

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 13 April 2026

**Report Title**

Community Governance Review

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

**Executive Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Judith Badger, Executive Director of Corporate Services

**Report Author(s)**

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**Ward(s) Affected**

Boroughwide

**Report Summary**

The Council has a duty to keep under review the electoral arrangements of its parishes, including town and community councils. The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Cabinet to commence a Boroughwide Community Governance Review.

Following initial consultation, a draft recommendations report will be brought to Cabinet for approval in Autumn 2026, to be followed by a further consultation. Following this consultation on the draft recommendations, a final recommendations report will be brought to Cabinet. It is a function of Council to approve the final recommendations arising from the review.

**Recommendations**

That Cabinet:

1. Approves the commencement of a Boroughwide Community Governance Review.
2. Approves the Terms of Reference of the review as set out in Appendix 1.
3. Approves the timetable for review as set out in Appendix 2.

4. Approves that should any Community Governance Reviews be triggered by petition during the Boroughwide review, Cabinet agrees to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to amend the Terms of Reference as appropriate.
5. Note that a draft recommendations report will be brought for approval following the first round of consultation.
6. Note that a final recommendations report will be brought for approval following the second round of consultation. Cabinet will be asked to approve the final recommendations and recommend the report to Council.

### **List of Appendices Included**

- Appendix 1 Terms of Reference
- Appendix 2 Community Governance Review Timetable
- Appendix 3 Part A – Initial equality screening assessment form
- Appendix 4 Carbon impact assessment CIA 609

### **Background Papers**

[Guidance on community governance reviews](#) [Department for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, March 2010]

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**  
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

### **Council Approval Required**

No

### **Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Community Governance Review**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 devolves the power to take decisions about matters such as the creation, changes, and abolishment of parishes to principal councils.
- 1.2 A Community Governance Review (CGR) is the legal process that a principal council must follow to consult with those residing in the area, and other interested parties, on the most suitable ways of representing the people in the area identified in the review. This means making sure that those living in the area, and other interested groups, have a say in how their local communities are represented. The former Department of Communities and Local Government and the Electoral Commission have produced Guidance on Community Governance Reviews.
- 1.3 A CGR can consider one or more of the following:
  - the creation, merger, alteration or abolishment of a parish
  - the naming of a parish and the style of a new parish
  - the electoral arrangements for a parish (i.e. the ordinary year of election; council size; number of councillors to be elected to the council and parish warding)
  - the grouping or de-grouping of parishes; and
  - other types of arrangements including parish meetings.
- 1.4 The Council has a duty to keep under review the arrangements of its parishes. As set out in the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews, it is considered good practice for a principal council to conduct a review every 10-15 years.

### **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 The last Boroughwide review in Rotherham took place in 2008. Since then, there has been significant new development and population movement across the Borough. The Borough has also been in dialogue with Ravenfield Parish Council who have expressed a desire to have a reconsideration of their Parish Boundaries.
- 2.2 Following the good practice arrangement set out in the Guidance on community governance reviews, conducting a Boroughwide review would allow any approved recommendations to come into force at the next scheduled elections on 4 May 2028.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 **Option 1:** That the Council undertakes a Boroughwide CGR as outlined in the Terms of Reference in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The review would cover the whole of the Borough, whether currently parished or not. The review would consider fundamental issues such as whether

parishes should be created in parts of the Borough which do not presently have them, whether current parish boundaries should be altered other than merely to address anomalies, whether existing parishes might be amalgamated, or whether new parishes might be created from within existing parishes.

- 3.3 Carrying out a review would help ensure that parish boundaries continue to reflect the identities and interests of the communities they serve, are meaningful, and facilitate the delivery of effective and convenient services.
- 3.4 **Option 2:** The Council does not undertake a Boroughwide CGR. This option could be considered as not meeting the Council's duty to keep its parish arrangements under review.
- 3.5 Not commencing a review would mean the Council would not be following the good practice timeframe for conducting a review, given the last one took place in 2008. It is also possible that an area wishing for a review could require this through the processes available to them in the legislation.
- 3.6 It is recommended that Option 1 is followed.

#### **4. Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 Section 93 (3) of the Act requires that the principal council must consult the following:
  - (a) the local government electors for the area under review.
  - (b) any other person or body (including a local authority) which appears to the principal council to have an interest in the review.
- 4.2 The review would be Boroughwide and involve consultation with electors in parished and unparished areas, parish councils, elected members, local MPs, and other interested parties.

#### **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 The CGR will be conducted in four stages.
  - **Commencement: 1 May 2026**
    - Publication of Terms of Reference
  - **Stage 1: 1 May to 26 June 2026**
    - Public consultation on the current arrangements
  - **Stage 2: July to September 2026**
    - Consultation submissions considered and draft initial recommendations prepared for approval by Cabinet
  - **Stage 3: October 2026 to November 2026**
    - Publication of draft recommendations
    - Public consultation on draft recommendations

- **Stage 4: December 2026 to April 2027**
  - Consultation submissions considered and draft final recommendations prepared for approval by Cabinet
  - Cabinet to make final recommendations to Council
  - Council resolves to make a reorganisation Order for any approved recommendations
- **Implementation** of approved recommendations at the scheduled elections: 4 May 2028

The full CGR timetable is set out in Appendix 2.

- 5.2 **Commencement:** The CGR would commence with the Council publishing the Terms of Reference for the review (Appendix 1) on 1 May 2026. If any modifications to the Terms of Reference are required during the review, these must also be published.
- 5.3 **Stage 1:** An eight-week public consultation will commence on 1 May 2026, to allow any interested parties to comment on the current arrangements and make proposals for change. The consultation will be available on the Council website, as well as paper copies in libraries across the Borough and parish council buildings. Responses can be submitted online, paper response form, email, or letter.
- 5.4 Interested persons, including Borough and Parish Councillors, Parish Councils and MPs will be notified of the commencement of a CGR.
- 5.5 An Officer Working Group will review the consultation responses. If necessary, clarification will be sought from respondents about their proposals and where appropriate, discussions will take place with any parishes and community groups that could be impacted by them.
- 5.6 **Stage 2:** The Officer Working Group will prepare a set of initial draft recommendations for approval by Cabinet in Autumn 2026.
- 5.7 **Stage 3:** Following approval by Cabinet, the draft recommendations will be published, interested persons informed and a second eight-week consultation period will commence in October 2026. The aim of the consultation is to gather any opinions for or against the draft recommendations.
- 5.8 Consideration will be given to targeted consultation where significant changes may be proposed in the draft recommendations, such as the abolishment or significant change to an existing parish, or the creation of a new parish.
- 5.9 **Stage 4:** Following the consultation on the draft recommendations, the Officer Working Group will review the responses and produce final recommendations for Cabinet to approve and recommend to Council in early 2027.

- 5.10 The final recommendations which could be made to Cabinet and Council following the review are:
- a) The constitution of new parishes. This might include the establishment as a parish of any area which is presently not a parish or part of one. It could also include the aggregation of such an area with one or more existing parishes or parts of parishes, the amalgamation of two or more parishes or the separation of part of any parish;
  - b) The abolition of a parish, with or without the distribution of its area among other parishes; or
  - c) The alteration of the area of a parish.
- 5.11 If the Council makes any recommendation for the constitution of a new parish, they must include recommendations for the establishment of a new parish council. However, if the population of the new parish recommended would include fewer than two hundred local government electors, the Council is not obliged to recommend the creation of a new parish council for that area, although it may do so.
- 5.12 Council to consider the final recommendations and resolve to make an Order to implement the approved recommendations, which would come into force at the next scheduled elections on 4 May 2028.
- 5.13 Consideration will be given to conducting a Polling District and Polling Places review during 2027, following the completion of the CGR.
- 5.14 The aim of a Polling District and Polling Places review is to ensure that all electors have reasonable facilities for voting and that every polling place is accessible to all electors who are disabled. It will also provide the opportunity to review the existing polling district boundaries to support the implementation of the approved recommendations from the CGR review.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations detailed in this report.
- 6.2 It is anticipated that the cost of staffing any CGR or consultation process will be absorbed within the existing Electoral Services budget.
- 6.3 As far as possible consultation documents will be made available online, however some printing and posting will be required and the costs associated with this will depend on the scope of the consultation and representations received during the review. Any costs relating to the consultation will be absorbed within the Electoral Services budget.
- 6.4 The cost of parish elections is incurred by the Council but is recharged to the parishes where a contested election is held. As it is envisaged that any changes to electoral arrangements would be implemented at the scheduled

elections in 2028, there should be no additional election costs arising from any agreed recommendations.

- 6.5 Any changes to the boundaries may affect the parish precept that residents affected by a boundary change will pay; any changes to precepts and council tax bills would be applied from the date the adopted recommendations from the review become effective. In line with Para. 14.5 of the Terms of Reference (appendix 1) for this review, changes will be implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2028.

## **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

- 7.1 The process which the Council must follow when undertaking a CGR is set out in Part 4, Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and this is followed in the body of the report in respect of the proposed CGR.
- 7.2 As referred to above, Government guidance states that a CGR covering the whole of a Local authority's area should be undertaken every 10 to 15 years and as such it is appropriate for this CGR to be commenced. Further the Terms of Reference as drafted are consistent with the legislation above and the relevant Government guidance.

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 There are no implications for Human Resources.

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 9.1 There are no implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults arising from this report.

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

- 10.1 There are no implications for equalities and human rights arising from this report.

## **11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change**

- 11.1 The implications for CO2 emissions and Climate Change are low. A Carbon Impact Assessment is set out in Appendix 4.

## **12. Implications for Partners**

- 12.1 There are no implications for partners arising from this report.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

- 13.1 The 2007 Act requires that local people are consulted during a CGR, that representations received in connection with the review are considered and that steps are taken to notify respondents of the outcomes of such reviews

including any decisions. When undertaking the review, the Council must have regard to the need to ensure that community governance reflects the identities and interests of the community in the area under review, and it is effective and convenient.

- 13.2 Following consultation, there may be representations from individuals or parish councils where the proposals are in conflict or contradictory. This may present a risk that a local amicable solution will not be possible, and the Council will have to adjudicate.
- 13.3 There is potential for requests for new parishes, and it will be necessary for the Council to ensure they would be sustainable and there would be enough interest from local people to serve as councillors. To mitigate and manage these risks, support and guidance is available from Yorkshire Local Councils Association, the Council, and the local Parish Network.
- 13.4 Without effective consultation there is the risk that recommendations arising from the review would not reflect the identities and interests of local communities or effective and convenient community governance. That risk is sought to be mitigated by the proposed consultation.

#### **14. Accountable Officers**

Phillip Horsfield, Service Director, Legal, Elections and Registration Services

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

|                                                             | <b>Named Officer</b> | <b>Date</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Chief Executive                                             | John Edwards         | 18/03/26    |
| Executive Director of Corporate Services<br>(S.151 Officer) | Judith Badger        | 11/03/26    |
| Service Director of Legal Services<br>(Monitoring Officer)  | Phil Horsfield       | 12/03/26    |

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