

Mid Suffolk Community Governance Review

Initial consultation responses

February 2026

We are committed to the principles of fairness and respect at Babergh and Mid
Suffolk District Councils

Document Owner: Directorate of Corporate Services
Community Governance

Version: 1

Date: 14 August 2026

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1. Summary

1.1. The Community Governance Review initial consultation commenced on 8th December 2025 and was to run for 6 weeks until 23rd January 2025. The areas under review are as follows:

- Coddensham
- Framdsen and Helmingham
- Palgrave
- Stradbroke

1.2. All parish councils, county and district councillors received a consultation poster relevant to their area, to raise awareness. The community governance review webpage on the district website featured the consultation with any further information about the request received. Additionally, all households within the Framdsen and Helmingham area of the community governance review received the consultation poster by post.

1.3. Representations during the consultation could be received by Microsoft forms, email, phone, or post.

A breakdown of the representations received by area are displayed in the subsequent sections.

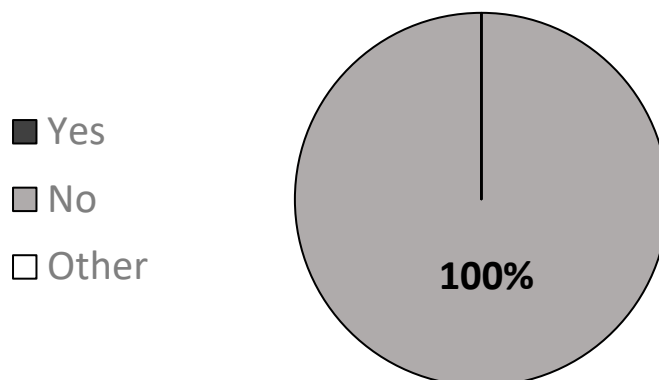
2. Coddtenham

2.1.1. How were representations received

Representation channel	Number	Percent
Microsoft forms	2	100%
Email	0	0.00%
Phone	0	0.00%
Post	0	0.00%
Total	2	100%

2.1.2. Response to the request

Do you agree with Coddtenham Parish Council that the Parish Council member seats be reduce from 11 to nine?



2.1.3. Further Comments

Replying as	Further comments
Resident	This request is submitted for the wrong reasons. It is being submitted to facilitate meeting Quorate requirements. The last request was withdrawn by the current council. It should be denied

2.1.4. Capacity of response

Capacity	Number	Percent
Resident	2	100%
Business	0	0.00%
Political	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%
Total	2	100%

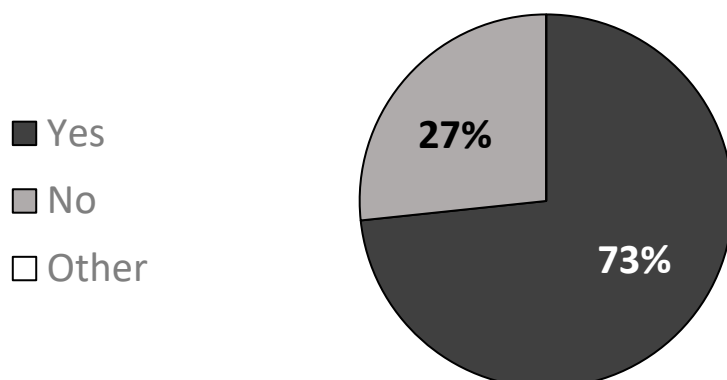
3. Framsden and Helmingham

3.1.1. How were representations received

Representation channel	Number	Percent
Microsoft forms	14	93.33%
Email	1	6.67%
Phone	0	0.00%
Post	0	0.00%
Total	15	100.00%

3.1.2. Response to the request

Do you agree with both Framsden and Helmingham Parish Councils to merge Framsden and Helmingham Parish Councils?



3.1.3. Response to the request

Replying as	Further comments
Resident	There are limited volunteers in both areas, but importantly, bigger issues relating to e.g. the Helmingham estate, affect both parishes, so sensible to have 1 body. If the inflexibility of pointless bureaucracy associated with local government is addressed then there would be more volunteers willing to be part of the parish councils.
Resident	Initially I understand the request to join together came from Helmingham Parish as they were unable to recruit enough people to their council. This is unfortunate but Framsden Parish council struggle to recruit councillors and struggle to manage their workload effectively for the benefit of Framsden. To dilute this further would be of no benefit to anyone
Resident	I wish them to have separate identities and priorities
Resident	Merging makes perfect sense in all aspects of local government in my view.
Resident	Two very different parishes
Resident	In a time when devolution is being considered and local authorities are getting bigger and further away from the local communities, very local parish councils will be essential. The two communities are really very different in make-up.

Helmingham Resident and Church Warden	Residents of Helmingham need to know how the joint parishes will distribute any funds they have now and in the future, other than for the purchase of land at Tollgate Corner. At the moment much of the benefit appears to be going to Framdsen. However, presumably the distribution of funds will be decided by the joint council, so it will be up to the residents of Helmingham to make sure that they are fully represented. Hopefully the joint Parish Council still be able to assist the Helmingham Parochial Church Council with a grant towards the maintenance of the Church Yard and its car park, the only public space in Helmingham that is open to, and enjoyed by, the residents without restriction.
Resident	Having reviewed the request and available information I would not object to the joining of Framdsen and Helmingham parish councils

3.1.4. Capacity of response

Capacity	Number	Percent
Resident	15	83.75%
Business	0	0.00%
Political	1	6.25%
Other	1	6.25%
Total	16	100%

4. Palgrave

4.1.1. How were representations received

Representation channel	Number	Percent
Microsoft forms	0	0.00%
Email	0	0.00%
Phone	0	0.00%
Post	0	0.00%
Total	0	0.00%

4.1.2. Response to the request

No responses were received in the duration of the initial consultation asking, 'Do you agree with Palgrave Parish Council to reduce the current number of Parish Councillors required to fill the posts available in Palgrave from the current 11 members to 10 members?'.

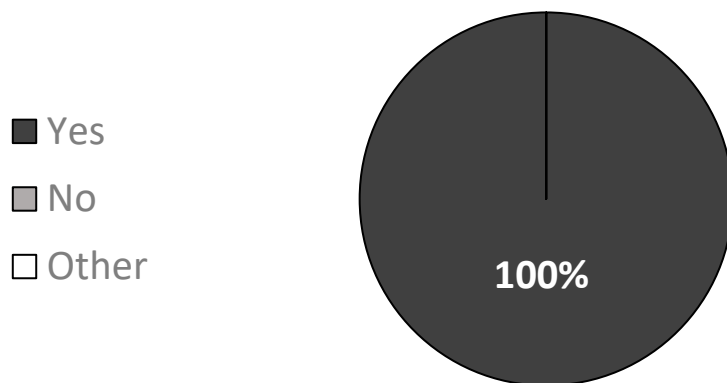
5. Stradbroke

5.1.1. How were representations received

Representation channel	Number	Percent
Microsoft forms	1	50.00%
Email	1	50.00%
Phone	0	0.00%
Post	0	0.00%
Total	2	100.00%

5.1.2. Response to the request

Do you agree with Stradbroke Parish Council for reducing the number of Parish Councillors from thirteen (13) to eleven (11)?



5.1.3. Response to the request

Replying as	Further comments
Resident	Need for a parish council election which hasn't happened for a long time- reducing number of councillors will get closer to threshold for an election.
Parish Council	Overall position Stradbroke Parish Council supports the proposal to reduce the number of parish councillors from 13 to 11. The Council considers that the proposed reduction would better reflect local circumstances and support effective governance. Community identity and representation Stradbroke is an unwarded parish with a single, well-defined community identity. The Parish Council does not consider that a reduction of two councillors would have any adverse impact on the representation of residents or on the ability of the Council to reflect the identities and interests of the local community. A council of eleven members would continue to provide a sufficient range of perspectives and experience to represent the parish effectively, while remaining accessible and accountable to residents.

Effectiveness and convenience of governance

Since the parish elections in 2023, the Parish Council has experienced continuing vacancies, with the full complement of thirteen councillors not being achieved since the elections. Despite efforts to promote vacancies and encourage co-option, sustained interest at a level required to maintain thirteen councillors has not materialised.

In practice, the Council has continued to operate effectively with fewer than thirteen members, remaining quorate and discharging both its statutory and discretionary functions. Attendance patterns and meeting dynamics indicate that a smaller council would be more sustainable and proportionate.

The Parish Council considers that a reduction to eleven councillors would:

- ☐ Reduce the likelihood of ongoing or long-term vacancies;
- ☐ Support efficient decision-making and constructive debate;
- ☐ Improve the resilience of the Council by aligning council size with realistic participation levels.

Impact on parish governance

The Parish Council does not believe that the proposed change would weaken local democracy or reduce community engagement. On the contrary, aligning the number of councillors more closely with actual participation is likely to strengthen the credibility and effectiveness of parish governance.

The Council remains confident that an eleven member council would be capable of fulfilling all statutory duties, managing parish assets, and responding to local issues on behalf of residents.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, Stradbroke Parish Council supports the proposal arising from the Community Governance Review to reduce the number of parish councillors from thirteen (13) to eleven (11).

5.1.4. Capacity of response

Capacity	Number	Percent
Resident	1	50.00%
Business	0	0.00%
Political	1	50.00%
Other	0	0.00%
Total	2	100%