

General Purposes Committee

11 March 2026

Part 1 - Public

Delegated



Responsible Officer Damian Roberts, Chief Executive

Report Author Daune Ashdown, Head of Electoral Services

Stansted Parish Council Community Governance Review

1 **Background**

1.1 A request has been received from Stansted Parish Council to increase the number of Parish Councillors from 7 to 9. Please see attached the request from Stansted Parish Council at **Annex 1**.

2 **Corporate Strategy Priority Area**

2.1 Efficient services for all our residents, maintaining an effective council.

2.2 This report sets out proposals that could help to contribute towards the efficient and effective delivery of local council services to the residents of Stansted Parish.

3 **Recommendations**

3.1 That a Community Governance Review, undertaken to ascertain if the residents of Stansted wish for their Parish Council to increase the number of councillors, **BE APPROVED**.

3.2 That the budget of £600, funded from the General Revenue Reserve **BE APPROVED**.

3.3 That the draft timetable, as set out in Annex 3 **BE APPROVED**.

3.4 That the Terms of Reference, as set out in Annex 4 **BE APPROVED**.

3.5 That the consultation process as set out in paragraph 5.1 **BE APPROVED**.

4 Introduction

- 4.1 Parish Councils are entitled to request changes in their democratic governance arrangements, including the number of councillors.
- 4.2 The formal process to change the number of councillors on a Parish Council is by means of a Community Governance Review. As set out under Part 3 of the Constitution, General Purposes Committee has the authority to decide whether a Community Governance Review is to be undertaken when a request is received.
- 4.3 Stansted Parish Council currently has 7 seats and at the May 2023 elections, they were able to fill all 7 vacancies. As of the 02 February 2026 register, Stansted Parish Council has an electorate of 452 people.
- 4.3 The 1972 Act, as amended, specifies that each Parish Council must have at least 5 Councillors on a Parish Council, there is no maximum. The Government's guidance also states that each should be considered on its own merits, having regard for its population, geography, and the pattern of communities. The Aston Business School found the following levels of representation aligned to the good running of a council. This model is used by local authorities nationally.

Electorate	Seats
Less than 500	5-8
501 – 2500	6-12
2501-10,000	9-16
10,001-20,000	13-27
Over 20,000	13-31

- 4.4 For comparison, a current list of Parish Councils within the Borough, showing their Councillor numbers and electorate as of the 02 February 2026 register is provided in **Annex 2**.

5 Proposed Next Steps

- 5.1 A timetable setting outlining the key stages of this Community Governance Review process is provided in **Annex 3**. The process requires a number of phases to be undertaken:
- Initiation and publishing of a Terms of Reference (**See Annex 4**)
 - An initial consultation – comprising:
 - a) the development of an online questionnaire.
 - b) direct email to Stansted residents on the electoral services database, the Parish Council and key stakeholders (including Ward Councillors, Kent County Council, the Member of Parliament, the Kent Association

of Local Councils (KALC) and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE)).

- c) letters to each household in the parish.
 - d) social media posts to engage with residents.
 - e) Press release
 - f) Poster/leaflet for the Parish to advertise the Community Governance Review.
- Draft recommendations
 - Final Recommendations and Order
 - Implementation – with changes taking effect at the next scheduled parish elections in May 2027.

6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 6.1 If the Committee were to agree for the Community Governance Review to go ahead, there would be a cost implication. The process would be managed by existing staff however there would be costs associated with the consultation exercise which would amount to approximately £600 and would come from the General Revenue Reserve.

7 Risk Assessment

- 7.1 No risks directly associated with this report and process.

8 Legal Implications

- 8.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 deals with Community Governance Reviews
- 8.2 In addition to the 2007 Act, legislation relating to parishes can also be found in the Local Government Act 1972 (in particular, provision about parish meetings and councils, the constitution of a parish meeting, the constitution and powers of parish councils and about parish councillors) and the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (reviews of, and recommendations about, electoral areas by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England), as well as in other enactments.

9. Climate Change and Biodiversity

- 9.1 Limited or low impact on emissions and environment.

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

10. Equalities and Diversity

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

Background Papers	None
Annexes	<p>Annex 1 – Letter from Stansted Parish Council</p> <p>Annex 2 – List of Parish and Town Councils (02 Feb. 2026)</p> <p>Annex 3 – Proposed Timetable for the CGR</p> <p>Annex 4 – Draft Terms of Reference</p>