

Kingswood town council consultation

15 October 2021 to 7 January 2021

South Gloucestershire Council is carrying out a review of the way decisions are made on local issues in your area and we want to hear your views. We want to know if you would like a town council created to represent the interests of Kingswood.

Why are we carrying out the review now?

The area where you live is currently unparished - there is no town or parish council in place. Arrangements in the unparished area were last reviewed in 2012. Kingswood has seen considerable change in this time, with work starting on the regeneration of the historic town centre, including the ongoing Whitfield Tabernacle restoration and the recent Masterplan consultation. This review considers how we can maintain this positive momentum in the town.

What are the proposals?

The initial proposal in the unparished areas is for two new parish areas to be created; a town council to represent Kingswood, and a parish council to jointly represent Staple Hill and Mangotsfield. This leaflet provides information about the proposal for a town council to represent Kingswood.

The area suggested for inclusion for a potential Kingswood town council is shown on the enclosed map. There are around 12,660 households and, in these households, roughly 21,500 residents are eligible to vote in local elections.

What is a town or parish council?

- Town and parish councils are a local form of government and are voted for during elections to represent a dedicated community.
- Town and parish councils have statutory powers which may be complimentary to those provided by South Gloucestershire Council, such as looking after local parks.
- They focus on very local issues and concerns.

Why have a town or parish council?

Town and parish can take different forms but are usually made up of local people who stand for election as a Councillor to represent their area. They can be the voice of the

local community and work with other government and organisations to coordinate and deliver services and work to improve the quality of life in the area.

Town and parish councils may choose to provide extra or improved local services, for example:

- Community and leisure facilities e.g., community halls, allotments
- Recreation and play facilities e.g., parks, play areas, sports pitches
- Activities for young people and children e.g., holiday and youth clubs
- Community events and festivals
- On street improvement e.g., flowers, litter bins, bus shelters
- Support/grants for local voluntary groups and represent the community on local bodies e.g., Chambers of Commerce
- Local 'watchdog' on planning and other local matters

What about the costs?

Town and parish councils are funded through a charge added to your Council Tax. This is known as a precept. These funds are required to be used to invest in the area to provide or improve local services or facilities.

In unparished areas, such as Kingswood is now, we (South Gloucestershire Council) provided some services which are provided elsewhere by parish councils. The costs of providing such services are called special expenses. These special expenses are funded through a charge added to your Council Tax. If Kingswood had its own Town Council, this charge would be reviewed and potentially stopped if they delivered all the additional services.

A town and parish council precept will depend on the size of the parish, the services it provides and the number of properties across which it is spread. It is not possible to say how much a precept would be for an area which is currently unparished. Any new parish council would be able to set its own precept level and it would depend on the services and facilities it wants to provide. The town or parish council will be accountable to its residents and as such will need to be realistic in the setting their precept.

What are the possibilities?

There are a number of possible outcomes of this review, which fall into the following categories:

Option 1: A new town council is created for Kingswood (as shown on the map on the next page)

This would mean that a town council is created to represent the interests of residents in Kingswood and the surrounding area.

Option 2: Join with existing neighbouring parishes

Residents in some parts of the unparished area may decide they would like to become part of a parish that neighbours the currently unparished area.

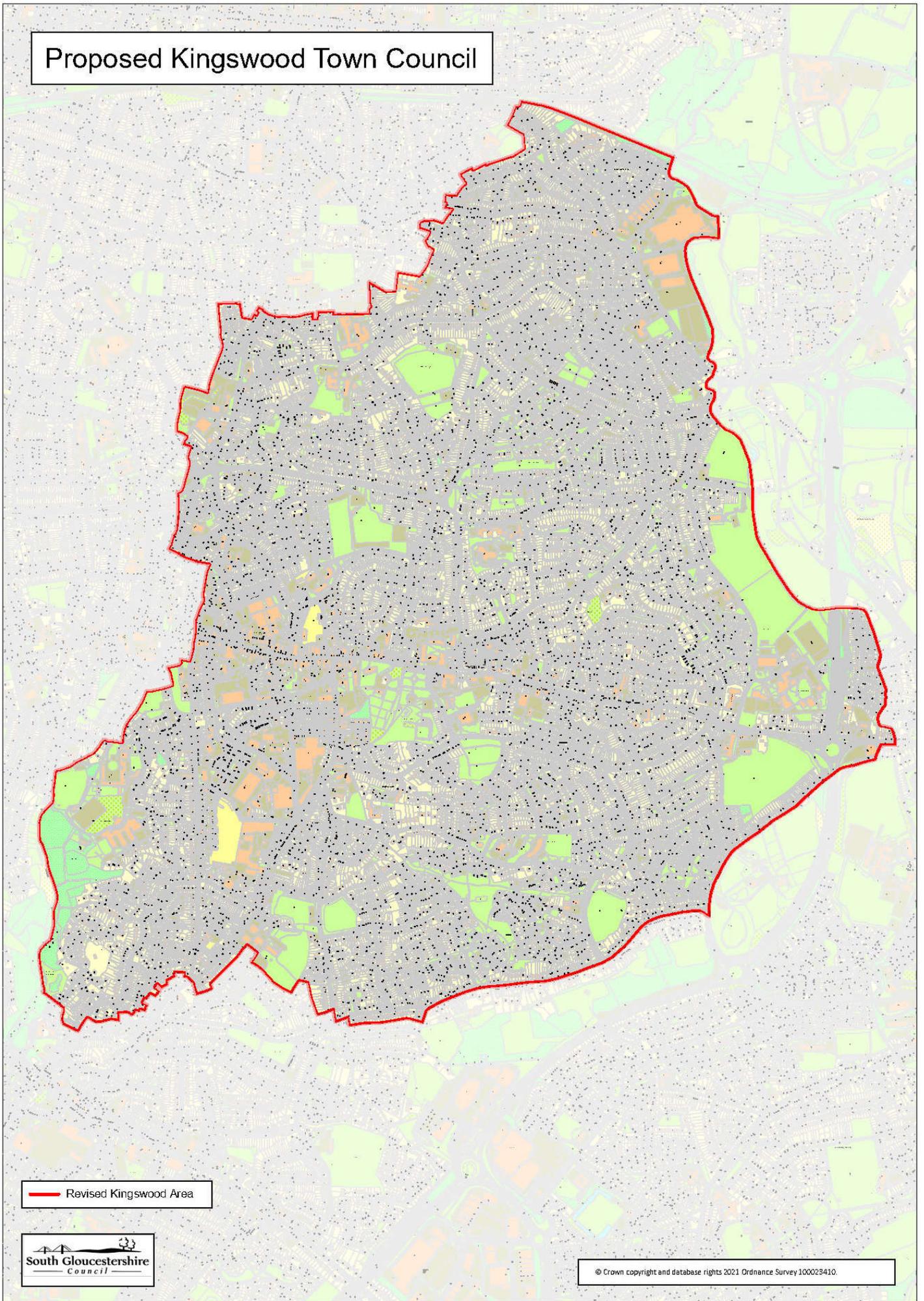
Option 3: No Change

This would mean that no town council was created.

What happens next?

All the responses will be reviewed and used in a report to go to our Regulatory Committee at the end of January 2022. If a decision is made to either create a new town council for Kingswood or join with another town or parish council, then we will consult again with further detail around how this might work for Kingswood.

Proposed Kingswood Town Council



— Revised Kingswood Area



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Have your say

There are several ways for you to tell us your views on this important local issue. You can:

- Complete the survey enclosed with this letter/leaflet and return it to:
Freepost COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW*
- Complete an online response at: southglos.gov.uk/KingswoodCouncilConsultation
- Email: electoral.services@southglos.gov.uk
- Write to Freepost COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW*

*Please ensure COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW is in capitals for this to work at the Royal Mail sorting centre

The consultation closes on 7 January 2022

If you have any further questions or require any additional information, including translations or accessible versions of this document please email:

electoral.services@southglos.gov.uk or phone: 01454 868009.