

Note for local councils on the Community Governance Review

A review of parish arrangements will take place next year after the May elections.

The Review is conducted under The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007- this Act gives powers to Principal Councils (Uttlesford DC) to carry out such a review.

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

There is a formal statutory timetable with consultation periods. A review is due.

This is an open transparent legal process and all comments will appear on our website.

The Review is for parishioners and the Parish Council itself to have an opportunity to have their say on current governance arrangements – views of local people.

Within Uttlesford district there are 53 Parish Councils of which two are styled Town Councils – Dunmow and Saffron Walden but all come under the umbrella of Local Councils. There are actually 57 geographical parish areas but four of these areas – Chickney, Lindsell, Strethall and Wicken Bonhunt currently do not have a Parish Council, principally as their size does not warrant a sustainable Parish Council or they do not wish to have one. There are no grouped parished areas and seven Parish Councils are warded i.e. split in to smaller distinct areas for administrative convenience and to reflect local identities of communities.

The guiding principles are:

- Any changes are to reflect local identities and lead to improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.
- Parishes should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity.
- Five is the legal minimum number of parish councillors on a parish – ideally seven, as recommended by NALC.
- No upper limit on numbers – our highest is 13 (Takeley Parish Council) – not warded but could easily be split in to 3 wards - AUC (Mole Hill Green), AUD (Priors Green) & AUE (Takeley Village).
- The review has to be completed within 12 months.

Examples of common requests:

- **To reduce the number of members as a parish has trouble filling vacancies** – we already have one such request from a Parish Council
- **To ward or de-ward the Parish Council for administrative convenience or to reflect local identities** – for example Takeley Parish Council is pretty large not to be warded; conversely Elmdon and Wenden Lofts Parish Council is relatively small electorate wise to be warded.
- **To re-align the parish boundary to accommodate housing development** – need mutual agreement – this does have an impact on other boundaries as the District Ward and the County Division boundary would need to be formally revised too. The District Council then seeks a Consequential Amendment Order from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to change any District ward or County division boundaries. We already have one such request for this.
- **Create a parish council where non currently exists** – for example, Lindsell and Wicken Bonhunt parishes have no council but both are bigger than Little Barfield Parish Council in terms of electorate. Is there local demand and interest for having a parish council? Is there any community assets within the parish? Implications are that they can raise a precept so local parishioners' Council Tax rises.