

## Special Meeting - Taunton Charter Trustees

Tuesday, 20th July, 2021,  
6.00 pm

The John Meikle Room - The Deane House



**Members:** Sue Lees (Chair), Brenda Weston (Vice-Chair), Lee Baker, Chris Booth, Simon Coles, Caroline Ellis, Marcia Hill, Richard Lees, Libby Lisgo, Derek Perry, Martin Peters, Hazel Prior-Sankey, Francesca Smith, Federica Smith-Roberts, Alan Wedderkopp and Danny Wedderkopp

### 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

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.

#### **Temporary measures during the Coronavirus Pandemic**

Due to the temporary legislation (within the Coronavirus Act 2020, which allowed for use of virtual meetings) coming to an end on 6 May 2021, the council's committee meetings will now take place in the office buildings within the John Meikle

Meeting Room at the Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton. Unfortunately due to capacity requirements, the Chamber at West Somerset House is not able to be used at this current moment.

Following the Government guidance on measures to reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), the council meeting rooms will have very limited capacity. With this in mind, we will only be allowing those members of the public who have registered to speak to attend the meetings in person in the office buildings, if they wish (we will still be offering to those members of the public that are not comfortable in attending, for their statements to be read out by a Governance and Democracy Case Manager). Please can we urge all members of the public who are only interested in listening to the debate to view our live webcasts from the safety of their own home to help prevent the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

**4. Communications**

**5. Draft SWT Council Report - Community Governance Review for the Unparished Area of Taunton**

(Pages 5 - 60)

This is a draft report prepared on behalf of the SWT Community Governance Review Working Group.

The Charter Trustees are asked to note and comment on the report.



**JAMES HASSETT  
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. 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. The Committee Administrator will keep a close watch on the time and the Chair will be responsible for ensuring the time permitted does not overrun. The speaker will be allowed to address the Committee once only and will not be allowed to participate further in any debate. Except at meetings of Full Council, where public participation will be restricted to Public Question Time only, if a member of the public wishes to address the Committee on any matter appearing on the agenda, the Chair will normally permit this to occur when that item is reached and before the Councillors begin to debate the item.

If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a 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. Full Council, Executive, and Committee agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: [www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](http://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

The meeting room, including the Council Chamber at The Deane House are on the first floor and are fully accessible. Lift access to The John Meikle Room, 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. For further information about the meeting, please contact the Governance and Democracy Team via email: [governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

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# **Somerset West and Taunton Council**

## **Full Council – 27 July 2021**

### **Community Governance Review for the Unparished Area of Taunton**

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

**Report Author: Marcus Prouse (Specialist – Governance and Democracy)**

#### **1.0 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members to formally commence the Community Governance Review for the Unparished Area of Taunton by approving the Terms of Reference (TOR), as well as the associated Consultation wording and Communications and Consultation Plan to enable the Council to undertake the first and subsequent phases of Consultation. A recommendation is also made to prudently allocate a figure for consultancy support and consultation materials to enable the delivery of the Council's aims in relation to this matter.
- 1.2 The Working Group keenly acknowledged the existing anomaly of the Unparished status of the central area of Taunton - a result of local government reorganisation in 1974. As the only part of the whole county of Somerset not to be parished, it was also understood by the membership that there was an urgent need to undertake the Review without further delay. The Working Group has discussed the option of a review which covered the existing Unparished area as well as the adjoining parishes. However, it was felt in line with the resolution of Council on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, that a wider boundary review of the Unparished Area should not be undertaken at this stage.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

##### **2.1 That Council resolve that:**

- a) The Terms of Reference set out at Appendix 1 to this report be approved for formal publication on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2021.
- b) The Consultation wording set out at Appendix 2 to this report be approved for use as the basis for all communications in respect of the Community Governance Review, with authority delegated to the Specialist in Governance and Democracy to make minor amendments to the text if required, in consultation with the Community Governance Review Working Group.
- c) The Communications and Consultation Plan set out at Appendix 3 to this report be approved, with authority delegated to the Specialist in Governance and

Democracy to make minor amendments to the text if required, in consultation with the Community Governance Review Working Group.

To note:

- d) It is estimated that external costs of up to £34,000 may be required for this review. Internal Operations will look to fund this within existing resource and will report via monthly budget monitoring.

### **3.0 Risk Assessment**

- 3.1 Any risks associated with this Review will be picked up and managed with the Member Working Group. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) is appended to this report.
- 3.2 Officers will mitigate any risks by working closely with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC)/ Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) and other Councils that have been through this process, which has been an ongoing process since the Council meeting in March where this project was approved.

### **4.0 Background and Full details of the Report**

- 4.1 At the Taunton Deane Borough Council meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2018, the Council resolved that *"a Community Governance Review of the Unparished Area of Taunton be commenced at the earliest opportunity (taking into consideration the guidance from both the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government)."*
- 4.2 At the Somerset West and Taunton Council meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021, the Council resolved that "a Community Governance Review (CGR) of the Unparished Area of Taunton was commenced with a view to creating a new Town or Parish Council(s) from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.
- 4.3 It was also resolved that a cross party Members Working Group was established to commence the Community Governance Review for the Unparished Area of Taunton (as per the Member Working Group Protocol being approved by Council on 30<sup>th</sup> March). This Group has met three times since then and their notes are attached.
- 4.4 The Member Working Group has approved this report and recommendations to Full Council (via the Taunton Charter Trustees) with regard to proposals for Terms of Reference for the review, and will do so for proposals for consultation, any amendments to proposals after the public consultation, and the implementation of the final review recommendations.
- 4.5 From February 2008, principal councils have had responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews and have been able to decide whether to give effect to recommendations made in those reviews. In making such a decision, Councillors are required to take account of the views of local people ensuring that governance arrangements continue to reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government.
- 4.6 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ("the 2007 Act") requires that principal councils have regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

- 4.7 Any Review should be concluded within 12 months of the agreement and publication of the Terms of Reference, and the outcomes of the Review are implemented by a Reorganisation Order.

### **Community Governance Review Process**

- 4.8 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 in that Act including details set out relating to consultation, the need to ensure any proposals reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area and is effective and convenient, and the publication of recommendations. The manner in which the Council consults with its local residents is not prescribed.
- 4.9 A Community Governance Review is a review of the whole or part of the district to consider the creation of a new Parish(es):
- Terms of reference for the Community Governance Review must specify the area under review and set out clearly the matters on which the Review is to focus, and these Terms of Reference must be published.
  - Consultees are set out in the Act and Guidance, and include the County Council, Members of Parliament, local councils, local people, local businesses and voluntary organisations, and their representations must be taken into account when finalising the detail of the review.
  - The review must take into account the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.
  - The review must consider electoral arrangements and, if creating a large Parish, whether or not this should be warded. Careful consideration must also be given to any Ward boundaries as these can have consequential effects on the boundaries for other tiers of local government.

### **Terms of Reference of the Review**

- 4.10 The guidance expects Terms of Reference to set out clearly the matters on which a Community Governance Review is to focus, and the local knowledge and experience of District Councillors has helped to frame suitable terms of reference which should be appropriate to local people and reflect the specific needs of the community. The Member Working Group has worked with officers to draft the Terms of Reference appended.

### **Community Governance Review process**

- 4.11 There are a number of stages to the process of conducting a Community Governance Review which are set out in the Revised Timetable in the Appendices.
- 4.12 During the Review, officers will ensure that:
- The Taunton Charter Trustees are kept updated and informed throughout the process
  - Somerset County Council are kept updated on the process and outcomes at each stage of the process
  - NALC and SALC are involved and consulted throughout the process
  - Parish Councils falling within the Review area or on the boundary, are involved and consulted throughout the process

## Implementation

- 4.13 If the Council chooses to accept the final recommendations of the Review, concluded after public consultation, then it needs to draw up a Reorganisation Order and publish this together with the reasons for the changes, making maps available for public inspection.
- 4.14 There are also various bodies that must be notified of the changes including the Local Government Boundary Committee for England.

## Unitary Somerset

- 4.15 The current timetable for Unitary Somerset is that it would come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. That is irrespective of whether the Stronger Somerset or One Somerset models are chosen. This fits with the timetable for a new Local Council 'going live' from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.
- 4.16 If, for any reason, the timetable for Unitary Somerset changes, a report will be brought before Council to outline any changes and the impact on the Community Governance Review.

**5.0 Links to Corporate Strategy** – This is a key project for 2021 within the Internal Operations Directorate Plan and links to the Corporate Strategy

### **6.0 Finance / Resource Implications**

The Association of Electoral Administrators have recommended that to complete this review we will need the additional support of 25 days from a specialist consultant, estimated at costing between £12,000 and £20,000, plus £12,000 to fund consultation material, to include a letter and leaflet to every household in the review area.

In addition to the current resource provided from within the Governance team, the project will require support from internal colleagues including IT; (to set up a website page), finance, legal, PMO and people.

The project group will need to scope what is required and secure the internal and external resource required.

Funding identified to date, being between £24,000 to £32,000 will be met from within the Internal Operations Directorate and will be reported as part of the budget monitoring process.

**7.0 Legal Implications** - The Community Governance Review will be conducted as per the Department for Communities and Governance (DCLG) and Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) guidance on Community Governance Reviews and in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

**8.0 Climate and Sustainability Implications** - None

**9.0 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications** - None

**10.0 Equality and Diversity Implications** -These have been addressed in the appended Equality Impact Assesment.



**11.0 Social Value Implications - None**

**12.0 Partnership Implications** – Appropriate consultation will take place with local Councils and others as part of the Community Governance Review process and this is set out in the Communications and Consultation Plan appended.

**13.0 Health and Wellbeing Implications - None**

**14.0 Asset Management Implications - None**

**15.0 Data Protection Implications** – The Council will comply with GDPR in respect of the Consultation and Communications Plan.

**16.0 Consultation Implications** - Appropriate consultation will take place with local electors, business, community and voluntary sector, local Councils and others as part of the Community Governance Review process

**Scrutiny/Executive Comments / Recommendation(s) – N/A**

**Democratic Path:**

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – No**
- **Cabinet/Executive – No**
- **Full Council – Yes**

**List of Appendices**

Annex 1	Community Governance Review for the Unparished Area of Taunton – Terms of Reference
Annex 2	Consultation Document
Annex 3	Consultation and Communications Plan
Annex 4	Revised Timetable
Annex 5	Notes of the Community Governance Review Working Group x 3
Annex 6	Equality Impact Assessment

**Contact Officers**

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**SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON COUNCIL**

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

**COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF THE UNPARISHED AREA  
OF TAUNTON**

**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.
- 1.2 The review will consider whether any changes should be made to existing community governance arrangements within Taunton, including whether new parishes should be created in all areas that are currently unparished and if so, whether a new town or parish councils should be created for those areas and the electoral arrangements for those 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'), 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 councils<sup>1</sup> are the most local tier of government in England. They are democratically elected and can play an important role in representing their local community, delivering services to meet local needs and promoting community wellbeing. They are a statutory consultee on

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<sup>1</sup> **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 parish council to serve a newly-created parish. A parish council serving an urban area may be called a town council. There is no difference between a parish council and a town council in terms of powers or duties.

planning applications. They may exercise a variety of powers and duties including the delivery of a number of specific local services and may also enter into discussions with the principal council (i.e. Somerset West and Taunton Council) about the transfer of services, budgets and assets subject to mutual agreement. Town and parish and town 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 SWT Council on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Town or parish councils may also promote community engagement and effective local government.
- 1.7 In addition, 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**

- 1.8 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 parish warding); and/or
  - Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.
- 1.9 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.
- 1.10 The Council's principle reason for undertaking the review is set out in paragraph 1.6 above, however in accordance with Government guidance, when considering the above criteria the Council will 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**

- 1.11 As the relevant principal authority, 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.
- 1.12 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 a project manager appointed by the Governance Manager and Monitoring Officer. The review will be overseen by the Community Governance Review Working Group. The Council itself will agree the draft and final recommendations and make any Reorganisation of Community Governance Order.

## **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 using electronic means including social media and seek to engage the local media in reporting the issues under review;
  - Consult residents, business organisations, community groups, other local organisations, political parties and elected representatives for the areas under review and the Taunton Charter Trustees and Somerset County Council;
  - 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 draft and final recommendations and the 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, which must then be completed within twelve months. A revised timetable is attached.

### **4. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION IN THE REVIEW**

- 4.1 The map at Appendix A shows the existing governance arrangements within Taunton and the boundaries of the wards (revised with effect from May 2019) of Somerset West and Taunton Council across the whole authority including the currently unparished area.

#### **Parish areas and town or parish councils**

- 4.2 The review will consider whether any changes should be made to the parish arrangements within the Unparished Area of Taunton, 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 the area; and
  - in the event that a new parish or parishes are created, whether they should have a town council.
- 4.3 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 potential parish areas and the delivery of local services.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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**

- 4.6 In the event that a new parish is proposed to be created, the review will make recommendations as to the geographical name of the new parish and as to whether or not it 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.
- 4.7 Where an existing parish is under review, the Council will make recommendations as to whether the geographical name of the parish should be changed, but it will be for the council to resolve whether the parish should have one of the alternative styles.

### **Electoral arrangements**

- 4.8 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 the existing Taunton Charter Trustees<sup>2</sup>. '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.
- 4.9 In relation to the year of election, the ordinary election of parish councillors takes place in 2023 and at four-yearly intervals thereafter.
- 4.10 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'.

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<sup>2</sup> **Note:** The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on 17 December 2018 made the Somerset West and Taunton (Electoral Changes) Order 2018 which included changes to the warding arrangements for Unparished Area. If, following this review, the Council wishes to alter the electoral arrangements for a parish whose existing arrangements were put in place within the previous five years by an order made by the LGBCE, the consent of the LGBCE will be required.

- 4.11 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**

- 4.12 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 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.
- 4.13 Current electorate figures for each of the wards in both the parished and unparished parts of Taunton will be made published as soon as possible after the publication of the revised electoral register reflecting the amended wards and polling districts that will apply at elections to the council from May 2023.
- 4.14 Electorate forecasts for July 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.
- 4.15 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**

- 4.16 As part of the consultation process the Council will outline the services that it envisages could be provided by town or parish councils and/or any assets or liabilities that could be transferred to them.
- 4.17 The Council will make available information on the precept currently payable by council tax payers in the area served by the Taunton Charter Trustees. It will also publish illustrative information on a range of services that might in future be transferred to or provided by the existing and/or any new town or parish councils together with estimated precept figures for a range of alternative levels of service provision.

### **Other matters**

- 4.18 The review will consider any other issues raised during the consultation process which are relevant to the review.
- 4.19 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.



## **5. PRINCIPLES THAT WILL GUIDE THE REVIEW**

### **Parishes**

- 5.1 The Council is undertaking the review following a resolution 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 that was re-affirmed by SWT Council on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021.
- 5.2 There is an evidence base which demonstrates that town or parish councils can play an important role in empowering and representing communities.
- 5.3 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'.
- 5.4 It is important that within the review, that any creation of parishes 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.
- 5.5 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.

### **Names**

- 5.6 With regard to the geographical names of any town or parish councils or town wards established within Taunton, 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**

- 5.7 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 on occasion merit variation.

## **Warding**

- 5.8 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 an area of the Unparished Area.
- 5.9 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 however 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.
- 5.10 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.
- 5.11 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.

## **6. COMPLETION OF THE REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY DECISIONS**

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 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, the Boundary Commission for England and the Audit Commission.

- 6.4 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 these terms of reference.

## **7. CONSEQUENTIAL MATTERS**

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 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 sets that the principal council sets the precept for the new parish 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**

- 7.4 No changes are proposed to be made to adjoining town or parish ward boundaries as a result of this review and the review will not automatically change the corresponding principal council ward boundaries. It is suggested that a wider boundary review of the Unparished Area is not undertaken at this stage, but follows on from any review of the Unparished Area of Taunton and the possible creation of a town or parish councils therein.
- 7.5 In the event of a reorganisation order making such a change the Council may recommend the LGBCE that the principal council ward boundaries are realigned to coincide with the revised town or parish ward boundaries and it would be for the LGBCE to decide if and when these related alterations should be made.
- 7.6 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: 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

**Contact details for the review**

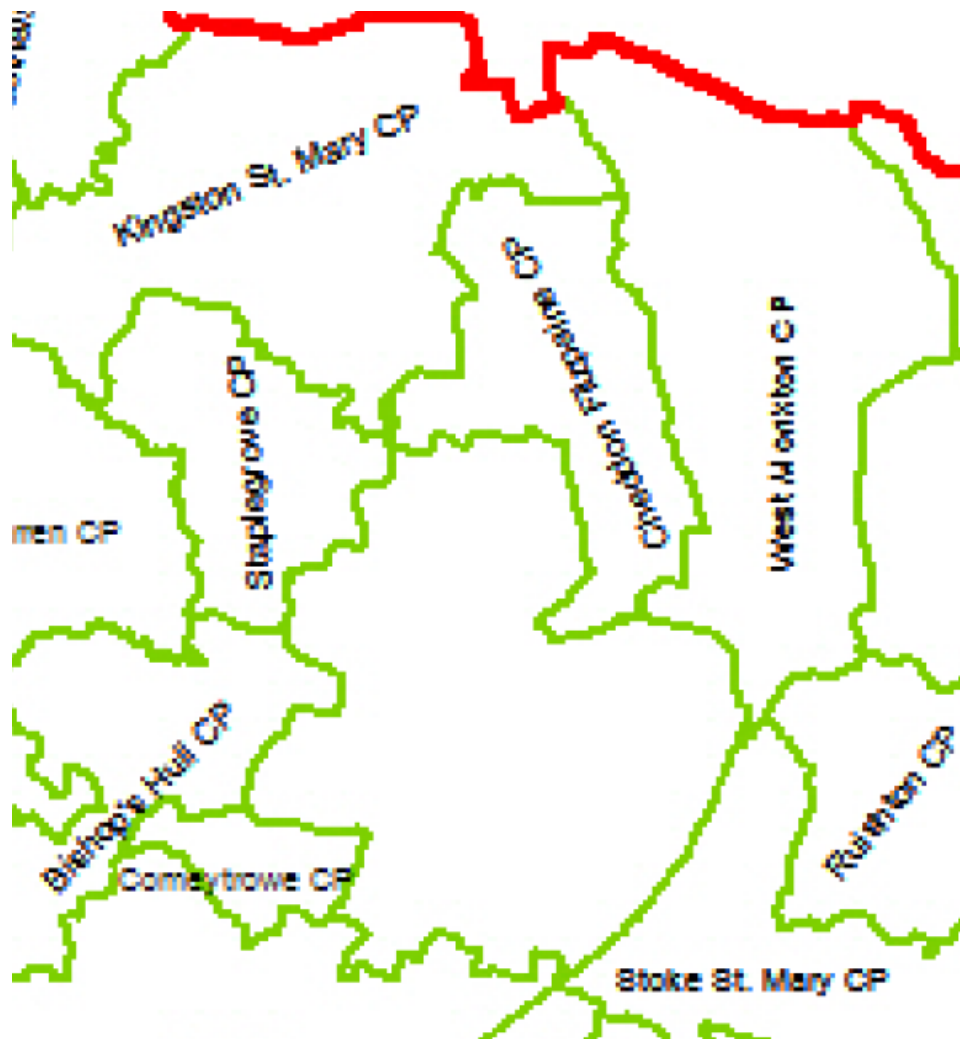
Enquiries regarding the review process and/or comments on the matters set out in these terms of reference should be directed to:

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

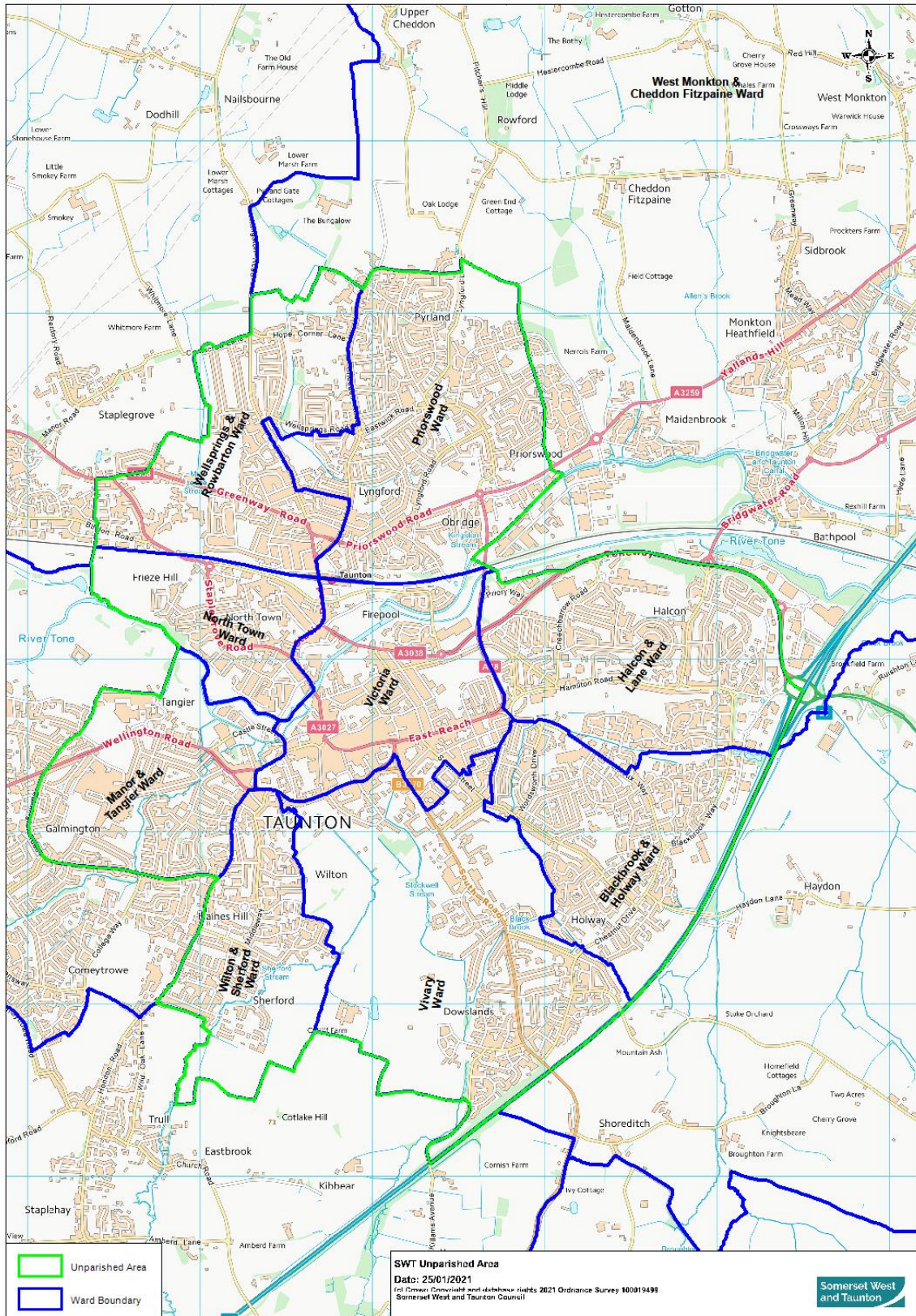
**E-mail:** [governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

## APPENDIX 'A'

The map below shows the existing Unparished Area Boundaries together with the Somerset West and Taunton Council Wards (revised with effect from May 2019).







## Community Governance Review for the Unparished Area of Taunton Indicative Timetable

### Timetable for the Review

Publication of the Terms of Reference formally begins the Review, and the Review must be completed within 12 months. The timetable set out below is indicative only and is based on an assumption of agreement of Terms of Reference at a meeting of Full Council by end July 2021.

Report to Council	<b>30 March 2021</b> (being presented to the Charter Trustee on 16 March 2021)	Council gives approval to set up the Member Working Group to commence the process
Terms of Reference	<b>Full Council 27 July 2021</b>	Member Working Group to draft these before they go before Council (via Charter Trustees)  The ToR will set out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the matters to be considered;</li> <li>• the geographic area to be covered;</li> <li>• Notification of other local authorities which have an interest.</li> </ul>
Publish Terms of Reference (12 month clock starts)	<b>by Friday 30 July 2021</b>	Publish on the Council website

Member Working Group to prepare draft proposals for consultation to be adopted by Full Council	<b>Full Council meeting on 27 July 2021</b>	Council approves the initial proposals regarding the creation of a new local council and the Communication/ Consultation Plan
Commence consultation on draft proposals and invite initial submissions	<b>30 July 2021 (Consultation closes: 9 weeks = 3 October or 10 weeks = 10 October)</b>	Initial submissions invited. Consult with: SWT Councillors Somerset County Council Relevant Town and Parish Councils Member of Parliament Local Groups and Interested parties such as local businesses, local residents association, local public and voluntary organisations Local electorate Publish proposals on the website
Consider submissions and draft revised recommendations, if appropriate	<b>Special Full Council meeting 7 December 2021</b>	Consider any submissions/ representations and prepare report of draft recommendations for Council (via Charter Trustees)
Publish draft recommendations for consultation	<b>By end 10 December 2021</b>	Publish draft recommendation for further consultation with: All local government electors SWT Councillors Somerset County Council



		<p>Relevant Town and Parish Councils</p> <p>Member of Parliament</p> <p>Local Groups and Interested parties such as local businesses, local residents association, local public and voluntary organisations</p> <p>Local electorate</p> <p>Publish proposals on the website</p>
Make final recommendations	<p><b>Member Working Group report to Full Council 29 March 2022</b></p> <p><b>(Consultation closes 13 February 2022 = 9 weeks or 20 Feb 2022 = 10 weeks)</b></p>	<p>Consider any further submissions/ representations and prepare final recommendations for report to Full Council (via Charter Trustees)</p>
Publish final recommendations	<p><b>After Full Council on 29 March 2022</b></p>	<p>Publish final recommendations and make Reorganisation Order</p>
Draft Reorganisation Order	<p><b>Member Working Group to report to Special Full Council in April 2022</b></p>	

Make Reorganisation Order		Reorganisation Order to be sealed once approval received from Full Council in April 2022
Create Shadow Council	<b>Approximately 12 months to set up new Local Council ready for 'go live' date of 1 April 2023</b>	Laying the groundwork for the new Local Council including: Finding premises for the local council to meet Consult residents about what they would like the local council to do Creating a website for the new Council Setting a Budget and Precept Employing staff Vesting and Asset Transfer
New Local Council created in temporary format with existing Charter Trustees	<b>1 April 2023</b>	
Elections to new Local Council	<b>May 2023</b>	

**Somerset West and Taunton Council  
Community Governance Review of the Unparished Area of Taunton**

**Communication and Consultation Plan**

Statutory Consultees

(Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, s. 93(3))

The local government electors for the area under review - Any other person or body (including a local authority) which appears to the principal council to have an interest in the review

Aim of this Plan

To ensure that local electors and all stakeholders and persons or bodies who may have an interest in the review are aware of the review, well-informed about the issues to be considered and able conveniently to contribute their views and evidence to the consultation process.

Formal Consultation Channels Proposed

1. Online: Dedicated web page on Council website giving information on the review, maps and key issues for consideration and the consultation process/timetable. To be updated as necessary during the review. To include an e-form for convenient response and e-mail address for more detailed/free-text submissions.
2. Press releases: (working with the Communications Team and local media to get the message out as widely as possible)
3. Write to businesses and local Voluntary and Community Groups (could also be done through the relevant SWT Newsletters)
4. Paper-based: Hard copy consultation leaflets giving information on the review, maps and key issues for consideration and the consultation process/timetable. To include response form to complete and return plus contact details for responses via e-mail or letter.
5. Face-to-face: Public consultation meetings in the areas under review, discussions at Community Roadshows, Parish Council meetings, Charter Trustee meeting and one-off events/presence in shopping areas/community venues/public spaces.

PHASES OF COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY AND KEY MESSAGES	KEY AUDIENCES AND COMMUNICATION METHODS (ALL PHASES)
<p>Launch of Review and first stage consultation from 30 July 2021 to 3 October 2021 = 9 weeks (could extend to 10 October and give 10 weeks if Members prefer?) <b>(up to 12 months to complete review from approval &amp; publication of Terms of Reference)</b></p> <p>Key messages:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CGR is taking place and SWT Council wants to know your views</li> <li>• What a CGR is and the possible outcomes</li> <li>• Why the Council is conducting the CGR</li> <li>• Issues to be considered (inc. possible new town council for Taunton, the boundary and electoral arrangements)</li> <li>• The role and possible benefits of town councils and how they are funded</li> <li>• Timetable for the consultation</li> <li>• How the public can find out more and respond to the consultation</li> <li>• We want to hear from you!</li> <li>• (towards mid August) reminder of the deadline to respond</li> </ul>	<p><u>Key audiences for all phases of communications activity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The general public</li> <li>• persons living, working or studying in the unparished area of Taunton</li> <li>• Electors across the unparished area of Taunton</li> <li>• Local media</li> <li>• Businesses and local business groups</li> <li>• Public and third sector organisations</li> <li>• Community groups</li> <li>• Residents' and tenants' associations</li> <li>• Charter Trustees</li> <li>• Elected representatives (local councillors, MPs, MEPs)</li> <li>• Political parties</li> <li>• Neighbouring T&amp;P Councils</li> </ul> <p><u>Key communication methods</u></p> <p>General Publicity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press releases</li> <li>• Social media posts (weekly during campaign phases) highlighting review/issues, deadlines for responses and link to dedicated web page</li> <li>• E-mails to subscribers to Council news service</li> <li>• Periodic links from front page of Council website to dedicated page (incl. at launch of each phase and as deadline approaches)</li> <li>• Articles in Council newsletters (where relevant)</li> <li>• Staff newsletter/in-house e-communications (as many Council staff will also be local residents)</li> </ul>
<p>Publication of draft recommendations and second stage consultation from 10 December 2021 to 13 February 2022 = 9 weeks (could extend to 20 February 2022 to give 10 weeks if Members prefer?)</p> <p>Key messages:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft recommendations have been published and SWT Council wants to know your views on them</li> </ul>	

PHASES OF COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY AND KEY MESSAGES	KEY AUDIENCES AND COMMUNICATION METHODS (ALL PHASES)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasons for the draft recommendations and what they would mean in practice</li> <li>• Key issues raised in first stage consultation and how the Council has responded to them</li> <li>• Timetable for the second stage consultation</li> <li>• How the public can find out more and respond to the consultation</li> <li>• Recap on what a CGR is and why it is being conducted</li> <li>• Have your say!</li> <li>• (towards mid December) reminder of the deadline to respond</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAQs on Council website</li> </ul> <p>Local public meetings, discussions at Community and one-off events/presence in shopping areas, community venues and public spaces.</p> <p>Distribution of consultation materials (posters/leaflets), including to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Libraries</li> <li>• Council offices/notice boards and service venues</li> <li>• Surgeries/health service providers*</li> <li>• Schools*</li> <li>• Community centres and halls*</li> <li>• Church halls*</li> </ul> <p>(* requested via database mailshot below)</p>
<p>Publication of final recommendations by mid March 2022</p> <p>Key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final recommendations have been published</li> <li>• What the final recommendations are and what they would mean in practice</li> <li>• We have listened - key issues raised in second stage consultation and how the Council has responded to them</li> <li>• Where the public can view the final recommendations/maps in detail</li> <li>• Recap on what a CGR is and why it is being conducted</li> <li>• Next steps including date of Council meeting to make the final decision</li> </ul>	<p>Direct mailshot (letter or e-mail) to ad-hoc consultation database of local organisations including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents' &amp; tenants' associations</li> <li>• Community groups, sports &amp; social clubs (including Community Partnerships)</li> <li>• Schools, surgeries, health providers</li> <li>• Public and third sector organisations</li> <li>• Business groups</li> <li>• Police &amp; Fire service</li> <li>• CAB/advice services</li> <li>• Churches, faith groups</li> </ul>
<p>Final decision and publicising the outcome of the review (report to Full Council on 29 March 2022 (Special Full Council meeting</p>	

<b>PHASES OF COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY AND KEY MESSAGES</b>	<b>KEY AUDIENCES AND COMMUNICATION METHODS (ALL PHASES)</b>
<p>to be arranged for April 2022 to agree Local Reorganisation Order)</p> <p>Key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting outcome of the Council meeting.</li> <li>• Final decisions of the review and what they means in practice</li> <li>• Reasons for the decisions</li> <li>• What happens now and the timetable for implementation</li> <li>• There have been two stages of consultation – key points raised and how the Council has listened/responded</li> <li>• How the public can view the decisions, reorganisation order, maps and related documents in detail</li> </ul>	<p>Direct letters/e-mails to elected representatives, political parties and relevant neighbouring Town &amp; Parish Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Briefing session(s)</li> <li>• Members Newsletter (also goes to T&amp;P Councils)</li> <li>• Charter Trustee meetings</li> <li>• Letter to all relevant SCC Members</li> <li>• Letter to the local MP</li> <li>• Offer to attend relevant neighbouring Town &amp; Parish Councils meeting</li> </ul>

Timetable gives us approximately 3 months contingency if we do need to slip some of the dates (we will have until end July 2022 to get Local Reorganisation Order signed off by Council).

The preparation for a Town Council (if that is the option would be carried out in tandem when there is a clear steer from the consultation as to what the public wish to see). There will still be eight months after the LRO is signed off to complete that work and have the new organisation up and running by 1 April 2023.

## Community Governance Review of the Unparished Area of Taunton Communications Master Text

# NEW TOWN OR PARISH COUNCILS IN TAUNTON? HAVE YOUR SAY

Somerset West and Taunton Council is carrying out a review to decide on whether changes should be made to the existing local governance arrangements, including whether or not new town or parish councils should be set up in those parts of Taunton where they don't currently exist, 'the Unparished Area'.

All local residents and organisations are invited to give their views.

### What is a Community Governance Review?

A Community Governance Review is a formal process involving consultation with local electors and other interested parties on potential changes such as creating new parishes, setting up or abolishing town/parish councils, changing their boundaries or electoral arrangements.

### What are town and parish councils?

Town and parish councils exist in many areas, both rural and urban, and are the most local tier of government in England. Somerset West and Taunton Council as a 'principal council' is responsible for deciding whether to create, amend or abolish parish areas within its boundaries and whether to establish a council to serve any parish.

A parish council that serves a town area may decide to call itself a 'town council'.

Town and parish councils do not have statutory responsibility for services such as social care, education or housing but they may decide to provide some local services for their residents or in some cases to take over responsibility for services previously delivered by Somerset West and Taunton Council.

Town and parish councils also represent their communities. They must be consulted on planning applications within their area and may work with Somerset West and Taunton Council to create a Neighbourhood Plan for development in their area. They

may bid to purchase assets of community value or express an interest in running a local authority service.

Town and parish councils are directly elected by local voters and are independent of the other layers of local government. Any new town or parish council, for example in Taunton, would not replace Somerset West and Taunton Council but would exist alongside it.

### **Why is Somerset West and Taunton Council carrying out the review at this time?**

Somerset West and Taunton Council took the decision that a Community Governance Review should be undertaken at this time because the former Taunton Deane Borough Council committed to address this anomaly in 2018, and the new Council restated this commitment in March 2021, to ensure that a review was undertaken with the resulting arrangements to be in place for April 2023.

Taunton is the only area in Somerset that does not have a Town or Parish Council level of local government. Across the country, many areas that were previously unparished have been turned into town and parish councils in previous years. Town or parish councils may also promote community engagement and effective local government.

In addition, Government guidance is that a Community Governance Review should be carried out every 10-15 years.

### **What kinds of services could a town or parish council provide and how much would it cost?**

There are almost 10,000 parish and town councils across England, with populations ranging from fewer than 200 to almost 100,000. The range of services provided varies accordingly and each town or parish council decides what, if any, services it will provide. Typically, these can include the provision of allotments (a statutory responsibility, if there is demand); parks and recreation grounds; public conveniences; control of litter; play areas; community centres; crime prevention; festivals and fetes; traffic calming; tourism activities and/or markets. However recently there are examples of different types of services being delegated to councils, for example street cleaning and CCTV in Salisbury, and a library in Charnwood.

As the level of services provided varies significantly between town or parish councils, so does the level of the precept that they charge Council Tax payers. For example, the average precept payable in 2020-21 by a Band D Council Tax payer within the Council area is £43.86 per annum. The national average Band D precept of all precepting parish and town councils in the current year is £64.05 per annum and for approximately 30 of the larger councils, some of which have taken on responsibility for a range of services 'devolved' from their principal authority, the Band D figure is between £200 and £300 per annum.



A town or parish council itself decides what level of precept to charge but in the case of any new town or parish councils, Somerset West and Taunton Council would set the precept for their first year of operation based on the estimated cost of the level of activity expected and any services anticipated to be transferred.

### **What area(s) could any new town or parish council(s) cover?**

The Council wishes to consult with the public before consulting on any initial suggestions so as not to influence the consultation process towards any particular result.

The guidance is clear however that the division of a cohesive area, such as a Charter Trustee town, may not reflect the sense of community that needs to lie behind all parishes; or places where there were no recognisable smaller communities.

However, alternative options are possible - for example there could be a larger number of small town or parish councils representing individual areas, parts of Taunton could remain unparished, or we could simply retain the status quo. Somerset West and Taunton Council wants to know your views.

### **Will the Taunton Charter Trustees remain in place?**

Not necessarily. The Charter Trustees for Taunton were established in 2019 in order to be able to save the historic Mayoralty for Taunton from being abolished. They are the 16 Somerset West and Taunton councillors elected to represent wards in the unparished area of Taunton. The Trustees elect a Mayor and Deputy Mayor for Taunton each year. The Mayor and Deputy uphold the traditional roles previously carried out by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Taunton Deane within the boundary of the unparished area.

Charter Trustees only have the power to raise a precept to cover the costs of their administration and the associated costs for the upkeep of the Civic Insignia or 'Silver' and the Mayoralty of Taunton. They cannot legally precept for taking on responsibilities and costs that Parish and Town Councils can such as grass cutting and public conveniences.

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:

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

This review is an opportunity for local people to comment on any changes that they might like to suggest in respect of the existence of the Unparished Area, the Taunton Charter Trustees, the area covered by it and its electoral arrangements (the number of councillors, wards etc).

In relation to service delivery and the level of precept, just as for any new town or parish councils that might be established elsewhere in Somerset West and Taunton, a new Town or Parish(es) Council could decide in future to take on additional services of the sort set out above.

### **Issues to be considered by the review**

In arriving at its recommendations the law requires that Somerset West and Taunton Council must have regard to the need for community governance arrangements to:-

- reflect the identities and interests of the community in the area;
- and - promote effective and convenient local government.

It must also consider the impact of town or parish councils on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish; and must take into account any other existing or potential arrangements for community representation or engagement in the area.

In coming to decisions on the electoral arrangements for any town or parish council the Council must consider the number of electors in the area(s) under review and any change in the number or distribution of those electors which is likely to occur in the next five years.

Any town or parish council should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity and electors should be able to identify with the town or parish in which they live. Any submissions providing evidence of community identity or local linkages will be important considerations in this review.

### **When would any new town or parish council(s) be set up?**

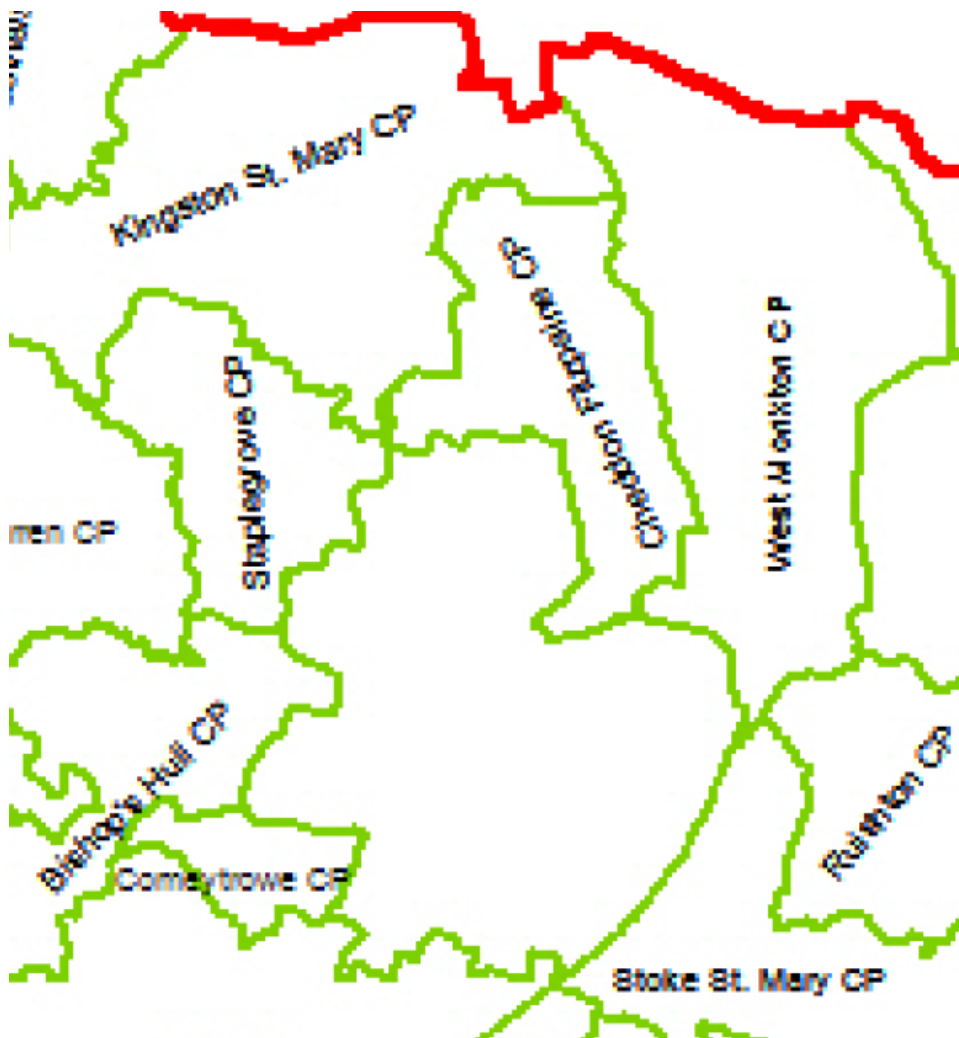
By law the review must be completed within 12 months of starting it. This review started on July 2021, and therefore it has to be finished by July 2022. It is anticipated that if any new town or parish councils were to be established following this review they would come into existence no later than April 2023.

### **How to find out more**

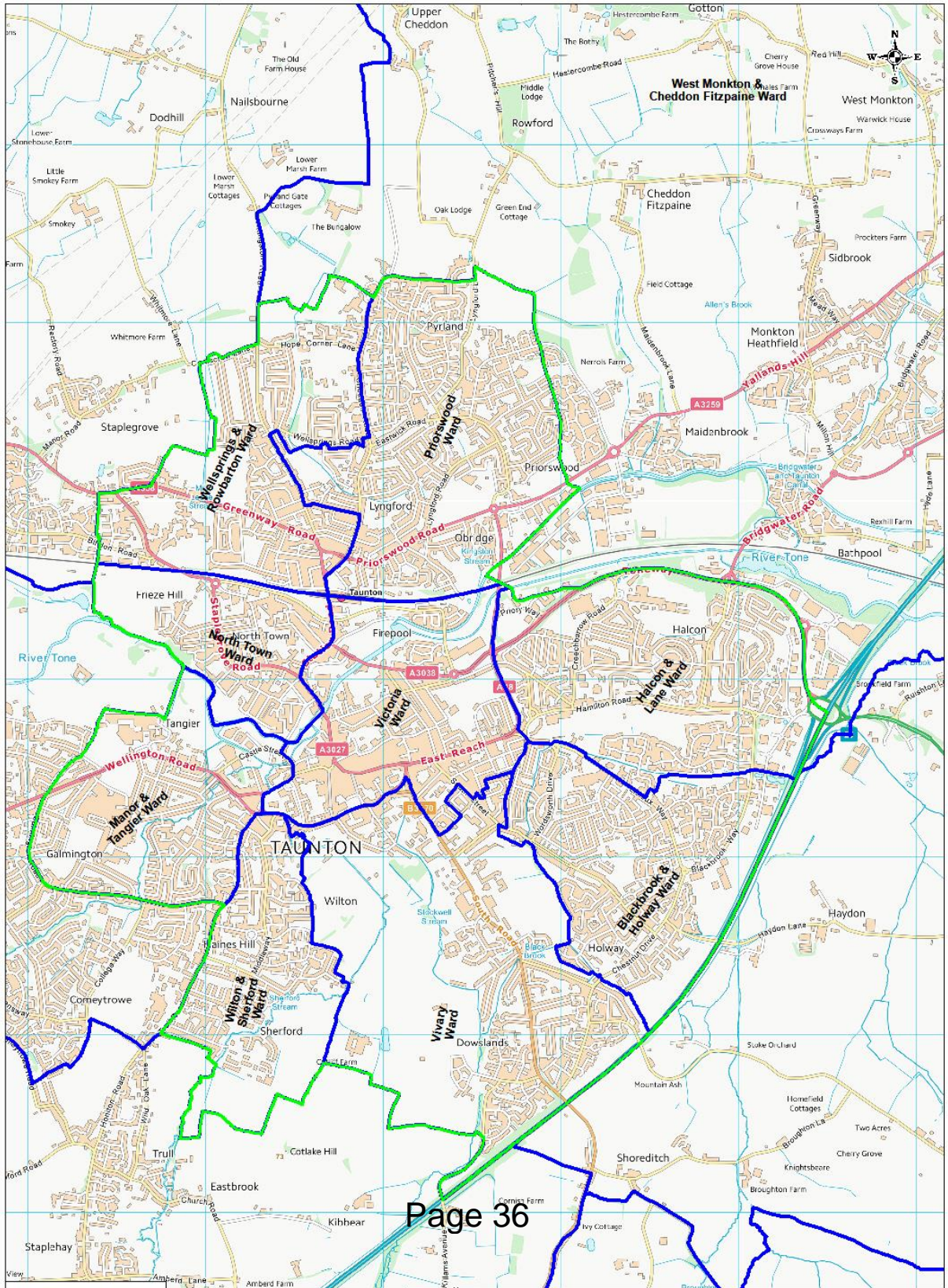
Full information about the Community Governance Review including the terms of reference and detailed timetable are on the website at [www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](http://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

## Map

The map below shows the existing Unparished Area Boundaries together with the Somerset West and Taunton Council Wards (revised with effect from May 2019).







## WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR VIEWS

Please tell us what you think about the matters above or any other issues concerning governance at the town or parish council level by **Tuesday 14 September 2021**. Somerset West and Taunton Council will consider all submissions received before coming to its draft recommendations, which will then be published for further consultation before any final decisions are made.

## Community Governance Review - Questionnaire

# NEW TOWN OR PARISH COUNCILS IN TAUNTON?

### INTRODUCTORY PAGE

Somerset West and Taunton Council is carrying out a review to decide on changes to existing local governance arrangements, including whether or not new town or parish councils should be set up in those parts of Taunton where they don't currently exist.

Full information about the review including the terms of reference and a timetable, are on our website at [www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](http://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

All local residents, business owners and organisations are invited to give their views.

The Council will consider all feedback before making draft recommendations. These will then be published for further public consultation before any final decisions are made.

You can complete this questionnaire online, or download a paper version and return it to Governance Team, Somerset West and Taunton Council, PO Box 866, Taunton, TA1 9GS or hand it in one of our offices.

Alternatively you can tell us your views by e-mailing:  
**[governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)**

This first stage of the consultation will close on **Tuesday 14 September 2021**.

**1. Please tell us whether you are a:**

- Local resident
- Local employee
- Local business person

Official representative of community organisation – Please state which one.....

Other (please state) .....

### Town and parish councils

Town and parish councils exist in many rural and urban areas and are the most local tier of government in England. Somerset West and Taunton Council is classed as a Principal Authority and therefore has responsibility for deciding whether to create, amend or abolish parish areas within its boundaries and whether to establish



councils to serve any of the parishes. A parish council that serves a town area may call itself a 'town council'.

Town or parish councils do not have statutory responsibility for services such as social care, education or housing but they may decide to provide some local services for their residents.

In some cases, they may take over responsibility for services previously or currently delivered by Somerset West and Taunton Council. 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 SWT Council on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Town or parish councils may also promote community engagement and effective local government. In addition, 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.

These local councils can also play a key role in communities by the promotion of community engagement between the council and residents and more inclusive local government.

### Community Representation

Town or parish councils represent their communities. They must be consulted on planning applications within their area and they may bid to purchase assets of community value or express an interest in running a local authority service.

Town or parish councils are directly elected by local voters and are independent of the other layers of local government. Any new town or parish council, for example in Taunton, would not replace Somerset West and Taunton Council but would exist alongside it or any future unitary authority.

There are some bodies in place already in Taunton which represent local residents such as local community groups.

## 2. **Should a town or parish councils be set up to serve the parts of Taunton that do not currently have them?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

REASONS/COMMENTS (free text) .....

**3. Do you think that creating town or parish councils would provide more benefits than if Somerset West and Taunton Council worked with the existing bodies in place?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

REASONS/COMMENTS (free text) .....

**Services provided by town or parish councils**

The range of services provided by town or parish councils varies with each council deciding what, if any, services it will provide. Typically, these can include allotments; parks and recreation grounds; public conveniences; control of litter; play areas; community centres; crime prevention; festivals and fetes; traffic calming; tourism activities and/or markets. However, recently there are examples of different types of services being delegated to them for example, street cleaning and CCTV in Salisbury, and a library in Charnwood.

As the level of services provided varies significantly between town or parish councils, so does the level of precept they charge Council Tax payers. For example, the Council Tax precept payable in 2020-21 for a Band D property in SWT is £43.86 per annum.

The national average Band D precept of all town and parish councils in the current year is £69.89 per annum and for approximately 30 of the larger councils, some of which have taken on responsibility for a range of services 'devolved' from their Principal Authority, the Band D figure is between £200 and £300 per annum.

A town or parish council decides what level of precept it will charge but in the case of any new councils, Somerset West and Taunton Council would set the precept for the first year of operation based on the estimated cost of any services to be transferred and the level of activity expected.

**4. Do you think the new town or parish council(s) should consider delivering some local services that are currently provided by Somerset West and Taunton Council and for these to be paid for by the town council precept?**

YES – If yes, what sort of services do you think town or parish councils could deliver?

NO

Reasons/Comments (free text) .....



## Community Governance

In arriving at its recommendations the law requires that Somerset West and Taunton Council must have regard to the need for community governance arrangements to:-

- reflect the identities and interests of the community in the area; and
- promote effective and convenient local government

Any town or parish council should reflect distinct and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity and electors should be able to identify with the town or parish in which they live.

**5. Based on where you live, which Somerset West and Taunton town, parish, area or locality do you feel you belong to?**

RESPONSE (free text) .....

**6. Do you consider that any part of the Unparished Area should be grouped with another parish or other parishes?**

If yes, please provide details of the proposals, the reasons for the proposal and explain how the proposal will:

- (a) be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and
- (b) be effective and convenient.

You should also include suggestions for a proposed name for the group, whether the group should have a council and what electoral arrangements should apply.

RESPONSE (free text) .....

**7. What is your postcode?**

(We are asking this to understand where you live in relation to the locality you feel you belong to)

.....

## Areas covered by town or parish councils

Somerset West and Taunton Council at this first stage of consultation is wishing to listen to all stakeholders and remain open to all options.

A new town council to represent the current area of the Unparished Area of Taunton is just one of the options the Council could opt for. Alternatively there could be a larger number of small town or parish councils representing individual areas, parts of Taunton could remain unparished, or we could simply keep things the way they are now. The government guidance does state that the division of a cohesive area, such

as a Charter Trustee town, would not reflect the sense of community that needs to lie behind all parishes; or places where there were no recognisable smaller communities, and a larger parish may best suit the needs of the area.

**8. If you do think that new town or parish council(s) should be created:**

**(a) What area(s) should it/they cover?**

RESPONSE (free text) .....

**(b) What would you name the new town or parish council(s)?**

RESPONSE (free text) .....

**Taunton Charter Trustees**

The Charter Trustees for Taunton were established in 2019 and cover the wards of the Unparished Area of Taunton, to enable the historic Taunton Mayoralty to continue, with the sixteen Somerset West and Taunton Councillors elected in May 2019 automatically serving as Charter Trustees. Charter Trustees only have the power to raise a precept to cover the costs of their administration and the associated costs for the upkeep of the Civic Insignia or 'Silver' and the Mayoralty of Taunton. They cannot legally precept for taking on responsibilities and costs that Parish and Town Councils can such as grass cutting and public conveniences. This review is an opportunity for local people to comment on any changes that they might like to suggest in respect of the existence of the Unparished Area of the Council, the area covered by it and its electoral arrangements.

**9. Do you think that there should be any changes to the area covered by the Unparished Area of Taunton area?**

YES – It should be abolished and replaced with a Town or Parish Council.

NO – it should be kept as it is.

Reasons/Comments (Free text).....

**10. Do you think that there should be any changes to the number of councillors who make up the Unparished Area of Taunton (sixteen)?**

YES – There should be more councillors/There should be fewer councillors

NO

Reasons/Comments (Free text).....

**11. Do you consider the unparished area should be divided into more or less than the nine wards that currently cover the area?**

If yes, please provide details of the proposals including a map illustrating the proposed ward boundary, the reasons for the proposal and explain how the proposal will make the election of councillors more practicable and convenient. You should also include suggestions for proposed ward names and the number of councillors that should represent the electorate in each ward.

Current wards;

1. *Vivary (2 Councillors)*
2. *Victoria (2 Councillors)*
3. *Wellsprings and Rowbarton (2 Councillors)*
4. *Priorswood (3 Councillors)*
5. *Halcon and Lane (2 Councillors)*
6. *Blackbrook and Holway (2 Councillors)*
7. *Wilton and Sherford (1 Councillor)*
8. *Manor and Tangier (1 Councillor)*
9. *North Town ( 1 Councillor)*

Reasons/Comments (Free text).....

**12. Do you have any other comments on governance issues at the parish/town council level?**

RESPONSE (free text) .....

**Further consultation**

If you would like to be contacted to take part in the second stage of this consultation, please leave your email details below. We will only use your information to contact you about the second stage of this consultation.

**Name** .....

**E-mail** .....

**Privacy Notice**

Somerset West and Taunton Council will hold this information for the purpose of contacting you about the second stage of this consultation, this information will not be used for any other purpose. We will hold your personal information for no longer than five years.

If you feel any information Somerset West and Taunton Council holds about you is incorrect, or if you wish to see a copy of the information we hold about you, please contact [governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

# 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](mailto:P.harding@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

**Organisation prepared for**

**Somerset West and Taunton Council**

**Version**

**1.1**

**Date Completed**

**10.06.2021**

**Description of what proposed change or policy is being impact assessed**

**Community Governance Review – consideration of a new parish or town council for Taunton**

**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?

N/A – these groups will be consulted through the two stage consultation taking place over two periods of 20 weeks in the next year.

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).

<b>Analysis of impact on protected groups</b>				
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.				
<b>Protected group</b>	<b>Summary of impact</b>	<b>Negative outcome</b>	<b>Neutral outcome</b>	<b>Positive outcome</b>
<b>Age</b>	<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"/>
<b>Disability</b>	<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"> <li>• Information as well as being online will be published in local media.</li> <li>• Printed copies of the consultation will be made available at Council offices for collection, and can also be posted to customers on request</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People with disabilities will be contacted through established routes via local groups to ensure inclusion and engagement with the review.</li> </ul>			
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	No adverse impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	No adverse impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	No adverse impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>Provision for documentation other languages.</p> <p>People of different race/ethnicity will be contacted through established local groups to ensure inclusion and engagement with the review.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Religion or belief</b>	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"/>

<b>Sex</b>	No adverse impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	No adverse impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• Information as well as being online will be published in local media and radio</li> <li>• Printed copies of the consultation will be made available at Council offices for collection, and can also be posted to customers on request</li> <li>• The creation of a new Town or Parish Council is likely to 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



<b>Negative outcomes action plan</b>				
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.				
<b>Action taken/to be taken</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>	<b>How will it be monitored?</b>	<b>Action complete</b>
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"/>
<b>If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.</b>				
The proposed Community Governance Review will have no adverse impact on any specific equality strands.				

<b>Completed by:</b>	<b>Marcus Prouse</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>11.06.2021</b>
<b>Signed off by:</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:</b>	
<b>To be reviewed by: (officer name)</b>	
<b>Review date:</b>	

## **Community Governance Review Member Working Group**

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **Role of the Community Governance Review Member Working Group**

A cross party, non-decision making Member Working Group who will work with officers on the Community Governance Review for the Unparished Area of Taunton.

The Working Group will report back to Full Council, but reports will also go to the Charter Trustees for their information

The panel will meet on a regular basis to review the options available to the Council

#### **Scope**

A Community Governance Review is a review of the whole or part of the district to consider the creation of a new Parish(es):

- Terms of reference for the Community Governance Review must specify the area under review and set out clearly the matters on which the Review is to focus, and these Terms of Reference must be published.
- Consultees are set out in the Act and Guidance, and include the County Council, Members of Parliament, local councils, local people, local businesses and voluntary organisations, and their representations must be taken into account when finalising the detail of the review.
- The review must take into account the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.
- The review must consider electoral arrangements and, if creating a large Parish, whether or not this should be warded. Careful consideration must also be given to any Ward boundaries as these can have consequential effects on the boundaries for other tiers of local government.

#### **Membership**

The membership of the group will be politically balanced, with all political parties being represented.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Political Party / Role</b>
Cllr Simon Coles	Liberal Democrat
Cllr Richard Lees	Liberal Democrat

Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey	Liberal Democrat
Cllr Fran Smith	Liberal Democrat
Cllr John Hunt	Independent
Cllr Loretta Whetlor	Independent
Cllr Norman Cavill	Conservative
Cllr Libby Lisgo	Labour

### Method of Working

- The Chair and Vice Chair to be elected at the first meeting on the Working Group
- Support from the Governance team.
- The Working Group will meet virtually on a regular basis, via Zoom
- The Working Group will work through the project plan and timetable for the Community Governance Review, drawing in relevant expertise as appropriate.
- The Working Group can make recommendations but is not a decision making body, collective views will feed into the Working Group report, which will be taken through the democratic process

## **SWT Community Governance Review Working Group**

01.07.21

Attendees: Cllr H Prior-Sankey (Chair), Cllr L Lisgo (Vice-Chair), Cllrs N Cavill, R Lees, L Whetlor.

Officers: A. Tregellas, M. Prouse

### 1. Apologies

No apologies were submitted.

### 2. Notes from the previous meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021 were approved as a true and accurate record.

### 3. Draft Committee Report

The Specialist in Governance and Democracy shared the four resolutions that would be proposed to form part of the report, including a request for budget. The Governance Manager notified members that there would be a dedicated member of staff in finance to support the review.

### 4. Trull Boundary Issue

The Chair of the Working Group had specifically requested this item as a matter for discussion. The Specialist shared the maps which showcased the issues in relation to Vivary Ward being an incomplete unparished ward i.e. it had a tiny bit (Killams Green) which was part of Trull Parish Council. There was also an element of the forthcoming Killams Park development which would be a part of both areas.

- It was suggested that Trull Parish Council were contacted informally, perhaps through the auspices of SALC to have an initial conversation.
- It was unclear whether this issue could be looked at through this review as it may require a boundary review and be outside of the scope of the Council decision. Officers would seek further clarification and were having an informal chat with a consultant the next day.
- Officers noted there had been concerns discussed around widening the scope of the review to not just the unparished area but the adjoining parishes and potentially the electors within, whereas the Council resolution was felt to be more specific in terms of the CGR being a review of the Unparished Area of Taunton and looking at the future governance arrangements of that unit.

### 5. Draft revised CGR Terms of Reference

The Specialist in Democracy and Governance introduced the revised Terms of Reference. The document was broadly supported, but it was suggested that a revised set of documents was circulated after the meeting, to allow for comments to be made, taking on board the comments around the Boundary Review aspect and

the discussion with the Consultant. It was recognised that the amount of work required in doing a boundary review of the entire area, as opposed to undertaking a review on the governance arrangements for the currently unparished area would be of a greater amount within the timescales.

#### 6. Draft Consultation Text and Questionnaire

The Specialist in Democracy and Governance introduced the proposed CGR Draft Consultation text and questionnaire. It was noted that some of the questions were more general in nature than tailored to the specific aspects related to this review. The Officer confirmed this was partly to ensure all aspects were covered at the first stage and would adjust as necessary and circulate at the end of the week for commentary before final publication.

- Comment was made that the text needed to emphasize that Taunton was the only such unparished area in Somerset and set the scene.
- Clarity was sought on whether there was a need to offer a posted element with the documentation and available on request.
- It would be helpful if the full range of costs of Town Councils from low, average and high could be provided in the document.

#### 7. Equality Impact Assessment

The Specialist in Democracy and Governance introduced the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA). Comment was made that reference should be made to offering a translation of any materials, considering the wider ethnic make-up of central Taunton.

#### 8. AOB

N/A

#### 9. Date of Next Meeting

This was proposed to be on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July at 10am. Councillor Cavill gave his apologies in advance due to a prior commitment.

POSTSCRIPT - email sent by Marcus Prouse on 02/07/21

*Just a note to say I have had a conversation with the consultant we are in discussions with who has undertaken a review before and he was of the view that it was an entirely appropriate approach to concentrate on the unparished area and not doing that wider boundary review as yet.*

## **SWT Community Governance Review Working Group**

10.06.21

Attendees: Cllr H Prior-Sankey (Chair), Cllr L Lisgo (Vice-Chair), Cllrs N Cavill, R Lees, J Hunt, F Smith, L Whetlor.

Officers: A. Tregellas, M. Prouse

### 1. Apologies

No apologies were submitted.

### 2. Notes from the previous meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021 were approved as a true and accurate record.

### 3. CGR Terms of Reference

An iterative version of the Terms of Reference was included in the Agenda pack which was shared with Councillors.

During the debate the following comments and questions were raised:-

- Discussion took place on the first stage of the consultation and whether preferred options would be set out at this stage?
- It was considered there were only three viable options and these were a Town Council based on the Unparished Area, multiple parishes, or a Town Council area that was wider than the Unparished Area.
- Officers cautioned that the advice in the guidance on Charter Trustees areas was clear that these should not be divided.
- It was clear that if there would need to be a pre-emptive discussion with the Parish Councils bordering the Unparished Area, especially in the area of Killams which was a part of the Vivary Ward but was a part of Trull Parish.
- It would be unhelpful if this exercise made any Parish Councils feel under threat.
- All other wards in the Unparished Area were complete i.e. did not contain bits of Parishes in them.
- One Councillor expressed a strong view that the boundaries of any new Council should be based on the boundaries of the old town.
- It was considered clear that the Working Group could not however go out to consultation with a pre-formed view and must consider multiple options.
- It was confirmed that the consultation would be with residents of the Unparished Area only, and not surrounding residents of parishes.
- A suggestion was made to involve and invite a representative from Somerset Association of Local Councils to assist in discussions with the Parish Councils.
- As wider amendments to Parish Boundaries would involve work with the Boundary Commission, it was considered that the timescales involved would mean the focus should be on parishing the unparished area.

- Discussion took place on the Local Community Networks proposed under the Unitary plans for One Somerset.
- There was some discussion over whether the existing unparished area was a large enough tax base for a Town Council. Officers confirmed there would be no issues over viability on this matter and the main issues were in reflecting identity and being effective and convenient.
- The population of the Unparished Area was confirmed as being around 48,000 people.
- Swindon was a recent example of a place that had opted for multiple parishes rather than one larger town Council.

The Group approved the Terms of Reference document.

#### 4. Communications and Consultation Plan

The Communications and Consultation Plan had been circulated and was shared on the screen for the benefit of the Group to consider.

During the debate the following comments and questions were raised:-

- It was felt that the roadshows should be fronted by officers.
- Clarity was sought on whether the Members on the Group could actively campaign for a particular option without being seen to be in conflict.
- It was advised that the forthcoming report to Full Council would seek to approve a budget from reserves to fund the communications materials.
- It was suggested the government and the County Council were lobbied for help with funding, even though it was SWT's responsibility to undertake the review.
- It was considered that once the minister had made a decision regarding unitary, the conversations with SCC would be on a different basis.
- The timing of the first consultation over the summer holidays and the possible extension of restrictions was considered and it was felt the longer time period of 10 weeks was preferable.

#### 5. Risks and Issues Log

The Group were advised that this would be circulated to the Group after the meeting.

#### 6. Examples from other Councils

The Governance Specialist signposted Councillors to the various documents attached which had been provided by neighbouring Councils such as Dorset and Torbay. Officers had held meetings with relevant officers to understand and learn from past experience to inform our review.

#### 7. Any other Business

N/A



## 8. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was proposed to be 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 12 midday, to allow for the Group to discuss the budget proposed for Consultation before the report was published for the Charter Trustees and Council, with a follow-up meeting after the Council meeting in July.

The meeting closed at 11:10am



## **SWT Community Governance Review Working Group**

27.05.21

Attendees: Cllr H Prior-Sankey (Chair), Cllr L Lisgo (Vice-Chair), Cllrs J Hunt, F Smith, L Whetlor.

Officers: A. Tregellas, M. Prouse, C. Rendell

### 1. Election of Chair

Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey was duly appointed Chair of the Working Group.

### 2. Appointment of Vice-Chair

Cllr Libby Lisgo was duly appointed Vice-Chair of the Working Group.

### 3. Apologies

None. Cllrs R Lees, Coles and Cavill absent.

### 4. Review Terms of Reference

The Governance and Democracy Specialist went through a slide pack giving an overview on the relevant considerations the review would have to consider, information pertaining to Charter Trustee areas and the potential pitfalls if looking to abolish or amend existing Parish boundaries.

The revised timetable document was also shared and discussed.

During the debate the following comments and questions were raised:-

- The flexibility of the timetable was discussed, bearing in mind the consultation was due to take place over part of the Summer Holidays. The question was asked as to whether the period of consultation could be extended to 14 September (for consideration at a later meeting). The Governance Manager confirmed this could be flexed to later on as some capacity had been built into the timetable and certain pieces of work could be done in tandem without having an impact on the new organisation 'going live' from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023
- The Council has 12 months from the publication of the Terms of Reference to complete the review and approve the Local Reorganisation Order
- The Parish Councils that surrounded the Unparished Area would have to be approached as part of the Consultation. There were drawbacks and benefits to looking to include further areas in a bigger Town Council, as negotiations could be contentious and have legal ramifications.
- The size and sustainability of a Town or Parish Council was discussed and the budget calculation requirement. It was felt this would come later on once discussions over transfers and responsibilities was in play with the Shadow Council.
- Whether information regarding the population size of the unparished area could be provided

- The Governance Manager made it clear that the Group had to be seen to be taking a broader view of the options available to them.
- Councillors suggested that the Revised Timetable included Somerset County Councillors to the consultee list as well as the Charter Trustees.
- The Governance Manager advised that external resource would be procured to keep the project on track and give specialist advice.
- A separate risks and issues log would be created and reviewed at each meeting.
- A Communication and Consultation Plan would be drawn up and brought back to the next meeting of the Working Group

5. Complete the Working Group Scoping document

The Governance Manager completed the Working Group Scoping Document with the assistance of the group the completed document would be circulated after the meeting.

6. Any other Business

N/A

7. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was proposed to be 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 9.30am, with the frequency of meetings to be determined based on the workload.

The meeting closed at 12.51pm