

Community Governance Review

Briefing Note No. 19-032

Service: Electoral Services
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This note sets out the background to the Community Governance Review Process, and that Wiltshire Council shall be undertaking a Community Governance Review in certain areas beginning on 1 November 2019.

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 can be.

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:
 - the alteration to, merger or grouping of, creation or abolition of 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 or 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, who 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. From 12 July 2019 Wiltshire Council contacted town and parish councils requesting expressions of interest for any changes to governance from parishes. Expressions received were circulated to any potentially affected parish council.
10. At its meeting on 31 October 2019 the Electoral Review Committee approved terms of reference for a Community Governance Review to be commenced on 1 November 2019, to include the following areas:
 - Trowbridge, Hilperton, North Bradley, Southwick and West Ashton
 - Salisbury and Netherhampton
 - Chippenham, Chippenham Without, Kington St Michael, Lacock and Langley Burrell Without
 - Melksham, Melksham Without and Seend
 - Derry Hill and Studley (proposed new parish)
 - Wilcot (and Huish), Manningford, Woodborough and Pewsey
11. Other areas will be reviewed at a later date.

How does a Community Governance Review work?

12. Community Governance Reviews are carried out in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and taking into account

statutory guidance. Links to those resources are included on the webpage for the reviews.

13. The Electoral Review Committee has approved [Terms of Reference](#) for this Community Governance Review. These terms of reference set out, among other details, the areas to be reviewed and a timetable for the review.

14. The indicative timetable for the review is set out below:

Stage	Action	Dates
Pre-consultation	Liaising with parish councils on suggested areas for consideration for review and receipt of initial submissions.	12 July 2019 – 30 September 2019
Stage one	Commencement of CGR - Terms of Reference published	1 November 2019
	Schemes uploaded to public portal for any initial comments, to be updated with any relevant additional information. To include any further schemes received which fall within the scope of the Review	1 November 2019 – 30 November 2019
Stage two	Consideration of submissions received in relation to proposed schemes. Local briefings and meetings as appropriate with unitary councillors and/or parish representatives.	1 December 2019 – 21 February 2020
	Scheme consultation Draft recommendations prepared.	1 January 2020- 21 February
Stage three	Draft recommendations published	Mid-Late March 2020
	Draft recommendations consulted upon	Mid-late March 2020 – 30 April 2020
Stage four	Consideration of submissions received. Final recommendations prepared	1 May – 24 June 2020
Decision	Recommendations submitted to Full Council for approval	Circa Late July 2020 – September 2020

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

16. 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.

17. 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?

18. 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

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

Next step CGR

20. 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 [this link](#).

21. 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.

22. 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.

Parish Name Changes

23. The committee agreed to progress parish council name changes under S75 of the Local Government Act 1972 in relation to Cheverell Parva, Fittleton, Wilcot and Fyfield and West Overton, which can be found at [this link](#), at an appropriate time.