



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

PARISH COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

STAGE 1 CONSULTATION PLAN

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Background

West Northamptonshire Council is undertaking a community governance review pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and other relevant statutory provisions. The aim of the review is to ensure that arrangements for community governance reflect ‘the identities and interests of the community in the area’ and are ‘effective and convenient’. The review will be conducted in accordance with the [Terms of Reference](#) as agreed by full Council at its meeting on 28 September 2023.

Ahead of commencing this review, all Parish and Town Councils were invited to tell the Council whether their parish areas should be included within the review. Along with the outcome of the recent Local Government Boundary Review in West Northamptonshire, this pre-review consultation has helped to determine the parish areas below being identified for inclusion.

The review is being undertaken for the following parish areas. These have been separated by category according to the outcome of the pre-consultation:

Parishes that requested to be included but did not specify reasons:

Blisworth	Boughton	Brackley
Cold Ashby	Cold Higham	Croughton
Culworth	Easton Neston	Everdon
Eydon	Farthinghoe	Flore
Grange Park	Greatworth and Halse	Guilsborough
Hannington	Lampport and Hanging Houghton	Naseby
Preston Capes	Shutlanger	Silverstone
Stoke Breurne	Stowe Nine Churches	Towcester
Warkworth	West Haddon	

Parish councils that asked the Council to review their boundaries and neighbouring parishes that could be affected by these requests:

Area	Change suggested
Church with Chapel Brampton	Changing the parish boundary to incorporate homes which are currently in Pitsford Parish but are geographically nearer to Chapel Brampton.
Cogenhoe and Whiston	Change to parish boundary to incorporate all of Cogenhoe Mill Caravan Park.
Dodford	Boundary between Dodford & Weedon
Great Houghton	To move the boundary between Great Houghton and Little Houghton & Great Houghton and Hardingstone
Hackleton	Hackleton Urban Ward becoming part of Wootton Parish Council. Change.

Hardingstone	Move the boundary to include the new development to the south of Hardingstone
Holcot	Wish to realign their boundary with the A43.
Kings Sutton	Review which parish settlement of Purston should be located in. Potential impact on Middleton Cheney, Farthinghoe and Newbottle.
Little Houghton	See comment re: Great Houghton
Moulton	Wish to move Moulton Leys into the Moulton Parish from Northampton Town Council.
Overstone	Move the boundary they have with Moulton Parish
Pitsford	Changing the parish to include homes in the Boughton Parish into Pitsford.
Roade	Move the boundary to be in line with the new Roade bypass.
Tiffield	Looking to move Caldcote Village from Towcester to Tiffield Parish. Will affect Towcester.
Towcester	See comment re: Tiffield.
Weedon Bec	See comment re: Dodford.
Wootton	Hackleton Urban Ward becoming part of Wootton Parish Council. See also Hardingstone.

Parish councils that requested that we review the number of councillors and/or wards

Braunston
Byfield
Daventry
Helmdon
Overstone
Thorpe Mandeville

For the following parishes, the Council will be required to review the parish ward arrangements, number of councillors and parish boundaries following changes made by the Local Government Boundary Commission to the Council's electoral wards. Changes to boundaries could affect neighbouring parishes:

Area	Changes suggested
Boughton	Review whether Dixon Road Ward should be moved to Kingsthorpe Parish. To review the current arrangements for the Buckton Fields estate.
Hackleton	To review the Hackleton Urban ward and to look at having a Hackleton Ward and a Piddington Ward and reviewing the councillor numbers for these wards.
Kingsthorpe	To review the parish boundary with Boughton for the Dixon Road estate. To review the warding arrangements

Northampton Town	Review of the warding arrangements and the councillor numbers in the wards. The Parish boundaries are also under review following changes to the Wards.
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The following parishes have been included as they neighbouring Northampton Town Council and may be affected by the changes:

Billing
Collingtree
Duston
Far Cotton & Delapre
East Hunsbury
Hunsbury Meadows
Far Cotton and Delapre
Upton
West Hunsbury

We have also been asked to review whether to abolish the following Parish Meetings or merge them with their neighbouring parish:

Parish Meeting	Neighbouring Parishes that may be affected
Adstone	Preston Capes Canons Ashby Maidford
Brockhall	Norton Flore
Clay Coton	Lilbourne Yelvertoft Stanford Elkington
Cottesbrooke	Haselbech Naseby Guilsborough Creaton Lamport

The following parishes originally expressed an interest in participating but have subsequently withdrawn. They will not therefore form part of the Stage 1 consultation:

Moreton Pinkney
Newnham

STAGE ONE CONSULTATION

There is a statutory duty to consult local government electors and any other person or body who appears to have an interest in the review. Parish councils must be and Government guidance suggests consulting local businesses, local public and voluntary organisations such as schools or health bodies. However, there is no requirement to write to every elector as the duty is to consult, not carry out a poll. Also, there is no provision allowing the Council to use the electoral register for consultation purposes.

During Stage one of the consultation the Council will be seeking views and/or proposals about existing parish boundaries, numbers of councillors and if any new parishes should be created or existing parishes abolished or merged and where these should be.

Consultation will open on 27 November 2023 and close on 31 January 2024

Why we are consulting

A Community Governance Review provides the opportunity to consider whether changes should be made to parish arrangements in identified area of West Northamptonshire.

It is intended that any new parish arrangements will take effect at the May 2025 local elections.

The consultation will ask respondents their views or proposals about parish boundaries, the numbers of Councillors and if there should be any new parishes created and where these should be.

How we are consulting

For each of the areas outlined above (some of which will be grouped together for the purposes of the consultation) the principal means of consultation will be via an online survey, with paper copies or alternative formats available on request.

The survey will be open to all residents who live in the outlined areas mentioned. Parish Councils, community groups and local businesses. The Council will use existing channels of communication and will work with Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (NCALC) in order to maximise engagement with parishes.

-Information will be provided on the existing sizes and populations of parishes as well as links to maps of the parished areas. The terms of reference for the review are included on the Council's webpage as a contextual document. (insert link)

There will be an opportunity for respondents to provide additional comments as well as submit evidence to support their comments/proposals.

The Democracy and Standards Committee resolved not to establish a task and finish group to oversee the CGR. We will instead consult directly with groups of ward councillors for proposals that affect one or more parishes in a ward.

[Link to stage one Consultation Survey](#)



Community Governance Review 2023/24 - Phase 1 Consultation

Draft Submission Form

Overview

We are responsible for electoral and governance arrangements within the area, these include town and parish boundaries, the number of town and parish councillors, arrangements for wards, and meetings of groups and parish councils.

Background

Following government and Local Government Boundary Commission for England guidance, we carried out a review this summer (2023) to seek requests from parishes who wanted to make certain changes to their parish arrangements.

The feedback from this work and from the Commission identified some changes to amend certain governance arrangements, which could be seen to be appropriate due to population changes and shifts in 'natural settlements' caused by new development.

A Community Governance Review offers an opportunity to address these issues. These could be addressed by putting in place strong, clearly defined boundaries, tied to firm ground features, and remove any parish boundary anomalies that may exist to help ensure community governance arrangements continue to reflect local identities and facilitate convenient and effective local government.

As the relevant principal authority, West Northamptonshire Council is responsible for conducting any reviews within its electoral area. Detail about the changes the Council is able to make is set out below.

Further information: What is a Community Governance Review

A Community Governance Review allows us to review and make appropriate changes to the existing governance arrangements of Parish and Town Councils, in order to ensure that:

- Parish governance is robust, representative and able to meet new challenges; and
- There is clarity and transparency to the areas that parish/town councils represent and that the electoral arrangements of parishes are appropriate, equitable and readily understood by their electorates.

The review can include:

- Abolishing, creating, merging or altering parishes
- Changing the name of a Parish or set the style of a new Parish Council,
- Altering the boundary or warding arrangements of one or more existing Parish,
- Bringing a number of Parishes together as a grouped parish council, and
- The electoral arrangements for parishes i.e. the number of parish councillors

The review cannot:

- Alter the West Northamptonshire Council boundary.
- Make changes to the electoral arrangements of an existing parish where those arrangements have been made as part of an electoral review (conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England). In such instances, the Council must seek consent from the LGBCE.
- Make changes to West Northamptonshire Council wards.

It should be noted that some changes to parish ward boundaries were made as a result of the recent electoral review undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. These changes are protected for five years and any further changes may only be made with the consent of the Boundary Commission. Proposals cannot conflict with changes made by the Boundary Commission.

Timetable for the review

The council must complete the Community Governance Review within 12 months from when it publishes the [Terms of Reference](#). The Terms were agreed and published following Full Council [28 September 2023](#).

The Council will oversee the review and produce draft and final recommendations; Full Council will approve the final recommendations before a Community Governance Order (Order) is made.

Detail	Dates
Commencement of CGR – Terms of Reference Published	29 September 2023
Initial consultation stage	28 November 2023 to 27 January 2024
Draft recommendations prepared	27 January 2024 to 26 April 2024
Draft recommendations published	26 April 2024
Consultation on draft recommendations	26 April 2024 to July 2024
Final recommendations prepared	26 July 2024 to 23 September 2024
Final Recommendations considered and approved by full Council	29 September 2024
Community Governance Order(s) made	Between October and November 2024
New community governance arrangements come into force	1 May 2025

How to provide your views

We are inviting views from residents, and parishes and stakeholders. You can provide your views and make your submission by:

- Completing the online questionnaire below
- By emailing cgrconsultation@westnorthants.gov.uk
- By writing to us at:

Community Governance Review
Electoral Services
West Northamptonshire Council
The Guildhall
St Giles Square

Northampton
NN1 1DE

Related documents

- FAQs
- Guidance on Community Governance Reviews
- Maps

If you have any queries, comments or would like a copy of this questionnaire in another format you can contact us by email at cgrconsultation@westnorthants.gov.uk

This consultation closes at midnight on Saturday 27 January 2023

For information about how your responses are managed please see the [Privacy Notice]

Draft questions

Section 1 – About you

Are you 16 years old or over?

- Yes / No

Individuals: Please be aware that an anonymised version of this submission will be published on completion of the review

Organisation: including Parish Councils, decision of parish council or corporate organisations – your views and submission will be published on completion of the review

In what capacity are you giving us your views? (please tick)

- Resident of West Northamptonshire
- Representative of local organisation
- West Northamptonshire Council councillor
- Parish or town councillor
- Representative of parish /town council
- Member of Parliament
- Political Groups
- Other (please specify)

- Other _____

About you – organisation (if applicable)

Name of respondent: Role/position Organisation Preferred contact details	
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Section 2 – About town, parish to parish meeting

Which Town, Parish or Parish Meeting would you like to comment on?

Please tick

<p>Adstone Parish Meeting Boughton Parish Council Brackley Town Council Braunston Parish Council Brockhall Parish Meeting Church with Chapel Brampton Parish Council Clay Coton Parish Meeting Cottesbrook Parish Meeting Clipston Parish Council Cogenhoe and Whiston Parish Council Cold Ashby Parish Council Cold Higham Parish Council Daventry Town Council Dodford Parish Council East Neston Parish Meeting Everdon Parish Council Eydon Parish Council Farthinghoe Parish Council Guilsborough Parish Council Grange Park Parish Council Great Oxendon Parish Council Hannington Parish Council Helmdon Parish Council Kings Sutton Parish Council Little Houghton Parish Council Naseby Parish Council Northampton Town Council Pitsford Parish Council Preston Capes Parish Council Roade Parish Council Shutlanger Parish Council Sibertoft Parish Council Silverstone Parish Council Stoke Bruerne Parish Council Thorpe Manderville Parish Council Tiffield Parish Council Towcester Parish Council Weedon Bec Parish Council West Haddon Parish Council</p>	
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Do you think the Parish/Town Council may benefit from exploring any of the following options

<p>Question 1</p>	<p>Do you think changes are needed for the arrangements for this Parish?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No– skip to – asking for additional comments/ send of survey <p>-----</p> <p>Do you feel that the parish boundary should be altered?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Y/N/unsure <p>Do you feel that the parish should be abolished?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Y/N/ unsure <p>If you have indicated you think a parish boundary and or parish area should be altered or abolished, please provide details of the proposals of the boundary changes.</p> <p>Please also explain how the proposal will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in the area; and b) Be effective and convenient in terms of local governance. <p>[Free text]</p> <p>If you are able to supply a map to help to define and explain your response to this part, you can send this to cgrconsultation@westnorthants.gov.uk</p>
<p>Supplementary (if required)</p>	<p>(example) The Council has received a suggestion that the border of this parish with the neighbouring parish be altered to follow the line of x road in order to accommodate new development. Do you agree?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes/No <p>Do you have any comment?</p>
<p>Question 2</p>	<p>Do you feel that the name of the existing parish should be changed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • No opinion <p>If yes, do you have a suggested name [open text]</p>
<p>Question 3</p>	<p>Do you feel that any parish should be grouped with another parish or parishes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • No opinion

	<p>If you answered Yes to the above, let us know which other parish or parishes should be grouped: [open text]</p> <p>If no, please give your reasons for your response [open text]</p>
Question 4	<p>Should the number of Councillors on an existing Parish Council be changed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Y/N/ Not sure <p>If yes, please indicated what the proposed number should be and the reason for the proposal: [open text]</p> <p>If no, please give your reasons for your response [open text]</p>
Question 5	<p>Do you consider the parish should be divided into parish wards to improve the representation of the parish?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Y/N <p>Please give your reasons for your response [open text]</p>
Question 6	<p>Do you have any other additional comments that support your submission? [open text]</p>

OPTIONAL SECTION – More about – individuals only – Demographic

As an organisation we collect specific demographic information from the people who participate in our consultations or complete surveys to build up an accurate understanding of the communities we serve and ensure that everybody has an opportunity to have their voice heard.

Feel free to leave any questions which you do not want to answer. Any information you chose to provide will be treated in confidence and in accordance with data protection legislation.

[Equalities Questions to help meet Equalities compliance duty]

Stage 1 Consultation – Communications Plan

Suggestions on involving electors:

- Web questionnaire - promoted by the communications team - on the WNC website news section and on the Council's social media sites such as X and Facebook pages plus a press release at the start of the consultation and a week before the closing date
- Community Engagement Team to promote the CGR and the survey to those registered on the Consultation Register and the Residents Panel
- Ask Parish Councils to promote the CGR on websites with links to the survey on WNC webpage
- Provide information via remote briefing with Parish Clerk meetings - could be facilitated by NCALC
- Provide information to NCALC to further promote the CGR to Parish Councils with links to the survey on WNC webpage
- Information to the other organisations via existing channels
- Provide details to the MPs
- Article in the Parish Council newsletter
- Article in the WNC weekly Member Briefing
- All Staff intranet news
- Involve WNC ward Members - short all-member briefing, plus information in the weekly Member bulletin

Receiving representations:

- Email (perhaps set up a generic email account cgrconsultation@westnorthants.gov.uk)
- On-line survey. Paper copies of the survey could be available at the One Stop Shop, Guildhall, Northampton and the reception, the Forum, Towcester. Return address to the Guildhall, or scanned in and emailed to cgrconsultation@westnorthants.gov.uk
- Hold two drop-in sessions - one at the Guildhall in Northampton and one at the Forum at Towcester, inviting Parish Council representatives and WNC ward Councillors to attend. There could be two identical drop-in sessions on each date, for example 4 December 2023, 2pm – 5pm and 6pm to 8:30pm Guildhall, Northampton, and 12 December 2023, 2pm to 5pm and 6pm to 8:30pm, the Forum, Towcester to maximise attendance and a separate WNC Member briefings (remote over Teams)

Suggested Timetable for elements of Stage 1 consultation

Task	Date	Notes	Completion (tick when actioned)
Media Release	Contact Comm Team 27 November 2023	Media release issued that consultation is live on 27 November 2023	
Promotion of stage 1 consultation - WNCs social media sites	Contact Comm Team 20 November 2023	Live on 27 November 20 December 25 January (reminding that the consultation is due to close)	
Contact D Moody, NALC - promotion of the consultation on its website and to Parish Clerks	20 November 2023		
Contact A Burns asking him to include an article in the Parish Council newsletter	30 October 2023 – to ensure article in November edition		
Contact Community and Engagement Team asking that they promote the consultation to	Email Vicki Rockall on 1 November ahead of consultation going live asking that it is promoted to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Forums • Residents Panel • Residents Associations • Community Safety Partnership 		
Contact A Burns advising drop-in sessions for Parish Councillors (and WNC Members) will be set up - Guildhall and the Forum - asking A Burns to promote to Parish Councils	Contact with A Burns 30 October 2023	Suggested dates for drop-in sessions: 4 December 2023 - 2pm - 4pm and 6pm to 8pm (Forum, Towcester)	

Also ask A Burns if M West and P Hanson can attend the December meeting of the Large Parishes at Duston regarding the consultation NB: suggest WNC Cllrs invited too but to have an online briefing session in addition for WNC Cllrs		And 12 December 2023 2pm – 4pm and 6pm to 8pm (Guildhall) M West and P Hanson to attend the Large Parish Meeting at Duston in December 2023	
Online briefing session for WNC Councillors	Set up briefing session 25 November 2023	Online briefing to be held on 18 December 2023 5pm (over Teams) Session can be recorded	
Produce a covering email and send details of stage 1 consultation to	26 November 2023 - a day ahead of the consultation going live to MPs Other organisations		
Contact Ian O Pray, Communications, WNC, and ask that information about the consultation is included in the Member briefing at various stages	25 November – contact Communications Team - articles in the Member Briefing: 1 December 2023 15 December 5 January 2024 and 26 January (reminder that the consultation closes on 31 January)		
Following consultation			
Report to the meeting of the Democracy and Standards committee on 25 March 2024 regarding the draft recommendations	Report to Democracy and Standards 25 March 2024 (MW/PH)		
Report to the meeting of full on 21 March 2024 regarding the draft recommendations			
Consult on the draft recommendations	Timetable to be update to include draft programme		

from 1 April to end of July 2024	of consultation for the draft recommendations		
Community Governance Order made Oct – November 2024	Dates to be added		
New Community Governance comes into force	1 May 2025		

Community Governance Review – Frequently Asked Questions

What is a community governance review?

A Community Governance Review is a way for councils to make sure that, at the parish level, governance arrangements are working as efficiently and effectively as they should be. This is achieved by asking the public, parish councils and any interested parties whether they feel their communities are suitably represented and whether parish councils would like to see any changes made to their current governance arrangements.

We have the power to undertake such reviews under Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the relevant national guidance document.

What can a Community Governance Review do?

A Community Governance Review can make a number of changes to parish councils when there is clear evidence to do so:

- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing 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
- Group parishes together under a common parish.

What can't a Community Governance Review do?

A Community Governance Review cannot:

- 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 through your council tax (known as 'precept')
- Change individual parish councillors
- Create a unitary authority.

What are Terms of Reference?

The Council is required by law to draw up Terms of Reference for a Community Governance Review. As a minimum, the Terms of Reference must specify the area under review and be published. Terms of Reference can also include information such as:

- The purpose of the review
- The issues that will be considered
- The timetable and procedures to be followed.

What role do parish councils perform?

Parish councils are the most local form of government. They collect money from Council Tax payers (via West Northants Council) known as a "precept" and this is used to invest in the area to improve services or facilities. Parish councils can take different forms but usually are made up of local people who stand for election as parish councillors to represent their area. They can be the voice of the local community and work with other tiers of government and

external organisations to co-ordinate and deliver services and work to improve the quality of life in the area.

What are grouped parishes?

It may best be considered as a working alliance of parishes that have come together under a common parish council, with the electors of each of the grouped parishes electing a designated number of councillors to the council. It has been found to be an effective way of ensuring parish government for small parishes that might otherwise be unviable as separate units, while otherwise guaranteeing their separate community identity.

The council recognises that the grouping of parishes needs to be compatible with the retention of community interests and notes the government's guidance that "it would be inappropriate for it to be used to build artificially large units under single parish councils." A grouping order is permitted under **Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1972**.

What are Parish Wards?

Parishes or towns can be divided into wards for the purpose of electing councillors. Again, this could depend upon the size and make up of a proposed council. The government guidance requires that consideration be given to the number and distribution of local government electors which could make a single election of councillors impractical or inconvenient or it may be desirable for areas within the town or parish to be separately represented.

The government's guidance is that "the warding of parishes in largely rural areas that are based predominantly on a single centrally-located village may not be justified. Conversely, warding may be appropriate where the parish encompasses a number of villages with separate identities, a village with a large rural hinterland or where, on the edges of towns, there has been some urban overspill into the parish."

What is a community governance order?

The review will be completed when the council adopts a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order. The Order will specify when it will take effect for financial and administrative purposes and when the electoral arrangements for a new or existing parish council will come into force.

Copies of this Order, the map(s) that show the effects of the order in detail and the document(s) which set out the reasons for the decisions that the council has taken (including where it has decided to make no change following a review), will be available at the council's offices and website.

In accordance with the guidance issued by the government, the council will issue maps to illustrate each recommendation at a scale that will not normally be smaller than 1:10,000. These maps will be deposited with the Secretary of State at the Department of Communities and Local Government and at the council's offices. Prints will also be supplied, in accordance with the regulations, to Ordnance Survey, the Registrar General, the Land Registry, the Valuation Office Agency, the Boundary Commission for England and the Electoral Commission.

What do "electoral arrangements" mean?

An important part of our review will comprise giving consideration to electoral arrangements. The term covers the way in which a council is constituted for the parish. It covers:

- The ordinary year in which elections are held;
- The number of councillors to be elected to the council;
- The division (or not) of the parish into wards for the purpose of electing councillors;
- The number and boundaries of any such wards;
- The number of councillors to be elected for any such ward; and
- The name of any such ward. The government's guidance is that "each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and the pattern of communities," and therefore the council is prepared to pay particular attention to existing levels of representation, the broad pattern of existing council sizes which have stood the test of time and the take-up of seats at elections in its consideration of this matter.
- Parishes wishing to increase numbers must give strong reasons for doing so. The number of parish or town councillors for each council must be not less than five but can be greater. However, each parish grouped under a common parish council must have at least one parish councillor.

Is there an ideal size for a parish council?

The National Association of Local Councils provides the following guidance regarding the number of Parish/Town Councillors:

Electors	Councillors
1 – 900	7
901 – 1400	8
1401 – 2000	9
2001 – 2700	10
2701 – 3500	11
3501 - 4400	12
4401 - 5400	13
5401 - 6500	14
6501 - 7700	15
11,800 – 13,300	18