

**COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Council</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> July 2025</b>
<b>Cabinet Member</b> (if applicable)	<b>Cllr Nosheen Dad (Corporate)</b>
<b>Key Decision Eligible for Call In</b>	No N/A
<b>Purpose of Report</b> That Council consider whether to undertake a Community Governance Review in Kirklees following the recent Local Government Boundary Commission for England full electoral review that took place in 2023/24.	
<b>Recommendations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That Council approves the undertaking of a Community Governance Review in accordance with the relevant legal framework and Government guidance.</li> <li>• In line with Corporate Governance &amp; Audit Committee’s terms of reference, Council to delegate to the Committee to agree the terms of reference of the review and oversee delivery.</li> </ul> <b>Reasons for Recommendations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond to changes following the Local Government Boundary Commission’s full electoral review of the Kirklees District completed in December 2024.</li> <li>• The last CGR in Kirklees took place in 2009. According to guidance from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, good practice for a principal council would be to consider conducting a review every 10-15 years.</li> </ul>	
<b>Resource Implications:</b> The Community Governance Review will be delivered within existing resources and complements existing planned activity. Where additional resources are required to deliver specific actions within the plan, relevant council process and procedure rules will be followed, with value for money clearly demonstrated.	
<b>Date signed off by <u>Executive Director</u> &amp; name</b>	Rachel Spencer-Henshall, Deputy Chief Executive 4/7/2025
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</b>	Kevin Mulvaney, Service Director Finance 1/7/2025
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)?</b>	Samantha Lawton, Service Director Legal & Commissioning 8/7/2025

**Electoral wards affected:** All

**Ward councillors consulted:** Not applicable

**Public or private:** Public

**Has GDPR been considered?** Yes, no personal data is included in this report

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 A Community Governance Review (CGR) is a process that allows upper-tier councils to review and make changes to the governance arrangements of parishes within their area to ensure they continue to reflect the identity and interests of local communities and are as effective and convenient as possible.
- 1.2 According to guidance on CGRs from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, good practice for a principal council would be to consider conducting a review every 10-15 years. The last CGR in Kirklees took place in 2008/9.
- 1.3 The Local Government Boundary Commission commenced a full electoral review of the Kirklees District at the beginning of 2023 and published their final recommendations in December 2024. The Commission have not amended the parish wards as part of their review; however, they have moved a small area from Dewsbury South ward to Kirkburton ward and a very small area from Ravensthorpe into the Mirfield ward. Until a Community Governance Review takes place and Council formally makes a resolution, these small areas will need to remain separate from the Parish Councils in Kirkburton and Mirfield
- 1.4 A principal council can conduct a CGR at any time, however decision-making in relation to community governance reviews cannot be a cabinet function; it requires Council to approve instigation. Once Council has approved a review, the terms of reference and oversight sit with Corporate Governance & Audit Committee (CG&AC).
- 1.5 Parish/Town Councils pay for their own elections. 'All-out' elections for Parishes are already scheduled for May 2027, so to reduce an extra cost burden the review would need to be completed in sufficient time to meet the May 2027 deadline. Therefore, the aim is to formally commence the review on 1st October 2025.

## **2. Information required to take a decision**

### **Background**

- 2.1 A Community Governance Review (CGR) is a process that allows upper-tier councils to review and make changes to the governance arrangements of parishes within their area to ensure they continue to reflect the identity and interests of local communities and are as effective and convenient as possible.
- 2.2 A Review must involve consultation with local people and stakeholders, and consider any representations received. It usually takes between 12 and 18 months to complete with the final recommendations subject to approval by Council.
- 2.3 A CGR is carried out by the principal council and is used to look at the whole or part of a district to identify a need for:
  - creating new parishes, abolishing, merging or altering parishes
  - the naming of parishes and the style of new parishes
  - the electoral arrangements for parishes, such as the ordinary year of election, council size, wards and numbers of councillors
  - grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes

- 2.4 The Council has power under Section 82 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct CGRs. A CGR must be conducted in accordance with the requirements set out in Chapter 3 of Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (as amended) and guidance issued by the Secretary of State under Section 100(4) of the 2007 Act.
- 2.5 According to guidance on CGRs from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, good practice for a principal council would be to consider conducting a review every 10-15 years.
- 2.6 The last CGR in Kirklees took place in 2008/9, 16 years ago as a result of a petition submitted to Council in September 2006. In August 2008 the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee agreed to initiate a community governance review focussed on the five currently parished areas. The Committee agreed to carry out the review in two distinct stages:
- Stage 1 – A general opportunity to make representations relevant to the terms of reference (06 October 2008 - 28 November 2008)
  - Stage 2 – A more focused consultation on specific proposals (16 February 2009 - 08 May 2009)
- 2.7 In January 2009, the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee considered responses to the first stage of the consultation and agreed a number of specific options for each parish council area. These options were subject to a further period of public consultation between 16 February 2009 and 08 May 2009.
- 2.8 Council resolved on 29th July 2009.
- That the recommendations of the community governance Review for each Parish area be approved and that the Head of Legal Services be authorised to make a reorganisation order under Section 86 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to give effect to these recommendations.
  - That Council endorses a number of additional recommendations for further work to improve the effectiveness of community governance arrangements in Kirklees, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report to Council.
- The full report can be viewed here: [COUNCIL29070936257S.pdf](#)
- 2.9 The Local Government Boundary Commission commenced a full electoral review of the Kirklees District at the beginning of 2023. Following two rounds of public consultation, they published their final recommendations for Kirklees in December 2024.
- 2.10 The Commission have not amended the parish wards as part of their review; however, they have moved a small area from Dewsbury South ward to Kirkburton ward and a very small area from Ravensthorpe into the Mirfield ward. Until a Community Governance Review takes place and Council formally makes a resolution, these small areas will need to remain separate from the Parish Councils in Kirkburton and Mirfield. More information can be found here: [https://www.lgbce.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-12/kirklees\\_full\\_report.pdf](https://www.lgbce.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-12/kirklees_full_report.pdf)
- 2.11 Parish councils are the lowest tier of local government in England, representing the interests and concerns of the residents of a particular parish or group of parishes. They have a range of powers and duties that can help improve the quality of life and environment of their communities. In Kirklees we have 5 parish or town councils;

- Denby Dale Parish Council
- Holme Valley Parish Council
- Kirkburton Parish Council
- Meltham Town Council
- Mirfield Town Council

2.12 Parish councils in Kirklees, like other parts of England, primarily receive funding through a parish precept, which is a part of the council tax collected by Kirklees Council. This precept is levied on residents within the parish's boundaries and is determined by the parish council's budget. Kirklees Council has no say in the amount a parish council decides to raise through its precept, as this is determined by the elected parish councillors themselves.

### **Implementing a Community Governance Review**

2.13 A principal council can conduct a CGR at any time and under the current legislation (Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007) decision-making in relation to community governance reviews cannot be a cabinet function; it requires Council to approve instigation.

2.14 Once Council has approved a review, the terms of reference and oversight sits with Corporate Governance & Audit Committee (CG&AC). They will also receive the final recommendations and refer back to Council for formal approval.

2.15 Once the Review is complete, electoral arrangements for any changes to the parish councils will come into force at the first elections to the parish council following the reorganisation order. Similar to the procedure following a Local Boundary Commission Review, all-out elections would need to follow a Community Governance Review.

2.16 Parish/Town Councils pay for their own elections. 'All-out' elections for Parishes are already scheduled for May 2027, so to reduce an extra cost burden the review would be completed in sufficient time to meet the May 2027 deadline. (Electoral Services view is at least a minimum of 6 months before the date of poll to allow time to set up the register and ensure all election material is correct to reflect new parish areas).

2.17 Therefore, the aim is to formally commence the review on 1st October 2025 (see Appendix 1).

## **3. Implications for the Council**

### **3.1 Council Plan**

Enhancing local levels of governance will improve on our engagement with people and build relationships. In terms of the 'place' outcome, it also recognises local areas and the governance structures that exist.

### **3.2 Financial Implications**

There are no immediate financial implications resulting from a CGR. It's worth noting that any new parishes/town councils created would be required to pay the Parish precept. Given the charges are on the Council tax bills that run from 1 April any change order following a CGR would need to take effect on the 1 April following the date on which it is made.

### 3.3 **Legal Implications**

In terms of the CGR once the review is complete, should any changes be proposed, a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order under S.86 of the Act would be proposed for approval at Council.

### 3.4 **Climate Change and Air Quality**

N/A

### 3.5 **Other (e.g. Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)**

There are risks associated with delaying a CGR which could have financial implications in terms of elections costings for parishes.

## 4. **Consultation**

As part of the review, there is a statutory duty to consult local government electors and any other person or body, including a local authority, who appears to have an interest in the review. Where there are other arrangements for community representation or engagement in place, the principal council must take those into account. For example, relevant residents' associations, community forums or area committees should be consulted. Government guidance also suggests consulting local businesses, local public and voluntary organisations, such as schools or health bodies.

## 5. **Engagement**

5.1 Relevant council officers (including Service Directors and the Executive Leadership Team) and the Cabinet have been engaged in highlighting the need for a Community Governance Review.

5.2 Leading members were also engaged on 02 June 2025.

## 6. **Options**

### 6.1 **Options considered**

- Formally commence a review on 1st October 2025 (see draft timetable [Appendix 1](#)).
- Not to commence a review (which would not be following good practise from the Local Government Boundary Commission).

### 6.2 **Reasons for recommended option**

- Parish/Town Councils pay for their own elections. 'All-out' elections for Parishes are already scheduled for May 2027 so to reduce an extra cost burden we need to complete the review in sufficient time to meet the May 2027 deadline.

## 7. **Next steps and timelines**

- Community Governance & Audit Committee to discuss and agree the terms of reference and timescales (the next scheduled meetings are 1<sup>st</sup> August and 26<sup>th</sup> September).
- Set up a series of informal conversations to engage key stakeholders on the intention to carry out a review commencing in October 2025.
- Establish a cross-service Project Working Group, made up of colleagues from across a range of service areas including Policy & Partnerships, Electoral Services, Legal, Consultation and Engagement, Communications, Governance and Finance.

## 8. **Contact officer**

Nick Howe, Policy & Partnership Manager. Policy, Partnerships & Corporate Planning

**9. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

Local Government Boundary Commission for England, Guidance on community governance reviews, March 2010

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-governance-reviews-guidance>

Council Community Governance (Parish) Review final report, 29<sup>th</sup> July 2009

[COUNCIL29070936257S.pdf](#)

Local Government Boundary Commission for England, New electoral arrangements for Kirklees Council, December 2024

[kirklees\\_full\\_report.pdf](#)

**10. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – DRAFT Timeline

**11. Service Director responsible**

Andy Simcox, Service Director Strategy and Innovation