



COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

AGENDA

DATE:	Tuesday, 6 October 2026
TIME:	7.30 pm
VENUE:	Committee Room, Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton-on-Sea, CO15 1SE

MEMBERSHIP:

Councillor Steady (Chairman)	Councillor Ferguson
Councillor Barrett (Vice-Chairman)	Councillor Griffiths
Councillor Amos	Councillor Harris
Councillor Davidson	Councillor Oxley
Councillor Doyle	

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DATE OF PUBLICATION: Monday, 28 September 2026

AGENDA

6 Report of the Assistant Director (Corporate Policy & Support) - A.2 - Town and Parish Councils for Clacton-on-Sea, Holland-on-Sea, and West Clacton & Jaywick Sands (Pages 5 - 8)

This report concerns the initial term of office of Parish Councillors elected to the Town and Parish Councils for Clacton-on-Sea, Holland-on-Sea and West Clacton & Jaywick Sands that is currently planned to come into being on 1 April 2027. Based on the decision of the Full Council of the District on 2 June 2026 (Minute 28 refers), that initial term will be five (5) years. Through this report, the Committee is invited to consider recommending to the Full Council meeting on 13 October 2026 that the term of office should be amended to three (3) years and to consider an alternative timeline.

Date of the Next Scheduled Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to be held in the Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton-on-Sea, CO15 1SE at 7.30 pm on Tuesday, 8 December 2026.

Information for Visitors

FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE

There is no alarm test scheduled for this meeting. In the event of an alarm sounding, please calmly make your way out of any of the fire exits in the room and follow the exit signs out of the building.

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COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 OCTOBER 2026

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (CORPORATE POLICY AND SUPPORT)

A.2 TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS FOR CLACTON-ON-SEA, HOLLAND-ON-SEA AND WEST CLACTON & JAYWICK SANDS

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report concerns the date the new Parishes for Clacton-on-Sea, Holland-on-Sea and West Clacton & Jaywick Sands (and their respective Parish Councils) are to be formed. The decision of Full Council following the required Community Governance Review and engagement with residents during that review was to establish the Parishes and their Parish Councils. The commencement date approved by Full Council was 1 April 2027 and through this report, the Committee is invited to recommend to Full Council that the commencement date be amended to 1 April 2028 (12 months later than originally envisaged).

In addition, based on the decision of the Full Council on 2 June 2026 (Minute 28 refers), that initial term of office for the Parish Councillors elected to the new Parish Councils would be five (5) years. Through this report, the Committee is also invited to consider recommending to the Full Council meeting on 13 October 2026 that the term of office should be amended to three (3) years. This would align the second and subsequent elections to those Parish Councils with the scheduled elections to all other Parish Councils in the District.

SCOPE - THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORT

The scope of the report is covered in the purpose section above in that the Committee is invited to recommend a change in the implementation date of new Parish Councils for Clacton-on-Sea, Holland-on-Sea and West Clacton & Jaywick Sands; and a subsequent change to the initial term of Councillors elected to them.

The reasoning for this item being submitted to the Committee is that the UK Government announced on 7 September 2026 that it was withdrawing its decision of 25 March 2026 to implement Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Essex, pending a review; and that the existing electoral cycle would be restored, with elections to District and existing Parish Councils on 6 May 2027.

The UK Government's decision not to proceed with its plans for changes to principal Councils (Districts, County and Unitaries) in Essex from 1 April 2028 (with elections to Shadow Authorities in May 2027) provides an opportunity to spend more time on developing the plans for the initial year of those Parish Councils and to engage more with residents on those plans. While delivery of the new Parishes on 1 April 2027 is still achievable and officers, with Essex Association of Local Councils, have been working to that date, it is clear that a longer lead in time for the new Parishes and their Parish Councils would be beneficial. It is on this basis that the recommended revised commencement date of 1 April 2028 is submitted for consideration by the Committee (to recommend on to Full Council)

As part of its overall Community Governance Review decisions for the three Parishes (and their Parish Councils), Full Council approved a five (5) year initial term of office for the new

Parish Councillors. This was on the basis at the time that all Parish Councillors elected in the District in 2027 would serve for a five (5) year term. This change was intended through a UK Government Structural Change Order as part of Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Essex, which is now under review. With that process paused, and a one year later commencement date for the three Parishes (and their Parish Councils), that initial term of office should be three (3) years. This would then align second and subsequent elections to the new Parish Councils with the scheduled elections for all other parish Councils in the District.

INVITEES

None.

BACKGROUND

With the UK Government's decision to withdraw its decision of 25 March 2026 to implement Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Essex, the existing electoral cycle for District and Parish Councillors to be elected was restored.

While the Community Governance Review was launched before the Local Government Reorganisation process commenced in Greater Essex, a key feedback theme in the engagement undertaken through the review was that residents sought a local voice. The timetable approved by Full Council on 2 June 2026 was intended to provide for the new Parishes (and their respective Parish Councils) to have elections one year ahead of the intended new Unitaries coming into being. This would enable them to settle into their representational role while Tendring District Council was still in existence.

With the Local Government Reorganisation now postponed for at least one year, there is a one-off opportunity to adjust the timeframe for the new Parishes (and their Parish Councils) to be established. Making the most of this opportunity will allow officers and local District Councillors, supported by Essex Association of Local Councils, to have a longer timespan to implement the new Parish Councils, including the requisite electorate and financial calculations, and engage further with communities due to be parished about the types of services and initial priorities they might want to see new Parish Councils deliver.

With regard to terms of office for Parish Councillors, the restoration of the existing electoral cycle means that all existing Parish Councillors elected on 6 May 2027 will serve a four (4) year term. If, therefore, the Committee is minded to postpone implementation of the new Parish Councils for Clacton-on-Sea, Holland-on-Sea and West Clacton & Jaywick Sands until 1 April 2028, it is also therefore sensible to consider aligning the term of office of those elected to serve on those Parish Councils that will come into being on 1 April 2028, to three (3) years to align with the wider electoral cycle. Otherwise, elections to those Parish Councils will always be one year out of alignment with all other Parish Councils in the District.

If the Committee is not minded to recommend a postponement to implementation of parishing for Clacton-on-Sea, Holland-on-Sea and West Clacton & Jaywick Sands – and this remains at 1 April 2027 – then the Committee is asked to consider recommending the initial term of Councillors elected to those bodies is amended to four (4) years, to bring alignment with the rest of the District. In this scenario, as there would be alignment between elections to existing Parish Councils with the elections to the District Council it will mean, with the current approved initial term of five (5) years, the subsequent elections to the Parish Councils for Clacton-on-Sea, Holland-on-Sea and West Clacton & Jaywick

Sands will be held separately (one year later than for all other parish Councils in the District). This is more likely to mean that there will be an ongoing higher cost for those Parish Councils in respect of elections as they will be unable to share the costs with the District Council, County Council, Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner/UK Government.

At the time of writing, the UK Government's stated intention is for election of a Greater Essex Mayor for the envisaged Combined County Authority in May 2028. On that basis, the recommended commencement date for the new Parishes (and Parish Councils) would mean the cost of elections to the new Parish Councils could be shared in those Parishes with the Greater Essex Mayor election costs.

Once the new Parishes and Parish Councils are established, the UK Government is able to change the terms of office of Councillors serving on principal and local councils, should that be required. As such, if local government review decisions are made for Essex there is a mechanism for adjusting the terms of office of the new Parish Councillors as it applies also to all other Parish Councillors.

Without making the recommended changes, the Order setting out, among other things, the term of office of the Parish Councillors for Clacton-on-Sea, Holland-on-Sea and West Clacton & Jaywick Sands Parish Councils **MUST** be made on 14 October 2026 at the latest to enable the necessary preliminary steps to be authorised in respect of those new parishes being created on 1 April 2027. Once the Order is made and sealed, a new Community Government Review would be needed to make any further changes to the arrangements for the new Parishes and their Parish Councils.

RELEVANT CORPORATE PLAN THEME/ANNUAL CABINET PRIORITY

The Corporate Plan 2024-28 has a central theme around community leadership, and the Council is undertaking this role in placing the issue of community governance in front of local electors and others with an interest in the review.

DESIRED OUTCOME OF THE CONSIDERATION OF THIS ITEM

That the Committee determines whether to recommend to Full Council that the implementation of new Parish Councils for Clacton-on-Sea, Holland-on-Sea and West Clacton & Jaywick Sands be postponed to 1 April 2028; and subsequently that the initial term of office for Councillors elected to those Councils should be three (3) years rather than the existing decision of Council that it should be five (5) years.

RECOMMENDATION

- (1) That, based on the information set out in this report, the Committee recommends to Full Council on 13 October 2026 that the decisions of Full Council on 2 June 2026 following the Community Governance Review for Clacton-on-Sea, Holland-on-Sea and West Clacton & Jaywick Sands be amended as follows:**
 - a) the new Parishes commence on 1 April 2028 and not 1 April 2027 (with elections to the Parish Councils consequentially moved to May 2028 rather than in May 2027);**
 - b) the initial term of office for Parish Councillors elected to those Parish Councils be three (3) years and not five (5) years; and**
- (2) That the Chief Executive be requested to await the decision of Full Council on 13 October 2026 in respect of the recommendation above before the required Community Governance Reorganisation Order (arising from the relevant**

decision of Council on 2 June 2026) is formally made and sealed and that the outcome of that meeting in respect of the above recommendation be incorporated as necessary into that Order;

- (3) To note that, on the basis recommendation (1) above is approved by Full Council, communication with residents and interested parties in the area of the new Parishes will be undertaken to update them that the implementation date for those Parishes and their Parish Councils will be 1 April 2028 and the commissioning of Essex Association of Local Councils to support the introduction of the new Parishes will be updated to reflect that timeline.

IMPLICATIONS RELATED TO DEVOLUTION AND/OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

On 7th September 2026, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government announced in Parliament that a review of the Local Government Reorganisation programme was commencing and that the decision made in March 2026 for Greater Essex (and other areas) had been withdrawn in the light of new legal advice. Following this announcement, local authorities received correspondence from the Minister of Housing, Communities and Local Government requesting that until this review has concluded, Councils cease work on implementing the decisions that have previously been announced. The timetable for completion of the review is unknown at this time.

The creation of the three new Parishes (and their Parish Councils) is not directly impacted by MHCLG's request, as it is to enable the Council to implement the outcome of the community governance review through the decisions of the Council on 2 June 2026 in the light of the updated position in respect of the continuation of existing principal Councils in Essex.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS

Council on 2 June 2026 (Minute 28) – Decisions on the creation of the new Parish Councils for Clacton-on-Sea, Holland-on-Sea and West Clacton & Jaywick Sands including that parishing would take effect on 1 April 2027, and that the initial term of office of the Parish Councillors elected to those Parish Councils would be five (5) years.

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

None.

APPENDICES

None.

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