



South Staffordshire Council

Review of the Community Governance Review 2025

Terms of Reference

Introduction

South Staffordshire Council (“the council”) has resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review (CGR) of its parishes across the district in accordance with Part 4, Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

In undertaking the Review, the council will be guided by:

- Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
- The relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972
- Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued in accordance with section 100(4) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010 and the following regulations which guide matters arising from the Review
- Local Government (parishes and parish councils) (England) Regulations 2008 Local Government Finance (new parishes) Regulations 2008

The 2007 Act has transferred powers to the principal councils which previously, under the Local Government Act 1997, had been shared with the Electoral Commission’s Boundary Committee for England.

Section 81 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires the council to publish its Terms of Reference.

This document is being published on our website and will have an accompanying communication and engagement plan in place which will include parish councils.

What is a Community Governance Review?

A Community Governance Review provides an opportunity to establish strong, clearly defined boundaries across the district. It can consider one or more of the following for the whole or part of the district:

- Creating, merging, altering, or abolishing parishes
- Naming parishes and determining the style of new parishes
- Electoral arrangements for parishes (including the ordinary year of election, council size, number of councillors, and parish warding)

- Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes
- Other types of local arrangements, including parish meetings.

The council must ensure that community governance within the review area reflects the identities and interests of the community and is effective and convenient.

The review will also consider the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and the size, population, and boundaries of local communities or parishes.

Why undertake this Community Governance Review?

The council believes parish councils play an important role in terms of community empowerment at the local level. The council wants to ensure parish governance in South Staffordshire continues to be robust, representative and enabled to meet the challenges that lie before it. Furthermore, it wants to ensure there is clarity and transparency to the area's parish councils represent.

It wants to ensure that the electoral arrangements of parishes – the warding arrangements and the allocations of councillors – are appropriate, equitable and readily understood by their electorate. This is also timely with the upcoming Local Government Reorganisation affecting South Staffordshire Council.

There are 27 parish councils in South Staffordshire, and they can help on a number of local issues including being responsible for smaller local services such as community centres, allotments and war memorials. Parish councils play a crucial role in the Council Plan priority of empowering our communities by representing their parish to provide local level support. The review will assess whether the existing parish council governance is appropriate, inclusive of all parishes, capable of meeting new challenges we face and financially equitably.

Areas to be reviewed

The CGR will cover the entire South Staffordshire Council district area.

Who will undertake the Review?

South Staffordshire Council's Corporate Support Team is responsible for conducting all aspects of the review and, on behalf of the council, will take into account the views of local people through a full consultation process to ensure their opinions are captured.

Formal decisions on the recommendations arising from the review will be made by the Standards and Resources Committee.

The council will publicise the review by displaying notices at the council offices in the Community Hub, sharing notices on the website, in email newsletters and across various social media platforms as well as considering other appropriate communication methods. The council will also write to all existing parish councils, relevant associations, councillors, MPs, and neighbouring councils. If required, the final recommendations must be approved by the council before the Community Governance Order is made.

Timetable for the review

A timetable for the review is included below under the heading 'Programme and Timetable'. To ensure that the review process is managed efficiently, the timetable has some flexibility if adjustments are needed after receiving representations from local people and interested bodies during the initial public consultation. Any adjustments to the programme and timetable will be approved by the council and published on its website.

Electorate forecasts for the district

The review will use electoral data from the May 2025 electoral register. The council must consider any changes in the number or distribution of electors likely to occur within five years from the start of the review. Electorate forecasts will be prepared using current planning permissions and the Local Plan to project the five-year electorate forecast. These forecasts will be made available to all interested parties early in the review process.

Representations

The council welcomes representations from any person or body wishing to comment or make proposals on any aspect of the matters under review. Representations should be submitted via the council's website, by email, or in writing to the Corporate Support Team Manager (elections@sstaffs.gov.uk). All initial representations must be made by 30th September 2025.

The council will consult with local government electors and any other interested parties, taking their representations into account against the criteria in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. All representations received will be published, along with the reasons for accepting or rejecting them. The council will notify consultees of the review's outcome.

How will the results be disseminated?

The council will publish full details on its website, and deposit key documents at the council offices.

This review is deemed to have commenced on the date of the publication of this Terms of Reference notice, dated 1 July 2025, and will be conducted over 12 months.

Programme and Timetable (subject to change)

Stage	Date/Timeline	Timescale	Outline of Activity
Stage 1 – Invite initial submissions	1 st July 2025 – 30 th September 2025	12 weeks	Commencement of Review with publication of Notice and Terms of Reference as well as Stakeholder Notifications. Both online and printed copies will be made available.
Stage 2 – Consideration of submissions received.	1 st October 2025 – 30 th October 2025	4 weeks	Draft recommendations will be prepared. Council to approve draft recommendations.
Stage 3 -Draft recommendations are published.	31 st October 2025 – 31 st December 2025	8 weeks	Consultation on proposals to commence.
Stage 4 – Prepare final recommendations	1 st January 2026 – 24 th March 2026	12 weeks	Consideration of submissions received before preparing final recommendations. If required, council to approve final recommendations and make a Reorganisation Order.
Publication of final recommendation	25 th March 2026	N/A	Publish final recommendations and conclude review.

and conclusion of review			
Final stage – Implementation	April 2026	N/A	If required, council resolves to make a Reorganisation Order and implement changes from next parish council election date.