

Stroud District Council

Community Governance Review 2026

Information – Phase 1 Consultation

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Stroud District Council is carrying out a Community Governance Review (CGR) in accordance with Part 4, Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 for a select number of Parish and Town Councils. The review will have regard to this Act plus guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Committee for England (LGBCE) - [Guidance on community governance reviews](#).
- 1.2. The Parish and Town Councils included as part of this review are;
 - Brimscombe and Thrupp
 - Chalford
 - Frampton on Severn
 - Great Oldbury
 - Minchinhampton
 - Standish
 - Upton St Leonards
- 1.3. The principal authority has agreed to review the areas identified under 1.2 above to ensure that:

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

1.4. With Stroud District Council proceeding through Local Government Reorganisation, there is a possibility that Parish and Town Council elections will be brought in line with the Unitary Shadow Council elections in May 2027 rather than being held as originally scheduled in May 2028. Therefore, if changes are considered appropriate and agreed as part of the review, the Council will aim for these to be implemented from the 1 April 2027.

2. What can a Community Governance Review do?

2.1. A CGR provides an opportunity to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries, which reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government. It can:

- Create, merge, or abolish parishes;
- Alter the boundaries of existing parishes;
- Change the name of existing parishes and the style of new parishes;
- Change the electoral arrangements for parishes (the number of councillors to be elected to the council and parish warding); and
- Group parishes under a common parish council or de-group parishes.

2.2. A CGR cannot:

- Change the number of district or county councillors;
- Change district or county ward boundaries;
- Change the amount of money that a parish council raises through council tax (known as 'precept');
- Change the individual councillors; or
- Create a unitary authority.

3. Who will undertake the review?

3.1. As the relevant principal authority, Stroud District Council is responsible for conducting the CGR within its electoral area. The principal authority will oversee and in conjunction with a Member Working Group, produce the draft and final recommendations. The final recommendations will be approved at the principal authorities Full Council meeting before a Community Governance Order (Order) is made.

3.2. Although the principal authority will undertake the review, Parish and Town Councils also play an important role in publicising the Community Governance Review within their respective areas and encouraging people to respond to the consultation.

4. Consultation

4.1. As the principal authority, the council is required to consult the local government electors for the area under review and any other person or body who appears to have an interest in the review and to take representations that are received into account.

- 4.2. The principal authority will comply with the statutory consultative requirements by:
- Consulting local government electors for the area under review;
 - Consulting any other person or body (including a local authority) which appears to the Council to have an interest in the review;
 - Notifying and consulting Gloucestershire County Council;
 - Taking into account any representations received in connection with the review.
- 4.3 The Council will publicise the review by displaying a notice at the Council Offices and on the council's website. The Council will write to the parish councils or any other community groups of which the council is aware of within the areas under review, the Gloucestershire Association of Local Councils (formerly Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils), District Councillors, the relevant County Councillors, the MP's and Gloucestershire County Council.

5. Indicative timetable for the review

- 5.1. Legislation specifies the process to be followed including two consultation stages as set out in the timetable below:

Stage	Action	Timescale
Commencement	Publish terms of reference and timetable.	17 July 2026
Consultation Stage 1	Initial submissions invited.	17 July 2026 – 9 September 2026
Stage 2	Consideration of submissions received and draft recommendations prepared.	10 September 2026 – 9 October 2026
	Draft Recommendations published	12 October 2026
Consultation Stage 3	Consultation on draft recommendations	12 October 2026 – 15 November 2026
Stage 4	Final recommendations prepared.	16 November 2026 – 30 November 2026
Stage 5	Recommendations submitted to full Council for approval.	17 December 2026
Stage 6	Reorganisation of Community Governance Order made where necessary	December 2026 – January 2027

Please note that the timetable is subject to change.

- 5.2 Any Order made following a CGR should, for administrative and financial reasons (for example setting up a new parish council and arranging for its first precept), should take effect on the 1st April following the date on which the Order is made. Electoral arrangements will come into force at the first elections to any new parish council following the making of the Order. Parish Council elections are currently scheduled for May 2028, however these may be brought forward in line with the expected Shadow Unitary Council Elections taking place in May 2027 due to Local Government Reorganisation.
- 5.3 If changes are made which affect District Ward and/or County Division boundaries, the Council will ask the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to consider amending the ward and/or division boundaries to match.

6. Criteria for a Community Governance Review

- 6.1. Section 93 of the 2007 Act requires the principal authority to ensure that the community governance within the areas under the review will be:
- Reflective of the identifies and interests of the community in that area; and
 - Effective and convenient.
- 6.2. When considering the criteria identified in the 2007 Act, principal Councils should take into account several influential factors, including:
- The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and;
 - The size population and boundaries of a local community or parish.

In considering this guidance, the impact on community cohesion is linked specifically to the identified and interests of local communities. Size, population, and boundaries are linked to both but perhaps more specifically to community governance being effective and convenient.

- 6.3. Any changes agreed as part of the review should lead to improved local democracy; enhanced community engagement; and better local service delivery reflective of the parish.

7. How to respond to the consultation

- 7.1. The council welcomes representations during the specified consultation stages as set out in the timetable from any person or body who may wish to comment or make proposals on any aspect of the matters included within the Review.
- 7.2. We ask that when considering representations for alterations to boundaries or parish wards that maps are submitted as part of the supporting evidence. This will aid the Working Group in understanding the requests being made.
- 7.3. The quickest and most cost-effective way to respond is by using the online survey: www.stroud.gov.uk/elections.
- 7.4. Alternatively, responses can also be made by downloading a pdf version of the survey above and returning your submission by either

- Email – elections@stroud.gov.uk
- Post or hand delivery to:
Electoral Services (CGR),
Stroud District Council,
Ebley Mill,
Ebley Wharf,
Stroud,
GL5 4UB

7.5. You can also request a hardcopy to be posted out to you by calling 01453 766321. Copies are also available from reception at Ebley Mill.

7.6. Prior to responding please ensure you have read through and understood the Terms of Reference relating to this CGR and the guidance contained herewith.

7.7. All responses should be provided in writing where possible and should be evidence based.

8. What should be covered within your response to the consultation?

8.1. Considering the Terms of Reference, we are seeking your views on what the Community Governance arrangements for your area should be. In support of your proposal, you will also need to explain how it might derive the following benefits:

- Improved community engagement
- Enhanced community cohesion
- Better local democracy
- More effective and convenient delivery of local services and local government.

8.2. You should also explain and evidence how your proposal reflects the identities and interests of the community.

8.3. The CGR will be more likely to recommend changes or no changes based on qualitative evidence received. It is important therefore to fully explain / evidence your response to allow the Working Group to consider the impacts of and reasons for your proposal.

8.4. We encourage the presentation of good argument and evidence rather than assertion; responses should include explanation as to why the particular viewpoint is being submitted.

8.5. Examples of information that could be provided to support proposals:

- Evidence of Parish/Town Council decisions e.g. Minutes of a Parish/Town Council Meeting.
- Evidence of public support.
- Electorate forecasts.
- Supporting maps (see 8.6 below)
- Evidence of more than 1 candidate coming forward for vacant posts (casual vacancies).
- Evidence of a small or large workload for each elected Councillor

- Recent elections results as evidence of difficulties filling existing seats or having contested elections.
- Evidence of a community identity or the impact of changes on community identity.
- Evidence of particular ties or linkages to an area.
- Evidence that the recommended community governance arrangements would meet the criteria set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

8.6. Any proposal to amend boundaries **must** be evidenced with appropriate maps detailing the changes being suggested. Maps must be an appropriate scale and show:

- The current boundary of the Parish as a whole.
- The proposed amended boundary for the Parish.
- Specific changes in more detail so that we can clearly identify individual houses or community assets affected.

8.7. All submissions will be carefully considered and when we publish our draft recommendations all such responses will be published on the council's website. Personal information such as address and contact details will be redacted in accordance with general data protection regulations.

8.8. We will not publish any submissions that are rejected for undue brevity, or which are wholly uncertain.

9. When will participants know the outcome of the Review?

9.1. The Review timetable at section 3 of the Terms of Reference (and section 5 above) sets out when each stage of the review will happen.

10. Further guidance

For further information please use the following:

- [Stroud District Council Website](http://www.stroud.gov.uk)
- [Government Guidance for councils on undertaking community governance reviews](#)

Alternatively please contact us by email: elections@stroud.gov.uk or by phone: 01453 766321.

Appendix A – Governance and electoral arrangement FAQs

What are Electoral Arrangements?

Electoral Arrangements are the way in which a council is constituted for the parish and they are an important part of the review. They comprise:

- 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.

What are Parishes?

The whole of Stroud District is parished with no unparished areas.

Parishes should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity; ensuring that electors are able to clearly identify with the parish in which they are resident, creating a common interest in parish affairs which will, in turn, encourage participation in parish elections. The Government expects the creation rather than the abolition of parishes.

Whilst there is no minimum electorate required to create a parish, it is recommended that where there are fewer than 150 electors the area is made into a Parish meeting instead of a Parish Council.

Boundaries

It will be desirable for Parish or Town Council boundaries to be readily identifiable and follow natural boundary lines. This can be by reference to physical features or may follow adopted electoral ward boundaries in the district such as rivers, fields, railways and major roads. Any changes should also take into account population shifts or additional development that may have affected community identity.

Parish Council or Parish Meeting

The principal authority has a duty to create, or not, a parish council and must follow the guidance laid down in legislation as follows:

- Where the number of electors is 1,000 or more the review must recommend that the parish should have a council;
- Where the number of electors is 151-999 a parish council may be created, with a parish meeting being the alternative form of governance; and
- Where the number of electors is 150 or fewer and does not currently have a council the review must recommend that a parish council is not created; and
- Where the number of electors is 150 or fewer and currently has a council the principal council must decide whether or not the parish should have a council.

What is the grouping of parishes

In some areas of the country small rural parishes have been 'grouped' under a common parish council. This arrangement permits the parish to survive as a separate entity with its own parish meeting, and therefore a grouping arrangement is quite distinct to a warding arrangement.

Grouping Orders are permitted under Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1972.
Grouped parishes can be seen

as a working alliance with the election of a set number of councillors to the 'common council' from each of the grouped parishes.

Grouping parish councils can be effective in ensuring parish government where small parishes are not viable on their own but allows their separate community identity to continue.

Names and styles

With regard to the names of parishes, the principal authority (Stroud District Council) will endeavour to reflect existing local or historic place-names and will also consider any ward names proposed by interested parties.

Alternative styles for parishes were introduced by the 2007 Act which could replace the 'parish' style. The alternative styles that may be applied to parishes, in addition to parish or town, are:

- (a) Community;
- (b) Neighbourhood; and
- (c) Village.

If an existing parish is under review, the principal authority will make recommendations as to whether the geographical name of the parish should change but it may not make recommendations for the parish about alternative style. It will be for the parish council or parish meeting to resolve whether the parish should have one of the alternative styles.

If a new parish is to be created, the principal authority would make recommendations as to the geographical name of the new parish and whether or not it should have one of the alternative styles.

Number of Parish Councillors

The Government's advice is that, as an important demographic principle, each person's vote should be of equal weight so far as possible, having regard to other legitimate competing factors, when electing parish councillors. The number should not be less than five councillors for each parish council although there is no maximum number and no rules relating to the allocations of councillors.

Legislation dictates that the principal authority must have regard to the following factors when considering the number of councillors to be elected for a parish:

- The number of local government electors for the parish; and
- Any change in that number which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts.

Each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and the pattern of communities. Nevertheless, the broad pattern of existing council sizes should be considered.

Parish and Towns wishing to increase the number of councillors should give strong reasons for doing so.

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) found the following levels of representation to be good for the running of a council:

Electors	Councillors	Electors	Councillors
1 – 900	7	4401 - 5400	13
901 – 1400	8	5401 - 6500	14
1401 – 2000	9	6501 – 7700	15
2001 – 2700	10	7701 – 9000	16
2701 – 3500	11	9001 – 10400	17
3501 - 4400	12	10401 - 11900	18

What are Parish Wards

The principal authority is required to consider the following points when deliberating whether a parish should be divided into wards for the purposes of elections:

- Whether the number, or distribution, of the local government electors for the parish would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
- Whether it is desirable that any area, or areas, of the parish should be separately represented on the council.

The Government's guidance is that warding of parishes may not be justified for largely rural areas based predominantly on a single centrally located village. Conversely, warding may be appropriate where a parish encompasses a number of villages with separate identities or where there has been urban overspill at the edge of a town into a parish.

The number and boundaries of Parish Wards

In respect of the number and boundaries of any parish wards, the principal authority will take into account the criteria stated above, in particular the community identity and interests in an area, but also whether any particular ties or links might be broken by the drawing of particular ward boundaries. Parish wards must be easily identifiable and remain so in the future.

Any recommendations which are intended to reflect community identities and links will be supported by relevant evidence. Although the Government's guidance is that district wards and county divisions should not split an unwarded parish, and that no parish ward should be split by such a boundary, the relevant legal provisions do not apply to reviews of parish electoral arrangements.

The Number of Councillors to be Elected for Parish Wards

The following will be taken into account when considering any changes to the size and boundaries of any parish wards and the number of councillors to be elected for each ward:

- The number of local government electors for the parish; and

- Any change in the number, distribution, of the local government electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day the review commences.

What should the name of Parish Wards be?

With regard to the naming of parish wards, the principal authority will endeavour to reflect existing local or historic place-names and will consider any ward names proposed by local interested parties.

Reorganisation of 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 and when the electoral arrangements for a new or existing parish council will come into force

Copies of the Order, maps detailing the effects of the Order, and documents setting out the reasons for all decisions made whether for change or no change will be published and made available for inspection.

It is expected that the Order will take effect from 1 April 2027 but any changes to electoral arrangements for existing parishes will come into force at the next ordinary elections for the parish council which are expected in May 2027 or May 2028.

Can Additional Parishes be added to the review?

No, the [terms of reference](#) of the CGR were agreed by Full Council on the 16 July 2026 and named the areas included within the scope of the review. There is no opportunity for Parishes to be added to the review during the process.