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Date: 13<sup>th</sup> November 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

A meeting of the **Local Government Reform Sub-Committee** will be held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Nuneaton, on **Monday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 4.30p.m.**

Yours faithfully,

Tom Shardlow

Chief Executive

To: Members of LGR Sub-Committee

Councillors: J. Clarke S. Hey, M. Kondakor, S. Markham, K. Price, C. Watkins and K. Wilson

## **AGENDA**

### **PART I**

#### **PUBLIC BUSINESS**

##### **1. EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

A fire drill is not expected, so if the alarm sounds, please evacuate the building quickly and calmly. Please use the stairs and do not use the lifts. Once out of the building, please gather outside the Lloyds Bank on the opposite side of the road.

Exit by the door by which you entered the room or by the fire exits which are clearly indicated by the standard green fire exit signs.

If you need any assistance in evacuating the building, please make yourself known to a member of staff.

Please also make sure all your mobile phones are turned off or set to silent.

##### **2. APOLOGIES** - To receive apologies for absence from the meeting.

##### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

###### **Declaring interests at meetings**

If there is any item of business to be discussed at the meeting in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest or non-pecuniary interest (Other Interests), you must declare the interest appropriately at the start of the meeting or as soon as you become aware that you have an interest.

Arrangements have been made so that interests that are declared regularly by members can be viewed in a schedule on the Council website ([Councillor Declarations of Interests](#)) Any interest noted in the schedule on the website will be deemed to have been declared and will be minuted as such by the Democratic Services Officer. As a general rule, there will, therefore, be no need for those Members to declare those interests as set out in the schedule.

There are, however, TWO EXCEPTIONS to the general rule:

1. When the interest amounts to a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest that is engaged in connection with any item on the agenda and the member feels that the interest is such that they must leave the room. Prior to leaving the room, the member must inform the meeting that they are doing so, to ensure that it is recorded in the minutes.

2. Where a dispensation has been granted to vote and/or speak on an item where there is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, but it is not referred to in the Schedule (where for example, the dispensation was granted by the Monitoring Officer immediately prior to the meeting). The existence and nature of the dispensation needs to be recorded in the minutes and will, therefore, have to be disclosed at an appropriate time to the meeting.

Note: Following the adoption of the new Code of Conduct, Members are reminded that they should declare the existence and nature of their personal interests at the commencement of the relevant item (or as soon as the interest becomes apparent). If that interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary or a Deemed Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, the Member must withdraw from the room.

Where a Member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest but has received a dispensation from Audit and Standards Committee, that Member may vote and/or speak on the matter (as the case may be) and must disclose the existence of the dispensation and any restrictions placed on it at the time the interest is declared.

Where a Member has a Deemed Disclosable Interest as defined in the Code of Conduct, the Member may address the meeting as a member of the public as set out in the Code.

Note: Council Procedure Rules require Members with Disclosable Pecuniary Interests to withdraw from the meeting unless a dispensation allows them to remain to vote and/or speak on the business giving rise to the interest.

Where a Member has a Deemed Disclosable Interest, the Council's Code of Conduct permits public speaking on the item, after which the Member is required by Council Procedure Rules to withdraw from the meeting.

4. **MINUTES** – to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2025 (**Page 5**) and to be signed by the Chair.
5. **PUBLIC CONSULTATION** – Members of the Public will be given the opportunity to speak on specific agenda items, if notice has been received. Members of the public will be given three minutes to speak on a particular item and this is strictly timed. The Chair will inform all public speakers that: their comments must be limited to addressing issues raised in the agenda item under consideration: and that any departure from the item will not be tolerated.

The Chair may interrupt the speaker if they start discussing other matters which are not related to the item, or the speaker uses threatening or inappropriate language towards Councillors or officers and if after a warning issued by the Chair, the speaker persists, they will be asked to stop speaking by the Chair. The Chair will advise the speaker that, having ignored the warning, the speaker's opportunity to speak to the current or other items on the agenda may not be allowed. In this eventuality, the Chair has discretion to exclude the speaker from speaking further on the item under consideration or other items of the agenda.

6. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE – report of the Chief Executive attached (**Page 8**)
7. ANY OTHER ITEMS - which in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting should be considered as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances (which must be specified).

**NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM SUB-COMMITTEE**

**22<sup>nd</sup> September 2025**

A meeting of Local Government Reform Sub-Committee was held on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2025 in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall.

**Present**

Councillor C. Watkins (Chair)

Councillors: J. Clarke, S. Hey, M. Kondakor, K. Price, S. Markham, and K. Wilson

The Chair welcomed Mr James Banham from Deloittes and Consultant - Mr Andy Sawford to the meeting

**LGR07 Apologies**

None

**LGR08 Declarations of Interest**

**RESOLVED** that the Declarations of Interest for this meeting are as set out in the Schedule published on the website.

**LGR09 Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Local Government Reform Sub-committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2025 be approved as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

**LGR10 CEO Update**

The Chief Executive submitted a report updating the sub-committee on the position of the current programme of the Local Government Reform for Warwickshire.

**RESOLVED** that

- a) the report be noted; and
- b) the continued participation in the collaborative workstreams, including public consultation and data sharing initiatives be endorsed.

**LGR11 Deloitte's Report**

The Director – James Banham from Deloitte's submitted a report to the sub-committee providing analysis around what the future opportunities for Local Government would be in a one or two unitary model for Warwickshire.

The following summarised matters were raised:

- Safeguarding will at the outset would be retained at the County level through a shared service approach to ensure there are no additional risks in the transition phase
- Warwickshire is not considered deprived even though Nuneaton and Bedworth have high deprivation areas. Using the current formula the North Unitary may receive more money than they do currently.

- Social care – data sharing has been limited until government guidance advised that authorities must be open to data sharing.
- Concern for cost of school transport for children as the service is needed more in the north of the county.
- Boundary review – lots of areas are opposing boundary changes, the proposals submitted will not be compliant with legislation. The short-term indications are that there will be a shadow council, during which community governance reviews will be taking place. Normally they would look at County Council boundaries in the first instance. The sub-committee were concerned about the use of county council boundaries; the population data would be outdated as certain areas such as Weddington have had large population increases due to the amount of development. The recent Borough Boundary review provides more up to date data on population density in different areas of the Borough.
- The shadow council will establish the instrument of governance; this is likely to be an Executive Model or Elected Mayor. If Warwickshire becomes a single unitary then Area Committees will be created.
- Various parts of Warwickshire look to other counties/cities for some services such as health e.g. parts of North Warwickshire look to Birmingham and parts of Stratford look towards Worcestershire.
- Warwickshire County Council have health within their remit, but the Borough have not received extra funding for health even though all the statistics demonstrate the residents of the Borough have poorer life expectancy and living standards than elsewhere in the county. Nuneaton and Bedworth are having a lot of regeneration such as Bedworth Physical Activity Hub to try and improve health outcomes but for decades it has remained the same without improvement, the services are likely to have much better outcomes when performed locally rather than County level.
- The Borough has partnerships with other authorities outside Warwickshire such as A5 Partnership that links in with Leicestershire.
- Residents in North Warwickshire and Rugby have ties to Nuneaton and we are more centrally located.
- Local initiatives such as Warwickshire Alcohol and Drug Court will have better localised, bespoke outcomes to keep young people out of care homes. Typically, there are more supervision orders rather than full time care.
- Residents who suffer with gambling addiction have to travel to Coventry to get help, some cancer treatments require you to go to Rugby, having more localised services means residents should not have to travel as far.
- Concern at keeping Education remit at County level, the quality of Education in the Borough needs improvement.
- Highways and Transport – consider sub-regional work – opportunities with West Midlands Travel or West Midlands Combined Authority.
- Fire and Rescue, Police –Concern we could fall into West Midlands.
- Waste – Potential to look at rurality e.g. Bramcote to be included within Nuneaton and Bedworth rather than Rugby.
- Funding – the North Unitary is likely to receive more money, in respect of council tax. The Borough has more Band A properties which gives a lower income, but we have bigger developments than other areas.

**RESOLVED** that the report and the matters raised be noted.

LGR12Any Other Items

None

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Chair



## AGENDA ITEM NO.6

### NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Report to:** LGR Sub-Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 24 November 2025

**Subject:** Community Governance

**Portfolio:** All

**Responsible Officer:** Chief Executive

**Corporate Plan – Theme:** All

**Corporate Plan – Aim:** All

**Ward Relevance:** All Wards

**Public or Private:** Public

**Forward Plan:** Not currently but to be added subject to resolution by the Sub-Committee

**Subject to Call in:** Not applicable at this stage

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## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. This report outlines the process and key considerations associated with establishing community governance structures within the Borough, specifically through the mechanism of Community Governance Reviews (CGRs). These reviews provide NBBC with the means to assess and determine the need for the establishment of parish and town councils within the Borough. An overview of this process has been provided via the production of a Community Governance Review Brief (see Appendix 1) and supplementary slides (see Appendix 2).
- 1.2. In the context of Local Government Reorganisation, considerations relating to community governance have assumed increased importance, thereby reinforcing the need for continued political oversight through this Sub-Committee. The Government has recognised community governance, through the establishment of parish and town councils, as a foundational mechanism for delivering successful reorganisation and devolution, ensuring local democracy is strengthened and can mitigate against local democratic deficit caused by unitarisation.
- 1.3. Due to the uncertainty surrounding any future government decision on the structure of Warwickshire (be it a single Warwickshire Unitary or Two North/South Unitaries), this report recommends that any decision to initiate a CGR should be deferred until the government has made its decision, currently expected in the Summer of 2026. The purpose of this report is to therefore provide Members with an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the Community Governance Review process and to facilitate constructive, cross-party discussion on matters relating to community governance.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended to Cabinet to:

- a) Note the report and raise any matters arising from the presentation.
- b) Recommend to Council that it is most logical to defer a Full Council decision to initiate a Community Governance Review, until the Government has made a decision on the future structure or local government within Warwickshire.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1.** The recommendations are proposed to ensure that Members are fully informed of the Community Governance Review process and its potential implications prior to any formal decision being taken.
- 3.2.** Deferring the initiation of a CGR until the Government has confirmed the future structure of local government within Warwickshire will allow the Council to make an evidence-based and appropriately timed decision, avoiding duplication of effort and ensuring alignment with any wider reorganisation outcomes.

### **4. Background**

- 4.1.** The English Devolution White Paper highlighted the value of nurturing strong community governance as a foundation for successful reorganisation and devolution. Following this national direction, many authorities undergoing the reorganisation process have initiated Community Governance Reviews and, in some cases, are now in the process of finalising these reviews in preparation for structural change (for example, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council in Surrey).
- 4.2.** The matter of community governance holds particular significance for NBBC as there is currently no parish or town council representation within the Borough. Consideration may also need to be given to the potential establishment of Charter Trustees, to ensure the preservation of the Borough's civic, historic, and ceremonial traditions throughout any reorganisation process, until such time as a parish or town council is formally constituted.
- 4.3.** As set out in the decisions taken by County Council on Tuesday 14 October 2025 Warwickshire County Council 'recognises the importance of Town and Parish Councils, and supports the establishment of such councils where they do not currently exist (e.g., Nuneaton, Rugby, Bedworth, Bulkington), and endorses the role of Town and Parish Councils as a necessary means of preserving local identity along with devolution of roles and powers to such councils where there is an appetite to do so.' This decision was reaffirmed following questions raised at an extraordinary County Cabinet meeting on 6 November 2025, in support of the County's Local Government Reorganisation proposals to be submitted to Government.

### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1.** Community Governance Reviews can take an extended period of time to complete, and the associated costs will vary depending on the complexity and scale of the review. At this stage, it is not possible to quantify the exact expenditure, but Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council would need to allocate an approved budget to cover consultation, administrative processes, and any specialist advice required. The Council would bear the full cost of conducting the review. In addition, if new town or parish councils are established, they may levy a precept on local council tax payers to fund their operations

and services, which could result in an increase in household bills within the affected areas.

## 6. Legal Implications

- 6.1. CGRs are governed by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and associated statutory guidance. NBBC must ensure compliance with all legal requirements, including consultation obligations, consideration of community identity and effective governance, and the production of a reorganisation order if changes are approved. Legal advice may be required to draft and implement these orders correctly. Failure to follow statutory procedures could expose the Council to legal challenge or judicial review.

## 7. Equalities implications

- 7.1. The creation of town and parish councils has the potential to improve democratic representation and give communities a stronger voice in local decision-making.

## 8. Health implications

- 8.1. Effective local governance can positively influence health and wellbeing. Conversely, poorly managed changes could create uncertainty or reduce access to, or standards of services.

## 9. Climate and environmental implications

- 9.1. This is largely dependent on the activities of any resulting organisation, and their commitment to the local environment.

## 10. Section 17 Crime and Disorder Implications

- 10.1. None specific arising, however Town and Parish Councils would have a role to play in community safety, at a very local level.

## 11. Risk management implications

- 11.1. The main risks relate to reputational damage, legal challenge, and community dissatisfaction if the review process is perceived as unfair or poorly managed. There is also a risk of increased costs if the review becomes protracted or contested. Mitigation measures include clear communication, robust consultation, adherence to statutory guidance, and early identification of resource requirements. Establishing new councils may also introduce governance risks if they lack capacity or expertise, requiring ongoing support and oversight

12. Human resources implications

12.1. None arising directly from this report; however, the creation of town and parish councils would require human resources. These bodies may become direct employers to deliver very local services, which could include clerks, maintenance staff, and community engagement officers.

13. Options considered and reason for their rejection

13.1. In formulating this report and recommendations, the following other options were identified. Reasons for their rejection or why the option and recommendation proposed in section 2 of the report has been selected are outlined below.

Option Ref	Option	Reason for rejection or why the option and recommendation proposed in section 2 of the report has been selected
A	Do nothing	This option would prevent consideration of community governance arrangements and may fail to protect local identity during the reorganisation process. It could also reduce democratic representation and limit future options for establishing parish or town councils.
B	The Sub-Committee may choose to recommend an alternative course of action to Cabinet, including a proposal to initiate a Community Governance Review prior to the Government's decision on Local Government Reorganisation in Warwickshire.	Initiating a CGR before the Government's decision could result in duplication of effort or misalignment with future governance arrangements, making it less efficient and potentially premature.
C	The Sub-Committee may recommend that no CGR be undertaken. In this scenario, it should be noted that the authority to implement a CGR rests with Full Council. Additionally, there are	This risks forgoing the opportunity to proactively consider community governance arrangements and engage with local communities. While Full Council retains the authority to implement a CGR,

	<p>alternative mechanisms for initiating a CGR, such as through community petitions or requests from existing parish councils, the latter of which is not applicable in the current context for NBBC.</p>	<p>delaying action could limit the Council's ability to respond strategically to future petitions or requests and may hinder the preservation of local identity.</p>
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#### 14. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Community Governance Review Brief

Appendix 2 – Community Governance Review – Sub-Committee Slides

2025

# Community Governance Review Brief

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## Introduction

With Local Government Reorganisation on the horizon, it has become increasingly important to consider the options for establishing parish and town councils within the Borough. The English Devolution White Paper highlighted the value of nurturing strong community and neighbourhood governance as a foundation for successful reorganisation and devolution, and in effect 'rewiring the relationship between town and parish councils and principal local authorities'. As Cllr Keith Stevens, Chair of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), stated: parish councils "can be a strong voice for our most local neighbourhoods and help address fears of remote government resulting from any larger unitaries being set up. By strengthening their role, the government can ensure that devolution delivers tangible benefits for communities nationwide."

Whether Warwickshire moves towards a single county-wide unitary or a North/South split, the question of local governance in Nuneaton and Bedworth remains vital. Without parish/town-level representation, residents risk losing a direct voice in local matters as local decision-making risks becoming obscured as Councillor numbers decline. To ensure reorganisation is best able to represent and deliver for all communities across Nuneaton and Bedworth it is pertinent now to consider the process for establishing community democracy and governance. The primary mechanism for achieving this is through a Community Governance Review (CGR).

This brief serves to explain what Community Governance Reviews are, the processes and assessment criteria involved, a detailed list of actions/documentation required to support a review, and expected timelines for completing a review. The main source of information used to draw this report together came from the '[Guidance on Community Governance Reviews](#)' published by the UK Government in 2010, in collaboration with the Local Government Boundary Commission. Additional sources include information drawn from other councils such as North Somerset Council and BCP Council who have gone through the CGR process recently, as well as the National Association of Local Councils representing parish and town councils across the country.

### Distinguishing Between Community Governance and Neighbourhood Governance

To frame this report, it is first important to distinguish between Community Governance and Neighbourhood Governance, in order to prevent confusion and clarify the parameters surrounding CGRs.

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, introduced to Parliament on 10 July 2025, places a new requirement on all local authorities in England to establish effective 'neighbourhood governance'. Unlike town and parish councils - which are independent of local authorities and represent a form of community governance - neighbourhood governance refers to the statutory structures that local authorities must create to secure local representation. The aim behind neighbourhood governance is to ensure that decision-making is informed by people who understand local needs, regardless of whether a town or parish council exists in the area.

While the detailed regulations underpinning the obligations surrounding neighbourhood governance will only follow once the Bill is enacted, recent initiatives provide a useful indication of the direction of travel. For example, the Pride in Place Programme which will fund regeneration projects in Bedworth and Camp Hill, will be led through neighbourhood governance-style boards designed to bring decision making on important regeneration spending closer to residents.

As the Government's guidance makes clear: although town and parish councils continue to play an independent role, all local authorities must also have mechanisms for working directly with people in their neighbourhoods, rather than relying solely on existing community governance structures, currently represented by town and parish councils. In the case of Nuneaton and Bedworth, given there are no current community governance arrangements within the Borough, forms of community governance (i.e. town and parish Councils) and forms of neighbourhood governance (e.g. The Believe in Bedworth Neighbourhood Board) are likely to co-develop as the Council transitions through reorganisation, offering a unique opportunity for the Borough to champion local democracy and locally led decision-making in a way that makes sense for local people and local places, through this period of change.

## What is a Community Governance Review?

As set out in the 2007 Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, power has been devolved to local principal authorities to take decisions about matters such as the creation of parishes and their electoral arrangements to local government and local communities in England. CGRs represent the legal process whereby principal councils can, under this legislation, create parish or town councils, review and change electoral arrangements and, in extreme cases, abolish parishes. CGRs provide an opportunity to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries, which reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government.

In the wake of the Government's English Devolution White Paper, a precedent for change in relation to community governance has been set, with many authorities already initiating renewed CGRs in preparation for future reorganisation and devolution.

### What are parish/town councils and what can they do?

Before moving on to understand the process behind CGRs it is worth clarifying what parish/town councils are, and the powers, both statutory and discretionary, they may dispense.

A parish/town council represents the lowest tier of local government within England, and as statutory bodies, they serve electorates, are independently elected, and raise their own precept. Depending on size, parish and town councils run numerous services, some of which are statutory, such as: allotments, bus shelters and burial grounds, however most services are discretionary which can enhance or complement existing provision and include items such as: community transport schemes, community centres, play areas and open space, community safety, street lighting, street cleansing, local festivals and celebrations.

Parish councils – often dubbed the 'local voice' – also play an important influencing role. Within this capacity they can serve for making representation on local issues, championing the cause of local residents and businesses with regards to items such as local planning matters, local police and health services, as well as delivering neighbourhood plans and funding community projects. They also have the ability to leverage external funding not otherwise available which can be used to support schemes and projects at a local level.

Whilst they can operate in isolation as a separate council, most parish and town councils will work in partnership with the principal local authorities and other parish and town councils to leverage opportunities to deliver joint services.

## Charter Trustee Areas

Another element worth briefly touching on, are Charter Trustee areas. Established following the local government reorganisations in the early 1970s and 1990s, charter trustees were established to preserve the historical identity of former boroughs or cities undergoing reorganisation. When undertaking Local Government Reorganisation within Warwickshire a consideration to the formation of charter trustee areas should be given, namely, to maintain the historic continuity of Nuneaton and Bedworth's charter rights, including the use of historic items like charters, insignia, and plate, until a permanent civil parish or town council can be established in the area.

## Who can undertake a Community Governance Review?

The principal Council within an area (in a two-tier area such as Nuneaton and Bedworth this would be NBBC) has the responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews within its electoral area and deciding whether to implement the recommendations made in those reviews. Reviews can be triggered in response to petitions from the community, requests from parish councils, or a council's own decision to review governance due to factors like population changes or wider local government reorganisation.

## Relevant Legislation

In undertaking a CGR, the principal Council will apply the guiding principles as appropriate from the following legislation and guidance:

- The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
- The Local Government Act 1972
- Guidance on CGRs (DCLG)
- Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008.

It is a statutory duty to review the electoral arrangements of all parishes within an area every 10-15 years.

## What Community Governance Reviews Can and Can't Do

A CGR invites the public and other interested parties to comment upon and submit suggestions about the most suitable way of representing local communities. A review may take place for the whole or individual parts of the Borough and when undertaken, can make a number of changes to parish/town councils when there is clear interest and evidence base to do so. These include:

- creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
- changing electoral arrangements for parishes including the ordinary year of an election, number of parish councillors and changes to parish wards;
- convert a parish council to a parish meeting;
- change the name or the style of a new parish/town council or parish meeting; and
- group parishes together under a common parish.

A Community Governance Review cannot however:

- change the number of district or county councillors;
- change a district or county council ward boundaries;
- change the amount of money that a parish council raises its precept;
- change individual parish councillors; and
- create a unitary authority.

#### Assessment Criteria of Community Governance Reviews

Any submission to create parish areas are assessed against a set of criteria so that proposals must:

- reflect the identities and interests of the community; and
- be effective and convenient

And in doing so, the principal local authority conducting the CGR is required to take account of:

- the impact of existing community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
- the size, population, and boundaries of any local community or proposed parish or town Council.

When considering the boundaries for parish or town councils, it is desirable these are readily identifiable. This can be by reference to physical features or may follow adopted electoral ward boundaries in a borough. Any changes should also take into account population shifts or additional development that may have affected community identity.

In considering whether an area is suited to separate parish governance, CGRs must also take note of the availability of adequate infrastructure for a proposed area, such as meeting spaces, community halls, schools, neighbourhood shops, and other local facilities. Principal councils must also consider the wider picture of community

governance in carrying out their reviews. In some areas there may be well established forms of community governance such as local residents' associations, or community forums which local people have set up and which help make a distinct contribution to the community. Potentially, as representatives of their community, these bodies may be considered as foundations for or stages towards the creation of democratically elected parishes.

Furthermore, under the 2007 Act, principal councils are required to consult electors in the area under review, as well as other interested parties. These may include local authorities such as the county council, along with local businesses, public bodies, and voluntary organisations that the principal council considers to have an interest in the review.

Ultimately, recommendations made by a CGR – with consideration to all the criteria set out above - should aim to strengthen community engagement, enhance local democracy, and lead to more effective and convenient delivery of services.

# Actions to Support a Community Governance Review

For a principal authority to carry out a CGR, it must prepare a series of key documents, each aligned with a distinct stage of the review process. These include:

- a terms of reference;
- documents to support public consultation;
- a draft recommendations report;
- a final report; and
- a Community Governance Reorganisation Order.

This section will cover each document in turn covering its purpose, what should be included and the process behind its publication and/or amendment.

## Terms of Reference

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 gives principal councils the power to determine the terms of reference under which a CGR is undertaken. The terms of reference define the scope and focus of the review, specify the area under consideration, and set out the timetable and procedures to be followed.

The terms should take account of any views already expressed by local people about their preferred form of governance, while also drawing on the experience of principal councils to ensure the approach is suited to the needs of local communities. Where a valid community governance petition has been received, the terms of reference must be drawn up or modified accordingly, allowing petitioners to influence their content. In areas where both a district and county council exist, the district council must notify the county council of its intention to carry out a review and seek its views at an early stage.

Once the terms of reference have been agreed, they must be published and made accessible to the public. If any modifications are made during the review, the amended terms of reference must also be published to ensure transparency. A CGR commences when the principal authority publishes its terms of reference and concludes when the principal council publishes the recommendations made in the review.

## Public Consultation

As part of a CGR, the principal council must undertake a public consultation with electors in the areas under review, as defined in the terms of reference. Consultation is usually carried out in two stages: the initial consultation (stage one)

and the consultation on draft recommendations (stage two). There is no statutory minimum length for each stage, and the duration varies between local authorities, but the period typically runs over several months. For example, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council held an eight-week consultation, while BCP Council ran theirs for more than twelve weeks.

The stage one consultation seeks views and proposals on matters such as existing parish boundaries (where relevant), the number of councillors, and whether new parishes should be created or existing parishes abolished or merged. A recent report published by North Somerset Council in July 2025, detailing the '[First stage public consultation comments](#)' provides a useful example of the matters a stage one consultation will request public consultation on. The document also provides a useful snapshot as to the types of responses electors will submit. Once the first stage consultation is concluded, draft recommendations, typically supported by a cabinet meeting, will be reported to and considered by a full council meeting.

The stage two consultation then invites views on the draft recommendations that emerge from stage one. The responses from the stage two consultation are again considered by a full council meeting and inform the final decision, which are given effect through the recommendations drafted following the second stage consultation process.

### Draft Recommendations Report

As set out above, a draft recommendations report should be produced following the stage one consultation of a CGR. This document sets out the range of recommendations for change and no change within the area under review. The document should also provide appendices detailing any proposed changes, including map illustrations of proposed boundary changes, and any impacts on council tax banding following proposed changes to precept levies. For a useful example for a draft recommendations document see North Somerset Council's [Draft Recommendations July 2025](#).

A publication of the draft recommendations following approval by the relevant decision-making body should coincide with the commencement of the stage two consultation, where feedback will be sought on specific proposals to inform the final recommendations of the CGR in the area under review.

### Final Report

Following the review of the stage two consultation, final recommendations are drafted and sent for approval via a full council meeting. This final report should: invite the council to consider the final recommendations and the outcome of the second and final stage of consultation and approve the recommendations accordingly so that a Community Governance Order can be made. Included within

the report, there should be detailed the set of issues and choices made in accordance with the CGR process, detailing recommendations, reasons for recommendations and final proposals.

Following approval by full council, delegated authority should be given to the Monitoring Officer to prepare and make an order under Section 86 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to give effect to the proposals, including such ancillary and consequential provisions as are considered necessary and to publish the decisions of the council and reasons for them and to bring them to the attention of persons interested in the review as soon as is reasonably practicable.

For an example of a Final CGR report, see West Northamptonshire Council's '[Community Governance Review: Update and Final Proposals](#)' document September 2024.

### Community Governance Reorganisation Order

A CGR is completed when the principal authority adopts a Community Governance Reorganisation order. The order serves as legal document detailing the outcome of the CGR and subsequent approval by full council for the reorganisation of Community Governance. This document sits in accordance with section 82 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and specifies when the reorganisation will take effect for financial and administrative purposes, and when the electoral arrangements for a new or existing parish council will come into force. A model community governance reorganisation order can be found on the [gov.uk website](#).

To implement the order, the principal authority should make the reorganisation order publicly available and in addition should make available a map showing the effects of the order in detail and a document which sets out the decisions it has taken and to publicise these reasons. Other means of publicity it may wish to consider are through publication on the council's website, in local newspapers, on notice boards in public places, and in local libraries, town halls or other local offices. In addition, after a principal council has made a reorganisation order, as soon as practicable, it must inform the following organisations that the order has been made:

- a) the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government
- b) the LGBCE
- c) the Office of National Statistics
- d) the Ordnance Survey
- e) the Land Registry
- f) the Registrar General

- g) the Valuation Office Agency
- h) any other principal council (e.g. a county council) whose area the order relates to.

## Timeline for a Community Governance Review

A CGR must, by statute, be concluded within a twelve-month period from the day on which the review commences, which will coincide with the publication of the terms of reference. In line with the commencement of the review, a Notice of Community Governance Review should be published to notify electors of the review (see [BCP Council Notice](#) as example).

The below table provides an illustrative timetable for a CGR based on previous CGRs completed by other local authorities. Please note there is no statutory minimum length for a consultation period, but as set out above, they generally last between two to three months.

<u>Action</u>	<u>Example Date(s)</u>	<u>Further Details</u>
Report to Full Council	15 October 2026	Council approves the principle of the Community Governance Review and its Terms of Reference.
Publish Terms of Reference	16 October 2026	Publish Terms of Reference and notify stakeholders of the commencement of the Review.
Preliminary Stage	From 21 October 2026 to 15 November 2026	Offer of local briefings and meetings with stakeholders.
Stage One Consultation	From 25 November 2026 to 19 January 2027	Publish draft consultation document and invite initial submissions/representation.
Draft Recommendations	From 20 January 2027 to 25 March 2027	Consider any submissions/representations made and prepare report of draft recommendations for Full Council.
Stage Two Consultation	From 31 March 2027 to 22 June 2027	Publish draft recommendations as agreed by Full Council and invite further consultation.

Final Report	From 23 June 2027 to 14 October 2027	Consider any further submissions/representations and prepare final report of final recommendations for Full Council.
Publish final recommendations as agreed by Full Council	October/November 2027	Publish final recommendations as agreed by Full Council and make necessary Orders.

## Reference Document Hyperlinks

Guidance on Community Governance Reviews – March 2010 - UK Government

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-governance-reviews-guidance>

First Stage Public Consultation Comments - July 2025 - North Somerset Council

<https://n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-07/1st%20Stage%20Consultation%20-%20Supporting%20comments%20%281%29.pdf>

Draft Recommendations - July 2025 – North Somerset Council

<https://n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-09/community%20governance%20review%202025%20-%20draft%20recommendations.pdf>

Update and Final Proposal for Community Governance Review – September 2024 - West Northamptonshire Council

<https://westnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s19612/Item%2012%20Community%20Governance%20Review%20-%20Final%20Proposals%201.pdf>

Public Notice of Community Governance Review – October 2024 - Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council

<https://www.bcp council.gov.uk/Assets/About-the-council/Community-Governance-Review/Notice-of-Community-Governance-Review-CGR.pdf>

# Community Governance Reviews

- The English Devolution White Paper highlights the value of strong local governance to support effective devolution.
- A Community Governance Review (CGR) is the key process for strengthening local democracy through new governance arrangements – namely the establishment of parish and town councils
- Parish councils can provide a strong local voice and help address concerns about remote decision-making under larger unitary authorities. They can also unlock funding opportunities, support local businesses, and enhance quality of life through initiatives like green spaces, youth programmes, and cultural events.

# Community Governance vs. Neighbourhood Governance – What's the difference?

- Community Governance
  - Delivered through town and parish councils – independent of principal authorities.
  - Provides a formal voice for local communities through elected representatives.
  - Established via Community Governance Reviews (CGRs).
- Neighbourhood Governance
  - A new duty under the English Devolution & Community Empowerment Bill (2025).
  - Requires local authorities to create statutory structures for local representation.
  - Aims to ensure local decision-making even where no parish/town councils exist.
  - Early examples include neighbourhood boards (e.g. Pride in Place Programme – Camp Hill and Bedworth).

- What is a CGR?
  - The legal process whereby principal councils can, create parish or town councils, review and change electoral arrangements and, in extreme cases, abolish parishes.
  - A review may take place for the whole or individual parts of the Borough and when undertaken, can make a number of changes to parish/town councils when there is clear interest and evidence base to do so.
- Who can undertake a CGR?
  - The principal council (e.g. NBBC) is responsible for carrying out CGRs within its area.
  - The council also decides whether to implement the review's recommendations.
- CGRs can be triggered by:
  - Council-initiated reviews (e.g. due to population change or local government reorganisation)
  - Community petitions
  - Requests from existing parish councils

- What CGRs can do:
  - create, merge, alter or abolish parishes;
  - change electoral arrangements for parishes including the ordinary year of an election, number of parish councillors and changes to parish wards;
  - convert a parish council to a parish meeting;
  - change the name or the style of a new parish/town council or parish meeting; and
  - group parishes together under a common parish.
- What CGRs can't do:
  - change the number of district or county councillors;
  - change a district or county council ward boundaries;
  - change the amount of money that a parish council raises its precept;
  - change individual parish councillors; and
  - create a unitary authority.

# Charter Trustee Areas

- Created during past reorganisations (1970s & 1990s), charter trustees are established to ensure the continuation of a town or city's charter after a district with borough or city status is abolished.
- The primary purpose of charter trustees is to ensure the preservation of civic, historic, and ceremonial traditions until a civil parish council or town council is established.
- Consideration of charter trustee areas should be given to retain Nuneaton & Bedworth's historic continuity through any reorganisation process.

# Assessment Criteria

Submissions to create parish areas are assessed against criteria whereby proposals must:

- reflect the identities and interests of the community; and
- be effective and convenient

(Proposals should take account of population shifts or additional development + availability of adequate infrastructure for proposed areas – e.g. meeting spaces and existing community groups/representation).

- Principle authorities must also take account of:
  - the impact of existing community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
  - the size, population, and boundaries of any local community or proposed parish or town Council.

# Actions to support a CGR

- For a principal authority to carry out a CGR, it must prepare a series of key documents, each aligned with a distinct stage of the review process. These include:
  - a terms of reference;
  - documents to support public consultation;
  - a draft recommendations report;
  - a final report; and
  - a Community Governance Reorganisation Order.

(More information of each can be found in brief document).

- A CGR must, by statute, be concluded within a twelve-month period from the day on which the review commences, which will coincide with the publication of the terms of reference.
- See table for illustrative timeline of events and actions to support a CGR.

Action	Example Date(s)	Further Details
Report to Full Council	15 October 2026	Council approves the principle of the Community Governance Review and its Terms of Reference.
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# Forward View

- Under legislation and the Council's Constitution, the CGR process must be formally initiated and approved by a Full Council meeting.
- Given the uncertainty regarding the future democratic structure of Warwickshire, it is recommended that any decision to initiate a CGR be deferred until the Government confirms the outcome of LGR (with government decision expected summer 2026).
- Careful consideration should be given to:
  - Which body will act as the principal authority during any shadow authority period.
  - The geographic scope that a future CGR would cover.

# Further Resources

- [Community Governance Review Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) | Epsom and Ewell Borough Council](#)
- Guidance on Community Governance Reviews – March 2010 - UK Government  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-governance-reviews-guidance>
- First Stage Public Consultation Comments - July 2025 - North Somerset Council  
<https://n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-07/1st%20Stage%20Consultation%20-%20Supporting%20comments%20%281%29.pdf>
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<https://westnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s19612/Item%2012%20Community%20Governance%20Review%20-%20Final%20Proposals%201.pdf>
- Public Notice of Community Governance Review – October 2024 - Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council  
<https://www.bcp council.gov.uk/Assets/About-the-council/Community-Governance-Review/Notice-of-Community-Governance-Review-CGR.pdf>