

TORBAY COUNCIL

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF TORBAY

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Torbay Council ('the Council') has resolved to undertake a community governance review ('the review') of the whole area of Torbay.
- 1.2 The review will consider whether any changes should be made to existing community governance arrangements within Torbay, including whether new parishes should be created in areas that are currently unparished (i.e. Torquay and Paignton) and if so, whether new town councils should be created for those areas and the electoral arrangements for those councils.
- 1.3 In undertaking this review the Council will have regard to the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued in March 2010 by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and will comply with Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ('the 2007 Act'), the relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972 and regulations issued under those acts.
- 1.4 These terms of reference set out the aims of the review, the matters that it will address and policies that the Council considers relevant to the review. The terms of reference will be published on the Council's website and in hard copy and will be made available at the Council offices and at other venues within the area under review.

Parish and town councils

- 1.5 Parish and town councils¹ are the most local tier of government in England. They are democratically elected and can play an important role in representing their local community, delivering services to meet local needs and promoting community wellbeing. They are a statutory consultee on planning applications. They may

¹ **Note re: terminology:** A principal (i.e. unitary or district) council may, following a community governance review create, abolish, or alter the area of, any parish within its area and may establish a parish council to serve a newly-created parish. A parish council serving an urban area may be called a town council. There is no difference between a parish council and a town council in terms of powers or duties. Brixham is currently the only parished part of Torbay and has a town council. It is anticipated that any parish councils established for Torquay and Paignton would also be called town councils. This document therefore uses the term 'parish' to describe any sub-area within Torbay that is or may be created for local government purposes 'town council' to describe any council to serve that parish.

exercise a variety of powers and duties including the delivery of a number of specific local services and may also enter into discussions with the principal council (i.e. Torbay Council) about the transfer of services, budgets and assets subject to mutual agreement. Parish and town councils are funded principally through an annual precept – an additional amount added to the Council Tax in their area.

Reasons for the review

- 1.6 The Council is undertaking the review at this time because it considers that the establishment of town councils may promote community engagement, effective local government and the provision of local services for local people that Torbay Council may be unable to sustain due to resource pressures.
- 1.7 In addition, Government guidance states that it is good practice for principal councils to conduct a community governance review every 10-15 years, except in areas with very low populations. No such review has been undertaken in Torbay since the establishment of Brixham Town Council in May 2007.

Community governance reviews

- 1.8 A community governance review is a review of the whole or part of a principal council's 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;
 - Whether a parish/town council should be established for a new parish area;
 - 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/or
 - Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.

The aims of the review

- 1.9 In accordance with the 2007 Act the Council will have regard to the need to secure community governance within the area under review which:-
- Is reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area;
 - Provides for effective and convenient local government; and
 - Takes into account any other arrangements for the purposes of community representation or community engagement in the area.
- 1.10 In accordance with Government guidance, when considering the above criteria the Council will take into account the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish; and will seek to make recommendations that bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

Responsibility for the review

- 1.11 As the relevant principal authority, Torbay Council is responsible for conducting any community governance review within its electoral area and for deciding whether to give effect to the recommendations of the review.
- 1.12 In accordance with regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2000, functions relating to Community Governance Reviews are not to be the responsibility of an authority's executive.
- 1.13 The management of the review will be the responsibility of a project manager appointed by the Director of Corporate Services. The review will be overseen by the Community Governance Review Working Party to which Councillors are appointed by the Council. The Council itself will agree the draft and final recommendations and make any Reorganisation of Community Governance Order.

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 In coming to its recommendations in the review, the Council will take account of the views of local people and stakeholders. Legislation requires the Council to consult the local government electors for the area under review and any other person or body who appears to have an interest in the review, and to take the representations that are received into account by judging them against the criteria in the 2007 Act.
- 2.2 The Council wishes to promote community engagement and transparency in decision-making. In relation to the review the Council will:-
- Publish these terms of reference;
 - Publicise the review as widely as possible using printed and electronic means and seek to engage the local media in reporting the issues under review;
 - Consult residents, business organisations, community groups, other local organisations, political parties and elected representatives for the areas under review and Brixham Town Council;
 - Make key documents available at the Council offices and at other venues in the areas under review;
 - Accept submissions by post or via e-mail or the Council's website;
 - Take into account representations received in connection with the review; and
 - Publicise the draft and final recommendations and the outcome of the review.
- 2.3 The Council will consider each matter under review on its merits and on the basis of the information and evidence provided during the course of the review.

3. THE TIMETABLE FOR THE REVIEW

- 3.1 Publication of these terms of reference formally begins the review, which must then be completed within twelve months.

Indicative timetable for the Community Governance Review of Torbay	
Action/stage of process	Proposed dates
Preparation phase	
Consultation on draft terms of reference; preparation of maps, electorate forecasts, consultation materials etc.	Wednesday 21 November 2018 to Friday 11 January 2019
Publication of terms of reference and commencement of first stage consultation	Monday 14 January 2019 <i>(formal start of review)</i>
First stage consultation – initial submissions	
Initial submissions invited:- publicity campaign, meetings etc	Monday 14 January 2019 to Friday 15 March 2019
Deadline for initial submissions	Friday 15 March 2019
Consideration of initial submissions/ preparation of draft recommendations	Monday 18 March 2019 to Friday 24 May 2019
Council to agree draft recommendations	w/b 17 June 2019
Second stage consultation – submissions on draft recommendations	
Publication of draft recommendations	Monday 24 June 2019
Submissions invited on draft recommendations:- publicity campaign, meetings etc	Monday 24 June 2019 to Friday 16 August 2019
Deadline for second stage consultation responses	Friday 16 August 2019
Consideration of responses to second stage consultation/ preparation of final recommendations	Monday 19 August 2019 to Friday 30 August 2019
Council to agree final recommendations	19 September 2019
Decisions & implementation	
Publication of final recommendations	Monday 23 September 2019 <i>(formal end of review)</i>
Council Meeting to decide whether to give effect to the final recommendations and to make Reorganisation Order	w/b 14 or 21 October 2019

Revised electoral register published incorporating any amendments	1 December 2019
Order takes effect – implementation of any changes for financial and administrative purposes.	1 April 2020
Elections to new town councils (if any)	7 May 2020 (term of office would run until May 2023)

4. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION IN THE REVIEW

4.1 The map at Appendix A shows the existing town council arrangements within Torbay and the boundaries of the wards (revised with effect from May 2019) of Torbay Council across the whole authority including the currently unparished area.

Parish areas and parish/town councils

4.2 The review will consider whether any changes should be made to the parish arrangements within Torbay, including:-

- whether there is a need to alter any existing parish boundaries or abolish any existing parish;
- whether a new parish or parishes should be created in areas that are currently unparished (i.e. Torquay and Paignton); and
- in the event that a new parish or parishes are created, whether they should have a town council.

4.3 In considering the above, the review will have regard to current and projected patterns of population, development, community identity and linkages in the area under review; to the viability of potential parish areas and the delivery of local services.

4.4 The 2007 Act provides that where a new parish is created which has 1,000 or more electors, the principal council must recommend that the parish has a council. Where a new parish is created that has between 151 and 999 electors the principal council may decide whether or not it should have a council.

4.5 In relation to previously unparished areas, the 2007 Act requires a principal council in undertaking a review to take into account other (non-parish) forms of community governance that have been, or could be, made for the purpose of community representation or engagement in the area under review. These might include community partnerships/forums, area committees, residents’ and tenants’ associations, neighbourhood management programmes or community associations. In accordance with Government guidance the review will consider whether such arrangements could be alternatives to, or stages towards, the establishment of town councils. The Council notes however that the guidance also states ‘what sets parish councils apart from other kinds of governance is the fact they are a democratically elected tier of local government, independent of other council tiers and budgets,

and possess specific powers’ and ‘their directly elected parish councillors represent local communities in a way that other bodies, however worthy, cannot since such organisations do not have representatives directly elected to those bodies’.

Names and style of parishes

- 4.6 In the event that a new parish is being created, the review will make recommendations as to the geographical name of the new parish and as to whether or not it should be a town council or have one of the alternative styles (community, neighbourhood or village).
- 4.7 Where an existing parish is under review, the Council will make recommendations as to whether the geographical name of the parish should be changed, but it will be for the town council to resolve whether the parish should have one of the alternative styles.

Electoral arrangements

- 4.8 The review will consider what electoral arrangements should apply to any new town council that is created and whether any changes should be made to the electoral arrangements of the existing town council². ‘Electoral arrangements’ means:-
- The ordinary year in which elections are held;
 - The number of councillors to be elected to the council;
 - The division (or not) of the parish into wards for the purpose of electing councillors;
 - The number and boundaries of any such wards;
 - The number of councillors to be elected for any such ward; and
 - The name of any such ward.
- 4.9 In relation to the year of election, the ordinary election of parish councillors takes place in 2019 and at four-yearly intervals thereafter. If the review results in the establishment of a new town council or councils to which it is appropriate to hold an election for councillors at an earlier date than the next scheduled ordinary elections, the Council intends to resolve to modify or exclude the application of sections 16(3) and 90 of the Local Government Act 1972 to provide for the first election to be held in an earlier year and the terms of office of any newly elected town councillors will be so reduced as to allow the electoral cycle to revert to the normal cycle in Torbay at the next ordinary elections.

² **Note:** The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on 20 June 2018 made the Torbay Electoral Changes Order 2018 which included changes to the warding arrangements for Brixham Parish. If, following this review, the Council wishes to alter the electoral arrangements for a parish whose existing arrangements were put in place within the previous five years by an order made by the LGBCE, the consent of the LGBCE will be required.

- 4.10 In relation to the number of town councillors, legislation provides that the number of councillors for each parish/town council shall not be fewer than five. There is no maximum number. Government guidance is that 'each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and the pattern of communities'.
- 4.11 In relation to warding of a parish, the 2007 Act requires that in considering whether a parish should be divided into wards the Council should consider (i) whether the number, or distribution, of the local government electors for the parish would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and (ii) whether it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the council.

Electorate forecasts

- 4.12 When the Council comes to consider the electoral arrangements of the town councils in its area, it is required to consider the number of local government electors in the area under review, and any change in that number or the distribution of the electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts.
- 4.13 Current electorate figures for each of the wards in both the parished and unparished parts of Torbay will be made published as soon as possible after the publication on 1 February 2019 of the revised electoral register reflecting the amended wards and polling districts that will apply at elections to the unitary council from May 2019.
- 4.14 Electorate forecasts for January 2024, taking into account information on developments underway or planned based on extant planning permissions and the local development framework, will also be published to inform the consultation process as early as possible during the review.
- 4.15 Population estimates will be used to apportion assets where significant changes, including the creation of new parishes, are recommended.

Council tax precept

- 4.16 As part of the consultation process the Council will make available information on the Council Tax precept (Band D equivalent) currently applicable for Brixham Town Council.

Other matters

- 4.17 The review will consider any other issues raised during the consultation process which are relevant to the review.

5. POLICIES THAT WILL GUIDE THE REVIEW

Parishes

- 5.1 The Council believes that town councils can play an important role in empowering and representing communities and that they can enable the continued resourcing and provision of services that residents value at the local level.
- 5.2 The Council notes the Government's continued commitment to parish and town councils and its guidance that it 'expects to see a trend in the creation, rather than the abolition, of parishes'. Subject to consideration of the submissions received during the review, the Council would see the eventual creation of town councils across the whole of its area as a positive development.
- 5.3 The Council considers that parishes should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity and that electors should be able to identify clearly with the parish in which they are resident. The feeling of local community and the wishes of local inhabitants are therefore important considerations in the review.
- 5.4 The Council wishes to ensure that parishes should be viable as an administrative unit and should possess a precept that enables them effectively to promote the well-being of their residents and contribute to the provision of services in their area in an economic and efficient manner.

Boundaries

- 5.5 The Council considers that the boundaries between parishes should reflect the distinct community identities of the respective areas. Wherever possible boundaries should follow areas of low population between settlements or pronounced physical barriers (either natural or built) such as watercourses, marshland or moorland; parks, canals, railways or major roads.
- 5.6 The Council will give careful consideration both to traditional community identities and to any changes that have happened over time, for example population movements or new development, that may have led to a different community identity in an area.
- 5.7 Should a reorganisation of parish boundaries occur as a result of the review, the Council will aim to select boundaries that are and are likely to remain easily identifiable.

Names

- 5.8 With regard to the geographical names of any parishes/town councils or town wards established within Torbay, the Council believes that these should reflect existing

local or historic placenames and there will be a presumption in favour of names proposed by local interested parties

The number of town councillors

- 5.9 When considering the number of councillors to be elected for any town council, in addition to applying the statutory rules described above, the Council will have regard to:-
- the recommended guidance issued by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and indicative national data on representation published by the former Aston Business School;
 - existing levels of representation, the pattern of existing council sizes which have stood the test of time and the take-up of seats at elections;
 - the desirability of a broadly equitable allocation of councillors to town councils across Torbay, whilst acknowledging that local circumstances may on occasion merit variation.

Warding

- 5.10 The Council notes Government guidance that 'there is likely to be a stronger case for the warding of urban parishes ... [where] ... community identity tends to focus on a locality ... [and] ... each locality is likely to have its own sense of identity'. The Council will however seek to secure that any warding arrangements should have relevance for the electorate, be in the interests of effective and convenient local government and not be wasteful of a town council's resources.
- 5.11 In reaching conclusions on the boundaries between any town wards, the Council will have regard to community identity and interests and will consider whether any particular ties or linkages might be broken by the drawing of particular ward boundaries. The Council will also have regard to guidance by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) that the principal council ward boundaries should not split an unwarded parish and that no parish ward should be split by such a boundary.
- 5.12 When deciding the number of councillors to be elected for any town ward, the Council will take into account the view of the LGBCE that it is not in the interests of effective and convenient local government, either for voters or councillors, to have significant differences in levels of representation.

6. COMPLETION OF THE REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY DECISIONS

- 6.1 The review will be completed when the Council publishes its final recommendations. The Council will take steps to inform interested parties of the recommendations and

outcome of the review. In accordance with Government guidance the Council will issue maps to illustrate each recommendation at a scale not smaller than 1:10,000.

- 6.2 If the review results in any changes to community governance, at the conclusion of the review the Council will make a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order. Copies of this order, the map(s) that show the effects of the order in detail, and the document(s) which set out the reasons for the Council's decisions (including where it has decided to make no change following the review) will be deposited at the Council's offices, published on its website, and provided to the clerk of any town council affected.
- 6.3 In accordance with legislation, copies of any order and associated maps will be deposited with the Secretary of State and the LGBCE, and prints of the maps will also be supplied to Ordnance Survey, the Registrar General, the Land Registry, the Valuation Office Agency, the Boundary Commission for England and the Audit Commission.
- 6.4 The provisions of any order will take effect for financial and administrative purposes on 1 April following the adoption of the order. Any revised electoral arrangements for a new or existing town council will come into effect in accordance with the provisions of these terms of reference.

7. CONSEQUENTIAL MATTERS

- 7.1 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 and/or provision for the transfer of staff, compensation for loss of office, pensions and other staffing matters.
- 7.2 In these matters, the Council will be guided by the relevant regulations issued following the 2007 Act. In particular, the Council notes that the regulations regarding the transfer of property, rights and liabilities require that any apportionments shall use the population of the area as estimated by the proper officer of the Council as an appropriate proportion.
- 7.3 In relation to the establishment of a precept for any new town council, the Council will comply with the requirements of the Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008.

Principal area boundaries

- 7.4 Any changes made to parish or town ward boundaries as a result of this review will not automatically change the corresponding principal council ward boundaries.

- 7.5 In the event of a reorganisation order making such a change the Council may recommend the LGBCE that the principal council ward boundaries are realigned to coincide with the revised parish or town ward boundaries and it would be for the LGBCE to decide if and when these related alterations should be made.
- 7.6 The LGBCE would require evidence that the Council has consulted on the recommendations as part of the review. The Council will therefore seek to include any such draft recommendations for consultation at the earliest possible opportunity should they appear desirable.

Date of publication of these terms of reference: 20.. *to be added*

Contact details for the review

Enquiries regarding the review process and/or comments on the matters set out in these terms of reference should be directed to:

**Teresa Buckley, Democratic Services Team Leader,
Torbay Council,
Town Hall
Castle Circus
Torquay
TQ1 3DR**

E-mail: governance.support@torbay.gov.uk

Telephone: 01803 207013

APPENDIX 'A'

The map below shows the existing town council arrangements within Torbay and the boundaries of the wards (revised with effect from May 2019) of Torbay Council across the whole authority including the currently unparished area.

[INSERT MAP]

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