

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

03 April 2025

Part 1 - Public

Recommendation to Cabinet



Cabinet Member	Cllr Des Keers, Community Services
Responsible Officer	Damian Roberts, Chief Executive
Report Author	Gill Fox, Policy, Scrutiny & Communities Manager

Review of Parish Partnership Panel

1 Summary and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider options for future meetings of Parish Partnership Panel

2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

- 2.1 Efficient services for all our residents, maintaining an effective council.
- 2.2 Ensuring we meet the needs of members of Parish Partnership Panel in relation to engagement and information sharing.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 That the following is recommended to Cabinet:
- 3.2 Meetings of Parish Partnership Panel are held in the Council Chamber, with the option for members to join remotely, if they prefer.

4 Introduction and Background

- 4.1 A review of Tonbridge Community Forum was requested last year and it was agreed at this meeting that it would also be helpful to review the operation of Parish Partnership Panel. Membership of Parish Partnership Panel is comprised of all Parish/Town Councils across the Borough. All members were contacted to seek their views on the current venue, style and format of the meetings. All responses are provided in Annex 1.
- 4.2 Additional time was allocated to allow members to raise any further issues or discuss the meeting format during a session of the Parish Partnership Meeting, but there have been no additional comments submitted. Overall, the members

are largely content with the current meeting format, with a slight preference for “in-person” meetings, rather than online.

5 Proposal

- 5.1 Views have been sought with no significant issues raised, other than the preference from some for “in person” meetings. One response suggested that the online meetings possibly achieved higher attendance figures, the proposal is therefore to offer in person meetings, with an option to join remotely if preferred. This will enable attendance for all and for those who would struggle to attend in person.

6 Other Options

- 6.1 No additional options are suggested. From the responses provided, members feel the format operates well and changes are not currently required. Given there are some comments in Annex 1 regarding “two-way conversations” and ensuring all members of the group are heard, it will be important going forward to continue to listen to all members of the Parish Partnership Panel and ensure meetings are inclusive for all, with information shared equally between attendees.

7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 7.1 There is no fixed budget for Parish Partnership Panel. There are no room-hire costs as the suggested venue is still the Council Chamber. As before, costs will be incurred in relation to staff time.

8 Risk Assessment

- 8.1 None

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 Parish Partnership Panel is not a decision-making body.

10 Consultation and Communications

- 10.1 Members of Parish Partnership Panel were consulted on their views.

11 Implementation

- 11.1 Meetings will be held in person (with an option to join remotely) following consideration by Cabinet.

12 Cross Cutting Issues

- 12.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity

- 12.1.1 Limited or low impact on emissions and environment.

12.1.2 Climate change advice has not been sought in the preparation of the options and recommendations in this report.

12.1.3 A move to all in person meetings is likely to increase car journeys, although there is still a hybrid option for remote attendance. Car sharing is to be encouraged or promoted where possible.

12.2 Equalities and Diversity

12.2.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Background Papers	None
Annexes	Annex 1: Summary of Responses