

Community Governance Review

Briefing Note No. 23-27

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This note sets out the background to the Community Governance Review Process. Wiltshire Council is undertaking a Community Governance Review in certain areas which began on 11 September 2023.

A [webpage](#) has been established for provision of information relating to the review, and for receipt of any initial comments or submission of additional proposals.

What are Community Governance Reviews?

1. A Community Governance Review (CGR) is a process to provide opportunity to review and make changes to governance arrangements to town and parish councils. This is to ensure that they continue to be reflective of the identity and interest of local communities, and that they are as efficient and effective in their governance as possible.

What can a Community Governance Review change?

2. A Community Governance Review can make a number of changes to parish areas and parish electoral arrangements including:
 - Altering, merging, grouping, creating or abolishing parishes
 - the naming of parishes and adoption of alternative styles for new parishes (the naming process can also be undertaken under S75 of the LGA 1972)
 - parish council size. e.g. number of councillors to be elected, and warding arrangements
 - any other electoral arrangements
3. A Community Governance Review is not responsible for the number of boundary of unitary divisions of Wiltshire Council. That is a process known as an Electoral Review and is conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). In certain circumstances a Community Governance Review may request minor alteration to a unitary division as a consequence of other changes, but this must be agreed by the LGBCE.

Who carries out a Community Governance Review?

4. Principal councils (district councils or unitary councils) have the power to carry out Community Governance Reviews and put in place or make changes to local community (parish) governance arrangements
5. Wiltshire Council has established an [Electoral Review Committee](#) to oversee Community Governance Reviews, including setting the scope of any review, its methodology and its timescales. The committee will make recommendations relating to any review to Full Council, to make the decision.

Why and when is a Community Governance Review carried out?

6. As principal authority Wiltshire Council may schedule a review in response to a reasonable request from an individual, group or parish when it considers it practicable to do so, except those that are the result of a petition containing sufficient signatures which must be reviewed once the petition has been verified. Wiltshire Council may also suggest a review when it considers it appropriate to do so.
7. The Electoral Review Committee is responsible for deciding when it is practicable to review requests which have been received.
8. Reasons for a Community Governance Review can include, but are not limited to:
 - Changes in population
 - Housing growth
 - Anomalous boundaries
9. In 2019 Wiltshire Council contacted town and parish councils requesting expressions of interest for any changes to governance from parishes. A number of areas have been reviewed each year since 2019.

At its [meeting](#) on 26 June 2023 the Electoral Review Committee agreed areas to be included in a Community Governance Review and the scope of the reviews in those areas. The final approval was delegated to the Director, Legal and Governance. Terms of reference were published on 11 September 2023, listing the areas for Review as:

- I. Winterbourne, Laverstock & Ford, Firsdawn, Idmiston and Durnford
- II. Mere and Zeals
- III. North Bradley and Trowbridge (Drynham)(Limited Review)
- IV. Lacock and Chippenham (Lowden and Rowden)(Limited Review)

The Council has also received representations regarding a number of potential electoral boundary anomalies which it will also review, these are:

- V. Salisbury (St Francis and Milford)
- VI. Royal Wootton Bassett, Brinkworth, Broad Town and Clyffe Pypard
- VII. Chippenham (Pewsham and Hardens & Central)

- VIII. Calne and Calne Without
 IX. Trowbridge (Lambrok and Grove)

How does a Community Governance Review work?

10. Community Governance Reviews are carried out in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and take into account statutory guidance. Links to those resources are included on the webpage for the reviews.

11. The indicative timetable for the review, in accordance with the terms of reference, is set out below:

Stage	Action	Dates
Pre-review preparation	Liaising with town and parish councils on previously submitted proposals submitted for areas for consideration for review.	May - August 2023
Stage one	Commencement of CGR - Terms of Reference published.	11 September 2023
	Initial Schemes uploaded to for any comments, to be updated with any relevant additional information. Local briefings and meetings as appropriate with unitary councillors and/or parish representatives. To receive further schemes which fall within the scope of the Review.	11 September – 13 October 2023
	Consideration of submissions received in relation to proposed schemes. Local briefings and meetings as appropriate with unitary councillors and/or parish representatives (continued) <hr/> Pre-consultation surveying (if appropriate) <hr/> Draft Recommendations prepared	16 October 2023 - 31 December 2023 27 October – 17 November 2023 (estimate) December 2023 - January 2024
Stage three	Draft Recommendations consultation.	24 January 2024 - 1 March 2024 (estimate)
Stage four	Consideration of submissions received	March 2024
		April-May

	Additional consultations (if appropriate)	2024 (estimate)
	Final Recommendations prepared	April-June 2024
Decision	Final Recommendations considered by Full Council.	May/July 2024

12. The committee will have the authority to adjust the timetable and other details if appropriate during the review.

13. A Community Governance Review will include; periods of information gathering on any proposals, the Electoral Review Committee making recommendations, and reasonable periods for public consultation on those proposals and recommendations with those who would be affected.

14. After consultation(s) the Electoral Review Committee will submit its final recommendations to Full Council.

On what grounds will a Community Governance Review be decided?

15. Any decision relating to parish arrangements must ensure that those arrangements:

- Reflect the identity and interests of local communities
- Ensure effective and convenient local governance

16. Any other factors, such as council tax precept levels, cannot be considered.

Next step Community Governance Review

17. At this stage of the review all schemes which have been received in relation to the areas under review will be uploaded. These will be accessible from the webpage linked to above.

18. Individuals, groups and parishes will be able to submit initial comments against those schemes or suggest alternative schemes within the areas listed in the terms of reference, through the contact details above.

19. Following consideration of any comments, and other information gathering, the Electoral Review Committee will prepare draft recommendations for each area and consult upon its recommended outcome.