

Agenda



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Contact Officer: Steven Corrigan, Democratic Services Manager
Tel: 07717 274704

E-mail: steven.corrigan@southandvale.gov.uk

Date: 14 November 2022

A MEETING OF THE

Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee

WILL BE HELD ON TUESDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2022 AT 6.30 PM

MEETING ROOM 1, ABBEY HOUSE, ABBEY CLOSE, ABINGDON, OX14 3JE

Members of the Committee:

Lynn Lloyd (Chair)

Ken Arlett

David Bartholomew

Maggie Filipova-Rivers

Mocky Khan

David Turner

Substitutes

Anna Badcock

Pieter-Paul Barker

Sue Cooper

Stefan Gawrysiak

Lorraine Hillier

Kellie Hinton

George Levy

Axel Macdonald

Ian Snowdon

Celia Wilson

You can watch this meeting via the council's YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/SouthandValeCommitteeMeetings>

An application to speak must be made in writing or by email to democratic services democratic.services@southandvale.gov.uk by 5.00 pm on Monday 28 November 2022.

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1 Apologies for absence

To receive any apologies for absence and details of the attendance of any substitutes.

2 Minutes (Pages 4 - 8)

To adopt and sign as a correct record the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2022.

3 Declarations of interest

To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest and any other conflicts of interest in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

4 Urgent business and chair's announcements

To receive notification of any matters which the chair determines should be considered as urgent business and the special circumstances which have made the matters urgent, and to receive any announcements from the chair.

5 Public participation

To receive any questions or statements from members of the public that have registered to speak.

6 Community Governance Review - Didcot (Pages 9 - 18)

At its meeting held on 10 October 2022, the committee did not reach a decision on this community governance review matter – see minute 25/10/2022.

The committee is invited to make a final decision in respect of CGR_G.

7 The timing of future community governance reviews

At its meeting on 10 October 2022 the committee, following an exchange of views, agreed to defer consideration of this item until a future meeting when more members of the committee would be in attendance – see minute 26/10/2022.

The [Local Government and Public Involvement and Health Act 2007](#) provides for principal councils to conduct a community governance review (CGR) at any time.

The relevant [guidance](#), issued by the Local Government Boundary Commission for

England and the Department for Communities and Local Government, suggests that principal councils will want to keep their community governance arrangements under review. The guidance goes on to offer the following advice on what might trigger a CGR:

- it can be helpful to undertake community governance reviews in circumstances such as where there have been changes in population, or in reaction to specific or new local issues
- communities may expand with new housing developments over time. This can often lead to existing parish boundaries becoming anomalous as new houses are built across the boundaries resulting in people being in different parishes from their neighbours. In such circumstances, the council should consider undertaking a community governance review
- councils should exercise their discretion, but it is good practice to consider conducting a review every 10-15 years

There is also provision for a community governance review to be triggered by a petition for the whole or part of the council's area, but this is subject to rules around previous CGR's carried out by the principal council.

In 2017 this committee agreed to undertake a community governance review every four years after the scheduled parish council elections, with any agreed changes implemented in time for the next scheduled elections.

Officers experience since 2017 has been that undertaking reviews every four years is a very resource intensive for the elections team and other service teams which support the reviews. Furthermore, undertaking a review every four years, generally invites parish councils to consider and submit speculative requests often on a repeat basis. A number of the matters considered generate little interest from the public.

The guidance states that principal councils should consider the benefits of undertaking a review of the whole of its area in one go, rather than carrying out small scale reviews in a piecemeal fashion of smaller areas, recognising that occasionally specific reviews, for example to adjust minor parish boundary anomalies, may be appropriate. Committing to undertake a review every four years is contrary to the above guidance, is unnecessary, and as can be seen from the most recent review, causes tension between parish councils.

Officers firmly recommend that the council relies on the statutory guidance provided on the timing of a community governance review, including the provision for a district wide review every 10-15 years. The committee will know that it is perfectly acceptable and possible for specific reviews to be carried out to address anomalies.

RECOMMENDATION

That the committee authorises the democratic services manager to carry out future reviews at timescales provided for in the government guidance in consultation with the chair of the committee.

Patrick Arran
Head of Legal and Democratic