

HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL

Community Governance Review of the Horsham District area

Local Government and Public Involvement In Health Act 2007

Terms of Reference

Introduction

Horsham District Council is conducting a Community Governance Review (CGR) of the whole of the Local Authority area in accordance with Part 4 Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The Council is required to have regard to the [Guidance on Community Governance Reviews](#) issued by the Secretary of State and the Local Government Boundary Commission. This guidance was considered when drawing up the Terms of Reference (TOR).

What is a Community Governance Review?

A CGR provides an opportunity for principal authorities to review and make changes to community governance within their area. The Government has emphasised that, ultimately, recommendations made in a CGR ought to improve community engagement, result in more cohesive communities, yield better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

A CGR offers the opportunity to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries, tied to firm ground features and to resolve any anomalous parish boundaries. It can take place for the whole or part of the District to consider one or more of the following:-

- Creating, altering, merging, or abolishing parishes;
- The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes;
- The electoral arrangements for parishes (the ordinary year of election; the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding); and
- Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.

The Council is required to ensure that community governance within the area under review will be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and is effective and convenient. In doing so the community governance review is required to take into account:-

- The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
- The size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.

The aim of the review is to consider and bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and efficient, more effective and convenient delivery of local services and ensure electors across the whole District will be treated equitably and fairly.

Why undertake this Community Governance Review?

From 1 April 2026, the entire district of Horsham will be parished, and will consist of 33 parishes. In recent years, informal enquiries have been made by individuals, and parish councils, in relation to the current arrangements. This includes appropriate warding, as well as the overall parish boundary for various parishes. Further to this, Government guidance advises that a review should be undertaken every 10–15 years and the last full review concluded in 2013.

The Council believes that parish councils could play an important role in terms of community empowerment at the local level and wants to ensure that parish governance within the District is robust, representative and enabled to meet new challenges. Furthermore, it wants to ensure that there is clarity and transparency to the areas that parish councils represent and that the electoral arrangements of parishes – the warding arrangements and the allocations of councillors – are appropriate, equitable and readily understood by their electorate.

Area under review

The Community Governance Review includes the whole of the Horsham District Council area.

Who will undertake the review?

As the principal authority, Horsham District Council is responsible for undertaking any CGR within its electoral area. The Governance Committee will be responsible for approving the draft and final recommendations, and will make any recommendation required to the Full Council for reorganisation orders.

How will the review be carried out?

The Council will publicise the review by displaying a notice at the Council Offices, placing articles on the Council's website, via social media channels and other appropriate routes. The Council will also write to all existing parish councils, the Horsham Association of Local Councils, Parish, District and County Councillors, the MPs, and West Sussex County Council.

In producing its recommendations, the Governance Committee will need to take into account the views of local government electors, and any other person or body which appears to us to have an interest in the review. This will include all parish councils, and West Sussex County Council. A full consultation process will form part of the Review to ensure that the views of these individuals and bodies are captured. There will be two phases of consultation, prior to the production of the final recommendations.

Scope of the review

This Review will consider whether there is a desire and need to make any changes to the arrangements of existing Parish Councils, within the Horsham District. The final recommendations may include the following changes:

- Creating, altering, merging, or abolishing parishes;
- The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes;
- The electoral arrangements for parishes (the ordinary year of election; the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding); and
- Grouping parishes under a common parish council

Timetable for the review

The programme and timeline are provided below.

Stage	Action	Dates
Commencement	Report to Governance Committee to approve the Terms of Reference for the review	18 February 2026
	Commencement of the review and publication of Terms of Reference	19 February 2026
	Inform Parish Councils of the review, and timetable	February 2026
Stage One – Invite initial submissions	Undertake formal consultation with local electors and other interested bodies in accordance with Section 93 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 by means of consultation	May – June 2026 (6 weeks)
	Local briefings and meetings as appropriate with councillors and/or parish representatives	
Stage Two – Consider Submissions	Consideration of submissions received – draft recommendations prepared	June – July 2026
Stage Three – Publish draft recommendations	Governance Committee considers consultation outcomes and draft recommendations, for further consultation	July 2026 Governance Committee meeting
Stage Four – Invite submissions on draft recommendations	Undertake formal consultation with local electors and other interested bodies in accordance with Section 93 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 by means of consultation	August – September 2026 (6 weeks)
	Local briefings and meetings as appropriate with councillors and/or parish representatives	
Stage Five – Publish final recommendations	Governance Committee considers consultation outcomes and final recommendations, and makes recommendations to Full Council for a reorganisation order, if required	October 2026 Governance Committee
	Full Council meeting to approve a reorganisation order, if required	October/November 2026 Full Council

Implementation	Effective date of any changes to parish boundaries, and electoral arrangements The effective date is typically the first 1 April, following a reorganisation order, for financial purposes.	1 April 2027, or other date as specified in the reorganisation order
	Elections to take place to elect councillors based on any agreed changes	1 May 2027

Representations

Horsham District Council welcomes representations from any person or body who may wish to comment or make proposals on any aspect of the matters under review.

Representations should be submitted during the consultation period via the Council's website at <https://www.horsham.gov.uk/council-democracy-and-elections/consultations>, by email to cgr@horsham.gov.uk or in writing addressed to: Democratic Services & Elections Manager (CGR), Horsham District Council, Albery House, Springfield Road, Horsham, RH12 2GB.

The Council will consult with 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 take the representations that are received into account by judging them against the criteria in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and having regard to the statutory guidance.

All representations received will be published, as will the reasons for accepting or rejecting any such representations. In accordance with the Act, representations received in connection with the Review will be taken into account, and steps will be taken to notify consultees of the outcome of the Review.