

**WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**13 JANUARY 2025**  
**COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

**1. Introduction**

1.1 The purpose of this paper is for the Committee to consider recommending to Full Council:

- (i) that it formalises a request to Somerset Council to carry out a Community Governance Review (CGR) of its boundary and
- (ii) the process that should be followed to enable the Council to make a recommendation for the CGR to consider.

**2. Background**

2.1 At the December Council meeting it was resolved to make a submission to the Boundary Commission review of Somerset Council and a copy of the submission is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

2.2 In the response it is noted that the Council *'intends to seek a Community Governance Review of its own boundary as are a number of other town and parish councils in Somerset. This is on the basis that there are developments planned, and other potential development sites outside of the current boundary of the town but which when built will directly impact on the town and its facilities. As things stand the town would not receive any S106 or Community Infrastructure Levy funding. Instead it would go to the parishes where the developments are built.'*

2.3 The Mayor wrote to the Chairs of Langford Budville, West Buckland, Wellington Without and Nynehead Parish Councils on the 3 December 2024, in advance of the Council meeting, to advise them that this comment was going to be included in our submission and indicated that a meeting would be arranged with them to discuss the matter once the Town Council had formalised its position.

2.4 The basis on which CGRs are carried out is set out in guidance published by the Department of Communities and Local Government in March 2010 which can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-governance-reviews-guidance>.

2.5 There are a number of towns in Somerset that are intending to seek a CGR along with Wellington e.g. Frome, Bridgwater, Langport/Huish Episcopi. As a result informal discussions have taken place between a representative of town clerks of those towns and the Chief Executive of Somerset Council.

2.6 In those discussions whilst it has been accepted that ideally the CGR should be run in parallel with the Boundary Commission review, which has to be completed in time for the 2027 election, there is a lack of capacity at Somerset Council to enable that to happen. It is to be hoped that a review could be completed by the 2031 elections. In that context it is important that the Town Council is proactive in developing proposals.

2.7 It is suggested that a Working Group of councillors be established to lead on this work and develop draft proposals for consideration by the Town Council and, once finalised, for submission to Somerset Council. The Working Group should develop a Project Plan to include how the Council will have regard to the 2010 guidance, what information the Council needs to gather to inform any proposals, and how it intends to engage with neighbouring parishes and the residents of those parishes and Wellington in developing proposals.

### **3. Considerations**

3.1 The Committee is asked to consider recommending the following to the Council :

- (i) That the Town Council writes to the Chief Executive of Somerset Council requesting that a CGR of Wellington Town Council's boundary is carried out as soon as possible.
- (ii) That a working group of councillors is established to produce a project plan to develop proposals for revised boundaries - details of membership to be proposed by the Committee.
- (iii) That a meeting is convened with representative of bordering parishes as referenced by the Mayor in her letter to the respective chairs, to set out the Town Council's position and the process it intends to follow and to seek a joint approach to developing proposals.
- (iv) That the responsibility for managing this work sits with the Policy and Finance Committee.

Dave Farrow

Town Clerk

7 January 2025

## **Appendix 1**

### **Wellington Town Council Response To The Local Government Boundary Commission's (LGBC) Initial Consultation on New Council Divisions**

At its meeting on the 2 December 2024 it resolved to make the following comment.

Wellington is a growing town and as with all towns has a unique identity. The Town Council too is growing and ambitious as it has demonstrated by being prepared to step in to take over assets and services from Somerset Council to support it in achieving the financial savings it needs to make.

The Town Council has indicated to Somerset Council that it intends to seek a Community Governance Review of its own boundary as are a number of other town and parish councils in Somerset. This is on the basis that there are developments planned, and other potential development sites outside of the current boundary of the town but which when built will directly impact on the town and its facilities. As things stand the town would not receive any S106 or Community Infrastructure Levy funding. Instead it would go to the parishes where the developments are built.

The Town Council believes that ideally the Community Governance Review should take place at the same time as the LGBC review so that its recommendations reflect the findings of the Community Governance Review.

In that context Wellington Town Council believes that the Unitary Council division boundary for Wellington and Rockwell Green should be coterminous with the Town Council's boundary preferably taking in to account the findings of a Community Governance Review but, failing that, its current boundary.

As it stands the Wellington East Ward of the Town Council is part of the Blackdown and Neroche Division which means that a small proportion of the town's residents are being represented by councillors who have to cover a very large geographical area stretching from Churchstanton in the south to Hatch Beauchamp in the east.

This response should not be seen as a criticism of the current councillors simply a desire to see all the residents of Wellington and Rockwell Green being part of the same division.

Given the size of the town The Town Council believes that it requires at least two councillors and potentially up to four councillors to adequately represent its residents.