



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

PARISH OF LITTLE PONTON AND STROXTON

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 South Kesteven District Council has resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review (CGR) of the parish of Little Ponton and Stroxton. The purpose of the review is to consider and determine the most appropriate future governance for this area.
- 1.2 The review will consider the electoral arrangements of Little Ponton and Stroxton Parish Council including options of abolishing the Parish Council, retaining a single Parish Council or grouping it with neighbouring Great Ponton Parish Council.
- 1.3 A Community Governance Review provides an opportunity for principal authorities to review and make changes to community governance within an area.
- 1.4 The review is being carried out by the Council's Democratic and Electoral Services teams led by Graham Watts, Assistant Director (Governance and Public Protection) and Monitoring Officer and Julie Edwards, Electoral Services Manager.
- 1.5 Full Council is required to authorise commencement of the review process through approval of this terms of reference. A working group comprising of 3 members of the Governance of Audit Committee will oversee the progress of the review.
- 1.6 In undertaking this 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 by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 2.1 Section 81 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires the Council to publish a Terms of Reference document for a Community Governance Review. This document is published to meet that requirement.
- 2.2 These Terms of Reference set out the matters on which the Community Governance Review is to focus. This document will be published on the Council's website. Hard copies will be made available on request at the District Council offices in Grantham.

3. WHAT IS A COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW (CGR)

3.1 A Community Governance Review (CGR) is a review of the whole or part of the district to consider one or more of the following:

- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes
- The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes
- Grouping parishes under a common Parish Council or de-grouping parishes
- 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)

3.2 A CGR is required to take into account:

- The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
- The size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.

3.3 The Council is required to ensure that community governance within the area under review will be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area, and is effective and convenient.

4. WHY IS THE COUNCIL UNDERTAKING THE REVIEW?

4.1 The District Council at its meeting on 23 November 2023, considered a motion from ward Councillor Ben Green to consider undertaking a CGR to address the inactivity of Little Ponton and Stroxtan Parish Council through appropriate measures. The Council resolved to initiate a CGR to explore proposals concerning Little Ponton and Stroxtan Parish Council to include:

- a. Abolishing Little Ponton and Stroxtan Parish Council;
- b. Returning it to its previous status as a single Parish Council; or
- c. Merging it with Great Ponton Parish Council

4.2 In completing the review, the Council must have regard to securing community governance arrangements that:

- Reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area
- Are effective and convenient
- Take into account any other arrangements for the purposes of community representation or community engagement in the area

4.3 If, after completion of the review, the Council determines that changes to the governance arrangements for the Little Ponton and Stroxtan Parish should be made, it will need to make a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order. Any changes that are agreed by Council would usually take effect from the next ordinary elections for the parish council, which would be in May 2027. There is provision for changes to be implemented before the next ordinary elections should this be deemed appropriate which would involve dissolving the current parish councils and elections taking place for the new 'grouped' parish council.

5. SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

5.1 The review will consider the future electoral arrangements for the Parish of Little Ponton and Stroxtan, including the following:

- a. The possibility of abolishing the Parish Council of Little Ponton and Stroxton to become a Parish Meeting with no elected members;
- b. Grouping Little Ponton and Stroxton Parish with Great Ponton Parish Council under a common council (an arrangement where two or more parishes in the same principal area join under a common parish council). Each parish remains a separate identity while governed by a single parish council. Each parish in the group elects at least one member on the common council);
- c. Retaining the current arrangement of a single parish Council for Little Ponton and Stroxton parish

5.2 The review will also consider:

- The number of councillors, the name any proposed grouped parish council and any warding arrangements;
- The ordinary date of election of councillors

6. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

6.1 In undertaking the review, the Council will be guided by the following legislation and government guidance:

- Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (part 4)
- Local Government Act 1972
- Guidance on community governance reviews issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government
- Consequential matters arising from the review may be impacted by the Local Government (Parishes and Parish Council) (England) Regulations 2008 and Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008.

7. TIMETABLE FOR THE REVIEW

The indicative timetable for the review is set out below. This timetable may be subject to change.

Stage 1	
Terms of reference agreed and published	29 February 2024
Consultation stage 1 – initial representations invited	Six week consultation period: 8 March to 19 April 2024
Consideration of stage 1 representations by Working Group	May / June 2024
Stage 2	
Publication of draft recommendations	18 July 2024 (provisional)
Consultation stage 2 – draft recommendations	Six week consultation period: September/October 2024
Consideration of stage 2 representations by Working Group	October/November 2024
Stage 3	
Final recommendations from Working Group submitted to Council	November 2024
Final recommendations published	November 2024
Re-organisation of Community Governance Order made	Approval by Council: November 2024
Effective date of Order	To be confirmed depending on the outcome of the review

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 Before making any recommendations or publishing proposals, the District Council will take full account of the views of local people and stakeholders, judging them against the criteria laid out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

8.2 The District Council will consult with:

- Local government electors in the areas under review
- South Kesteven District Council councillors for the Isaac Newton ward.
- Lincolnshire County Council councillors for the Colsterworth Rural division
- Lincolnshire County Council
- Parish Councils of Little Ponton and Stroxton and Great Ponton
- Any other person/organisation who appear to have an interest

There is no provision allowing the use of the electoral register for consultation purposes, therefore consultation with electors will be undertaken by writing to the occupier of each address in affected parishes.

8.3 The Council will have regard to the need to ensure community governance arrangements within the area under review, such that it:

- Reflects the identities and interests of the community in the area
- Is effective and convenient
- Takes into account any other arrangements for the purposes of community representation or engagement in the area

8.4 How to take part in the consultation

Full details of the consultation will be published on the Council's website, on social media and in the local media.

Representations can be made via the Council's website:

www.southkesteven.gov.uk/community-governance-reviews

Alternatively, comments can be made in writing and sent to:

- Email: cgr@southkesteven.gov.uk; or
- Post: Community Governance Review, Legal and Democratic Services, South Kesteven District Council, Council Offices, The Picture House, St Catherine's Road, Grantham, NG31 6TT

All communications must include the name and home address of the person submitting their views. If submission is made on behalf of an organisation, the title of the organisation should be clearly detailed.

Consultation responses will be published on the South Kesteven District Council website.

9. PARISH AREAS AND PARISH GOVERNANCE

- 9.1 The Council believes that parish councils play an important role in terms of community empowerment at the local level and aims to ensure that parish governance in our District continues to be robust, representative and enabled to meet the challenges.
- 9.2 Furthermore, the Council wants to ensure that there is clarity and transparency to the areas that parish councils represent.
- 9.3 The Council aims to ensure that parishes are viable and should possess a precept that enables them to actively and effectively promote the well-being of their residents and to contribute to the real provision of services in their areas in an economical and efficient manner.
- 9.4 The Council is committed to ensuring that the review leads to parishes that are based on areas which reflect community identity and interest, and which are viable as an administrative unit.

10. THE PRESENT STRUCTURE OF LITTLE PONTON AND STROXTON PARISH, ELECTORATE AND ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 10.1 The Parish of Little Ponton and Stroxton currently has 7 seats. Elections are held every four years on the first Thursday in May and the last elections were held on 4th May 2023.
- 10.2 The current electorate, based on the electoral register published 1 December 2023, of the areas which could be impacted by this review are:

Parish	Electorate	No. of properties	Number of councillors
Little Ponton and Stroxton	141	80	7
Great Ponton	304	179	7

- 10.3 Where a parish with fewer than 150 local government electors does not already have a parish council, section 94 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 states that any review undertaken must recommend that the parish should not have a parish council. However any existing parish of less than 150 electors with a parish council already in place can continue. Little Ponton and Stroxton Parish Council could therefore remain in place as a single parish council if this is deemed the most appropriate outcome following the review.
- 10.4 The option of grouping two or more parishes under a common council can be seen as an effective way of ensuring government for small parishes that might otherwise be unviable as separate units, while otherwise guaranteeing their separate community identity.
- 10.5 The Local Government Act 1972, as amended, specifies that each parish council must have at least five councillors; there is no maximum number. Although, there are no rules relating to the allocation of councillors, the Department for Communities and Local Government reports of research by Aston Business School that typically parish councils have the following number of councillors based on the number of electors within the parish:
- Less than 500 electors – between 5 and 8 councillors
 - Between 501 and 2500 electors – between 6 and 12 councillors

11. REORGANISATION OF COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE ORDERS AND COMMENCEMENT

11.1 The Review will be completed when the Council adopts the Reorganisation of Community Governance Order. Copies of this Order, and the other documents that set out the reasons for the decision (including any decision to make no change) will be published on the Council's website. A copy will also be supplied to the relevant Parish Council(s) for their records.

11.2 Any changes to electoral arrangements arising from the review will usually take effect at the next ordinary election to the parish council, which will be in May 2027. However the Review may find it appropriate to hold an election for parish councillors at an earlier date than the next scheduled ordinary elections in May 2027. Where this occurs the term of office of any newly elected parish councillors will be reduced to enable the electorate cycle to revert to the normal cycle in the district at the next ordinary elections.

12. MAKING REPRESENTATIONS

Comments and representations to the consultation can be made in the following ways:

Complete the online survey on the Council's website: www.southkesteven.gov.uk/community-governance-reviews

Alternatively you can send your comments to:

- Email: cgr@southkesteven.gov.uk
- Write to:
Community Governance Review
Legal & Democratic Services
South Kesteven District Council
Council Offices
The Picture House
St Catherine's Road
Grantham
NG31 6TT

The deadline for receipt of written comments are:

Stage 1 initial consultation: 19 April 2024

Stage2 Draft recommendations consultation: to be confirmed after stage 1 consultation process

Any submissions received after this date may not be taken into account.

Consultation responses will be published on the South Kesteven District Council website www.southkesteven.gov.uk/community-governance-reviews

13. PUBLICATION OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

These Terms of Reference will be published on the South Kesteven District Council website www.southkesteven.gov.uk and are available for inspection at the offices of the Council

Date of publication: 29 February 2024