

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Community Governance Review?

A Community Governance Review (CGR) is a way for District Councils (principal authority) to make sure that, at 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 where there is clear evidence to do so, it can:

- Create, merge, alter or abolish 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 parish/town council or parish meeting; and
- Group parishes together under a common parish.

Why are we doing a Community Governance Review?

Following the Community Governance Review (CGR) undertaken in 2022-2023, the Council agreed that a further CGR should be undertaken ahead of the next scheduled parish elections in May 2028. This was intended to allow time for new and developing communities to become established and for residents to be meaningfully consulted in those areas.

Government guidance states that it is good practise to conduct a full CGE at least every 10-15 years. The Council undertook a full review in 2019 and therefore a full district wide CGR is not necessary. In advance of producing the Draft Terms of Reference, all Parish and town Councils were contacted to invite any further requests for a CGR.

Which areas are under review?

Parish/Town Council	Reason for a CGR
Brimscombe and Thrupp Parish Council	To consider increasing the number of Councillors on the Parish Council (currently 9). To review the southern electoral boundary with Minchinhampton Parish (area south of Brimscombe Port including Brimscombe C of E Primary School and Brimscombe Church).
Chalford Parish Council	To consider increasing the number of Councillors on the Parish Council (currently 9). To review the southern electoral boundary with Minchinhampton Parish (area south of Brimscombe Port including Brimscombe C of E Primary School and Brimscombe Church).
Frampton on Severn Parish Council	To consider reducing the number of Councillors on the Parish Council (currently 10).
Great Oldbury Parish Council	To consider increasing the number of Councillors on the Parish Council (currently 7). To review the northern boundary with

	Standish Parish Council (area comprising the development of PS19a).
Minchinhampton Parish Council	Following Brimscombe and Thrupp Parish Council's submission to review their northern electoral boundary, Minchinhampton requested to be part of the review.
Standish Parish Council	To review the southern boundary with Great Oldbury Parish Council (area comprising the development of PS19a).
Upton St Leonards Parish Council	A submission was received from Upton St Leonards Parish Council (Stroud District Council area), Brockworth Parish Council (Tewkesbury Borough Council area) and Hucclecote Parish Council (Tewkesbury Borough Council area) which demonstrated a clear aspiration to create a single parish council covering the whole of the Coopers Edge development. However, this outcome cannot be achieved through a CGR as the powers are limited to parish governance arrangements within the principal authority area undertaking the review (Stroud District Council). As Coopers Edge spans both Stroud District Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council areas, the creation of a single parish council would require changes to the principal authority boundary. This would instead require a Principal Area Boundary Review undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). Whilst the creation of a single parish council for Coopers Edge cannot be considered through this review, the Council may consider other matters that fall within the scope of a Community Governance Review. Upton St Leonards Parish Council indicated that although it does not support the introduction of parish warding arrangements it has requested that it be included within the Community Governance Review. The Community Governance Review would provide an opportunity to consult with residents and ascertain local views on Community governance arrangements within the parish and consider whether any changes should be made to ensure they remain effective, convenient and reflective of local communities.

Can Parishes be added to the review?

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

What can't a Community Governance Review do?

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.

What are the timescales?

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	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 this timetable is subject to change.

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.

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.

What are the Terms of Reference?

The [Terms of Reference](#) define the purpose, areas for review, consultation information and timetable for undertaking the Community Governance Review. The Terms of Reference also include information relating to the electorate forecasts and any consequential matters. The Terms of Reference had to be approved by Full Council before the review could commence.

Who makes the final decision on any changes?

The Community Governance Review Members Working Group will need to consider any comments and evidence received as part of the consultation process and will have the final say on any draft recommendations. The decision on the final recommendations rests with Full Council.

What if we don't agree with the recommendations?

Whilst we will listen to all representations received, it is ultimately up to the Council and Working Group to make the final decision in relation to how community governance should be undertaken.

What role do Parish and Town Councils perform?

Parish and Town Councils are the most local form of government. They collect money from Council Tax payers (via the district 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.

How do I respond to the CGR consultation?

The quickest and most cost-effective way to respond is by using the online survey: <https://forms.office.com/e/j0h1bjfWKG>

Alternatively, representations 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

You can also request a hardcopy to be posted out to you by calling 01453 766321, or you can complete a paper version in reception.

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

All responses should be provided in writing where possible and should be evidence based. Responses should be qualitative and should provide explanations for proposals.

What do "electoral arrangements" mean?

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 and a request for a Parish Council to be created is received, that instead the area is made into a Parish meeting.

Viability

The government has a commitment to improve the capacity of the parish structure to deliver better services and to represent the community's interests. Therefore, the council is anxious to ensure that parishes should be viable and should possess a precept that enables them to actively and effectively promote the wellbeing of their residents and to contribute to the real provision of services in their areas in an economic and efficient manner.

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 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](#).

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?

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 of 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 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 "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."

How many boundaries can be included in 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.

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 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.