

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 14 September 2026

Report Title

Community Governance Review Interim Update

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)

Mike Thomas, Electoral Services Manager
01709 823268 or mike.thomas@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Boroughwide

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with an interim update on the progress of the Community Governance Review following the completion of the first stage of public consultation.

A report setting out the draft recommendations arising from the review will be presented to Cabinet in October 2026 for consideration and approval. Subject to Cabinet's approval, a second stage of public consultation will be undertaken to seek views on the draft recommendations.

Following the conclusion of the consultation period, a final recommendations report will then be brought to Cabinet. It is a function of Council to approve the final recommendations arising from the review.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Note the progress of the Community Governance Review following completion of the first stage of consultation.
2. Note the proposed next steps in the review process, including the development of draft recommendations, further consultation, and the timetable for reporting final recommendations.
3. Note the extension of the second stage consultation period to twelve weeks to maximise opportunities for engagement with the draft recommendations.

List of Appendices Included

- Appendix 1 Number of consultation responses by area
- Appendix 2 Part A – Initial Equality Screening Assessment
- Appendix 3 Climate Impact Assessment CIA 685

Background Papers

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

[Community Governance Review Cabinet Report](#), 13 April 2026

[Community Governance Review Terms of Reference](#), 13 April 2026

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Community Governance Review

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council has a duty to keep under review the arrangements of its parish, town and community councils through a statutory process known as a Community Governance Review, undertaken in accordance with Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 1.2 A Community Governance Review sets out the steps 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 Community Governance Review 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 Following approval by Cabinet on 13 April 2026, Rotherham Council commenced a Community Governance Review on 1 May 2026.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 An initial consultation took place between 1 May and 26 June 2026, providing residents, local councils, community groups, and other stakeholders with the opportunity to submit their views on existing governance arrangements and any potential changes they would wish the review to consider.
- 2.2 The consultation was accessible via the Council's consultation portal and in paper format at all Rotherham libraries. To support public engagement, seven outreach events were held at library locations across the borough, enabling residents to view maps, ask any questions, and submit a response.
- 2.3 The consultation received just under two hundred responses, representing views on existing parish, town, and community councils, together with interest in the establishment of new parish councils. A summary of the number of responses received by area is shown in Appendix 1.
- 2.4 The responses are currently being analysed to identify common themes, levels of support for proposed changes and any alternative suggestions put

forward by respondents. The feedback received demonstrates a range of views across different communities, reflecting local circumstances and priorities.

2.5 Some of the key themes include:

- Strong support for retaining existing arrangements was evident in many areas, with respondents expressing satisfaction with current parish boundaries, governance arrangements, councillor numbers, and parish identities.
- Boundary-related comments formed a significant proportion of responses. These generally focused on ensuring parish boundaries better reflected community identity, patterns of service use, established settlements, new housing developments, or residents' sense of belonging.
- Views on parish warding were mixed. Some respondents supported the removal of parish wards to simplify governance and promote a unified community identity, while others favoured retaining existing ward structures to ensure fair representation of different parts of a parish.
- There was considerable interest in representation and governance arrangements. Responses included suggestions to increase, decrease, or retain the current number of councillors, with comments often linked to concerns about effective representation, vacancies, recruitment challenges, or the efficiency of parish, town or community council decision-making.
- Community identity was a recurring theme. Many respondents emphasised the importance of maintaining local distinctiveness, protecting existing community ties, and ensuring governance arrangements reflected how communities identify themselves.
- A small number of submissions proposed the creation of new parish councils in currently unparished areas. These responses generally cited increased local representation, stronger community advocacy, greater local accountability, and improved focus on community priorities as reasons for establishing a parish council.
- Comments on local facilities, services and community assets were also received, with respondents highlighting the role parish councils play in supporting community buildings, events, environmental improvements, and local initiatives.

2.6 No consultation responses were received in relation to Brampton Bierlow, Gildingwells, Hooton Levitt, Hooton Roberts, Orgreave, Thorpe Salvin, Thrybergh, Todwick, Ulley or Woodsetts Parish Councils.

2.7 **Development of Draft Recommendations:** The Officer Working Group is in the process of reviewing the consultation responses, together with the

statutory criteria for community governance reviews, to inform the development of draft recommendations.

- 2.8 **Next Steps:** An information session for Members will be held during September to provide an overview of the consultation responses and the draft recommendations arising from the review.
- 2.9 The Draft Recommendations report will be presented to Cabinet on 12 October 2026, to seek approval to undertake a second phase of consultation on the draft recommendations.
- 2.10 Subject to Cabinet approval, the second phase of consultation will commence on 26 October 2026. To maximise opportunities for engagement with the draft recommendations, the consultation period will be extended from eight weeks to twelve weeks. Although the consultation will span the Christmas period, the timetable has been designed to provide additional opportunity for participation during January 2027 before the consultation closes.
- 2.11 The consultation will be available online via the Council's consultation portal and in paper format at all Rotherham libraries. Targeted communications and local engagement events will also be undertaken to encourage participation from residents in areas affected by the draft recommendations.
- 2.12 Following the second consultation stage, final recommendations will be prepared and reported to Cabinet in Spring 2027, before being referred to Council for approval. Any approved changes would then be implemented through a Community Governance Order at the next scheduled elections in May 2028.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 This report is for information and provides an interim update on the progress of the Community Governance Review.
- 3.2 It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - 1. Note the progress of the Community Governance Review following completion of the first stage of consultation.
 - 2. Note the proposed next steps in the review process, including the development of draft recommendations, further consultation, and the timetable for reporting final recommendations.
 - 3. Note the extension of the second stage consultation period to twelve weeks to maximise opportunities for engagement with the draft recommendations.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 This report is for information and, therefore, no decision is required and no

consultation needed.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 The CGR will be conducted in four stages.

Commencement: 1 May 2026 - Complete

- Publication of Terms of Reference

Stage 1: 1 May to 26 June 2026 - Complete

- Public consultation on the current arrangements

Stage 2: July to September 2026 – In progress

- Consultation submissions considered and draft initial recommendations prepared for approval by Cabinet.

Stage 3: October 2026 to January 2027

- Publication of draft recommendations
- Public consultation on draft recommendations

Stage 4: January 2027 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: 4 May 2028

- Implementation of approved recommendations at the next scheduled elections.

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 The costs of staffing the CGR and consultation process will continue to 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. Any changes will be implemented on 1st April 2028.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 The Council has the power and duty to undertake Community Governance Reviews under Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. As stated above a Community Governance Review enables the Council to consider the creation, alteration, abolition, grouping or de-grouping of parishes, together with associated electoral arrangements. The Council must conduct the review in accordance with the statutory requirements set out in the 2007 Act and have regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
- 7.2 In undertaking the review, the Council must ensure that appropriate consultation is carried out, that representations received are properly considered, and that any recommendations are based on the statutory criteria, namely the need to secure community governance that reflects the identities and interests of local communities and is effective and convenient. The proposed continuation of public consultation and consideration of consultation responses supports compliance with those duties.

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.
- 10.2 An Initial Equality Screening Assessment has been completed and is attached at Appendix 2.

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 3.
- 11.2 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. 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 consider conducting a review every 10-15 years.

- 11.3 When carrying out a review, the Council must 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. As well as carrying out online consultation, hard copies will be made available in all local libraries to minimise the distance residents would have to travel.
- 11.4 To minimise the distances residents would have to travel to any consultation events held as part of the review, the locations will be chosen to ensure a good geographical spread across the Borough. When travelling to consultation events, where possible, Electoral Services staff will car share.

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 decide.
- 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 of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	John Edwards	21/08/2026
Executive Director of Corporate Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	17/08/2026
Service Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	18/08/2026

Report Author: *Mike Thomas, Electoral Services Manager*
 01709 823268 or mike.thomas@rotherham.gov.uk

This report is published on the Council's [website](#).