



**Report To:** South Holland District Council

**Date:** Wednesday, 13 May 2026

**Subject:** Spalding Community Governance Review - Stage 1 Consultation Outcomes and Draft Recommendations

**Purpose:** To present the draft recommendations of the Community Governance Review (CGR) Working Group following the Stage 1 consultation and seek approval to publish these for Phase 2 consultation

**Portfolio Holder:** N/A

**Report Of:** John Medler, Assistant Director - Governance (Monitoring Officer)

**Report Author:** Forrest White, Democratic and Electoral Services Officer

**Ward(s) Affected:** Spalding Castle, Spalding Monkshouse, Spalding St Johns, Spalding St Marys, Spalding St Pauls and Spalding Wygate

**Exempt Report:** No

### Summary

This report provides an update on the Community Governance Review (CGR) for the unparished area of Spalding following the completion of Stage 1 of the consultation. It outlines the outcome of the Stage 1 consultation, presents the draft recommendations agreed by the CGR Working Group, and seeks approval to publish these recommendations for a second stage of consultation.

The review seeks to ensure that Spalding residents continue to benefit from strong, accountable, and locally representative governance arrangements. The consultation explored whether a new Parish Council should be established for the unparished area of Spalding, in what form any new Parish Council should be, namely whether there should be one Parish Council or multiple within the currently unparished area, and whether any changes should be made to existing Parish boundaries to incorporate unparished areas.

### Recommendations

Council is asked to:

1. Note the outcomes of the Stage 1 Consultation
2. Approve the draft recommendations of the CGR Working Group for publication and Stage 2 consultation as listed below:
  - Establish a single parish of Spalding for the unparished area of Spalding
  - That the Council size for the Parish of Spalding be 19 Councillors, based on national guidance and proportional representation for an electorate of approximately 22,000 (forecast to rise to 23,500 by 2031).
  - That the Parish of Spalding be warded into six wards, aligned with the existing district ward boundaries to ensure clarity and coterminosity, as follows:

<b>Name of Parish Ward</b>	<b>Number of Councillors to be elected to the Parish Ward</b>
Castle	2
Monkshouse	4
St Johns	3
St Marys	3
St Pauls	3
Wygate	4

- That the first elections for the proposed new electoral arrangements be in May 2027, aligning with ordinary parish council electoral cycles.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

The recommendations are necessary to progress the Community Governance Review. They reflect the preferences expressed during the first stage of consultation, support effective community governance, and align with statutory guidance.

### **Other Options Considered**

- Do nothing – rejected as inconsistent with the Council’s duty to keep governance arrangements under review and with public support for parishing would leave the unparished area without a locally elected tier post-Local Government Reorganisation; or
- Alternative governance models – discounted due to weaker alignment with community identity (Stage 1 showed clear support for one council), increased complexity and cost, and greater risk of fragmented governance.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 On 26 November 2025, Full Council resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review under Part 4, Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The review was prompted by the Government’s Local Government

Reorganisation programme, which will abolish South Holland District Council and create a new unitary authority.

- 1.2 The Terms of Reference for the review were approved and published on 16 February 2026, marking the formal start of the process. The scope includes whether a new parish council should be created for the unparished area of Spalding, whether any changes should be made to existing parish boundaries, and what electoral arrangements should apply. A copy of the Terms of Reference is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.3 To oversee the process, a CGR Working Group was established in November 2025. The Working Group met on 20 January 2026 and 14 April 2026 to agree the stage 1 consultation document and develop the draft recommendations. The membership comprises of Councillors Ashby, Hasan, J Le Sage, M Le Sage, Sheard, Taylor and Whitbourn. At the CGR Working Group meeting on 20 January 2026, Councillor Dave Ashby was appointed as Chairman.
- 1.4 The Stage 1 consultation ran from 16 February to 30 March 2025 and invited views from residents and stakeholders on future governance arrangements for Spalding. A total of 173 responses were received, with strong support expressed for the creation of a Parish Council for Spalding.

## **2. Report**

### **2.1 Stage 1 Consultation**

- 2.1.1 The consultation received 173 responses (166 online and 7 paper). Of these, 146 supported the creation of a Parish Council for Spalding, and 126 preferred one council covering the whole town. Views on boundary changes showed 68% support for keeping the boundaries the same. The full results of the Stage 1 consultation are attached at Appendix 2.
- 2.1.2 Postcode analysis confirmed responses were received from across the town and surrounding areas, including PE11 and PE12 postcode areas, demonstrating a Spalding-centre footprint with satellite reach into neighbouring areas.

### **2.2 Draft Recommendations and Methodology**

#### **2.2.1 Recommendation 1: Establish a single parish of Spalding for the unparished area of Spalding.**

The recommendation to establish a single parish of Spalding for the unparished area of Spalding is based on clear evidence from the Stage 1 consultation, which demonstrated strong public support for parishing and a preference for one council covering the whole town. This approach meets the statutory tests under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 by reflecting community identity and providing effective and convenient governance. A single council will ensure that Spalding residents have a unified voice and avoid the complexity and duplication that would arise from multiple smaller councils.

**2.2.2 Recommendation 2: That the Council size for the parish of Spalding be 19 Councillors, based on national guidance and proportional representation for an electorate of approximately 22,000 (forecast to rise to 23,500 by 2031).**

The proposed council size of 19 members is based on national guidance from the National Association of Local Councils and research by Aston Business School, which recommend between 13 and 31 councillors for towns with an electorate of over 20,000. Spalding's current electorate is approximately 22,000, with forecasts indicating growth to 23,500 by 2031.

Detailed modelling of elector-to-councillor ratios across proposed wards demonstrates that this number provides reasonably balanced representation while maintaining manageable workloads for councillors. A council of this size will also ensure sufficient capacity for committee structures, effective governance without creating an unnecessarily large body and realistic numbers to enable meaningful elections to take place in each ward.

In developing this recommendation, the Working Group explored a range of options from 18 to 24 councillors, modelling allocations across wards to ensure proportional representation as far as practical. This analysis considered both the current electorate figures and forecasts for 2031, with adjustments made to maintain fairness and practicality. The final proposal of 19 councillors reflects national guidance and benchmarking while balancing effective governance with manageable council size.

**2.2.3 Recommendation 3: That the Parish of Spalding be warded into six wards (see appendix 4), aligned with the existing district ward boundaries to ensure clarity and coterminosity, as follows:**

Name of Parish Ward	Number of Councillors to be elected to the Parish Ward
Castle	2
Monkshouse	4
St Johns	3
St Marys	3
St Pauls	3
Wygate	4

In line with paragraphs 163 and 166 of the government's guidance on community governance reviews (DCLG & LGBCE, 2010), the Council has considered the implications of electoral representation and warding arrangements. The guidance recognises that achieving perfect equality may not be possible without breaking established boundaries; therefore, the proposed model priorities clarity and consistency with existing Ward boundaries while ensuring fair representation.

The Working Group proposes dividing the new parish into six wards aligned to existing district ward boundaries: Castle, Monkshouse, St Johns, St Marys, St Pauls and Wygate. This approach maintains clarity for voters, simplifies electoral administration, and respects established community identities. Aligning parish

wards with district wards achieves coterminosity, meaning the boundaries of the new parish wards match the existing district wards. This is considered best practice because it reduces confusion for electors, avoids creating polling districts that cross multiple boundaries, and supports efficient electoral management. It also provides a strong foundation for future reviews by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, as coterminous boundaries are easier to maintain and use as building blocks for district and parliamentary boundaries. A map detailing the proposed Spalding parish warding and electorate is attached at Appendix 3.

**2.2.4 Recommendation 4: That the first elections for the proposed new and revised electoral arrangements be in May 2027, aligning with the ordinary parish council electoral cycle.**

The recommendation that the first elections for the proposed new and revised electoral arrangements be held in May 2027 ensures alignment with the ordinary parish council electoral cycle. Holding the elections in May 2027 as part of the standard cycle will minimise disruption and costs while providing clarity and certainty for residents and electoral administrators. This approach reflects best practice adopted in other areas undertaking similar governance reviews.

### **3. Second Consultation Proposal**

4.1 The second stage will seek views on the draft recommendations, including the proposed parish boundary, council size, and warding arrangements. The consultation will run between June and July 2026 and will include a variety of approaches.

### **4. Conclusions**

5.1 The Stage 1 consultation demonstrates clear support for creating a parish council for Spalding. The draft recommendations meet statutory requirements, reflect community identity, and propose practical arrangements that can be delivered within the published timetable.

### **Implications**

#### **South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership**

None.

#### **Corporate Priorities**

The Community Governance Review will support wider corporate plan objectives by ensuring that community governance is appropriate within the District.

#### **Staffing**

Dedicated resources are in place to manage the delivery of this review.

#### **Workforce Capacity Implications**

Community governance reviews are resource intensive and require significant input from a range of services such as Legal, Democratic, Elections, Communications and Consultation.

Community Governance Reviews are ordinarily scheduled to be undertaken between major election periods as this provides the necessary time to concentrate on the CGR process which can be complex and require significant officer resource. The Council is also having to consider proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Lincolnshire.

Dedicated resources are in place to manage the delivery of this review.

### **Constitutional and Legal Implications**

These proposals have been developed in accordance with Section 93 of the LGPIHA 2007 and meet the three legal tests:

1. Community identity and interests – The proposals reflect the distinct identity of Spalding, and the views expressed during consultation.
2. Effective and convenient governance – A single council for Spalding will streamline decision-making.
3. Consideration of other arrangements – Existing structures such as STF have been considered and will be transitioned appropriately.

The Council has had regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State and the LGBCE, including the importance of transparency, consultation, and the use of parish boundaries as building blocks for future electoral arrangements.

### **Data Protection**

There are no specific data protection implications relating to the consultation as no personal data was requested. The postcode data was requested in short form to avoid unnecessary identification of personal addresses. Consultation responses are kept for a maximum of three years in line with the Council's retention policy. Where consultees have concerns, they are directed to the Data Protection policy on the website and the Data Protection Officer.

### **Financial**

The Community Governance Review will incur resourcing, professional advice and consultation related costs which will be funded through drawdowns from the reserve, as agreed by the S151 Officer.

### **Risk Management**

The following key risks have been identified:

- Resourcing and timing of the review – As set out in the workforce capacity implications section of the report there are identified resourcing challenges in undertaking this Community Governance Review. The aim will be to mitigate these through the use of additional dedicated resources and careful timetabling within the review.

- Non-compliance with Government policy and legislation – This will be mitigated through review of legislation, statutory guidance and acquiring legal and other professional advice during the review.
- Local Government Reorganisation – Decisions taken through the Local Government Reorganisation process could impact on the delivery of the Community Governance Review. Ongoing monitoring will be undertaken and options identified to mitigate potential impacts of the LGR process.
- Transitional arrangements – Should the outcome of the review be the creation of a new Parish Council then transitional arrangements will require considering, for example precept arrangements. These will be further explored as plans develop as part of the Review.

### **Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales**

Public consultation is taking place in accordance with the Terms of Reference, Legislation, Statutory Guidance and the principles of consultation.

### **Reputation**

None.

### **Contracts**

None.

### **Crime and Disorder**

None.

### **Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding**

The review will invite communities to input into the governance arrangements that affect them. Equality and Diversity implications will be considered throughout the Community Governance Review, particularly in relation to the consultation process to ensure that all residents and stakeholders are able to participate and submit their views.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

None.

### **Climate Change and Environment Impact Assessment**

None.

### **Acronyms**

CGR – Community Governance Review

LGR – Local Government Re-Organisation

LGBCE – Local Government Boundary Commission for England

LGPIHA – Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

STF – Spalding Town Forum

## Appendices

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report:

Appendix 1	Terms of Reference
Appendix 2	Stage One Consultation Feedback
Appendix 3	Map of proposed Spalding Parish Warding

## Background Papers

Background papers used in the production of this report are listed below: -

<b>Document title</b>	<b>Where the document can be viewed</b>
Guidance on community governance reviews (DCLG and LGBCE) 2010	<a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a78e983ed915d0422066530/1527635.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a78e983ed915d0422066530/1527635.pdf</a>

## Chronological History of this Report

A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body

## Report Approval

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Approved for publication:	N/A