

Ipswich Borough Council Community Governance Review 2025-26

Terms of Reference

Background

Proposed local government re-organisation is expected to leave the area currently within Ipswich Borough Council's boundaries as the only part of a larger unitary authority without a Town or Parish Council.

In light of this Ipswich Borough Council has decided to undertake a Community Governance Review (CGR) of the whole of the Borough to determine whether alternative Community Governance arrangements should be made (for example, the creation of an Ipswich Town Council).

What is a Community Governance Review?

A CGR is a legal process through which Ipswich Borough Council can consider:

- the creation of parishes, and the naming and style of these (e.g. whether to call a council a town or community council),
- the electoral arrangements for created councils, i.e. the ordinary year of election, council size, the number of councillors to be elected to the council and its warding.

A CGR must reflect the identities and interests of communities and consider the provision of effective and convenient arrangements for local government, taking into account other arrangements for community representation and engagement.

As the principal authority, Ipswich Borough Council is responsible for undertaking CGRs within its area. The Council will approve the final recommendations before a Community Governance Order is made.

Scope of the Review

The Review includes all aspects of community governance arrangements for Ipswich, including whether any new town or parish councils should be created, along with the number of town or parish councillors to be elected for any such council created.

What are Town and Parish councils?

Town and Parish Councils represent the most local form of government.

A Town or Parish Council is made up of parish councillors elected by local government electors in its area, with elections taking place every four years. Vacancies within the four year term are either filled using co-option, or a by-election if local government electors request it.

What can parish and town councils do?

There are a number of different styles of local council, such as Town, Parish, Community, Neighbourhood and Village councils. Depending on their size, they can be responsible for:

- **Services**, such as allotments, car parks, celebrations and festivals, community buses, community and leisure centres, litter bins, parks and open spaces, public toilets and streetlights.
- **Improving the quality of life**, such as community hubs, neighbourhood plans, funding community projects and services, suitable housing, setting up dementia-friendly groups, solar panels, tackling loneliness and youth projects.
- **Giving the community a voice**, for example on planning matters with principal authorities and developers, local police and health services, and the government.

You can find out more on the [National Association of Local Councils website](#).

In the event that a parish or town council is created for the whole of the current Borough of Ipswich the town charter, Mayoralty and civic functions would pass to the new council.

Consultation

These terms of reference provide the aims of the review, the legislation that guides the process and the areas that the council will consider as part of the review process.

The council will consult widely on the review including but not limited to:

- Local government electors / Ipswich Borough Council residents
- Ipswich Borough councillors
- County councillors
- Members of Parliament
- Suffolk County Council

Prior to making recommendations or publishing final proposals, the Council will take full account of the views and suggestions put forward by local people and organisations and will comply with the statutory consultation requirements by:

- Consulting local government electors and other persons or bodies which appear to the Council to have an interest in the review,
- Considering any representations received in connection with the review,
- Notifying consultees of the outcome of the review,
- Publishing all decisions taken and the reasons for such decisions.

Electorate forecasts for the review

When considering the electoral arrangements of the parishes in the area, the Council must consider any likely future change in the number or distribution of electors within five years from the day the review commences.

The review will use the electorate figures together with an estimate based on the delivery of new dwellings over the five-year period.

The Legal Framework

In undertaking the review, the Council will be guided by Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (referred to as 'the 2007 Act'), the relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972 and Guidance on CGRs issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010.

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) and Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008 (SI2008/626).

Section 81 of the 2007 Act requires the Council to publish its Terms of Reference for the Review which clearly set out the focus of the review. This document will fulfil that requirement.

The Council is also required to have regard to guidance on CGRs issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. This guidance was published in March 2010 and has been considered when drawing up the Terms of Reference and timetable for this review.

Consequential matters

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, including:

- the transfer of management or custody or 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. 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.

Furthermore, the Council notes the Regulations regarding the establishment of a precept for a new parish and their requirements.

Date of publication

These terms of reference will be taken to the Ipswich Borough Council meeting on 24 September 2025 and if approved will be published on 29 September 2025.