



Agenda item: 11

Committee	Full Council
Month	October 2021
Report Title	Community Governance Review (CGR)
Report Author	Lisa Courtney, Town Clerk
Attachments	<p>Appendix A: Report as provided to Council in July 2021, acting as an aide-memoire to the process</p> <p>Appendix B: UDC’s report dated 28.09.21 as presented to the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee</p> <p>Appendix C: Copy of map showing the land at Swards End</p>

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1. Summary

This report updates Council on the current CGE review and seeks a formal response from Council regarding the proposals of the UDC review.

The approved CGR comments are now available for SWTC to make comment until 31 October 2021.

2. Background Information:

2.1: The CGR is being undertaken by UDC, following a statutory process. Throughout June/July 2021, UDC invited residents and Town/Parish Councils to submit comments and representation for any amendments to the existing parish boundaries and representation.

2.2: This matter was initially discussed at the Town Council's Full Council meeting on 14.06.21 and is recorded under Min Ref FC235-21. At this meeting, the Clerk was requested to submit a report to the July meeting which summarised the discussion from June along with a series of recommendations. This report is attached as Appendix A.

2.3: At the July Full Council meeting, Council considered its formal response to the CGR and this is repeated below:

Extract from minutes of Full Council meeting dated 12.07.21 and recorded under Min Ref FC250-21: *Committee Governance Review (CGR)*

The Town Clerk reiterated that the CGR consultation closes on 31.07.21 and notably any agreed changes (by UDC) would not be implemented until 2023; it was further noted that it was unlikely such review would take place again for another 10 years. Members therefore identified that any proposed changes must serve both the current and future needs of the Town Council and town (and until at least 2033). Members considered the following options:

- a) *To increase the number of Councillors representing Saffron Walden*
- b) *To amend the SW boundary to include the potential Radwinter Road development, which currently sits in the geographical area of Swards End Parish Council.*

*Following considerable discussion and debate, it was **Resolved:***

(c) To request UDC to increase the number of Councillors representing Saffron Walden as a whole from 16 to 18 Councillors. This increase will accord with NALC's recommended ratios of 625 residents per Councillor.



(d) In order to ensure best representation, UDC is requested to reconsider the existing SW ward boundaries (for the Town Council) and to reallocate to ensure the best ratio between electorates and residents.

(e) To request UDC to rejoin the ward boundary of Little Walden with Castle Ward (as proposed by UDC) in order to regain both the ratio of numbers and to ensure inclusivity into SW for those in Little Walden

(f) To redraw the parish boundary line to incorporate the proposed development land off Radwinter Road. For the avoidance of doubt, this is the land which currently rests in the parish of Swards End Parish Council and is proposed for development by Rosconn Group for circa 240 homes. It was further noted that the Town Council maintained its strong opposition and objections to development on this site but equally wished to adopt a pragmatic approach should future planning permission be granted on this site. Council noted that whilst this development sat outside of Saffron Walden, any new residents (should future planning permission be granted) would likely associate more with SW than Swards End. These residents would equally create a demand on Town Council services on the basis that residents would access the town centre, shops, services, facilities, public open spaces, community and leisure facilities. For the avoidance of doubt, the Town Council remains opposed to the planning application for development at Radwinter Road but acknowledges, that should the application be granted, the Town Council would seek to mitigate the impact in extending the parish border and seeking S106 contributions.

2.4: A summary of the Town Council's response is therefore:

- (a) increase the number of councillors to allow better representation and in accordance with advice from NALC (from 16 to 18)
- (b) to re-join Little Walden Ward with Castle Ward
- (c) to amend the parish boundary with Swards End – **only if** the current planning application is granted

2.5: These minutes were accepted at the September Full Council meeting as a true and accurate record of the meeting, with the following addition:

[Extract from minutes of Full Council meeting dated 13.09.21 and recorded under Min Ref FC264-21:](#)

“Minute reference FC 250-21 paragraph F to be strengthened in confirming the Town Council’s continued objection to the application but should the application be granted, the Town Council would seek to mitigate the impact in extending the parish border and seeking S106 contributions.”



3. Current Situation

3.1: UDC has compiled all responses to the CGR and these were presented and agreed at a UDC meeting of the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee on 28.09.21. A copy of this UDC report is attached, and shown as Appendix B.

3.2: A summary of the recommendations made by UDC for Saffron Walden are:

(a) To increase the number of seats from 16 to 20, distributed as follows:

Ward	No of Seats proposed	No of current seats (provided for comparison only)	Electorate
Audley Ward	5	4	3565
Castle and Little Walden Ward	6	4 for Castle Ward 1 for Little Walden Ward	3791
Shire Ward	9	7	5550
Totals	20	16	12,906

Extract from UDC's report in support of the above proposal reads:

"The ERO has no objection to increasing the size of the Town Council membership due to continued electoral growth within the town. Using the ratio of 625 councillors per seat, Shire ward is under-represented and considering the amount of growth in the town the Council be recommended to increase the number of councillors to 20 seats and not 18"

(b) To re-join Castle Ward and Little Walden Ward, and rename this "Castle and Little Walden" Ward with a total of 6 seats,

(c) With regards to a boundary change at Saffron Walden / Swards End, the ERO makes the following recommendation (extract from report):

"That if the development be granted planning permission, the Council consider a possible change to the parish boundary as part of an Interim Community Governance Review taking on board further consultations.

Should the development go ahead and remain in the Swards End parish, consideration be given to (a) increase in its seats from 7 to 9 due to the doubling in size of its electorate and (b) ward the parish – the new development to comprise one ward and the older development the other ward, with representation apportioned."



4. Recommendation

(a) To receive this report

(b) To consider a response to UDC's recommendations (a) to (c) as detailed in section 3.2 of this report