary Commission for England should be involved to realign many other boundaries at no doubt vast expense. This is totally unnecessary and a complete waste of Council Tax money.....underlining the wasteful prism through which all Taunton Town Council activities will be viewed if the black boundary line is implemented.

The Electoral Commission has been consulting on the parliamentary boundaries. Under their current proposals parts of Staplegrove will be part of a parliamentary constituency based in Tiverton. This is totally wrong. All of the new town council area, wherever the boundaries are decided, should be part of the Taunton parliamentary constituency.

The proposals will simply leave some of the Parish Councils unable to perform their duties for their Parishioners.

Leave Cheddon Firtzpaine Parish Council as it is.

I do not believe that Cheddon Fitzpaine current boundaries should not be alter as what would be left would be unsustainable and would be at the mercy of much lager new town council furthermore the money we currently pay to the parish council though our council tax is spent in the Parish a good example of this would be the new country park, which provides much needed outside space due to the large urban expansion happening in the area.

This money could then be spent in other areas of the town with very little benefits to residents of the current parish of Cheddon Fitzpaine

I have a feeling this has more to do with money and where it is going than unifying the town into one council and is probably an attempt to cover a deficit or and over spend somewhere in the council by taking money away from existing parish councils.

Good idea to set up a Town Council, in view the abolition of truly local level of democracy in 2023

It is important that the semi-rural parishes forming the nearby rural catchment of Taunton (Kingston, Creech St. Michael, Trull, Cotford St. Luke, Henlade / Ruishton etc.) have a close working relationship with the new Town Council; these areas have a stake in decisions about the urban area (particularly transport and the Town Centre) and should make a contribution / have an influence as appropriate; e.g. through a Local Community Network - based partnership.

THE PROPOSED CHANGES ARE ALL BEING RUSHED THROUGH BEFORE CONSIDERATION WOULD HAVE BEEN MADE BY THE NEW UNITARY COUNCIL. HOW LONG BEFORE PARISHES SUCH AS CREECH ST MICHAEL, WHICH CONTAINS 85% OF THE MONKTON HEATHFIELD PHASE 2 BUILD OUT, GETS INCLUDED AS WELL?!

I FULLY SUPPORT A TOWN COUNCIL BUT LEAVE THE EXISTING PARISH COUNCILS AS THEY ARE, THEY FUNCTION WELL, ARE MORE PERSONAL

AND CARE ABOUT THEIR PARISH, ALL THIS WILL BE LOST IN THE NEW TOWN COUNCIL.

I live in sheltered housing council accomodations - a flat. Maybe the new Town / Parish Council could help residents like me especially as our Supported Housing Officers were axed by Somerset West and Taunton Council.

I live in a council flat in supported accomodations. Perhaps a Town / Parish Council could re-instate Support Housing Officials which the present Somerset West and Taunton Council axed.

NOT REALLY

I feel the work of Parish Councils is vastly underrated. Many times a Parish Council's status is negated by being overridden by Town Council or larger Local Authority views. For example in Winkleigh ALL of the Parish Councillors were against a proposed new housing development. Yet Torridge District Council completely ignored the views of the Parish Council and the residents and passed the new development. This unfortunately leads the local residents to feel Parish Councils are ineffective. Of course housing is needed but the parishes have existed for many years and are an integral part of a community. Please keep Staplegrove Parish Council!

Re 10 above,the functions of the unitary and parish/town councils will differ; it is more important that all of the area of a parish council is included within just one Local Community Network (which is another reason why the new Town Council should be restricted to the current unparished area).

Staplegrove has a distinct identity of its own,with a church,village hall,primary school,play and sports areas and clubs,shop and post office ie it is no different from Bishops Hull and should be treated the same.To abolish Staplegrove parish will be the equal of an act of vandalism.

Staplegrove is separated from the rest of Taunton by the railway line and the green wedge which is the Taunton School playing fields and northwards.Staplegrove parish should be squared off by being expanded to include those parts of Bindon ,Staplegrove and Greenway roads,and Private road and Stanway Close, which are north of the railway line and west of that green wedge; some,if not all,of the residents of those properties consider themselves to be part of the Staplegrove community.

I agree that a town council is required for the unparished area, however the current Parish Council represent their area and work hard to achieve what the residents want. I'm not sure that the unitary council will have the resources to maintain what the Parish Council currently does.

I am concerned about the future of the country park and the role which Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council plays.

Vanity project.

Leave well enough alone and don't try to fix something that isn't broken. If you think something is 'broken' please clarify and be more specific as to the advantages you believe there will be for the wards you intend to remove from their existing parishes. I don't see any advantages to the residents of any of the affected wards. Let's be honest, your motives are not being articulated in a transparent manner.

As is to be expected a totally ill thought through proposal.

Leave well enough alone.

Leave well enough alone

Don't change the boundaries, respect local areas. Merging everything will force local villages to lose their identity and autonomy.

This consultation is heavily biased. It is difficult to answer some questions without them being misconstrued as support.

I agree that Taunton should have a Parish Council, but I fundamentally disagree with the maps. Maidenbrook and Nerrols are now part of Cheddon Fitzpaine, they join in with our activities, they provide trustees for the local village hall, and so much more.

To include them in the new Town council would be wrong, especially when a more obvious area (Bishops Hull) has for some reason been excluded. Why?

Parish boundaries and funding should remain as they are. SWT does not have the mandate to push through changing these in its dying days.

District Councils, in name or otherwise, are part of the past as we move to a Unitary model.

All local authorities should be prevented from spending public funds on campaigning, particularly in an antagonistic way to a different tier of local government.

I think many of the questions on this consultation questionnaire are leading questions and will not truly reflect the views of many of those completing it. It worries me that this whole publicly funded process appears to be an attempt by some local representatives and/or employees to re-create the district council for their own interests. There is a clear conflict of interest in this proposal for a Taunton Town Council geographically larger than the current un-parished area.

Parish Council should remain.

Question 10 makes assumptions that certain things may happen, and wants comments. This is speculation, and any answer could be misconstrued as support .

Maidenbrook and Nerrols estates were built on land within the parish of Cheddon Fitzpaine and should remain so. They have become a valuable and important addition to our community. There is a real sense now that they are "part of us", and are welcomed and included in all our local events.

Q10 is meaningless, as to answer it implies a course of events that is speculative.

I have been a Trustee of Cheddon Fitzpaine Memorial Hall for 32 years and Chair of Trustees for 7 years, and in the last 10 years I have seen the make up of our

trustees change slowly. The developments at Maidenbrook, then Nerrols have provided a rich source of volunteers for local events (village Flower Show and Fete), and trustees for the hall. These are people who want to be part of "country life" even though they live on an estate, and their contributions have been immense. They are welcomed and valued and encouraged to be part of one big village.

To excluded them now after all this time would be wrong, they ARE part of Cheddon Fitzpaine, and we in the village do not want to lose them.

Q10 is gobbledegook, and requires speculation on a series of possible events.

I repeat, Cheddon Fitzpaine should not be split up. Maidenbrook and Nerrols are within our parish and should remain so. The people who live there are part of our community, and they contribute accordingly. As a consequence they have been welcomed into all the village organisations, Church, Village hall, Country Park etc. To include them now in the new Town Council would just be wrong.

Please, step back, reflect on what the community wants, and acknowledge that the residents of Maidenbrook and Nerrols want to be part of Cheddon Fitzpaine.

Leave the Parishes as they are as they work well.

I am not happy with the down-sizing of Cheddon Fitzpaine and the transfer of the new residential areas including Maidenbrook into a new town council.

My parish currently has 5 councillors. In the proposal it will only have one. The matters of the parish are dealt with at the most appropriate level nearest to the electors.

The proposed town council will have no greater responsibilities.

The current councillors are not party political so have no masters directing their votes and can represent the electors

Regretably once again politics of the party type is interfering with democracy.

I do not want to become part of a new Town Council as feel that my existing Parish Council is better placed to deal with the local community and make decisions on local spending.

I do not agree with the proposal that the village of Staplegrove be incorporated into the new Taunton Parish Council and I do not want the Staplegrove Parish Council to be abolished.

In the review it is stated

6.2 The Council notes the Government's continued commitment to town and parish councils and its guidance that it "expects to see a trend in the creation, rather than the abolition of parishes" and

5.4 Parish Councils' "directly elected parish councillors represent local communities in a way that other bodies, however worthy [!] cannot.

The present proposition reduces the elected representation of the villagers of Staplegrove to 1 councillor, compared with the current 6 parish councillors, 3 district councillors and 1 county councillor. This is a retrograde step, not progress!

Staplegrove is a village. It has a village atmosphere and a community spirit. It is not, and never has been, an extension of Taunton; it grew around the Manor and

the Church and the surrounding farms formed the community. Our TA2 postcode demonstrates this well; Kibby's Field is Green Wedge to mark the village's separation from the town and the Taunton Vale Sports Club was established here on the Green Wedge to continue the open space and separation from the town.

The planned 'merger' with a new Taunton council effectively means we will no longer have a voice for our community. Would our Recreation Ground and The Grove, (which is designated Village Green, for a reason!) be as well protected and nurtured by a larger, more remote council? The Recreation Ground was left in Trust to the children of the village of Staplegrove, and the Parish Council, in perpetuity, is the trustee, ensuring the field and its boundaries and the play equipment is all safely cared for. In recent years a new footpath has been established along the wall of the Rec. to allow villagers to walk safely to the shop, Post Office and Church without having to risk life and limb by walking along the busy Manor Road. A hedge has been planted along the fence of Kibby's Field and additional trees planted, a look to the future and contributing to bio-diversity. Would a more remote council contribute to the continued care of the Rec. with such dedication and voluntary commitment?

We were told by our County Councillor at a recent Parish Council meeting that Trull has been omitted from being absorbed into the new town parish because it has a church, a village hall, a village school and a shop and is seen as a village. If these are the criteria for being a village we meet them fully. Staplegrove too has a church, a village hall, a village school, a Post Office and a shop. We also have a village Sports Club (as well as the Taunton Vale Club) and a Scout Hut with various levels of Scouting using the hut as their HQ. Surely we should be treated in the same manner as Trull and be excluded from this new town council since we can demonstrate that Staplegrove too is a village?!

Each week the parish Journal lists 10 or more clubs or activities taking place in the village, most, but not all, in either the village hall or the church. The Village Hall was built through the efforts of villagers in planning and fundraising for the excellent amenity we now have here, a hub for a host of activities. Similarly, the recently re-ordered Parish Church interior has made it more amenable for a variety of activities to take place within the village and in a familiar environment; the village hall, similarly, has a busy programme of events.

I do not agree with the proposal for Staplegrove to become part of a new Taunton Council and I wish us to retain our Parish Council.

The proposal is out of order and Cheddon Fitzpaine should remain its own parish and not be encompassed into the new town council.

Cheddon Fitzpaine, including all of the proposed Maidenbrook ward, should not be part of the new town council

I am very strongly against Staplegrove Parish council be abolished. Staplegrove has long been a community going back to the Manor and church being the heart of the village. Although times move on, there is a huge sense of community in Staplegrove with the rebuilding of the village hall, the reordering of the Parish Church, the flourishing cricket club refurbishment, all organised by local people. I

look in the Staplegrove Journal will show you just how many organisations there are within the church community and the fully booked village hall also shows just what a vibrant place it is. This is all because we are a community working for each other and supporting all that goes on. Just like Bishops Hull which seems somehow to be able to stay as a Parish. Why on earth abolish a Parish Council who is involved and supports all the things that help to make up this special place?

Retain Staplegrove as a Parish Council.

In our view the creation of a Taunton town council will sever the links with individual communities.

We live on the edge of Staplegrove Village. We value the existing Parish Council which provides local knowledge of the area to provide information on local issues and help make decisions for this unique rural and historic area. This knowledge will be lost if we are included in the expanse of a Town Council, with representatives that do not know the area.

An example of this is we knew nothing of these review until the Parish Council delivered a flyer to our home.

We believe the boundary should retain our home as part of the Staplegrove Parish.

It may be a consideration to redraw the boundary between Taunton Town and Staplegrove along Staplegrove Road.

North Taunton development should NOT be included as part of Staplegrove Parish as it will be too big, with no historic link, but would benefit to be created into a new separate Parish which would encourage this community to have an identity.

No, but we should have a referendum on whether we adopt a town council, shouldn't just be a SWT decision. SWT were keen on referendum for unitary authority so hopefully they won't be hypocrites and deny us a referendum on formation of a town council.

I'm suspicious of any changes as generally not for the better or benefit of local residents

I feel that it is a shame that Taunton Council are trying to take over the parishes. This feels like a power/money grab rather for the benefit of the town. I would hope that there is a discussion to be had and the communities views addressed, rather than this consultation being for show only.

Would like the TC to include active travel as part of its work programme

In Staplegrove Village there is a strong sense of community (which could be lost within a larger Taunton Town Council) with many active social groups based around the Church and Village Hall. The Parish Council is Trustee of The Grove, a valuable 'green' asset and the maintenance of the excellent Recreation Ground/Play Park is financially supported from the Parish Precept. It is very important that these should all continue.

I suspect most people will not even get this far, it was not easy to find the questionnaire and I, like most people, cant be bothered to read all of the above. The point of going Unitary is surely to simplify things and cut costs, not just replace district councils with town councils.

Please just get on with green priorities, stop putting the motor car first. We need better pavements (please cut the hedges so my face doesn't get shredded by brambles when I walk) cycle routes, secure bike parking.
Don't approve house building until all the brown field sites and derelict buildings are converted to housing. Move all the shops to the centre, lower the shop rents on high streets, turn all the small shops back in to houses. Do not allow buildings to be left empty for years. If all space above shops and in empty shops was turned into housing you could clear the housing wait list in no time
Insist on insulation, solar panels and bird nesting boxes on all new housing, don't agree planning permission unless the above is guaranteed.
Its a climate emergency, we do not have time to waste.
Thank You

To get authority for the new council area the council have sent a postcard to my daughter in Wellington eight miles away. Residents beyond the unparished area gain a fall in district level tax with these proposals, why would'nt they want to say yes. The response of Taunton unparished area and three parishes at threat must form the key gauge of any community governance issues.

I would like to see the establishment of deliberative democracy principles in a town council in order to engage all citizens. I would like to see citizens assemblies set up for key things like transport, energy generation sharing, promotion of libraries of things, repair cafes and resilience strategies to combat climate change

Existing boundaries to remain, I wish to remain in the parish. I feel that the existing council have far more important issues to sort out within the existing boundary of Taunton rather than considering this boundary change,

I vehemently oppose the proposals to abolish Staplegrove Parish Council (SPC). Staplegrove village is a community distinct from Taunton (we have a TA2 postcode & green wedge between Staplegrove and Taunton). Staplegrove has its own Church, Post Office/Shop, Village Hall, School, Grove (our village green) & Recreation Ground. The Staplegrove Parish (SP) Journal highlights the numerous community organised clubs, societies & events, & is funded by advertisements from local SP businesses. SPC is effectively run/administered/and its assets including footpaths maintained due to the intimate local knowledge of SPC representatives (knowledge of the roads, building, land, planning and community wishes etc.). SPC would be able to absorb the new planned development of 1600 houses (if it happens) assuming a new parish council is not created for them. If, as I have suggested, a smaller town council is approved I would be in favour of the boundaries being changed accordingly.

SPC is a legally constituted representative body which currently represents a large number of residents (~ 1500?) and local businesses. Written response from current parish councils (e.g.SPC) should be treated by Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) Councillors as being representative of their parish communities and not just as single letters as if just written by one household. I request confirmation from the compliance/governance officers on SWT that this representation by SPC councillors is indeed being correctly observed. I also wish to lodge my concern in respect of the very limited dissemination in relation to the existence of this stage 2 consultation.

I have restricted my comments as to how it affects me but won't be at all surprised that other residents on the outskirts of the town will have queries regarding boundaries.

As residents of Cheddon Fitzpaine parish area (new houses) we do not agree that the apparent power-grab by the centre of Taunton will bring any benefits to the local (i.e. walkable) area. We are very concerned that the new and developing facility of Maidenbrook Country park will be underfunded and will lack control and oversight by people local to the area and of those who travel locally to use the facility. Few, if any, people would travel from the west of the town to use the facility, so on balance the control of the area should remain with those that devised and use it.

As a resident of Comeytrowe I favour the inclusion of the Parish of Comeytrowe within the new Town Council as it is a natural extension of suburban Taunton.

Comeytrowe is an urban area so it makes sense for it to be part of Taunton but I would hope it won't lose its identity.

I agree with the proposed boundary of the Staplegrove area where I live. How will this fit with the proposed changes to parliamentary constituency boundaries? Last I heard the new boundary would cut right through the Hudson Way/Bindon Road area, leaving my address as part of the new Minehead and Tiverton constituency, which I'm unhappy about. So the majority of the new Taunton town council area would come under one new parliamentary constituency for Taunton, but my area would not. This does not make sense to me.

It is a shame that the process for consultation was shortened, given the demands on counsellor and officers time, due to the rushed Unitary Elections.

I think a lot of residents of the town will be unaware of this consultation.

I think this was demonstrated by the contrast in feedback from West Monkton where the sense of identity of the parish was able to engage more residents.

In future, I would hope that on issues that affect both wards, and the whole town, there may be more opportunities for face to face engagement, education on the issues and deliberation with residents (now that we have accepted that we need to live with COVID mutations), such as People's Assemblies.

Please stop wasting money on schemes such as this.

I object strongly to forcing us into a Taunton Town Council with 1 representative. The information provided is poor. eg electorate numbers (including new houses or not?). With new housing we would need more representatives in 2027. Confused? Me too.

Nobody I have talked to in Staplegrove has been notified of any of the consultation meetings. Why? I have spoken to several people and cannot find anyone who has requested change or wants it. Which residents want this? We have many facilities here including: shop/post office, scout hut, playground/park, church, football/sports club, village hall, hockey/sports club, school and I expect facilities I have not immediately thought of, which ones would we gain? I agree Taunton Town is a mess and needs proper representation but feel it is for Taunton to sort this out, not us at Staplegrove.

Staplegrave is a village and distinct from Taunton the town. It grew around a manor and a church. A green wedge separates the village from the town. The merger would deprive the village of its own voice. The parish council nurtures and protects its environs especially the recreation ground left to the village in trust. A more remote council would not be so concerned. There is a fairly new village Hall created, built and funded by the villagers and the church has been up-dated by and for the villagers and any people or organisation that wishes to use it. Staplegrave village has a very distinctive presence within the community that surrounds it and in no way sees itself as just an add on to the town of Taunton. The town of Taunton has its own distinctive character and the village of Staplegrave being such a separate entity has no wish to be subsumed by it.

If a new Taunton Town Council was created there should be local elections to elect new councillors (not sure how you arrived at figure of 20 but would need to be enough to represent local population)

Can you advise why Bishops Hull has been left out of a new Taunton Town Parish? It would appear that Bishops Hull and Maidenbrook have a similar set up but have been treated differently. Both are on the outskirts of Taunton. What is the difference?

The parish boundaries should be left as they are.

I agree with the proposals provided the existing parishes affected are happy with them, particularly those parishes to be abolished. I note that the number of people represented by one parish/town councillor on the new Taunton Council will be about 2000 which is far greater than the number of people represented by one councillor in a rural parish. This is presumably because of the far greater number of services that will probably be provided by the new Taunton Town Council which it appears will probably be taking over many of the services at present provided by the existing district council. Presumably there will have to be some paid staff and hopefully funds from the council tax will be allocated proportionately between the County Council and the Town Council according to how many services the Town Council takes on. Even so, I note that the extra precept to be paid by people in the Taunton Town Council area is likely to be considerably higher than at present.

This should have happened years ago, but I'm pleased to see that it is being delivered now. Indeed, this is more important than ever with the abolition of SWT Council. The residents of Taunton need a voice.

Keep Cheddon Fitzpaine a village

Staplegrave should remain as a separate entity with its own Parish Council as at present.

West Monkton and Norton Fitzwarren, despite recent and current large scale housing developments, have retained their current Parish Councils. There is no reason why Staplegrave should not do the same.

This proposal will significantly reduce the councillor representation for local Staplegrave inhabitants from 6 current Parish councillors, and 3 SWT councillors to 1 Ward councillor. Staplegrave retains its area identity in the same way as West Monkton and Norton Fitzwarren.

The character of Staplegrove should be preserved, not split as suggested.
Take the new boundary along the Staplegrove Road.

SWT claims that bringing the post-1999 residential developments in Cheddon Fitzpaine parish into a new town council reflects some alleged reality. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth! The reality is that these estates were built as an extension of the Cheddon Fitzpaine community - they never had anything to do with the town in terms of their identity and still don't. None of my friends and neighbours moved into this southern part of the parish in the belief or hope that they would ever become part of Taunton town. Over the last 20 years we have bonded into a close-knit, coherent community of our own, we haven't been waiting for SWT to come along and tell us who or what we really are. Your proposed re-parishing of some or all of Cheddon Fitzpaine is based on a total misunderstanding of our community's achievements, wants and needs.

Leave well alone

As far as Cheddon Fitzpaine parish is concerned, all is currently well and SWT just need to leave well alone. This is an established, functional community that does not identify itself with, or wish to become part of, Taunton town. The village church, village hall, Maidenbrook Country Park and footpaths in and around Cheddon Village are used by the whole parish. The old village environs and the more recent residential estates to the south are inter-dependent and splitting them would be to the dis-benefit of both. The reality you claim to be reflecting through your CGR proposal simply does not exist in the hearts and minds of the residents of Cheddon Fitzpaine parish. Last but not least, how can SWT justify making Cheddon Fitzpaine a joint lease-holder of the country-park land located wholly within our parish while at the same time creating a scenario where we will be unable to act as a joint and equal partner with West Monkton PC? This does not make sense!

Don't see how the needs of such a large area can be met effectively

The town council needs leadership but not at the expense of the democracy of parishes which would lose their sense of identity, particularly in view of the proposed massive development in Staplegrove. The village would lose all rights to manage the development, have any say in the proposed structure of building proposals and maintain it's identity. The proposals could be viewed as a power and money grab. I have lived here for 38 years and feel desperately sad about the fact that as residents we would no longer have any say in the future of the village.

The overall approach of the revised boundaries is flawed. There is no call for semi-rural, semi-urban areas to be segregated into black and white, urban or not-urban areas. Such an argument is clearly divisive. It is also unsustainable as whatever arbitrary division lines are devised today, these will become incorrect as housing, green wedge and other aspects gradually evolve over time, making the proposed changes today seem shortsighted.

There is no reason to do anything other than setup a new Parish for the town centre unparished area, setup wards accordingly, and let the existing parish councils continue to their excellent work for their existing parishioners.

Given that we have to make the new One Somerset and its LCNs work this proposal is in effect petty politicking and shows a deliberate failure to understand and get to grips with the task ahead.

It is extremely undemocratic with its agenda of attacking existing historical parishes. The postal ballot on the two Unitary proposals is of questionable validity on 2 counts:

- 1) before Xmas 2020 the district councils voted against holding a ballot
- 2) with 6 months of this decision, after the formal consultation period on the two proposals had closed they voted to spend £350K on a postal ballot. Given the covering letter and info and dud (?????) website address that ballot was of questionable validity.

These proposals fail on two counts.

In a society where people are seeking meaning and identity a sense of place is most important. This needs to form the basis for any model.

Across many fields these days modelling is based on nature ie on the organic rather than the mechanical. These proposals are not based on an organic model but a mechanical top down power driven model. It is out of date if not potentially destructive.

Secondly these proposals ignore the importance of the critical mass argument. Depend on the purpose of a structure or organisation there is an optimum size necessary to carrying out its purpose. Too small or few participants and it lacks the critical mass to be effective, too large or too many it falls apart or morphs into something else.

Given Taunton's history, current reputation and the negativity of the Somerset Gazette Postbag letters we have a big task ahead to make the current embryonic town council work. To propose to expand its boundaries at this point risks a disaster for Taunton.

This is more than failing Taunton it is also a serious breach of the democratic process and breaks down trust with the electorate by the ruling group who to date have very little to show on the ground for their current 3 years in power.

Please apply fairness, consistency, follow criteria and please be lawful! I sincerely hope you re-think your plans.

I object to the inclusion of Staplegrove parish being disbanded and disappearing into a large organisation that will not have our best interests at heart. Staplegrove is a village community that has a parish council that cares for its village. The new numbers of councillors that will take effect if the Taunton absorbs parishes will be an expense that we can least afford

Very disappointed that Somerset West and Taunton elected councillors have ignored the wishes of the people of Cheddon Fitzpaine by not taking into account the submissions which have already been made.

Cheddon Fitzpaine are enacted it does bring into question the viability of the remaining area being covered by a separate Parish Council. Have separate discussions taken place with that PC and adjoining PCs about alternative arrangements?

Has SWT had discussions with the affected PCs about the HR implications on staff employed by those PCs?

On the current outcome and recommendations any proposal from the working group can only be respected if 'gainers and losers' are properly represented on the working group. The current recommendations do not follow a logical model or thought process.

If a single council for Somerset is formed why do you want to form another layer by having a town council.

Let decisions and spending be made by local parish councils, not a larger town council which is not in touch with parish needs and opinions.

Why have Somerset West and Taunton councillors ignored the submissions already made and put forward proposals against the wishes of those living in and around Cheddon Fitzpaine ?

The outlying Parishes have told you loudly and clearly "LEAVE US ALONE"

They should remain as they are

Prouse, Marcus

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 17 July 2022 12:04
To: Governance
Subject: CGR

Categories: Marcus

Good Morning

Please can your record that our household completely disagree with the proposal of being included in a Taunton town council. We want to remain as the Cheddon Fitzpaine parish council as we have faith in the way it is run and we feel we belong in our parish and not with Taunton.

Regards

Vince Carey



Subject: RE: CASTLE GREEN & HESTERCOMBE/CHEDDON FITZPAINE

Dear Federica,

Many thanks for your swift reply. This is much appreciated.

I'm afraid the proposal in the Community Governance Review to exclude Hestercombe makes no sense to me. Historical precedence is all very well. But in today's world there is no logic in partitioning Cheddon Fitzpaine as a separate entity when it is so obviously an important part of Taunton. The new Taunton Town Council will be the poorer without this important district included within its boundary.

As ever, Kit

27 JUL 2022

SOMERSET WEST
24 Jul 2022 14:47:23

Community Governance Review - ...

Btinternet

Subject: Community Governance Review - Objection T M Walker

Date: Sun Jul 24 14:47:23 GMT+01:00 2022

From: ~~Mrs Patricia Walker~~ **TIMOTHY M WALKER**

To: governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

As a resident of Cheddon Fitzpaine I wish to object in the strongest possible terms to the destruction of the existing parish of Cheddon Fitzpaine.

The formation of a new Taunton Parish is a very good idea but should only include the existing areas of Taunton which are currently unparished.

Cheddon Fitzpaine is a historic and beautiful parish and has a caring and thriving community which will be broken up if the proposed land grab is implemented by SW&T.

If your plan goes ahead the parish will become unsustainable financially and may not be able to fulfil its obligations locally.

It appears to me that your plan is a political move for the current LibDem administration to get more power over local communities which have existed perfectly for centuries.

Timothy M Walker
84 Cheddon Fitzpaine
Taunton
TA2 8JU

As a family we only have one email address, Mrs Walker has already sent her reply by email.

Prouse, Marcus

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 20 July 2022 16:52
To: Governance
Subject: Response to planned changes to local governance

I am a local resident of Cheddon Fitzpaine (TA2 8JT) and concerned about the proposed changes to create a Town Council that incorporates many parts of local parishes. I attempted to complete the online questionnaire but it is a very poorly designed questionnaire (I say this as a marketing professional who has conducted a great deal of marketing research) as it is entirely subjective and leading, e.g. most questions begin 'Do you agree' which leads people to agree with your point of view, and should render the research invalid. Also, the consultation process seems to have been poorly managed e.g. feedback from the first consultation not included in this stage which many will not be aware of (it is entirely reasonable to believe that having provided feedback it will be considered throughout the process). Additionally, a recent 'pop-up consultation' took place at Cheddon Fitzpaine Village Hall with little advance notice and from 3pm – 7pm when families are picking up children from school, coming home from work, cooking dinner etc., it was hardly designed to be convenient.

My points are:

I think that a Town Council makes sense for Taunton, although I see no reason to refer to it as Taunton Parish. My concern is that the criteria for being part of the Town Council seems to include adding in developments that have been built in local parishes – surely this alienates residents of these developments from the community that they live in and causes divisions. Where people have chosen housing in local parishes surely they should be encouraged to engage with and participate in that parish in order to build community and lend their voice to creating services and maintaining the area in which they live. To suggest that new developments can't belong to an existing parish creates a 'them and us' mentality that could contribute to social divisions and disagreements.

And where does the 'reflecting the current reality of the town' stop? As further development takes places, does that too get subsumed into the Town Council without the **actual reality** of its location being respected and given appropriate funding, and its newest residents prevented from having a voice that impacts the area they actually live in.

I am concerned that a Town Council will attract the bulk of any spending power and decisions while there will be a number of smaller rural parishes that will be left without a voice or adequate representation. Part of Taunton's appeal is that it is surrounded by beautiful countryside and historic villages and these should be protected and allowed to flourish rather than either ignored or built over. Many people who live within Cheddon Fitzpaine parish do so to enjoy the countryside and community on their doorstep – including those who have recently moved into newer developments such as Nerrols Grange – and should be able to be part of that parish and decide what happens there. To ignore the countryside and its local residents is to lose the very heart of Taunton.

Carolyn Cooper

Prouse, Marcus

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 17 July 2022 09:04
To: Governance
Cc: Cllr Cavill, Norman; Cllr Pritchard, Andy; Cllr Pritchard, Andy
Subject: Land and Power grab by proposed Taunton Town Council

Categories: Marcus

Dear Sir

I am a resident of Cheddon Fitzpaine village and have attempted to access the SWT questionnaire regarding Taunton Town council on your website – the website is coming up as unavailable so am putting my views by email. I have copied in my local councilors and would welcome their views on my comments.

- 1) Wording of questionnaire: Many of your questions appear to be leading. This would be considered poor and potentially illegal practice in any government regulated area of industry (eg: Financial Services) leading to potentially unfair outcomes and undermines the entire efficacy of using a questionnaire to assess the true feeling of the populace. I would imagine a Judicial Review of your final decision on the scope of any future Taunton Town Council would likely take the leading nature of many of these questions into account.
- 2) Please explain to me the rationale for negating responses to the proposals during the first phase of the public consultation.
- 3) Please confirm how you have managed the conflict of interest of existing SWT councilors who were unsuccessful in the recent Unitary Authority elections and potentially surplus SWT employees (ie: they will effectively lose their roles when the Unitary Authority becomes active) in the creation of a Taunton Town Council, and in particular, attempting to expand the geographical reach to grab land from neighbouring and long-established parish councils. To a sceptic, it could look like an attempt to create a body that partially undermines the benefit of the Unitary Authority model by re-creating an (albeit smaller) Taunton Deane BC.
- 4) By creating a huge Town Council, rather than one based on the current un-parished area, there will be no balance to the size of this smallest layer of local government. A Taunton Town Council to cover the un-parished part of the town appears to have merit and would provide good urban/sub-urban/rural balance.
- 5) The newer developments in Parishes are not part of the Town Centre, and to suggest residents moving to these newer developments want to be managed by a Taunton Town Council, rather than the existent Parish Council is unsubstantiated conjecture – I believe many of these residents moved there BECAUSE of the historic link to villages and therefore the village PC. I refer you to point 1) regarding the inability of your poorly worded questionnaire to represent their views.
- 6) The Community Infrastructure Level is for the community – to isolate villages into small parishes like islands will deprive the community of funds and put it into a central body. Spending is allocated fairly across whole parishes at the moment but largely concentrating this in a large town council will deprive parishes of much needed funds.
- 7) Public money spent on campaigning. Over the years, I have witnessed local authorities (TDBC, SWT, SCC and parishes) spending what must be vast sums of publicly raised fund on campaigning in the interests of those who run the bodies. How much has been wasted on this land grab, the campaigning by SWT to expand the scope of a Taunton Town Council to Parished area's, the response from rightly worried Parish Councils, the appalling campaigning by SWT of the existential threat of a Unitary Authority (eg: <https://www.somersetcountygazette.co.uk/news/19325460.major-gaffe-somersets-district-councils-direct-people-offensive-spoof-website/>), campaigning by SCC in support of the unitary authority and, of course, TDBC employees and funds used in support of the (thankfully) defeated residents vote to hive off local authority housing to a housing association some years ago. None of this, often antagonistic, use of public funds was really for the benefit of residents and council tax payers.

In summary, I would like my questions above answered, and while I can see many merits in a Taunton Town Council for the un-parished part of the Town, it's reach should not eat into the existing Parish council boundaries.

Ian Hunt

 TA2 8JU

Prouse, Marcus

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 26 July 2022 19:17
To: Governance
Subject: A Town Council for Taunton - questionnaire answers

Dear Sirs

Please see below my answers to this questionnaire;

1. I am a local resident
2. My home postcode is TA2 8FY
3. I do NOT agree that Taunton should be represented by a town council
4. Whilst we need a renewed sense of community in the town with community cohesion, I feel this can be achieved by keeping the current parish councils as well as creating a new town council ALONGSIDE them
5. I do NOT agree that a town council, if established, should encroach on existing / historic boundaries around the edge of the town.
6. I do NOT agree with the proposal made by Somerset West & Taunton Council for changes at the parish level including the establishment of a new Taunton Town Council covering the area shown in Map A, and consequential changes in a number of surrounding parishes.
7. Yes, I believe services such as parks and open spaces etc are important to the place where I live. And yes, parish and town councils should consider providing such services if the principal council is unable to continue doing so, however, that should not be a unilateral decision and should be held under consultation with a valid reason why the principal council cannot continue doing so.
8. I do agree that any new Taunton Town Council should be divided into wards for the purpose of electing councillors to represent local people – though this seems like just asking should we keep the same principles in place as we have right now – so why change the parishes?
9. I don't agree with the look of the new council so don't feel I can answer about the number of councillors to be elected in a correct way.
10. If parish and parish ward boundaries are changed then it would be make sense that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England should be asked to amend the relevant district ward and county/unitary division boundaries where necessary to align them with the revised parish boundaries. However, I still don't agree that the parish boundaries should be changed.
11. We are the county town of Somerset. We were once a market town. We are now a 'garden town' yet seem to want to get rid of our lovely village feels by changing the parish boundaries. Part of Taunton's charm is having it's semi rural parishes to live in. I don't agree that just because a new build estate for example is built that it should then be classed as urban and therefore swallowed up a generic town council where we lose all of our charming areas. The likes of North Curry have new build sites and you feel you're in an urban environment in parts but you don't suggest they get pulled in.

I look forward to hearing how things are moved on.

Elaine Jewell-Moore

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
TA2 8FY

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Prouse, Marcus

From: Colin Locke [REDACTED]
Sent: 17 July 2022 12:32
To: Governance
Subject: Break up of parish council

Categories: Marcus

I am part of the parish of Cheddon Fitzpaine and I would like to keep it that way. I cannot see any sensible reason to break it up and reduce it to 309 members. We have a strong sense of community and this would break it down .

I am a local resident living in TA2 8PS which I believe would become part of a new Taunton Town council as a new build area. I don't think a town council would promote a sense of community by destroying one that is already in place with Cheddon and Monkton .

So please leave well alone and look at the strong representation that was put forward in the first round of consultations and don't just ignore it.

Colin Locke

Sent from my iPad

Prouse, Marcus

From: David Redpath [REDACTED]
Sent: 25 July 2022 21:48
To: Governance; clerk@cfpc.co.uk
Subject: Somerset West and Taunton - Community Governance Review

David and Camilla Redpath

[REDACTED]
Dear Sir

We live in Cheddon House which is a Grade 2 listed building in the Conservation Area of Cheddon Fitzpaine. The village has a unique character, which everyone in the village values and wishes to preserve. The village also has strong and historic links to the Hestercombe Estate. A key part of protecting the villages' interests is the Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council. We would therefore object to any proposal which diminishes the ability of the parish council to do this effectively.

We would suggest that the council failed to take adequate account of views provided in Phase 1 of this consultation in the preparation of Phase 2. We therefore question the legality of Phase 2 and our objections below are made without prejudice to this position.

We object on the following grounds:-

1. The original reason for this change was to address the un-parished area in the centre of Taunton. This could have been done without impacting any other existing parishes. The council has ignored the recommendations of its own Working Group set up to give this issue proper consideration.
2. The council has subsequently given insufficient weight to the views provided in the Phase 1 consultation outcome.
3. The current proposal in Phase 2 would create an excessively large central parish with undue influence on planning and other local issues outside central Taunton.
4. The other existing parishes would be diminished as a consequence and be less able to represent the views of other local areas very different in character to central Taunton.
5. In particular it would call into question the future of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council and the work it does to preserve this area.

We have little faith in this consultation process to date and fully expect that the views provided in Phase 2 to be treated with the same disregard that has been shown previously.

David and Camilla Redpath

Prouse, Marcus

From: J SCANLON [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 July 2022 09:02
To: Governance
Subject: Taunton Tawn Council Proposal

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Categories: Marcus

Dear Sir / Madam

I wish to lodge an objection to some of the plans related to the creation of a new Taunton Town Council, particularly the absorption of semi rural areas from the neighboring parishes into a bigger urban council with specific reference to Cheddon Fitzpaine.. I also disagree that many of all the areas labelled as "urban extensions" should be labelled thus and should rightly be referred to as "semi-rural developments" because their populations identify as members of their parish communities. I do however agree with the existing unparished town area having its own parish

Parish Councils are formed to improve the development, appearance and environment and to be a strong voice on behalf of local people. It is supposed to be the level of government closest to the people. The current proposals seems to be ignoring this principal and at a cost that is clearly detrimental to the communities of the surrounding parishes. A reasonable person might suspect that it is proposed purely to enhance the finances and power of the Town council

Incorporating semi rural communities into a much larger urban parish will result in a dilution of representation. The priorities of the larger council will clearly swamp the needs of local communities. The loss of the semi rural areas will undoubtedly weaken the strength of representation the current parish has. It is clear that the needs and aims of a large urban population will dominate any newly incorporated areas needs.

The representatives on large councils will look towards the greater needs of that large council and will not be in close enough contact with each semi rural areas needs. When it comes to parish councils, bigger is not better when one is looking at the purpose of such councils. At present the local parish councils represent the local population, both semi-rural and rural. Within a larger town council the strength of local representation will be greatly reduced.

At present the parish councils are all local people where political party differences are rarely apparent, however within a bigger council party differences are more in play and again this distances the council from addressing smaller more local needs.

The additional effect is the reduction in size and population in what remains of the parish. The "lost" semi-rural populations will loose the representation and their say within the parish that they identify with. The remaining reduced parish will have to continue maintaining existing services which would, to a large extent, continue being used by the residents of the urban population. .

I think a large urban council will be driven to promote the town itself at a cost of ignoring the needs of newly incorporated semi rural communities. The consequent reduction in the the overall strength of neighboring Parish Councils will of itself be detrimental to the new Town Council because they will not have the funding or population to maintain their current functions.

It is probable that a degree of alienation and hostility would exist between surrounding councils together with the incorporated semi rural areas towards the bigger and more distant new Town Council. I also feel that the reduction in the current parish areas would of itself be detrimental for the local urban community.

Yours sincerely

John Scanlon

TA2 8LH

Prouse, Marcus

From: Janet [REDACTED]
Sent: 17 July 2022 12:33
To: Governance
Subject: Somerset West & Taunton's CGR

Categories: Marcus

Wish to register my view that Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish should remain as it is currently, I live in Tudor Park and definitely do not want my parish to be downsized in any way.

Janet Scott

[REDACTED]
TA2 8TD

Sent from my iPhone

Prouse, Marcus

From: Mrs Patricia Walker [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 July 2022 14:47
To: Governance
Subject: Community Governance Review - Objection T M Walker

As a resident of Cheddon Fitzpaine I wish to object in the strongest possible terms to the destruction of the existing parish of Cheddon Fitzpaine.

The formation of a new Taunton Parish is a very good idea but should only include the existing areas of Taunton which are currently unparished.

Cheddon Fitzpaine is a historic and beautiful parish and has a caring and thriving community which will be broken up if the proposed land grab is implemented by SW&T.

If your plan goes ahead the parish will become unsustainable financially and may not be able to fulfil its obligations locally.

It appears to me that your plan is a political move for the current LibDem administration to get more power over local communities which have existed perfectly for centuries.

Timothy M Walker

[REDACTED]
Taunton
TA2 8JU

Prouse, Marcus

From: Stephen Tudgey [REDACTED]
Sent: 17 July 2022 08:57
To: Governance
Subject: A town council for Taunton- my views

Categories: Marcus

Dear Sir/Madam,

In response to your questionnaire re Town Council for Taunton.

I fully support the idea of a Town Council for Taunton. We are the County town and a Town council will unify and promote the area.

However In my view we should also keep parish councils such as Cheddon Fitzpaine. The parish councils know their area in detail and can best deal with local issues .

Yours sincerely,

Mr Stephen Tudgey

[REDACTED] Taunton, TA28GE

Prouse, Marcus

From: Mrs Patricia Walker [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 July 2022 14:31
To: Governance
Subject: Community Governance Review

I have been a resident of Cheddon Fitzpaine for 26 years and during that time have seen our parish grow with the addition of new housing developments. We are an entirely rural parish with new housing being built on land previously farmed by Crown tenants.

I totally disagree with the Councils proposed plans to carve up Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish by adding the new estates to the proposed Taunton Parish, we are a rural community which has been enhanced by new families joining our Parish and by the addition of Maidenbrook Country Park.

I think that people in central Taunton should have a Parish Council but only the area that at present is unparished. I feel SW&T are trying to land grab to make a bigger parish at the expense of rural parishes which serve their communities very well.

Cheddon Fitzpaine is a very caring community with a great history and the proposals will destroy a lovely rural community and make it financially unviable.

Patricia Walker
[REDACTED]
Taunton TA2 8JU

RECEIVED

21 JUL 2022

SOMERSET WEST
and TAUNTON

TAUNTON

TA1 5QT

11.17.2022

Re Community Governance Review

In answer to questions 3 and 11

I agree in principal a town council is a good idea especially for the unparished areas. But I see no advantages to Comeytrowe Parish to be part of it.

It is said it is part of the town because there is no green boundary between it and the town. There was no green boundary when it was set up 35 years ago.

There seems to confusion between a village that has a parish and a parish so an assumption is made that it is not a parish. Comeytrowe has never been a village though part if it was once Trull, so it has no history. It has a lot of things some of which a village parish may not have -. A church, a primary school, a community hall, shops including a pharmacy, a doctors' surgery, a pub, a nature reserve , a take away, and a public school whose playing fields mean green areas and less density of housing.

It also has activities many based in the community hall including a Wednesday welcome for people on their own to meet together. It has an active stream group who clear litter and fight for no pollution from the Orchard grove development, Pilates group meets on Penny's Field.

Penny's Field is owned by the Parish and the Parish Council see is maintained, grass cutting, tree management, fences and the play equipment which they provided. An enclosed area for the under 5's, equipment for the older children and a youth shelter. All this is regularly inspected and kept in good order. It has put up litter and anti dog fouling signs.

It owns and maintains two bus shelters.

Public response has been asked for but the publicity has been so poor in relation to how any changes affect Comeytrowe. A card through the door asking you to look on line or use your smart phone when the terms were so general few people would realise what it was about or how it would affect them. Noy everyone has a computer or a smart phone.

You will say you have consulted but the consultation in Comeytrowe Hall on Friday 8th July was not advertised. There was a small notice in the Gazette which comes out the day before and I by chance read it less than 24 hours before the meeting. I had been at a Parish Council meeting that week and it had not been mentioned. The Chairman of the parish Council did not know and it was on a Friday afternoon when many people are at work.

What is the advantage to the residents of Cometrowe to incorporating into the town? Will Penny's Field become like the other play areas in the parish which are looked after by the

town, neglected and run down,- not useable.? Will the precept go up to pay for things in the town not related to us? Eg public conveniences, allotments, office premises.

I think you wanted to incorporate Orchard Grove into the town to get its money it would bring but could not do so with Comeytrove in the way. We always assumed as Trull wants no part of it, it would become a Parish in its own right as we did. It will have a school, shops playing fields, perhaps a care home.

Many people seem to think the incorporation of Comeytrove parish into the town is a fait accompli. I have heard this from Councillors and seen letters in the gazette to this effect

J M Robinson

Prouse, Marcus

From: Jennifer Hoyle [REDACTED]
Sent: 27 June 2022 17:29
To: Governance
Subject: Taunton to be parished

As a resident of a rural parish, we have always felt that it was unfair for all of us to be effectively “subsidising” Taunton, so the proposal to set up a parish is welcomed

Thank you for the opportunity to respond

Best wishes
Jenny Hoyle

Sent from my iPhone

Prouse, Marcus

From: ian pitman [REDACTED]
Sent: 12 July 2022 16:53
To: Governance
Subject: Local Authority Government

As a local resident I am bemused by the wishes of certain people to overrule the existing arrangements for parish councils as, under the new Unitary Authority there is one unparished council.

The purpose of creating a unitary authority is to provide greater efficiency in the running of local government. To ensure that there is no reduction in democracy following the change from the previous arrangements Local Community Networks (based on existing parish councils) were incorporated in the new single council running. To remove existing parish councils or reduce their remit surely goes against the new structure's concept.

Effectively what is being proposed by those that wish to absorb some or part of the parish councils into the unparished council is to 1) reduce local democracy

2) take assets away from the parish councils that have been accrued over time

3) remove local knowledge from the parish councils by imposing those that do not live in area.

The danger, if proceeded with, is that assets removed from the parish councils become neglected because

1) not being in their area councillors would not feel any responsibility for them.

2) should any funds be required for their upkeep, as they are not in the area for another councillor, and that councillor felt that something in their area required funding, funds would be redirected.

The solution is for councillors in the unparished council to concentrate on the area they have been elected to represent and develop that area without distraction.

Ian Pitman

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

Submission on Community Governance Review from Taunton Labour Party

This submission addresses the Stage 2 Community Governance Review proposal “A Town Council for Taunton”. In particular we wish to comment on proposal G Electoral Arrangements and the detailed ward arrangements outlined in Section 3.

Our contention is that the case for multi-member wards is flawed and does not serve the interests of electors seeking a direct relationship with their local Councillor. In a single-member ward, the responsibility for the representation of electors in a clearly defined community is much clearer.

In a situation when Councillors from different political parties represent a multi-member ward, electors may get different responses from different Councillors and find it more difficult to hold them to account. Our experience on Somerset West and Taunton leads us to believe that having one Councillor representing an area clarifies both their political role and their function in seeking redress for a constituent with an administrative problem.

In a specific alternative to the multi-member ward arrangements, we would argue that the Priorswood Ward, where the proposal is for three Councillors, could be split into three distinct areas – Pyrland, Lyngford and Obridge. Each of these areas has its own characteristics and each community could have its own dedicated Councillor.

In terms of elector numbers, the polling districts of DEZ and DFB combine to produce around the average number for a single-member ward. The other polling districts in Priorswood – DFC and DFD – contain the right number of electors for two wards. With a small modification of the polling district boundaries (for example, moving all the DFC electors north of Eastwick Road into DFD), roughly equal numbers could be allocated to Pyrland and Lyngford.

We believe that this illustration of how Priorswood could become three separate wards shows that the democratically-superior arrangement of single-member wards could be achieved across the proposed Taunton Town Council area. For the sake of clarity of representation, we urge that the elector arrangements be re-examined to produce a pattern of single-member wards which would serve Taunton well into the future.

Neil Guild Chair
Libby Lisgo Councillor
Brenda Weston Councillor
Jon Gray Policy Officer

Taunton Labour Party

Prouse, Marcus

From: Mary Barons [REDACTED]
Sent: 19 July 2022 10:32
To: Governance
Subject: Response to Consultation by Community Governance Review

To whom it may concern

I do not agree with the proposal that Staplegrove should become part of a new Taunton Parish/Council for several reasons.

Firstly, there has not been due consultation and no information to the residents until this month July with about three weeks notice.

Secondly, Staplegrove is a village with a self supporting Parish Council which serves the Parishioners well. Why should it not remain so?

Staplegrove has a thriving community, with a lively church, a good school, an excellent village hall, a well used recreation ground maintained and cared for by Staplegrove Parish Council, a Post Office and shop, and. Sporting facilities.

Staplegrove is outside the area Postal code, TA1. It has a proposed housing development adjacent to Kingston St. Mary (Which has no change). It is with Norton Fitzwarren under a Church Benefice. (Norton Fitzwarren has no change).

Why should Staplegrove be reduced to one Councillor?

There is no apparent inclusion of what this proposal will cost.

Certainly if there are wards without Parish Areas, new Councils should be formed, inviting those neighbouring to apply to join if they so desire.

I trust there will be further consideration and amendments made to the current proposal.

Mary Barons.

Sent from my iPad

Prouse, Marcus

From: Michael Clark [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 July 2022 10:21
To: Governance
Subject: Staplegrove

We are afraid that we object strongly to the suggestion that the establishment of the new Taunton Town Parish should result in the complete take over of the Parish of Staplegrove.

We suppose that there is a case to be made of expanding the town boundary to include the 'industrial' part of Staplegrove, being that area south of Bindon Road and possibly even extending northward to take in the housing south of Staplegrove Road, but that should be highly dependant on the views of the residents living there and hence for them to decide who they wish to represent them. However, there can be no justification at all in extending the town parish to occupy all of the Staplegrove village, based on the assumption that the North Taunton Development will be undertaken and completed any time soon.

There is a large stock of possible future developments in the area which have the necessary initial approval and are waiting until some developer considers that the time is right to make a start. In NTD's case the approval is now six years old but has made very little, if any, meaningful progress. It suffers from being divided into two sections, east and west, requires the building of a spine road to be completed as soon as the first 250 houses are occupied and has the requirement also for a new primary school, a village hall, shop and other basic facilities. The western end of the spine road had a developer but he has now lost interest and left. There has been nobody named for the east end.

The spine road has so far not been planned so as to connect with Silk Mills junction, as stipulated in the design brief, but has, for no explained reason, been proposed as an additional, expensive and dangerous junction between the existing Staplegrove and Cross Keys junctions, making 5 intersections in a very short length of a very busy main road. It is dangerous because it is located at a position which requires a maximum 6% steep gradient down to the A358. As the new spine road will no doubt be part of a western and northern bypass to Taunton, this junction will require traffic wishing to use the bypass to change traffic lanes to turn east at Silk Mills and then change again to turn northwards at the new junction. The stipulated requirement at Silk Mills would be incorporated in a straight crossroad controlled by traffic lights and would be cheaper and safer and positively helpful in the construction of the spine road. One wonders why this has not been followed! It needs to be corrected, presumably by way of a second planning application.

Staplegrove village is blessed with The Grove, which was given to the villagers for their enjoyment and also has a centrally positioned conservation area. Most of the remaining area has been safeguarded by being established as Green Wedge for the express purpose to maintain the separation of the village from Taunton by preventing more houses being build on that area. Taunton Sports Club were encouraged to transfer from the town to preserve this green wedge.

It may be that some time in the future NTD will be undertaken but that is certainly very likely to be many years before it is completed which might then, perhaps, justify passing to the town parish, but that time is not now.

Yours very sincerely
Lesley and Michael Clark

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

Prouse, Marcus

From: Rosalind Went [REDACTED]
Sent: 20 July 2022 22:09
To: Governance
Subject: Staplegrove Parish and the Governance Review

I wish to object very strongly to the proposal to merge the whole of the Parish of Staplegrove into the new Taunton Town Parish.

Staplegrove is a thriving Parish that has grown out of a small village on the edge of Taunton. Over the years development has joined it to Taunton but that is no reason for it to lose its very strong identity and become absorbed into Taunton, effectively becoming an outskirt.

If it proves impossible for Staplegrove Parish to remain as it is maybe a compromise would be for the area south of Staplegrove Road to be taken into the new Taunton Parish. This would leave Staplegrove with a viable and flourishing Parish going into the future.

I hope common sense will prevail.

Rosalind Went
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPad

Prouse, Marcus

From: Nicholas Hancock [REDACTED]
Sent: 19 July 2022 11:08
To: Governance
Subject: Community Governance Review - 2nd stage consultation

Dear Sir,

Rather than completing your questionnaire, I am emailing with my thoughts regarding the second stage consultation on the proposed plan for the new boundaries .

My observations purely relate to the interaction of the boundaries with Trull , as I am a resident in that parish , postcode TA3 7AA .

I am also a member of Trull parish council, although I would stress my thoughts and observations in this e-mail are personal, and are not necessarily representative of some other parish councillors.

In summary, I think the parish boundary between the new Town council and Trull is set correct. It runs along the Comeytrowe road and Dipford road, and where appropriate includes existing housing along those two roads within Trull parish. I.e. those properties remain in our parish.

If the new boundary line was positioned to split the Orchard Grove new development, so part of it falls in the new Taunton council, and part of it in Trull parish council, I personally think that would be wrong as effectively that would be splitting a new community. The only area of the Orchard Grove development that you propose remains in Trull parish , is that south of Dipford road . I think that sounds fair and reasonable because of the natural split of the Dipford road .

The boundary line as shown, at least is fairly straight forward to understand as it runs along those two roads as mentioned above.

Also , by leaving the Orchard Grove area south of Dipford road in Trull , it means importantly to us , we can have a degree of involvement with the new roundabout layout and how it will interact into the Honiton road . This is a crucial consideration for us .

Turning to the other interaction with Trull , this is in the Killams area . Again , your proposal makes good sense , as that area has never previous identified as being part of our parish . Therefore for that now to be part of the new Taunton Town council makes sense .

Other thoughts of mine , in no particular order :

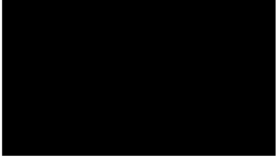
1. Trull existing number of parishioners gives us a good size parish already . Any material change to that would create too big a parish for us to oversee (in my opinion) .
2. At your recent consultation with us in Trull (30th June) , there was discussion regarding existing Orchard Grove CIL monies already paid , or about to be paid , to Trull PC . It was mentioned those monies will stay with Trull PC , and would not be taken back and passed to the new Taunton town council , if the boundary changes go through . Trull PC can then either look to spend that money within its (new) parish area , or if it ends up not being fully used , it could go back to the Authority (presume the new Unitary authority by then) . If it goes back because its unspent by the deadline (5 years ?) , or if we hand it back earlier , are

we able to stipulate the funds should be used to benefit the new residents of Orchard Grove only ?

I hope my above points makes sense . If you wish to come back to me on anything I say , particularly my query 2 above , please do .

Yours faithfully ,

Nick Hancock .



Prouse, Marcus

From: Anthony Kent [REDACTED]
Sent: 26 July 2022 10:27
To: Governance
Subject: A Town Council for Taunton

I would like to comment on the Community Governance Review and the associated questionnaire. I am a resident of Trull living at [REDACTED] Dipford, Trull.

I support the creation of a Town Council for Taunton but have a number of concerns about its implementation.

Boundary. The area to be covered is very large and diverse with needs varying from those of a town community to those of a rural community. The treatment of Orchard Grove with part of it staying within the Trull Parish does not seem to be in the best interests of either Orchard Grove or Trull. There are major issues outstanding such as community facilities, a proper flood risk plan, medical centre etc which affect both Orchard Grove and Trull, that need to be co-ordinated especially as their resolution could absorb most of the CIL money generated by the development. Whilst it could be argued that the size of the Orchard Grove development could eventually justify a separate parish in its own right, the creation of the necessary facilities need to be done now and I doubt if the proposed Town Council has the capacity to take this on. Perhaps a joint Town Council/Trull Parish Working Group needs to be created to do this.

Town/Parish Council Expertise Throughout Somerset, there are several parish councils where a number of vacancies exist though a lack of volunteers to take on what has become a very onerous role. If more responsibility is passed down as outlined in the Unitary Council plan, parish councils will struggle to meet their obligations, especially if the proposed LCN structure is not in place and the proposed Town Council will not be immune from this. There needs to be clarity on what professional support will be available to support the Town Council as it takes on the role.

Best wishes

Anthony Kent

“Taunton” Civil Parishes Re-organisation Proposal

Context of the Proposals

SW&T has already consulted on its initial proposals for re-organising the Civil Parishes in and around Taunton. But, despite the historic nature of these changes, very few responses were received, not least because so many critical considerations were omitted from the relevant documents.

Under a government edict, and against the wishes of its residents, a Unitary Authority has been imposed upon Somerset, through which the number of the County’s Councillors has already been arbitrarily halved.

In Taunton, there has long been a “democratic deficit”, in that most of its urban area has not been represented by the lowest tier of elected civil authority - the Civil Parish; These “unparished” areas are the only such areas left in Somerset.

In recent years, substantial areas of “greenfield” land, in and around Taunton, have been developed for housing, but very little of the vital infrastructure (schools, health-facilities, public transport, playing-fields, public open spaces, etc.) has accompanied that ongoing development.

The difficult task of the Local Planning Authority [L.P.A.] - to structure the long-term future of its territory through its planning policies and decision-making, has been rendered well-nigh impossible, by the changes to the national planning system made by successive Westminster governments, by their savage cuts to Local Authority funding, by the presumption in favour of development, and by the inability of L.P.A.’s to fund the potential legal costs of appeals against their decisions. SW&T is also hamstrung by the planning decisions of its predecessors.

Difficulties in analysing the Proposals

1. Under the *existing* arrangements, it has never been made clear which Authority is responsible for planning, funding, building and maintaining essential infrastructure, like G. P.’s; dentists; nursery, primary, and secondary education; playing-fields; public open spaces; strategic roads; public transport etc., etc. No-one can say for certain what C.I.L. money *must* cover – only what it *may* be used for. Developers will avoid responsibility for funding anything, unless LPA’s can prove, and, if necessary, take through the courts, the proposition that such costs must be met by the developers. Developers evade Conditions by playing the “viability” card, long after those Conditions were imposed, throwing substantial costs back on LPA’s, whose national funding has been halved by successive governments. Essential infrastructure, and genuinely-affordable housing does not get built. SW&T’s proposals are made in a financial vacuum, because successive governments have refused to address the problems of financing essential services.
2. Civil Parishes have traditionally had very limited (but statutory) responsibilities, and, appropriately, limited funds; they never, until now, needed professional, qualified

staff, but have relied upon public-spirited local residents, prepared to do unpaid work for the good of their communities. Their functional efficiency depends upon some stability in their composition. Prospective Councillors need to know what functions they are required to discharge, and for what they could be held legally responsible.

3. Under SW&T's proposal, a newly-constituted Taunton Parish will elect its first Councillors (no fewer than 20 in number) in May 2023 [para. 9.60]. But the next elections for all the other Parish Councils are not until May 2027 [9.66]. That disparity, in itself, is problematic. Some existing Councillors might prefer to stand for the new Taunton Parish, and/or to relinquish their existing positions - but cannot do that, because the elections are out-of-phase.
4. Under the Proposal, despite the fact that Trull's electorate would *fall* from 1,828 to 1,666 (in 2027) [9.62], NALC recommends that the new Trull Parish Council should have 9 Councillors [9.62, 9.67]. And, from 2023 onwards, Taunton Parish Council would need 25 Councillors [page 179]. Where are all these new Councillors likely to be found, especially if their responsibilities are greatly increased? As things *are*, many Parish Councillors are elected unopposed; vacancies are often filled by co-option; the number of P.C. meetings each year is kept to minimum, but, already, meetings often have inadequate time to discuss their necessary business.
5. Existing Parish Councils have not needed qualified accountants, lawyers, and planners etc., but have discharged their responsibilities under the guidance of an experienced Clerk. Now they are having to set up systems to handle, potentially, hundreds of thousands of pounds of C.I.L. money each year, without knowing on what it is supposed to be spent.
6. The future planning status of the Trull Neighbourhood Plan (currently a material planning consideration until 2028) is unclear. Its geographical boundary is contiguous with the existing Trull Civil Parish, but the Parish boundary alters in 2023, *if* SW&T's proposals are accepted.
7. In all such Parishes, where Neighbourhood Plans exist already, the proportion of C.I.L. money which SW&T must transfer to the Parish increases, from 15 to 25%. It is in no-one's interests that the respective financial responsibilities of SW&T (now), the Unitary Authority (from 2023), and the Parishes (now, and forever) remain in doubt.

Comments on Specific Recommendations

- a) The new Taunton Parish [2.2A].

The Proposal *does* rectify the longstanding "democratic deficit" of Taunton's "unparished" areas, and it is logical to do that as soon as possible. But it is questionable whether its proposed geographical boundaries are appropriate. If representation is allocated on the basis of numbers of residents on the Electoral Register, and the new Taunton Parish should be, broadly, the *existing* contiguous urban area, surely, for now, Taunton should *exclude* Comeytrowe [2.2A(i)]?

b) The transfer of Killams Green from Trull to Taunton [**2.2A(ii)**].

Agreed.

c) The transfer of an area NW of Cotlake Hill from Taunton to Trull [**2.2A(iv)**].

Agreed.

d) The transfer of the existing western half of Trull to Taunton [**2.2A(iii)**].

By the same logic as in a), above, this area should, for now, remain in Trull. As the Urban Area is developed, it should be progressively transferred to Taunton, from existing Parishes. Obviously, the appropriate representation by Councillors would have to alter, as developments are occupied, to match the population within each Parish Boundary [**2.2H, 9.66**].

I am a local resident – postcode TA3 7JQ.

Whilst I do agree that Taunton should have a Town Council (TTC), I do not agree with the boundary as drawn.

Do you agree that a town council for Taunton could help to promote a sense of community in the town and promote community cohesion?

I suspect the area as drawn would do the opposite! Creating a Town Council as proposed, incorporates areas with very different, and potentially conflicting, interests. Twenty voices with twenty interests make it impossible for one peripheral area to win its case. Councils are responsible for the delivery of services, aim to improve the quality of life in the community, and are there to give communities a voice. TTC would inevitably, and probably rightly, fight for the bigger projects – at a more strategic level. But this takes decision making – and finance – out of the hands of local areas. It takes Localism out of the equation - people should be able to fight for their patch, to try innovative ideas, to raise their concerns directly with people who can do something rather than debate them. In defining localism, the Government said ‘We believe that localism is best achieved when it is led by the local communities themselves.’ It might even appear that the proposed TTC area is drawn with the desire to bring the CIL money from new development into their remit?

If a town council is established for Taunton, do you agree that its boundary should reflect the current reality of the town and include areas where urban development has occurred or is under way extending beyond the historic boundary?

No. The village areas outside the historic boundary have their own character and interests, the urban extensions are not urban but suburban. The services they need differ from urban services – I started a list, but the differences are so fundamental and numerous that I will spare you the details. The TTC boundary should respect existing loyalties and reflect the very distinct needs. Unparished areas outside the ‘town’ should be encouraged to become parishes, or similar. A parish with a population of over 300 may choose to constitute a separate parish council – but it is under no obligation to do so. Parished areas should retain their areas, except where small inconsistencies might benefit from ‘tweaks’.

Do you agree with the proposal made by Somerset West and Taunton Council for changes at the parish level including the establishment of a new Taunton Town Council covering the area shown in Map A, and consequential changes in a number of surrounding parishes?

A. That a single parish be created to serve the currently unparished areas of Taunton and that in addition:

(iii) The part of the forthcoming development in the south-west corner of Taunton that currently falls within Trull Parish should be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.

No.

The governance review must examine whether one or more parish councils should be created, divided or merged in order to ensure that local government arrangements are ‘effective and convenient and ‘reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area’. SWT ‘should take various factors into account, including the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion, and the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish’. Whilst there may have been a petition for a Town Council to represent the unparished areas of

Taunton, there has been no petition to halve Trull. The process of the TNP was, in effect, a confirmation of the existing boundary.

I am writing as a member of the Trull Neighbourhood Plan (TNP) Group; TNP is due to last until 2028, and covers Trull village (approx. 2,300 residents) with a large hinterland. The urban extension of 2,000 houses has outline permission, and lies almost completely within the Parish. As Reserved Matters are granted, and subject to management of phosphates, the development is progressing towards completion. Because the TNP is in place, the Parish has already received some of, and is currently entitled to, 25% of the CIL money – several million pounds.

The crucial section for Trull is (iii) – the 2,000 houses would be in an area transferred to the new Taunton Town Parish.

The area, shown on the plans App A and App B in the Full Council report, almost abuts the Trull village line of shops – as close as can be without slicing through the village. The new development is served by a spine road, the only car access, that will disgorge, via a new roundabout, onto ‘Trull Road’ – our connection to the town and over the Blackdown Hills to Devon. The spine road will undoubtedly be used as a Taunton bypass. The NP was initiated because of this development and the impacts that will be imposed on the existing infrastructure; the CIL money would support the modifications needed to accommodate these impacts, improve facilities to support the larger community and restructure the access to restore the village character.

Any changes to TPC boundary would nullify TNP.

Although a primary school and a shop will be part of the development, it is essentially a housing estate; there will be considerable dependence on the village facilities and its green spaces. One of the elements of the draft TNP was the importance of integrating the people living in the new development with the existing, and friendly, community of Trull. The CIL is to *‘support the development of the local council’s area, or any part of that area, by funding: a) the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure: or b) anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area’*. Geography determines that there will be a doubling of the population relying on Trull’s infrastructure; a doubling of people ready to become an active part of the Trull community.

One of the important elements of the TNP was the integrity and independence of the village. There was an overwhelming response to the initial Questionnaire for the TNP; people cared and care. The draft TNP described the Urban Extension as smaller communities that would share facilities, spaces and friendships. Trull was going to ask the new residents what they wanted. This was knocked on the head by the Developers and TDBC. But Trull came back with willingness to share. I believe these new Parish proposals would cause harm to that process; unacceptable pressure on Trull school, roads, green space – and goodwill.

Not least would be the impact of significant financial consequences. Trull Parish Council (TPC) is, at present, entitled to 25% of the CIL money paid for development within the Parish. It can use this money to fund infrastructure in the Parish and meet demands placed on the Parish by the development; it can collaborate with other Councils or providers for that purpose. It can commission professional assistance. If the Trull Parish boundaries were changed as proposed, TPC would lose the CIL money, and the precepts for the new houses, but would still experience additional demands on local facilities. Whilst the ‘Property, rights and liabilities of that council which relate to the transferred area’ would transfer to TTC, TPC could find itself liable for associated risks, management costs and maintenance payments, with only its reduced precepts to meet its ongoing costs. There is

a national argument that the billing authorities do not pass on the full proportion of the local government finance settlement earmarked for parish and town councils. TNP would no longer apply once the Parish split; TPC would be eligible for 15%, not 25%, of CIL money for future development in the new Parish – for example if the 145 houses were built at Broadlands.

There will undoubtedly be capital projects arising from the additional pressures of the UE, that are essential for the wellbeing of the Parish. Trull has sought ideas of the impacts and costs, for example, the re-landscaping of Honiton Road adjacent to the spine-road roundabout near Trull stores in Trull village, a 20mph limit through the village, an enhanced village bus service. TPC would take into account evidence, local views and aspirations – starting from the results of the questionnaire filled in by most of the TPC population at the time of the NP asking how people would improve their village. TPC could draw up its own Infrastructure Delivery Plan to identify local priorities for CIL spending. One of TPC powers is the ‘Right to Buy’, potentially a long-term protection for the village retaining a pub or shops, but the right does not help without the means.

The new TTP would not have a NP – there were discussions about writing one. It would receive 15% CIL, to fund the whole Town Parish, with Taunton town centre inevitably having a louder voice. The extra 10% would revert to SWT whilst in existence, and then to Somerset. SWT could then use the Urban Extension CIL to fund the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure anywhere in the extensive District.

The government is committed to changing CIL, possibly this year? Proposals are for a flat-rate charge and postponement of payment to project-completion. Land within Trull Parish is identified in the Core Strategy for several-thousand more houses in the longer-term. Trull could then face even more extraordinary demands on infrastructure which, if planning proposals are taken forward, will generate no payments at all from s106 agreements, and no new CIL payments until completion of the project.

What aspects of the proposal do you think should be changed?

Just to consider one aspect - I have no doubts that Comeytrowe has a similarly strong sense of identity to Trull. When a description of Comeytrowe in a TBC research document was reproduced in the draft TNP, there was an outcry! It did not reflect their Parish as people saw it.

The Government has said ‘Existing parish councils are not to be abolished against the wishes of local people.’ TP should not lose the UE area to a new TTC. If, by agreement, it would be possible to retain the TNP, a rational, and I suggest, acceptable, solution, would be for Comeytrowe to retain its status as a Parish Council, and to acquire the Western Neighbourhood of the UE – the line of the stream defining the boundary with Trull PC. If TNP would be lost, that would be unacceptable, and other changes, such as Killams, should also not take place.

Do you believe that services such as parks and open spaces, public toilets, control of litter, Car Parking and community events e.g. Christmas Lights Switch On are important to the place where you live?

TCs and PCs already have the powers to provide and support these matters – are you asking what priority they should have? In which case, all the powers need to be listed. These specific aspects relate primarily to Taunton town itself. Would the precepts be higher for TTC? Would PCs be asked to contribute?

If so, should parish and town councils consider providing such services if the principal council is unable to continue doing so?

Town and Parish Councils have no power to raise money through business rates – now might be a good time to resurrect the idea. Unless and until this happens, the question on taking on responsibilities previously borne by SWT has to have the answer ‘no’.

If the principal council were unable to do so, this would presumably be a funding issue. The government has confirmed local (parish and town) councils are not included in its financial support for local government, with district and unitary councils still expected to help PCs with funding. If the Unitary Council could not afford it, and were still failing to pass on the appropriate funding, how could the TTC afford it? PCs do not have the same interests; their priorities are linked to their parish.

It would be appropriate for TTC to attain the status of Quality Council; a better position to influence local decision-making processes and take on additional responsibilities from principal authorities.

Do you agree that any new Taunton Town Council should be divided into wards for the purpose of electing councillors to represent local people?

Yes. But the TPC should not have political affiliations. It does seem, surprisingly, that SWT is keen to resurrect TDBC in all but name. This is not acceptable, as TTC would not have the checks and balances attached to a District Council. For example, the Ombudsman does not have a remit, financial controls are less stringent. A TC needs to have a focus. If it is to ‘improve’ the town centre – yes, I remember the boulevard – it will not be able to offer the right level of care and attention to other, less central wards. As proposed, it would need to set up a similar bureaucracy to SWT.

Do you agree with the proposal by Somerset West and Taunton Council that the number of councillors to be elected to any new Taunton Town Council should be 20 and the ward boundaries and names should be as shown in Map B?

No. Some existing Parishes (Trull+) and potential new parishes would be outside TTC, leading to a reduction in population and consequently, of necessary representatives.

**To the Somerset West and Taunton Council
Community Governance Review for Taunton unparished area
Comment Two from Roger House, [REDACTED] TA11QJ**

I believe Taunton would be best served with one new parish body based on the old unparished area but find difficulty with the consultation page 5, section on financial matters.

1 The Councils documents say the average town/parish precept payable in 2022-23 by a band D Council tax payer within the Somerset West and Taunton Council area is stated as £47.79. This contains the Taunton unparished area with a low band D home payment of £5.88. The area accounts for over 25% of the district council in tax base terms, so it is dragging down the average quoted. The purpose of the review is to replace this unparished area, and I have re-calculated the SW&T area without Taunton included. This average band D council tax cost for the real Towns and Parish councils around Taunton is £63.24. More helpful might have been to step into South Somerset District Council area (average £102) and then Dorset (average just over £200) where a new Unitary Council was formed in 2019.

2 A similar operation to set up the large parish of Weymouth Town Council had just happened within the creation of the adjoining Dorset Unitary Council in 2019, **a simple explanation of that process would have helped those viewing the consultation understand the scale of a new County Town Council to come.**

3 Borrowing Weymouth town's current year budget I have reworked it to show what a Taunton Town Council's budget might be like this year. I am grateful to the Liberal Democrat Council for giving a much clearer breakdown of the general budget in late February 2022 than the old Taunton Deane Council did. For other costs particularly the central operating costs /overheads I have looked at other leading Somerset town councils like Yeovil and Frome.

4 For a Council based on the unparished area we have a £2.25 million precept meaning with its tax base an average band D cost of precisely £149.61, calculations below. This compares well to Weymouth on basis of electorate size and seaside resort towns having generally 50% more expense than towns inland. Taunton's cost should be less than competing county towns Dorchester £202 and Truro £267 as these have only two thirds our population.

5 How does this effect the consultation papers issued? The review was sparked by the Taunton Deane / West Somerset Merger but subsequently the creation of the Unitary Council is now in a parallel time period, this should have led to mention of the transfer of costs between the two new councils.

6 I have extracted £1.3 million net cost from this years Somerset West and Taunton Budget, all for similar services that were clearly devolved to Weymouth Town, and that will be devolved again to a new Taunton Council. All taxpayers outside of Taunton in West Somerset would benefit, from a compensating saving of £1million pounds in the District Tax this year. Next year this will be spread to a wider Somerset. All Councillors proposing this consultation are well aware of this. Postcards are being sent to a wider audience (My daughter has one in Wellington) to seek wider approval of the town council proposals, as council taxpayers they will benefit from the scheme, so why wouldn't they say yes.

7 I attended the December 2018 meeting of the Shadow Dorset Executive in Dorchester where it was finally confirmed Weymouth could not keep part of the rumoured £3 million car park incomes. In drafting the rules for the merger of Councils in Dorset any income generating asset with more than £100,000 income annually had to be retained by the Principle Dorset Council. At a previous Charter Trustees meeting I challenged David Fothergill previous SCC leader on this point, with regards some car parks income being used towards funding public

toilets. This could only be considered if the Unitary Council foundation rules were set differently than for Dorset and Weymouth.

8 There is no indication yet if Taunton could be a special case where income from property assets could replace that from the extra taxpayers of the three parishes joining. There is additional pressure on Somerset to follow Dorset's lead, in that the band D tax for the Dorset Council taxpayers is around 14% higher than the current combined tax in Somerset. Allowing for other income the "High Spending Conservatives" of Dorset will have about 8% more money to spend on very similar services. This makes devolving revenue generating assets much harder.

9 There is mention of Salisbury City Council but not of its exceptional creation in 2008 to fit into Unitary Wiltshire. Only slightly larger than the Taunton's unparished area, it now has a near £5 million expenditure with half its income arising from commercial activity including assets like a crematorium, lettable buildings, carparks, and a massive market square in use most days. A more helpful mention of Salisbury would be that a new super "County Town" on this commercial scale will not happen here.

10 There is mention of markets, important to promote Taunton, but not of it being able to regain its Market Charter, bestowed on the old Taunton Borough Council plus the historic Market House, with its current £85,000 income that could fund premises of the new councils choice. The building will come with a grant to upgrade insulation and install a lift. The extent of the councils green spaces budget may require the setting up of its own in-house workman and depot as Weymouth Town Council did.

11 Again as occurred at Weymouth I have included a 10% percentage addition to the budget to build a new council financial reserve. How current assets of parishes being abolished in differing degrees will be dealt with, is not explained.

12 I am aware the Council's preferred solution is the unparished area plus the three parishes to be abolished so have extended my calculation to include their much more modest costs and then divide by a wider tax base. This gives an alternate band D home cost for the enlarged council of £128.55; this confirms the effect of extra numbers on helping to fund the Town Councils central expenditure. This suggests a 14% reduction in band D tax.

13 Questions 6 simply asking to confirm the wider parish area, might have been fairer if it was split in three parts so each parish to be abolished could be identified and then commented on.

14 Five close parishes outside the town have now been excluded from the review but an alternative to raise moneys for central expenditure could be for the eight parishes to help fund wider Taunton issues by local agreement while retaining their own democratic structures. An example may be in shared funding and operation of a Town Mayor.

15 The new town council when elected will have control of spending from its first budget set from April 2023, **but until then the budget will be set** by the district councillors for the town. They know the issues and objectives of transferring services. The consultation infers the cost of the town council, is only about one third of the cost foreseeable by rational investigation. The new Town Councillors have a big task for unpaid volunteer councillors, much more intense than the parishes to be replaced. Councillors and officers behind this parish proposal have failed to paint a full picture of the new Councils scope: to guide those asked to comment.

16 In my electronic survey opinion I have suggested a council based on the old unparished areas is best, and most easy to enable given the cramped timescale.

Spread sheet follows, my creation comparing Weymouth and Taunton for 2022/23

**Taunton Town Council
Projection of 2022/2023 budget**

Executive Summary of Taunton Town Budget

parks and open spaces	906,000
public toilets	130,000
community rooms, halls, staff	170,000
other premises	70,000
market house, markets and rent income	-97,360
councillor activities, events, grants	261,000
central staff costs overheads	500,000
Members and Mayor cost	92,840
Contingency, and build up reserves	<u>250,000</u>
total	£2,282,480

old unparished area

this is a projection of budget from SW&T budget and other towns councils budgets

services			
Parks and open spaces			
allotments	4760		4,000
cemeteries	5110		5,000
nursery and green space depot	39970		45,000
parks and open spaces staffing	800430	0	0
parks and open spaces contractors	325250		832,000
sports facilities	18790		20,000
total			906,000
Operations			
advertising drums	-6940		-2,600

current financial year 2022/2023

the key issue is that in these calcs we transfer £1.3 million from the district council budget to the Taunton Town budget. outside Taunton taxpayers will share a £1 million windfall

Projection from SW&T general fund revenue budget	
2022-23, full council february 2022	
Staff and overheads from other Somerset towns	
General reserve contributions pr Weymouth town	
Parish information budget appendix	

Taunton projected by R House where possible figures from swt current budget feb 2022
W income £58k
existing nursery
SWT total parks green space £1980950
combined Taunton say 42% sport
less scope £.50 per week

Weymouth TC

Taunton TC

resort management	369200	0	Weymouth income £265k
deckchairs	-59060	0	Weymouth beach
events	118520	46,000	W income £ 58k
community development	44170	20,000	training h&s
public conveniences		130,000	SWT 213k
community rooms/halls		170,000	including small coms rooms in housing
Headquarters Commercial Road	80110	60,000	rent offices and depot
Market House future council base		-85,760	investment and long-term office project
Catering kiosks and markets	-39560	-9,000	town centre income less costs
other property clocks and monuments	13030	10,000	pro rata
totals		519,470	338,640
Member, Civic, & Central Operations			
members (Weymouth 29 Councillors)	47900	65,000	assume 25, but start up costs
civic and mayoral	13010	27,840	as present 67839 -40k staff below
central operating costs/overheads	1059480	500,000	staff, mayor, services, finance
totals		1,120,390	592,840
Promotions and activities			
tumbledown Environmental centre	60960	0	figure between Yeovil and Frome
grants to community		65,000	£21k swat now so say 30%
promotions, activities, climate change		120,000	the bit free for councillors to choose
peoples budget as Frome tc	0	10,000	Frome jubilee tributes
total		60,960	195,000
net cost of services		2,895,130	2,032,480
contributions to minimum town reserves balance		0	(£134 band D charge at this point)
from earmarked reserves		0	Weymouth £300k for first three years (pr)
staffing contingency		0	excludes any reserves from SWT
inflation contingency	29,510		excludes any scc/swt start up grant
contribution to earmarked reserves	167,800		general and inflation contingency
total precept(a)		3,092,440	50,000
			like elections/equipment, not in first year
			total
			2,282,480

Weymouth
3092 440

Taunton
2252 480

tax base (b)	18,275.5	15,255.85
band D charge (a divided by b)	£ 169.21	149.61

band D charge old unparished area

**Conversion to larger town council area
absorbing Comeytrove, Chedden and Staplegrove**

current year 2022/23	tax base	precept	as last review proposal march 2022
Chedden Fitzpaign parish (all)	909.06	37,247.00	
Comeytrove parish	1990.73	24,000.00	
Staplegrove parish	788.77	12,910.00	
local tax av £20 at band D	3688.56	74,157.00	

info from parishes
websites

assume all current reserves and CIL monies will be spent locally on halls and village infrastructure before merger
hall income to be retained by town council

recalculation with parish costs	74157	2,282,480
plus year one merging services with town	45843	
excludes legal costs closing 3 parishes		
revised tax base	15255.85	120,000
combined town/parishes	3688.56	2,402,480

band D charge wider area T.C.

Notes to accounts	cost for a wider town	band D tax	£126.82
			18,944.41

relative populations: electors Weymouth 48,000, Taunton unparished area 35,000
Taunton Town council comes into effect April 2023, for that year inflation to add
There will be further Unitary Council costs transferred.

Read completely at your own risk Roger House mk 2 26/06/2022

**To the Somerset West and Taunton Council
Community Governance Review for Taunton unparished area
Comment One from Roger House, [REDACTED] Taunton TA11QJ**

1 I believe Taunton would be best served with one new parish body based on the unparished area but with the some small boundary changes and resident additions as in the Councils list of proposals. So generally as the first town proposal when Cllr Lisgo headed the working group. With Somerset Unitary Council being created at the same time, it is this area that cannot remain unparished after 49 years. This amended area would still be the biggest parish council in Somerset. I don't wish to see the three whole parishes abolished Chedden Fitzpayne, Comeytrowe or Staplegrove.

2 I think pushing boundaries out to Kingstone St Mary or Rumwell are distant from my home in the town centre. For the junction with long established Staplegrove Parish, using Bindon Road as a ward boundary might allow the commercial element to the south to be with the town with only the block of flats by the Staplegrove Road transferring to Taunton. The unparished area is a cool shape, to be its own Community Network within the Unitary Council. For any Community Network of linking established parishes, the area around might divide into three shapes using physical boundaries M5 for the east and then the rail corridor dividing the west.

3 My primary concern in this Council Proposal is that 16 elected council members to serve the old unparished area are not enough. The consultation states for a wider Town Council there will be 20 or more Councillors for 43,487 electors; this could be a ratio of one unpaid Councillor to 2174 electors.

4 More specific for the unparished area the old district council wards are proposed with a total of 16 Councillors for 34,597 electors, a ratio of just one Councillor for 2162 electors. To form a larger council; the maximum 31 councillors figure was quoted at parish consultation meetings: perhaps as reserve to tempt on board the eight parishes consulted. This ratio is a significantly different style town council, with far fewer unpaid councillors to share the workload compared to these towns in my table below.

South West Comparable Towns to Taunton	approximate electorate	Councillors	Ratio of electors to one Councillor	Guide to Political Control as last election	Band D Home local tax
Dorchester County Town	19,000	20	1:950	Large liberal Democrat Majority, have 6 Museums and 3rd share of Market Income	£ 202
Frome	20360	17	1:197	All Councillors Independants for Frome. Most talked about town in broadsheet press	£ 209
Salisbury County City (new 2008)	36300	24	1:1512	Mixture of four political parties created through Unitary change own crematorium+massive market	£ 208 square
Truro County City	22,600	21	1:1076	Mixture of four political parties £2, million budget	£ 267
Weymouth Town (new 2019)	48,000	29	1:1655	Created via Dorset Unitary change, Seaside expenditure four differing political parties	£ 186
Yeovil Town	27,200	24	1:1133	Large Liberal Democrat Majority next biggest Somerset town after Taunton	£ 143
Taunton electorate	43,487 or 34,597	Current Proposal old unparished area option			

5 The consultation has not highlighted the wide divergence from the norm regarding comparable towns in this table, which includes three close County Towns and the newest Weymouth Town Council created with Dorset Unitary Council. Our Unitary Council change has already seen councillors lost.

6 In the previous consultation stage I proposed a draft ward name pattern for 25 elected council members for this unparished area, a map of possible wards included at the end again.

7 Using the Councils latest electorate figures there is a better ratio with one councillor to 1430 electors, putting us midway in the table. I have tested other numbers, but at 25 Councillors, the wards potentially can best be created equally north and south of the solid boundary of the railway line, (8 in the north and 17 in the south). We might still incorporate the small boundary amendments in the Councils changes schedule for a marginally bigger area.

8 The expansion in Councillor numbers will give more scope to link with historic neighbourhood place names. Example of Victoria Ward now proposed with two members, could instead cover with three councillors the residential areas of Firepool, Priory and Trinity.

9 The review stages are somewhat being hind time as compared to the review that led to Weymouth Town Council being formed. The second stage public engagement there was 10th November 2017 to January 2018 before a new Council election in May 2019. A new town clerk appointment was announced 10 months before that date. Aware that other Somerset boundary reviews are in progress, so a full Taunton Parish ward review (for my 25 Councillors) may only be possible after the scheduled May 2023 elections.

10 As temporary measure could the listed 16 wards could be used for May 2023 elections and then a further 9 Council Members be co-opted by the new the Town Councillors as part of its public inaugural public meeting?

Alternatively as a one off measure, adapting the proposed 20 council ward layout in the proposal. The wards for 16 councillors in the unparished area could be up graded if two sets of wards are combined? Perhaps (Victoria and North Town with 3 councillors plus Manor and Wilton with 2 councillors) it would be possible then to upgrade these wards to suit election of 25 councillors as the diagram below labelled "Quick set of wards for 25".

11 The Reasons for 25 Councillors for the Unparished Areas Town Council:

They can much better represent the differing neighbourhoods over the town. Many studies in the last decade have looked at optimum neighbourhood populations; a common factor is 6000 residents. This would better allow some ground level elements of the town council to be devolved to communities from the historic town centre, north of rail line, then to east and south of the town. We will be going from my terraced streets to more expensive detached homes.

12 The biggest town budget item is the high cost of caring for the many green spaces of a garden town. There will be wide local variations between the maintenance of sports pitches, more formal parks or landscaping and river or road corridors. There will be conversions to allotments and more rewilded areas. For our park group I have been on a scything course. If local meetings can be enabled, volunteer action to support the Councils Work will be more likely achieved and sustained. The scale of green space may enable the Town Councils to form its own work force based at the Hayden Road Nursery.

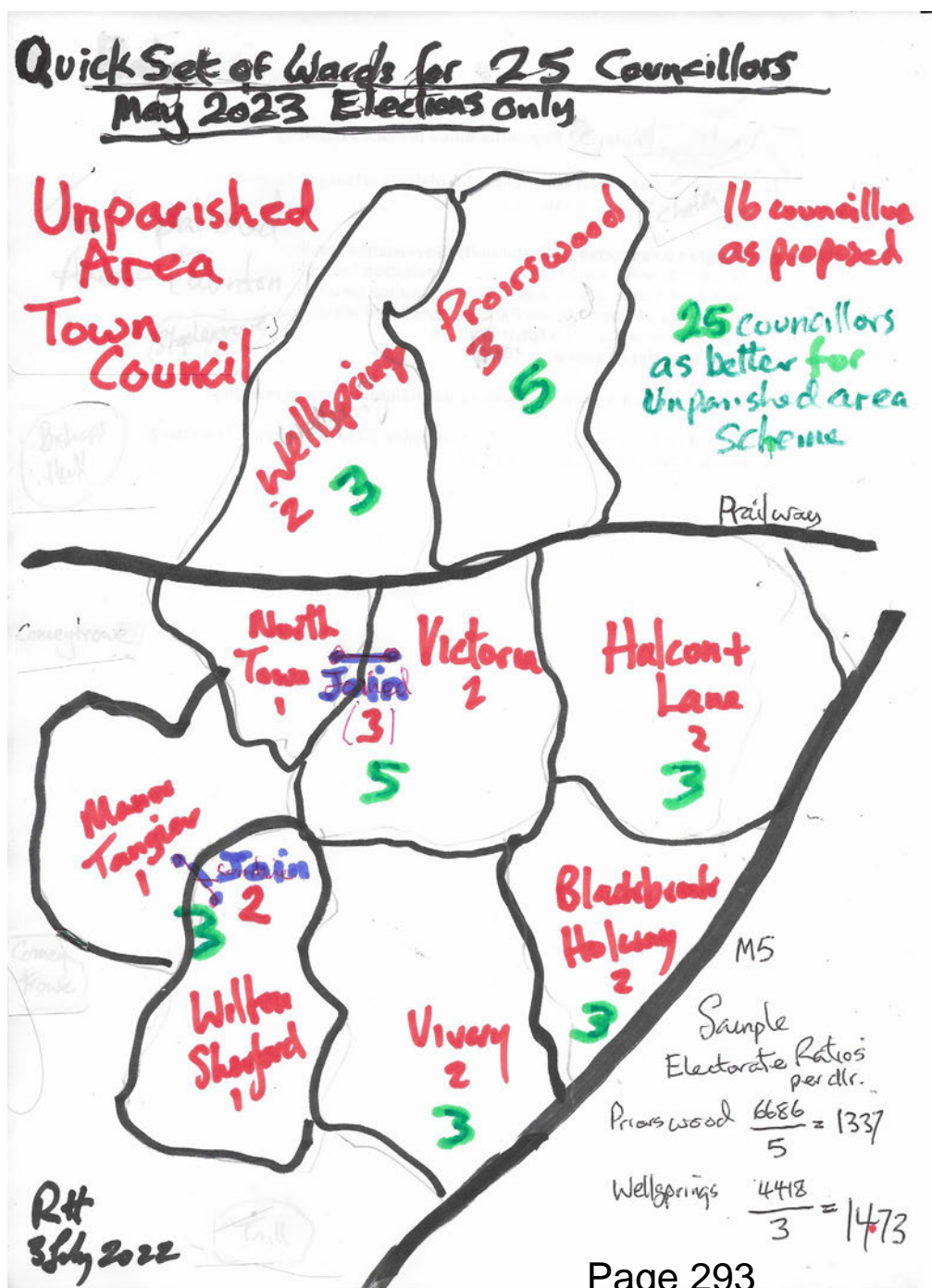
13 In the councils list of duties the simple phrase Community Development, does not really convey a key role for parishes: the provision and management of village halls. After 49 years of no parish council the biggest difference between the town and surrounding parishes, is the later have good standard Parish Halls capable of multi-functions. Trull's hall complex cost one million pounds. By contrast in the town there are several small community rooms currently linked to social housing schemes. I am sure these or the cost will be transferred to the Town

Council. If parishioners want higher standard village halls, there will be site acquisition, fund raising, construction and then ongoing task of hall management committees making the best use of the Hall. Parish Councillors working together locally with the rare breed of willing volunteers will be vital in order to finance and sustain the process. Here in Victoria Park we have a double pyramid changing rooms and have since 2015 had commissioned feasibility studies to see if one section could be upgraded to a village hall of minimum 75 sq m area.

14 In a more severe climate change/carbon saving world, the Town Council may need to lead changes to more people supporting their local centres rather than drive into town for shopping. A better spread of Councillors will help the towns "Local Centres" to get support to improve or expand. Community groups are not all based in the centre, One day street markets could be shared around the town.

15 Also I hope that the 25 Councillors workload will be slightly better, to allow more young people in employment the chance to contribute as Councillors.

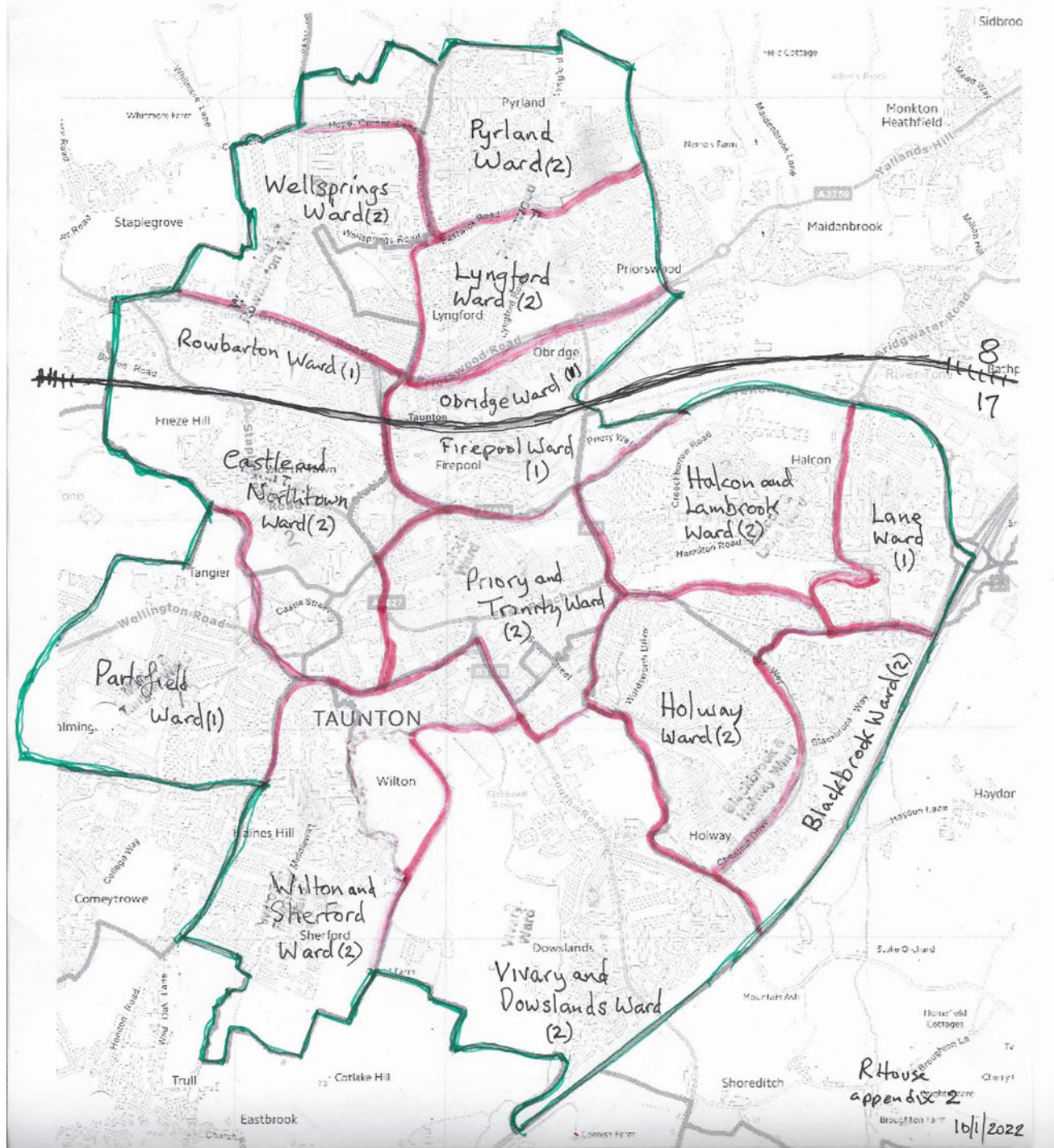
R House 4th July 2023, This is supplementary evidence to my computer survey.



More permanent scheme advanced at the earlier consultation stage. Electoral numbers to calculate. Wards for mainly 2 councillors although Weymouth had 2 and 3 member wards.

Taunton Town Council – potential wards for 25 Councillors

Projection based on the Full Council Meeting Oct 2021 appendix 6, listing 34536 electors as at July 2021. Anticipate some future growth west of town centre hence expansion of Castle and Northtown ward. North of railway 11,107 electors, 8 members will average 1388 per councillor. South of railway 23,429, electors 17 members will average 1378 per councillor. Average for whole County Town 25 councillors average 1381 electors per Councillor.



A TOWN Council for Taunton

Taunton is expanding and the layout of the town and its surrounding parishes needs to be examined from time to time in order to have sensible rearrangements for the wider town.

The Somerset West and Taunton council is currently undertaking one such examination and has published a Community Governance Review for comment by the rate payers.

I would like to comment that the reshaping of the parish of Staplegrove sits uncomfortably within these proposals.

It now includes Long Run Farm. This is parkland serving the whole of west Taunton and was never part of Staplegrove.

It includes a block of post war housing developed north of the railway which has a character quite different from the rest of the parish which is mainly traditional agricultural land.

It includes the 13th century church of St John and Staplegrove Manor. It has a Village Hall, sports fields and recreation ground. Staplegrove is a village. It has a village atmosphere and has always had an independence from the town.

In the fullness of time housing may be developed to the north and east of the village, and if this happens it will be timely to look at the boundaries again.

Until, and if, this comes about Staplegrove should be kept out of the town and should be served by its own parish council.

Martin Cursham, [REDACTED] Taunton. [REDACTED]

Prouse, Marcus

From: Mark Durk [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 July 2022 17:38
To: Governance
Subject: Community Governance Review Stage 2 Consultation

Dear Community Governance Team

My response to the consultation follows, in the format of the questionnaire.

1. I am a local resident
2. Postcode TA2 8LJ
3. Yes
4. Yes - it could.
5. Yes - but see below.
6. No.

There are a number of inconsistencies and irrational elements to the proposals. The law requires that SWaT must have regard to the arrangements reflecting the identities and interests of the area and promote the effective and convenient local government. These proposals fail to achieve these objectives.

The review must also consider the IMPACT (my emphasis) on community cohesion, the size, population and boundaries. Again, these proposals do not consistently achieve these objectives.

For example, the area of MH2, major development to the east of Taunton, is due on stream under the current Core Strategy. This fits the criterion of those areas 'proposed' for development to reflect the REALITY of the area covered by present day Taunton and pending development areas. But the the community identity of its residents, now and in future? Big assumption. The map provided does not include Creech St Michael, within whose boundary the a community for Taunton will be built. But no reference is made to it while other 'pending' development areas are included.

Bishops Hull is excluded from the new Town Council area (apart from a small area) yet it is clearly within Taunton. Just look at a map. The arbitrary use of a major road, the A38 is part of the argument, yet other man made barriers are not used, e.g Nerrols Drive in Cheddon Fitzpaine. Comeytrove is proposed for abolition yet it has similar facilities to those of Bishops Hull. Its only 'crime' seems to be that of being a newer community.

West Monkton Parish is only marginally affected by the proposals as it seems that the 'green wedge' between Cheddon Fitzpaine and Monkton Heathfield is seen as a natural break between Taunton and settlements beyond. Indeed it is one of the functions of green wedge to stop coalescence. But that is a development and landscape issue, not one of governance. Given the proposed growth of Monkton Heathfield in the Core Strategy it seems a gross error to omit these new communities, current and proposed, from the considerations. The Green Wedge between Dowslands and Comeytrove does not seem to carry similar weight in consideration of separateness.

Cheddon Fitzpaine is proposed as having a ward removed, and the electors with it. This creates two anomalies. Firstly it calls into question the validity and relevance of the current Cheddon Fitzpaine/ West Monkton Neighbourhood Plan (under second revision). Secondly, the objective of 'effective' local government is being undermined by reducing Cheddon Fitzpaine to a potentially ineffective council, with fewer resources yet many existing commitments based on its current size. There is no assurance that a new Taunton Council will address these issues 'pro rata'.

It seems clear that part of the agenda for this review is to strip resources from existing communities and concentrating these in the hands of the new town council.

Section A(xiii) suggests 'further consideration' be given to the current boundary of West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Councils south of the A3259. What is the purpose of this? The land is in 'green wedge' and ostensibly protected from further development. There is no community present. Interesting use of another man made feature, i.e. road, in arbitrary boundary creation. Nerrols Drive as a boundary between the new Taunton parish and Cheddon Fitzpaine, an existing and historic parish, would satisfy the community aspiration of the review and also ensure the effectiveness of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish. What community involvement will there be in these 'further considerations'?

The irrational elements of the proposals seem to bear significant weight. An assumption that those councils that can mobilise a community response infers that communities who are generally silent agree with these proposals. Not true. Also, that individual SWaT councillors have given undue prominence to their own communities.

So, include all of Bishops Hull in the new Taunton, re-think the communities of Monkton Heathfield 1 and 2, maintain Cheddon Fitzpaine's effectiveness and apply some consistency to amended proposals.

7. Yes. Parish and Town councils should co-operate to provide these services and not assume that they must be done in isolation.

8. Yes.

9. No. See above response to Q6.

10. No. The boundaries should not be changed as proposed.

11. Please apply some logic and consistency of analysis to the criteria set out and the law.

I'm happy to be contacted further.

Thank you

Mark Durk

Prouse, Marcus

From: Helen Mcgladdery <bishopshullparishclerk@gmail.com>
Sent: 14 July 2022 12:21
To: Prouse, Marcus
Subject: Bishops Hull PC response

Hi Marcus

Please find the agreed response from Bishops Hull PC below:

Bishops Hull Parish Council fully supports the formation of a Town Council for Taunton. We confirm our preference for Bishop's Hull to be excluded from the proposed Taunton Town Council, as well as noting and accepting the revisions to our parish borders, as shown on the map contained within the second stage of the consultation.

Please confirm receipt

Kind regards

Helen McGladdery
Clerk to Bishops Hull Parish Council - CILCA

Bishops Hull Parish Council Privacy statement and Privacy policy can be viewed by following the links below:

<http://www.bishopshull.org.uk/Parish/BHPCprivacyNotice.pdf>

<http://www.bishopshull.org.uk/Parish/BHPCprivacyPolicy.pdf>

Prouse, Marcus

From: Helen McGladdery <comeytroweparishclerk@gmail.com>
Sent: 12 July 2022 12:23
To: Prouse, Marcus; Cllr Perry, Derek
Subject: Consultation response

Dear Marcus and Derek

Please find the agreed response from Comeytrowe Parish Council to the Community Governance Review

The Parish Council are not convinced of the reasons given or the case being made for the proposal, although the Parish Council understands the strategic benefit to Taunton, the Parish Council remains to be convinced that there is a creditable benefit to the residents of Comeytrowe.

I had previously requested a meeting with both of you this week, however, as Derek and Mike were present at the Parish Council meeting in discussion with the Chairman we do not feel an additional meeting would add any benefit at this present time, as the concerns of the Parish Council were made clear at the meeting (I've listened to the recording)

However, depending on what happened in September, if the Parish is to be abolished we would then be keen to have meetings to discuss the process.

Kind regards

Helen McGladdery
Clerk to Comeytrowe Parish Clerk - CILCA

Comeytrowe Parish Council Privacy Policy can be found by following the attached link:
<http://www.comeytrowe-pc.gov.uk/UserFiles/Files/Comeytrowe%20Privacy%20policy.pdf>

Prouse, Marcus

From: Charlie Cudlip <charliecudlip.cc@gmail.com>
Sent: 25 July 2022 17:38
To: Governance; Andrew Williams; Tamsin Ely; Annabelle Peters; Neil Davidson
Subject: Community Governance Review (Creech St Michael PC)

To whom it may concern

I am a Parish Councillor with Creech St Michael Parish Council. It was agreed at our last PC meeting in July that I would be charged with completing the CGR Questionnaire. I will keep to the points on the questionnaire and also add a comment at the end as requested.

1. I represent Creech St Michael Parish Council.
2. Our Postcode is TA3
3. We AGREE that Taunton should have a town council.
4. We AGREE with this statement.
5. We DO NOT agree that it should extend its boundaries.
6. We DO NOT agree with the proposal, TTC should only be covering the existing unparished areas of the town.
7. We AGREE with this statement.
8. We DO NOT Agree that Taunton Town should be divided into Wards.
9. We DO NOT agree with this proposal.
10. We DO NOT agree with The Boundary Commision realigning the Parish boundaries without FULL consultation on this with the existing affected parish councils.
11. We believe that Taunton should have a Town Council **ONLY** made up of the unparished areas of the town and surrounding areas. We also believe that SWaT are attempting a "land grab" of prime areas around the town to drain the affected parishes of any remaining section 106 monies and future precept payments, that would render what parts of the remaining parishes are left, with little income from the new developments. This will result in the remaining parish communities being left to fend for themselves and endure the massive expansion of their areas with no benefits whatsoever. We agreed with the Unitary One Somerset decision and look forward to working with the county to forward our parish interests.

Please contact our Clerk and RFO Andrew Williams, in any future correspondence.

Kind Regards

Charlie Cudlip Cllr

KINGSTON ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Cllr Paul Townsend

*Clerk: Katie Gibbins
Hayrig, Nailsbourne,
TAUNTON, TA2 8AG
Tel: 01823 451505
Email: clerk@ksmpc.org.uk*

19 July 2022

Community Governance Review Stage 2 Consultation

Introduction

Please find below Kingston St Mary Parish Council's (the Parish Council) Stage 2 Consultation submission to Somerset West and Taunton Council's (SW&T) Community Governance Review (the Review), to decide whether changes should be made to local governance arrangements.

The submission below reflects:

- i. a Public Meeting held on 24 November 2021 to consider the Review's Stage 1 Consultation;
- ii. the findings of Kingston St Mary's Community Plan and Housing Needs Survey, which formed part of the evidence base for the Parish Council's submission to the Review's Stage 1 Consultation;
- iii. the Parish Council's Meeting on 19 July 2022 to consider the Review's Stage 2 Consultation;

Proposals

SW&T have recently released their preferred options for proceeding with the Review, which includes the following proposals affecting Kingston St Mary's Parish Boundary:

- i. that a single Parish be created to serve the currently unparished areas of Taunton; and that in addition:
- ii. a small southern portion of Kingston St Mary Parish area, representing that part of the proposed Staplegrove East Development that falls within the Parish, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;
- iii. the urban parts of Staplegrove Parish, including the entirety of the forthcoming development in the north-west corner of Taunton, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish;
- iv. if the proposed changes bring about a remaining Staplegrove Parish area of fewer than 150 electors, that area be merged with Kingston St Mary Parish.

Submission

The Parish Council very strongly identifies with the proposal that a single Parish be created for Taunton. A single 'Taunton Parish' comprising the Town's entire urban envelope will hopefully result in regeneration of Somerset's County Town and realisation of its 'Garden Town' ambitions.

The Parish Council is very pleased that SW&T agreed with its submission to Stage 1 of the Review, that:

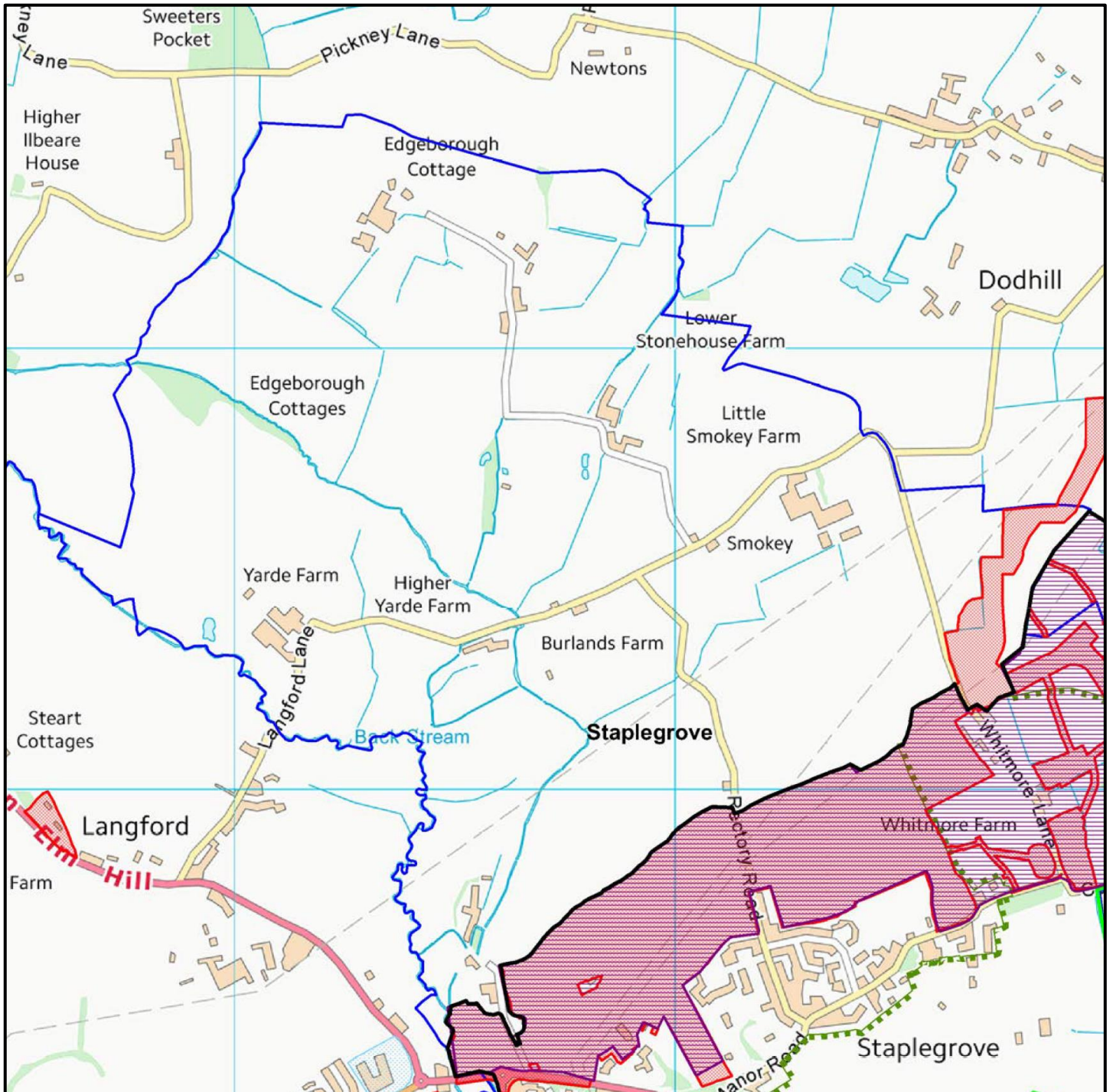
- i. Kingston St Mary should remain a stand-alone rural Parish and not be subsumed into a new Taunton Parish; and that
- ii. Parish Boundaries should be redrawn to exclude the part of the proposed Staplegrove East Housing Development which extends into Kingston St Mary Parish.

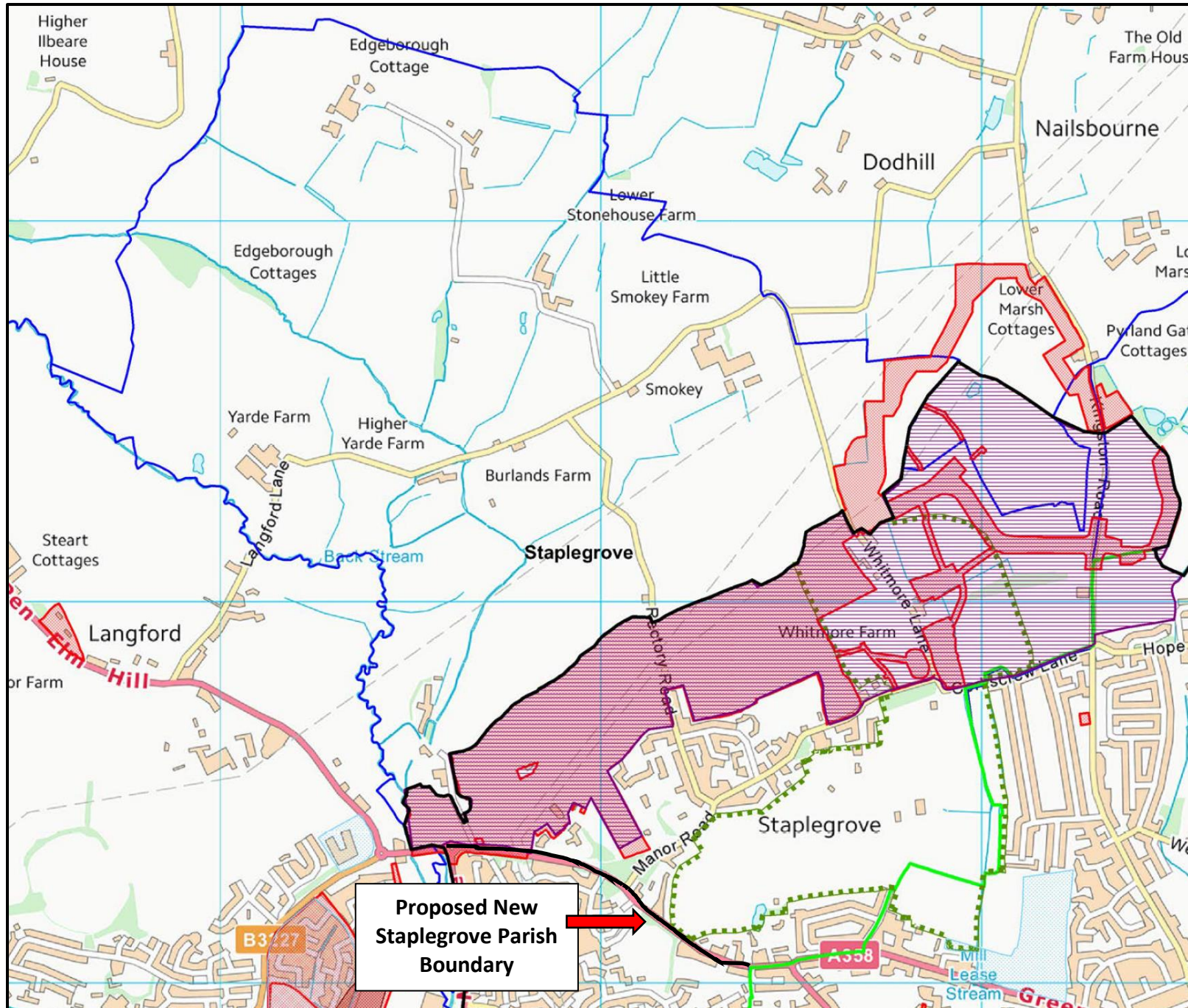
The Parish Council was surprised by the proposal that should the proposed boundary changes bring about a Staplegrove Parish of fewer than 150 electors, then Staplegrove's remaining rural area will be merged with Kingston St Mary (see appendix A). The Stage 2 Consultation proposals could therefore result in Staplegrove Parish being abolished and replaced by a ward of the new Taunton Parish. Given the current uncertainty concerning delivery of the proposed Staplegrove East and West Housing Developments, it would be premature for this ancient Parish to be abolished.

The current urban areas of Staplegrove Parish (e.g. around Bindon Road) are very different in character from the Village and rural part of this Parish and therefore more suited for inclusion within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish. This would result in Staplegrove Parish covering the area north of the A358 until it reaches the Parish boundaries of Norton Fitzwarren and Kingston St Mary. The A358 would form the southern boundary between the Staplegrove and Taunton Parishes (see appendix B), with Staplegrove effectively becoming a Village Parish with a large predominately rural area. This would make Staplegrove Parish more coherent, distinct and very different in character from the proposed urban Parish of Taunton. It would create a sense of place with a local identity that Staplegrove Parish residents will be able to identify with and consequently facilitate more effective and convenient local government.

However, should the rural part of Staplegrove Parish be merged with Kingston St Mary, the Parish Council undertakes to represent the interests of its new residents and will proactively welcome them and seek their participation in community activities and events.

The area of Staplegrove Parish to be merged with Kingston St Mary Parish if it has fewer than 150 electors.





**Proposed New
Staplegrave Parish
Boundary**

STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN

Ian Talbot
Magnolia Cottage
Manor Road
Staplegrove, Taunton
Somerset TA2 6EQ

01823 259506

CLERK

Janet Coates
16, Stoneleigh Close,
Staplegrove, Taunton
Somerset TA2 6ET
01823 276702

staplegroveparishcouncil@hotmail.com

07 September 2022

Dear Marcus,

Response to second stage of LGR

Whilst Staplegrove Parish Council supports the establishment of a Town (Parish) council for the unparished area of Taunton it cannot see why Staplegrove should be absorbed into Taunton Town and its Parish Council abolished.

Local democracy

LGR Guidance - Review should improve local democracy

Staplegrove's current representation

Parish 6
District 3
County/Unitary 2

Proposed representation from May 2023

Town ward 1
Unitary 2

The decision to move to a unitary authority, leading to the abolition of Somerset West and Taunton District Council, reduces local representation by 3 and abolition of the Parish Council is a further reduction to total of 9. This is a huge democratic deficit. How can 3 representatives carry out the work of work of 11 particularly during this period of change?

The proposed change is predicated on a future expansion of housing (The North Taunton Development).

This has been in the pipeline, over loading a stretched planning department, since 2016 and is only marginally further forward. Redrow have pulled out of negotiations on the western section and there has never been a reserved matters application submitted for the eastern section which includes the majority of the housing and key infrastructure like the school. It will be many years before this site is completed. To many this seems to be a land grab to ensure Taunton Town access to CIL monies at some time in the future.

Service delivery

Visit our website www.staplegroveparish.co.uk

LGR Guidance - Review should lead to more effective and convenient delivery of local services

Somerset Council, as the prime authority from May 2023, will be responsible for provision of services throughout Somerset. There is a total lack of information about which services might be devolved to towns and parishes and this information should be in place before deciding on the structure to deliver the services. No data has been presented to show that the proposed structure will provide greater efficiency in service delivery or at what cost.

For a considered judgement to be made much more information must be presented.

Proposals

A proposal has been made to take in the areas of housing which have developed around Taunton over the past 40 years. There is a degree of logic in this approach. However it has not been applied consistently. Staplegrove is not and never has been an extension of Taunton; it grew up round The Manor and the church and the surrounding farms formed the community. The proposal is being applied to Comeytrowe and parts of Trull where building has started and to Staplegrove where building may take place, but not to long established built up areas like Bishops Hull where indeed, the process is turned completely on its head by suggesting a significant portion of the currently unparished area is added to the parish, all with the same TA1, i.e. town centre post code, whereas Staplegrove is TA2. West Monkton, too has undergone a significant development which is ongoing, with no designated green wedge areas separating that parish from the town, yet it has been excluded. Like Trull, Staplegrove has a church, village hall, a school, a Post Office and a shop, criteria used to designate Trull a village and allow it to keep its current status.

Commented [1]:

Surely it would be easy for Staplegrove to join the Taunton Council at a later date if this was deemed the best way for the residents to be represented.

Commented [2]:

Staplegrove Parish Council opposes the draft proposals and wishes to remain an independent parish with appropriate local representation.

Yours Sincerely,

Ian Talbot

Chair – Staplegrove Parish Council

Visit our website www.staplegroveparish.co.uk

“We believe that a single Town Council for Taunton should be set up to cover whichever boundaries are established, taking into account the results of the consultation.”

Proposed by Cllr L Lisgo

Seconded by Cllr S Lees



Prouse, Marcus

From: Trull Clerk <trull.clerk@gmail.com>
Sent: 21 July 2022 09:15
To: Prouse, Marcus
Subject: CGR Consultation Stage 2
Attachments: Map showing proposed boundary of Trull Parish and Taunton Town Council_July_22.docx

Trull Parish Council would like to comment on the Community Governance Review Stage 2 consultation as follows;

Firstly, Trull Parish Council is disappointed that the original comments were not considered by the working group and were located instead on p. 99 and p.148 of Appendix D.

Trull Parish agrees to accept the proposal as it stands but are of the opinion that it should also include the playing field and housing area to include properties 42/43/44/45/46 & 47, and suggest the boundary being redrawn as shown in the thick red line on the attached map. This was not a unanimous decision but was passed as a majority vote.

Kind regards

[Sammie Millard-Jones CILCA](#)

[Trull Parish Council Clerk & RFO](#)

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West Monkton Parish Council

Somerset West and Taunton Council – Community Governance Review - Second Consultation

Consultation Response

West Monkton Parish Council (WMPC) has prepared this response to the second consultation in relation to the Community Governance Review to form Taunton Town Council.

Section 2 of the Consultation document outlines 'The Proposal', this WMPC response is structured to respond to each part of the proposal that has implications for the Parish of West Monkton.

Section 2 A(v) The urban area covered within the Maidenbrook Ward of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council, including sites earmarked for housing development in the near future, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish.

Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council (CFPC) are expected to make representations in relation to this element of the proposal. The implications of this boundary change so that the urban area of the Maidenbrook Ward is removed from Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish and encompassed within the boundary of Taunton Parish will undoubtedly have implications on the future size of CFPC, the number of properties and electors within its Parish and therefore the finance and resources that it will have available.

The lease between WMPC, CFPC and SWT in respect of the Maidenbrook Country Park has been signed and will shortly be completed.

Were the urban area of the Maidenbrook Ward to be included in the new TC boundary, WMPC notes the impact of CFPCs reduced resources on its ability to contribute towards the ongoing costs and maintenance of the Country Park, however, WMPC with the help of around 400 loyal volunteers and active members of our community, will continue to maintain the Country Park with or without the assistance of CFPC because of the importance of the Country Park for members of the community and to mitigate the impact of new development in the area as described in the adopted TDBC Core Strategy (2011 – 2028) including Policy SS1 Monkton Heathfield. The Policy states that 'Within the area identified at Monkton Heathfield, a new sustainable neighbourhood will be delivered through a coordinated and comprehensive approach, including a country park within the green wedge between Monkton Heathfield and Priorswood...'

WMPC has recently recruited an Assistant Clerk for Community, whose key role is to build the community of the Parish of West Monkton. The new Clerk enabled successful Platinum Jubilee events to take place in the Country Park and further community events are planned in the future. Continuing to be responsible for the Country Park is therefore one of our prime objectives and regarded as a key success factor for WMPC so that it is able to continue in its work to build the local community. For these reasons WMPC is happy to look at the options available for the benefit of the community if the urban area of the Maidenbrook ward is incorporated into the Town Council.

Section 2 A(xi) The Hankridge Retail Park, Creech Castle and the associated Toneway Road, currently within West Monkton Parish, be included within the boundary of the proposed new Taunton Parish, which should run along the railway to the M5.

WMPC is supportive of this proposal. Moving the southern boundary of West Monkton Parish to the railway enables a straightening of the boundary and the new boundary will follow the natural boundary of the railway line as referred to at Paragraph 16 of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England Guidance on Community Governance Reviews (The Guidance) which states that 'A community governance review offers an opportunity to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries, tied to firm ground features, and remove the many anomalous parish boundaries that exist in England'.

Section 2 A(xiii) Further consideration be given to whether the current boundary between West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine parishes between Maidenbrook and Yallands Hill south of the Country Park should be amended, for example by following the A3259 westwards to Maidenbrook Lane, in the light of any comments from the parish councils.

WMPC supports the proposed boundary from the railway line, running north on the edge of the future industrial development and then around the outside of Waterleaze and Tudor Park. WMPC's preference would be for the jagged line from the Tudor Park boundary to be straightened where possible to provide a more easily identifiable and clearly defined boundary to the west of West Monkton Parish as referred to at Paragraph 16 of The Guidance which states that 'A community governance review offers an opportunity to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries, tied to firm ground features, and remove the many anomalous parish boundaries that exist in England'. WMPC would prefer the boundary to follow the proposed eastern Taunton Parish boundary around the edge of the urban part of the Maidenbrook ward up to the A3259. It should then follow the A3259 and then continue along the existing West Monkton parish boundary which is to the east of Maidenbrook Country Park.

Section C. That with the exception of the area described at A (xi) above, the area of West Monkton Parish Council be completely removed from further consideration of the review and its inclusion in any new Taunton Parish/ Town Council.

WMPC is supportive of this element of the proposal.

Taunton Parish Budget and Council Tax Implications 2023/24

1 2023/24 Budget Summary

- 1.1 The following table provides a summary of the proposed Taunton parish/town council budget for 2023/24.
- 1.2 The Budget for the first year of the new Council is required to be set by Somerset Council in October, as part of the Order, as the prospective Billing Authority for the area in which the new parish exists.
- 1.3 The Budget draws together cost estimates for services that are to be transferred which are currently provided by the district council (SWTC) and the affected neighbouring parish councils, special expenses for the current unparished area of Taunton, the Taunton Charter Trustees, and core running costs of a brand new local council.
- 1.4 The proposed budget also includes additional funding in a Service Growth and Improvements budget to provide the new council with spending power for betterment of local services and the town environment reflecting the determination of the CGR Working Group that the new Council will make an impact with improvements for Taunton.

Table – 2023/24 Proposed Budget

Description	2023/24 Proposed Budget £000	2022/23 Existing Costs				2023/24 New Costs £000
		Charter Trustees £000	Special Expenses £000	Parish Budgets £000	SWTC Budget £000	
Income						
Allotments	-6				-6	
Asset Management	-11				-10	-1
Parks	-12				-11	
Events	-10				-10	
Total Income	-38	0	0	0	-37	-1
Expenditure						
Town Council staffing and admin	275	41	0	44	0	189
Allotments	8	0	0	0	8	0
Handyman services: amenities and play areas	52	0	0	21	0	31
Parks	563	0	0	0	509	55
Public Conveniences	106	0	0	0	99	7
Community and Events	101	0	0	1	100	0
Grants	75	0	29	1	0	44
Local Democracy	17	17	0	0	0	0
Council offices	34	0	0	0	0	34
Service Growth and Improvement	400	0	0	0	0	400
General Contingency	100	0	0	4	0	96
Total Expenditure	1,732	59	29	71	716	857
Contribution To Reserve	420					420
COUNCIL TAX PRECEPT	2,114	59	29	71	678	1,276

2 Key Budget Items

Charter Trustee and Civic items

- 2.1 The Taunton Charter Trustees precept in 2022/23 is £58,726. This amount is charged to the households in the current Taunton unparished area which has a 2022/23 Tax Base of 15,255.85 Band D Equivalents and a Band D charge of £3.85 per year. This budget provides for the mayor, civic support and administration, civic events, civic regalia and chattels, and democratic costs. These costs have been taken into account when preparing the budget estimates for the new parish/town council, with no separate precept for Charter Trustees due in 2023/24.

Unparished Area Special Expenses

- 2.2 Somerset West and Taunton Council raises council tax in the form of special expenses to provide for costs incurred where there is no parish council in Taunton. The special expenses rate precept in 2022/23 is £29,458. This amount is charged to the households in the current Taunton unparished area which has a 2022/23 Tax Base of 15,255.85 Band D Equivalents and a Band D charge of £1.93 per year.

Allotments

- 2.3 Allotments are required by regulation to be transferred to the new parish/town council. The budget reflects the current costs of maintenance and income received resulting in a small net cost to the council. The allotments currently owned by SWTC included are:

- Whitmore Allotments
- Galmington Road Allotments
- Hamilton Road Allotments
- Rowbarton Allotments
- Priorswood Allotments
- Higher Holway Allotments
- Turners Allotments
- Stoke Road Allotments

- 2.4 All these allotments are leased with local management arrangements in place. The freehold will transfer to the town parish/town which will then become the lessee.

Parks

- 2.5 The CGR Member Working Group proposes that the following parks and amenities at these locations are transferred to be the responsibility of the new Taunton parish/town council from 1 April 2023.

- Victoria Park (including pavilion and public conveniences)
- French Weir Park
- Galmington Park (including pavilion)
- Greenway Recreation Ground
- Hamilton Gault Park (including pavilion and public conveniences)
- Hawthorn Park
- Lyngford Park
- Priorswood Park
- Taunton Green (including pavilion)
- Goodlands Gardens (including café)
- Comeytrowe Park

- 2.6 Cost and income estimates have been prepared for amounts included in the SWTC budget in 2022/23 for these services/assets and an estimate of the projected costs for 2023/24. These estimates are set to cover a wide range of service delivery

relevant to each location for example grounds maintenance, play equipment maintenance and inspection, other compliance activity, pitch marking, hired use, tree maintenance, utilities, business rates, and so on.

2.7 Actual costs are not easily disaggregated for example when work is undertaken through a contract for service covering more than the above. The presumption at this stage is that the parish/town council will buy the service from the unitary from the outset. This may be reviewed later for example when current contracts end.

2.8 Included in the transfer of Parks are all services and responsibilities that occur within the boundary of the facility. These differ from site to site but include responsibilities such as:

- Grass Cutting
- Tree inspection and maintenance
- Planting and shrub maintenance
- Play area provision, replacement, inspection, and maintenance
- Sports pitch markings and bookings
- Benches and street furniture
- Litter and dog bin provision, replacement and emptying
- Litter picking, fly tip waste removal, glass, needles etc.
- All buildings and structures
- Compliance responsibilities, legionella, gas safe, electrical
- Utilities costs
- Public liability insurance
- Stream / watercourse maintenance
- Third party leases
- Trustee responsibilities

Public Conveniences

2.9 The budget reflects the operating costs (cleaning, locking/unlocking, consumables) of the following public conveniences in Taunton:

- Castle Green (town centre)
- Cannon Street (in car park)
- Victoria Street (in the park pavilion)
- Vivary Park (in the park café building)
- Hamilton Gault (in the park pavilion)
- French Weir (in the COACH building)
- Priorswood Place (in shops buildings)

2.10 The budget reflects the running costs of the service. It is anticipated the assets currently in SWTC ownership will transfer on either a freehold or leasehold basis as appropriate to each property one or after Vesting Day.

2.11 Actual costs are not easily disaggregated for example when work is undertaken through a contract for service covering more than the above. The presumption at this stage is that the parish/town council will buy the service from the unitary from the outset. This may be reviewed later for example when the current SWT contracts end.

2.12 Included in the transfer of Public Toilets are all services and responsibilities that occur within the boundary of the facility, including responsibilities such as:

- All building related costs, maintenance, and capital works
- Compliance responsibilities, legionella, gas safe, electrical
- Utilities costs

- Public liability insurance
- Waste removal, needles etc.
- All cleaning costs and consumables

Events, Grants and Other Costs

- 2.13 The district council currently holds an events budget which funds activities such as Christmas events, Christmas lights, bunting/banners, Jubilee and similar celebrations etc. Most of the funding is incurred delivering events in Taunton therefore a proportion of the budget is proposed to transfer £100,000 to the Town Council. The staffing budget includes a provision for staff to organise events in the town.

Parishes

- 2.14 The amount of Parish precept that is budgeted to transfer to Taunton from Comeytrove, Staplegrove, Cheddon Fitzpaine & Trull is the pro-rata amount relating to the Band D equivalents transferring into Taunton. The presumption is assets will transfer reflecting boundary changes and the budget assumes existing services and facilities delivered in the transferred locations will continue.
- 2.15 The parish budgets cover the salary cost of the Clerks, annual memberships, election costs, administration and parish related maintenance costs. Generally the maintenance costs cover areas such as footpaths, church yards and play areas, and more specific assets being Penny's Field in Comeytrove and The Grove in Staplegrove.

3 Indicative Council Tax Rate for the New Taunton Parish

- 3.1 The Band D Council Tax rate for the new Taunton parish will not be determined until the 2023/24 Council Tax Base is calculated and approved in December 2022.
- 3.2 An indicative tax base has been modelled in May 2022 based on council tax register data held at the time, reflecting the properties that would be in the new parish boundary assuming the boundary as set out in the stage 2 consultation is adopted. The final tax base will be based on the adopted boundary for the new parish per the Order.
- 3.3 The indicative Tax Base for 2023/24 is 22,500 Band D Equivalents. In this scenario an **indicative amount** for the Band D Council Tax Rate based on the proposed budget and precept of £2.1m would be **approximately £94 per year**. The following table shows how this would be applied across the council tax bands for this **indicative amount**.

Band D Equivalent Factors	5/9	6/9	7/9	8/9	9/9	11/9	13/9	15/9	18/9
Council Tax Band	A (dis)	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Indicative Charge per Band	£53	£63	£73	£84	£94	£115	£135	£157	£188

- 3.4 It is important to emphasise these are **indicative amounts only** and the final Council Tax charge per Band for 2023/24 Council Tax Billing will **almost certainly be different** when calculated in December 2022.

4 Council Tax Comparisons

- 4.1 The Council Tax charges will change for affected households in the current unparished area and the households that become part of Taunton Parish when the boundaries change on 1 April 2023.
- 4.2 Neighbouring parish councils as reflected in updated boundaries will still be responsible for setting their own precept for 2023/24.
- 4.3 As a guide the following table provides a summary of 2022/23 Precepts for Taunton and the neighbouring parishes whose boundaries are set to change through the proposed Order. This provides a comparison with the indicative tax rate for the new Taunton parish based on the proposed budget and indicative tax base for 2023/24.

	2022/23 Tax Base Band D Equivalent	2022/23 Precept £	2022/23 Band D Rate £	Indicative 2023/24 Tax Base £	Indicative 2023/24 Precept £	Indicative 2023/24 Band D
Taunton unparished (special expenses + charter trustees)	15,255.85	88,184	5.78	Households in these areas that are within the new Taunton parish boundary from April 2023 will be charged the Band D rate for the new parish/town council.		
Cheddon Fitzpaine	909.06	37,247	40.97			
Comeytrove	1,990.73	24,000	12.06			
Staplegrove	788.77	12,910	16.37			
Trull	1,087.58	31,000	28.50			
Taunton Parish <i>Indicative</i>			N/A	22,500	2,114,040	94

5 Council Tax Adjustment – Alternative Notional Amount (ANA)

- 5.1 As part of the wider Local Government Review (LGR) in Somerset an exercise will be undertaken to harmonise the Band D tax rates, which restates the 2022/23 tax rates to set a new baseline comparative figure for 2022/23 as if the unitary council was already in place. This is called an Alternative Notional Amount (ANA) and is subject to Secretary of State approval. The ANA combines the tax precepts raised by the County Council and the four district councils in 2022/23 to create an average Band D rate for the whole tax base for Somerset. Future tax increases are measured against this adjusted baseline.
- 5.2 In addition to the harmonisation adjustment for LGR the ANA will also need to reflect an adjustment for the costs and budget transferred in respect of district services currently included in the SWTC precept. This has the effect of reducing the district and thus unitary council's council tax precept baseline by the same amount of budget that is removed for transferred costs. This will include the removal of special expenses (2022/23 = £29,458) and transferred district service costs (2022/23 = £678,440).
- 5.3 The total reduction included in the ANA for district/unitary council tax precept is therefore £707,898, which divided by the Somerset 2022/23 Tax Base of 200,747.16 band D equivalents = £3.52.
- 5.4 The proposed ANA needs to be submitted to DLUHC by 7 October 2022 by the SCC S151 Officer and is expected to be confirmed with the Finance Settlement in December 2022.

