

REVIEWS OF PARISHES AND RELATED MATTERS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007

TERMS OF REFERENCE SUTTON VALENCE PARISH COUNCIL – INCREASE IN PARISH COUNCILLORS

INTRODUCTION

What is a Community Governance Review?

It is a review of the whole or part of the district / parish 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;
- The grouping of parishes under a common parish council.
- 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

In undertaking any Review, the Council will be guided by the following legislation:

- Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007;
- Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 (SI2008/625);
- Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008 (SI2008/626)
- Relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972

The Council is required to have regard to the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (published in April 2008), together with the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission (CLCBE) for England in March 2010. The Terms of Reference of any Review will be published on the Council's website (www.maidstone.gov.uk) and will also be available to view at our reception area at the Council's main offices in The Gateway, King Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6JZ.

Parish governance in the Borough of Maidstone

The Council believes that parish councils play an important role in terms of community empowerment at a local level, and wants to ensure that parish governance in our Borough continues to be enabled to meet the challenges that lie before it. Furthermore, it wants to ensure that there is clarity and transparency to the areas that parish councils represent and that the electoral arrangements of parishes (the warding arrangements and the allocations of councillors) are appropriate, equitable and readily understood by their electorate.

Ultimately, the recommendations made in any community governance review should aim to bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in a more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

Why is the Council undertaking this Review?

Reviews are normally undertaken because of one or more of the following reasons:

- Changes in population
- Shifts in “natural settlements” caused by new development
- In reaction to specific or local issues which have now been raised
- In receipt of a valid petition
- In advance of a full review of the district or parish electoral arrangements
- At a request from the parish council or other interested party

In this particular review, Maidstone Borough Council has resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review of Sutton Valence Parish Council with a view to increasing the number of parish councillors from 9 to 11 as a result of a formal request from the Parish Council.

Who undertakes the Review?

The organisation of the consultations and all subsequent correspondence is undertaken by the Electoral Services team at the Borough Council. The General Purposes Committee of the Council is delegated to deal with all electoral matters and will make recommendation to full council for the final decision after the consultations have been concluded.

Consultation

The Council is now publishing this Terms of Reference document. It sets out the aims of the review, the legislation which guides it and some of the policies which the Council considers important in the review. The Council will need to take into consideration the views of the local people, together with the views of any other interested party. Local people and any other stake-holders should be aware of the outcome of decisions made and the reasons behind them. The district councils will also ask for the views of the County Council and any neighbouring parish councils.

Electoral statistics and arrangements

The parish council comprises one parish boundary and is coterminous with the borough ward boundaries and no change is requested to these.

The Council has used the Register of Electors as at 1 Sept 2014 to provide the electoral statistics. These are as follows;

Polling District	Area	Electorate as at 1 September 2014	Current no. of parish councillors
ZA, ZB	Sutton Valence	1083	9

Timetable

The review must be completed within twelve months of the publication of this document.

Stage	What happens	Date/Timescales
Commencement of review	Publication of terms of reference	11 December 2014
Stage 1	Consultation period. Submissions are invited.	6 weeks
Stage 2	Consideration of submissions. Draft recommendations prepared and published.	2 weeks
Stage 3	Principal Council agrees and publishes final recommendations	20 February 2015
Stage 4	Council resolves to make an Order to increase the number of parish councillors	
Order effective	Number of parish councillors increases effective from next termly parish elections	7 May 2015