

Community Governance Review

Briefing Note 25-09

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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 will begin on 19 November 2025.

A [webpage](#) has been established to provide further information relating to the review. Members of the public and others can submit proposals for areas under review, or make other comments, through the email address above.

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.
2. 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. These are referred to as the statutory criteria.

What can a Community Governance Review change?

3. 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
4. For example, a CGR might adjust the boundaries between two parishes, add or remove warding arrangements, alter the number of parish councillors on a council, or group a number of parishes together under a joint council, and more.

5. In certain circumstances a Community Governance Review may request minor alteration to a Wiltshire Council unitary division as a consequence of other changes, but this must be agreed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

Who carries out a Community Governance Review?

6. 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
7. 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 would make the decision.

Why and when is a Community Governance Review carried out?

8. 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.
9. The Electoral Review Committee is responsible for deciding when it is practicable to review requests which have been received.
10. Reasons for a Community Governance Review can include, but are not limited to:
 - Changes in population
 - Housing growth
 - Anomalous boundaries
 - Periodic review
11. At its [meeting](#) on 15 October 2025 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.
12. In selecting areas for review the Committee took account of government guidance that all parishes should have their arrangements reviewed every 10-15 years.
13. Terms of reference for this review will be available on the website linked in this briefing note. The areas to be included are set out in the table below:

Review Areas	Review parameters
<p>The parishes within the Devizes, Marlborough, and Royal Wootton Bassett & Cricklade Area Boards, being:</p> <p><u>Devizes</u> Bishops Cannings, Bromham, Bulkington, Cheverell Magna, Coulston, Devizes, Easterton, Erlestoke, Etchilhampton, Little Cheverell, Market Lavington, Marston, Potterne, Poulshot, Rowde, Seend, Stert, Urchfont, West Lavington, Worton.</p> <p><u>Marlborough</u> Aldbourne, Avebury, Baydon, Berwick Bassett, Chilton Foliat, East Kennett, Fyfield, Marlborough, Mildenhall, Ogbourne St Andrew, Ogbourne St George, Preshute, Ramsbury, Savernake, West Overton, Winterbourne Monkton.</p> <p><u>Royal Wootton Bassett & Cricklade</u> Braydon, Broad Town, Broad Hinton, Clyffe Pypard and Bushton, Cricklade, Latton, Lydiard Millicent, Lydiard Tregoze, Lyneham and Bradenstoke, Marston Maisey, Purton, Royal Wootton Bassett, Tockenham, Winterbourne Bassett.</p>	<p>Internal and external boundaries of the parishes listed, or any parishes bordering those listed, including associated warding.</p> <p>Also any other electoral arrangements, e.g. councillor numbers, and any other arrangements including grouping, merging, abolishing, or creating parishes.</p>

14. Any parishes which neighbour one of those listed in the table above will also be able to be included within the review, if a proposed change impacts them.

Parish Council vs Parish Meeting

15. Most of the parishes are served by a parish or town council to represent their electorate. A few do not have a council, and local electors may meet in a Parish Meeting to discuss and make decisions in some local matters. A review can recommend that an area without a parish council has one established, or that an area with a council becomes a Parish Meeting only.

How does a Community Governance Review work?

16. 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.

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

Stage	Action	Dates
Stage one	Commencement of CGR - Terms of Reference published.	19 November 2024

	<p>Initial Schemes received (if any) uploaded to for any comments, to be updated with any relevant additional information.</p> <p>Local briefings and meetings as appropriate with unitary councillors and/or parish representatives if proposals have been submitted.</p> <p>To receive further schemes which fall within the scope of the Review.</p>	<p>November 2025</p> <p>November-December 2025</p> <p>19 November – 31 December 2025</p>
Stage two	<p>Consideration of submissions received in relation to proposed schemes/areas.</p> <p>Local briefings and meetings as appropriate with unitary councillors and/or parish representatives (continued)</p> <hr/> <p>Pre-consultation surveying (if appropriate)</p> <hr/> <p>Draft Recommendations prepared</p>	<p>December 2025- January 2026</p> <p>January 2026</p> <p>January - February 2026</p> <p>February - March 2026</p>
Stage three	Draft Recommendations consultation	March-April 2026
Stage four	<p>Consideration of submissions received</p> <p>Additional consultations (if appropriate)</p> <p>Final Recommendations prepared</p>	<p>May 2026</p> <p>May/June 2026</p> <p>May-June 2026</p>
Decision	Final Recommendations considered by Full Council.	July 2026

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

On what grounds will a Community Governance Review be decided?

19. Any decision relating to parish arrangements must ensure that those arrangements align to the statutory criteria for reviews, being that they must:

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

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

Next steps

21. At this stage of the review background information for the areas under review will be uploaded. These will be made accessible from the webpage linked to above.

22. The Committee will solicit any initial proposals/schemes for changes to parish arrangements and make these publicly available once received.

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

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