

South Oxfordshire District Council

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Introduction

The council's Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee ("the committee") has agreed to undertake a community governance review (CGR) pursuant to Part 4, Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 of part of the district of South Oxfordshire. The 2007 Act vested powers in the council to undertake such a review and the council has delegated those powers to the committee.

The committee will undertake the review in accordance with the guidance on community governance reviews issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) in March 2010 ("the guidance").

What is a Community Governance Review?

Community Governance Reviews provide the opportunity for South Oxfordshire District Council to review and make changes to community governance within the area. The recommendations made in such a review have two main objectives:

- To improve community engagement and better local democracy.
- To enable more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

A Community Governance Review considers one or more of the following:

- Altering the existing boundary of a parish.
- Creating, merging or abolishing parishes.
- Changing the name of existing parishes.
- The electoral arrangements for parishes (e.g. how many parish councillors are required and parish warding).
- Grouping parishes under a common parish council, or de-grouping parishes.
- The "style" of a new parish (enabling an area to be known as a town, community, neighbourhood or village rather than a parish).

Proposals for consideration

The committee proposes to consider the following parish matters:

CGR reference	Parish/Area	Matters to be considered
CGR A	Ewelme Parish Council	Proposal to increase number of parish councillors from 6 to 7
CGR B	Stoke Row Parish Council	Proposal to increase number of parish councillors from 6 to 8
CGR C	Woodcote Parish Council	Proposal to increase number of parish councillors from 10 to 12

CGR D	Didcot Town Council	Review town warding arrangements implemented as part of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England 2024 review of Oxfordshire County Council
CGR E	Henley-on-Thames Town Council	
CGR F	Thame Town Council	
CGR G	Watlington and Pyrton parishes	Review of parish boundary along lines of the proposed relief road
CGR H	Shirburn and Pyrton parishes	Review of parish boundary to include the whole of Shirburn Castle Park in the parish of Shirburn
CGR I	Clifton Hampden and Dorchester parishes	Review of parish boundary to include whole of Linnet Close in Clifton Hampden parish
CGR J	Thame and Great Haseley parishes	Amending the boundary of the parish to include land currently in Great Haseley parish, within Thame parish
CGR K	Nuneham Courtenay Parish Council	To review options for grouping the parish with a neighbouring parish council.

Assessment criteria

The factors that the council will take into account in making decisions are as follows:

- natural or man-made boundaries that help to define clearly one community from another
- housing developments that straddle parish boundaries, thereby resulting in people being in different parishes from their neighbours
- effective and convenient representation of local residents at parish level
- views expressed in relation to any changes, particularly from those people directly affected
- the extent to which proposals reflect the identities and interests of the affected community
- the size and population of the local community

Why is the Council undertaking the review?

The guidance states that it is good practice for principal councils (in this context that means this council) to undertake CGRs every 10-15 years. The council completed a review of the whole district in 2014 and agreed to undertake a further review every four years with any changes to be implemented for the next scheduled elections. Reviews were subsequently undertaken and changes were implemented at the scheduled elections in May 2015, May 2019 and May 2023. Any changes agreed as part of this review will be implemented for the elections in May 2027.

In late 2025 the council invited parish councils to submit matters for review. The council's Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee considered all the formal requests at its meeting on 13 January 2026 and agreed to review those matters set out under proposals for consideration.

Consultation

The committee will consult formally on the review and will take full account of the views made by, and suggestions of local people and organisations. In particular, the council will consult local government electors/residents in the relevant parishes, town and parish councils, district councillors and the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils.

Timetable

The 2007 Act requires the council to complete a CGR within 12 months of the date of publication of terms of reference. The proposed timetable complies with the legal requirement.

Action	Completion Date
Publication of terms of reference	26 February 2026
Initial consultation commences	26 February 2026
Initial consultation closes	9 April 2026
Committee agrees draft proposals for consultation	May 2026
Further consultation commences	May/June 2026
Further consultation closes	July 2026
Committee agrees whether to make changes	September 2026
Community Governance Order completed and consequential matters in place for implementation at the parish council elections in May 2027	Autumn 2026

How to make comments

Please submit any comments via email to cgr@southandvale.gov.uk

The council does not require a hard copy of any submission. For those without access to email please send any submission to:

CGR (Elections Team)
South Oxfordshire District Council
Abbey House
Abbey Close
Abingdon
OX14 3JE

Should you require any further information or need clarification on the review process, please contact the elections team the email or address above.