

Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Review of Foxton Parish Council

Introduction

South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) is carrying out a Community Governance Review (CGR) of Foxton Parish Council under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007¹.

Section 81 of the 2007 Act² requires SCDC to publish its Terms of Reference for the Review which clearly set out the focus of the review. This document, when published, will fulfil this requirement.

SCDC is required to consider the Guidance on CGR's issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010³. This is to ensure that the review reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area and that any arrangements put in place by the review are effective and convenient. This and other relevant legislation and guidance have been considered in drawing up these terms of reference.

Why is the council (SCDC) undertaking the review?

Although not at the instigation of a petition, the Council has been approached by Foxton Parish Council who has made a request for a formal review process to take place to consider the potential decreasing of the number of parish councillors from 10 to 9.

Reasons for this request provided by Foxton Parish Council:

- Foxton Parish Council is entitled to 10 councillors; however, over the past four years, the number of serving councillors has never exceeded 7 and currently stands at 5. The council increased its membership from 9 to 10 in 2021 with the intention of better managing what was then an increasing workload
- Reducing the overall number of councillors from 10 to 9 would mitigate the risk of meetings becoming inquorate should a reduction in the number of Parish Councillors occur.
- In the current climate, where volunteer numbers are declining across many sectors, this adjustment would help ensure the continued operation and decision-making capacity of Foxton Parish Council. In addition, several councillors have been unable to complete a full four-year term before the next election.

¹<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/28/contents>

²<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/28/section/81>

³<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-governance-reviews-guidance>

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What is a Community Governance Review?

CGR's provide the opportunity for councils to review and make changes to community governance within their areas. The recommendations made in a CGR have two main objectives:

- To improve community engagement and better local democracy
- To enable more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

A CGR considers one or more of the following:

- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parish councils
- The naming of and the style of new parish councils
- The electoral arrangements for parish councils (the ordinary year of election; council size; the number of councillors to be elected to the council and warding)
- Grouping or degrouping parish councils.

In this case, the review is considering whether to decrease the number of parish councillors from 10 to 9 at Foxton Parish Council.

Parish governance in our area

The Council's Corporate Plan 2025-2030⁴ underlines the key role of parish councils in sustaining successful, vibrant communities. The Council's constitution states the function of the Civic Affairs Committee with regard to Electoral and Governance Arrangements. The responsibilities of the Civic Affairs Committee include the following:

- Reviews District or Parish electoral arrangements including boundaries and makes recommendations to Council
- Gives parish meetings the powers of a parish council
- Can increase or reduce the number of parish councillors on a parish council
- Changes parish electoral arrangements where agreed, including parish warding
- Recommends district and ward boundary changes arising from a review
- Recommends a Periodic Electoral Review
- Recommends the establishment of a new parish council.

⁴ www.scambs.gov.uk/our-corporate-plan

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In undertaking the review, the Council will be guided by Part 4 of Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007⁵ (referred to as 'the 2007 Act'), the relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972⁶, Guidance on CGR's issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010.⁷ Also, the following Regulations which guide, in particular, consequential matters arising from the review: Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 (SI2008/625)⁸; Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008 (SI2008/626)⁹.

Scope of the Review

The CGR will examine whether decreasing the number of parish councillors at Foxton Parish Council from 10 to 9 would provide better governance and service delivery.

The review will assess existing governance structures and the following considerations:

- Electoral arrangements – The number of councillors elected
- Impact on existing arrangements – Effects on local democracy and representation, community identity, and service
- The potential financial implications and efficiencies.

Objectives:

- To fulfil SCDC's obligations to undertake a CGR following the receipt of an application. The current guidelines state that we must complete this review within 12 months of receipt of the application.
- To ensure that any proposed arrangements provide effective and convenient local government, including viability in the provision of services, the promotion of well-being and community cohesion.
- To take into account any other arrangements for community representation and engagement in the area that are already in place or that could be made.
- To consider options for electoral arrangements for the parish council should the proposal to create a single parish council be adopted.

⁵<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/28/part/4/chapter/3>

⁶<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/contents>

⁷<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-governance-reviews-guidance>

⁸<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/625/made>

⁹<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/626/made>

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Review Process

A full timetable is set out at the end of the Terms of Reference but in summary the following steps will be followed:

1. Consultation based on the Terms of Reference.
2. SCDC considers the responses and prepares the final recommendation(s).
3. Civic Affairs Committee considers the recommendation(s) and uses its delegated authority to make a decision.

Who will be consulted in the review?

The Council is responsible for conducting the review and has drawn up and now publishes this 'Terms of Reference' document. This document lays out the aims of the review, the legislation that guides it and some of the policies that the Council considers important in the review.

In coming to its recommendations in the Review, the Council will take account of the views of local people and stakeholders. This includes ensuring all local government electors for the parish of Foxton are provided with an opportunity to input, and any other person, organisation or business who appears to have an interest in the Review.

The Council will:

- Publish these Terms of Reference and take submissions via its website.
- Promote the process by means of general press releases and social media.
- Provide key documents on deposit at the District Council offices in Cambourne and at Foxton Parish Council (Foxton Village Hall, Hardman Road, Foxton Cambridgeshire CB22 6RN).
- Enable provision for collection of paper submissions at these locations, with postal submissions accepted at the District Council office (South Cambridgeshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge, CB23 6EA).

This Council will notify Cambridgeshire County Council that a review is to be undertaken; they are a formal consultee of this process.

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Electoral Arrangements

The existing parish electorate for Foxton is **1025** (Register of Electors of 1 January 2026). The electorate is not forecast to significantly increase or decrease over the next five years based on the Greater Cambridge Housing Trajectory and Housing Land Supply Report. The electorate has also not significantly increased or decreased over the past five years (electorate in October 2020 was recorded as 1033).

The Council notes that the number of parish councillors shall not be less than 5. There is no maximum number. There are no rules relating to the allocations of councillors. The National Association of Local Councils has suggested that the minimum number of councillors should be 7 and the maximum ¹⁰ 25.

The Council must have regard to the following factors when considering the number of councillors to be elected for a parish:

- The number of local government electors for the parish;
- Any change in that number which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts.

Decision-making authority

The Review will be completed when the Council adopts the Reorganisation of Community Governance Order. Copies of this Order and the document(s) which set out the reasons for the decisions that the Council has taken (including where it has decided to make no change following a Review) will be deposited at the Council's offices, on its website and by request from the Parish Clerk for Foxton, email: clerk@foxtonparishcouncil.gov.uk or tel: 01763 838430.

The provisions of the Order will take effect for financial and administrative purposes on **1 April 2026**.

The electoral arrangements for a new or existing parish council will come into effect at the next elections to the parish council. Should this not coincide with the next ordinary local elections, the Council might have need to modify or exclude the application of sections 16(3) and 90 of the Local Government Act 1972¹¹ to provide for the first election to be held in an earlier year, with councillors serving a shortened first term to allow the parish electoral cycle to return to that of the district.

¹⁰ <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/>

¹¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/contents>

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Consequential matters

General principles

The Council notes that 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;
- provision for the transfer of staff, compensation for loss of office, pensions and other staffing matters.

In these matters, the Council will be guided by Regulations that have been issued following the 2007 Act.

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Timetable for the Review

Publication of the Terms of Reference formally begins the Review, and the review must be completed within twelve months. To this end we will adhere to the following timetable for the Review:

Stage	What happens?	Timescales	Dates
Initiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Application received	Milestone	08 October 2025
Preparing for the review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Project planningPreparation of Terms of ReferenceReport drafted for the Council's Civic Affairs Committee (on 22 January 2026) recommending commencing a CGR	15 weeks and 1 day	08 October 2025 - 22 January 2026
Review begins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Terms of Reference published – commencing the review	Milestone	22 January 2026
Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Public consultation will be undertaken to gather views from affected parishes and local stakeholders.Engagement methods may include surveys, public meetings, and written submissions.	5 weeks and 2 days	22 January 2026 – 28 February 2026
Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Analysis of responsesReview of demographic, financial, and governance data.Assessment of potential benefits and drawbacks of reducing the number of parish councillors.Final Report drafted for the Council's Civic Affairs Committee (on 12 March 2026) outlining findings and recommendations for final approval-concluding the review.	1 week and 5 days	28 February 2026 – 03 March 2026
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">South Cambridgeshire District Council resolves to make a Reorganisation Order (which sets out how the parish council will be set up), if required.	Milestone	By end of March 2026

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Contact information

Enquiries regarding the review should be directed in the first instance to:
Engage@scambs.gov.uk

Timetable of the Community Governance Review

Stage	Dates
Terms of Reference published	22 January 2026
Submissions invited – have your say	22 January 2026
Consultation closes	28 February 2026
Consideration of submissions and recommendations prepared	28 February 2026 – 03 March 2026
Civic Affairs Committee decision	12 March 2026
Reorganisation Order (if required)	By end of March 2026
Implementation for financial/admin purposes	1 April 2026