REPORT TITLE: **Kirklees Community Governance Review: Stage 1 Consultation Summary and Stage 2 Recommendations**

Meeting	Corporate Governance & Audit Committee
Date	30th January 2026
Cabinet Member (if applicable)	N/A
Key Decision **Eligible for Call In**	No N/A

Purpose of Report

- To provide Corporate Governance and Audit Committee with a summary and analysis of responses received in the first stage of public consultation on the Community Governance Review (CGR).
- To seek approval for the draft proposals arising from stage one consultation that will form the basis of Stage 2 consultation.
- To ask the Committee to note arrangements for the second stage of consultation, scheduled to commence on 9th February 2026.

Recommendations

That Corporate Governance and Audit Committee:

1. Approve the draft proposals arising from stage one consultation.
2. Note arrangements for the second stage of consultation, scheduled to commence on 9th February 2026.

Reasons for Recommendations

- Corporate Governance & Audit Committee has delegated responsibility to agree the terms of reference for, and oversee delivery of, the Community Governance Review.
- In accordance with the agreed terms of reference and timeline, Corporate Governance and Audit Committee is asked to consider and agree the draft initial recommendations, prior to the second stage of consultation, scheduled to commence on 9th February 2026.

Resource Implications: 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.

Date signed off by <u>Executive Director</u> & name	Rachel Spencer-Henshall, Deputy Chief Executive 13th January 2026
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	Kevin Mulvaney, Service Director Finance 13th January 2026

Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)?	Samantha Lawton, Service Director Legal & Commissioning 13th January 2026

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 On 16th July 2025, Full Council agreed the undertaking of a CGR in accordance with the relevant legal framework and Government guidance, and in line with Corporate Governance & Audit Committee's (CG&AC) terms of reference, to delegate to the Committee to agree the terms of reference of the review and oversee delivery.

1.3 On 26th September 2025, CG&AC resolved to undertake a review of those areas of Kirklees which are currently parished and relevant adjoining land, to enable the Council to consider if any changes are needed to existing parish arrangements. The Terms of Reference for the CGR were published on 1st October 2025, and the first stage of the public consultation took place between 1st October – 12th December 2025.

1.4 CG&AC is asked to note the summary of responses received and approve the draft proposals arising from this first stage of public consultation and to note arrangements for the second stage of consultation, scheduled to commence on 9th February 2026.

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 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.

2.3 On 16th July 2025, Full Council agreed the undertaking of a CGR in accordance with the relevant legal framework and Government guidance, and in line with Corporate Governance & Audit Committee's (CG&AC) terms of reference, to delegate to the Committee to agree the terms of reference of the review and oversee delivery.

2.4 On 26th September 2025, CG&AC resolved to undertake a review of those areas of Kirklees which are currently parished and relevant adjoining land, to enable the Council to consider if any changes are needed to existing parish arrangements.

2.5 A Review must involve consultation with local people and stakeholders, and consider any representations received. It is deemed good practice to complete a review within 12 months, with the final recommendations subject to approval by Council.

2.6 Parish/Town Councils pay for their own elections. 'All-out' elections for Parishes are already scheduled for May 2027. To reduce an extra cost burden the review will need to be completed in sufficient time to meet the May 2027 deadline. The intention, therefore, is that final recommendations be considered by full Council in September 2026.

2.7 The Terms of Reference for the CGR were published on 1 October 2025, and stage 1 of the public consultation took place between 1 October – 12 December 2025.

3. Consultation

3.1 The Kirklees CGR consists of two distinct phases of public consultation:

- Stage 1 – a general opportunity to make representations relevant to the terms of reference.
- Stage 2 – a more focused consultation on specific proposals.

3.2 The Review must consider whether community governance arrangements within the areas under review are:

- reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and
- effective and convenient to the community in that area

and make recommendations with regard to:

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

3.3 A public notice launching the review was published on 1 October 2025, marking the start of a ten-week Stage 1 consultation period. The review was extensively publicised, and stakeholders were provided with multiple submission options to ensure broad and inclusive consultation. Interested parties were invited to respond through a range of channels, including electronically via the Council's website, by email, or by letter. A dedicated contact number was also made available for stakeholders requiring assistance or wishing to receive information in an alternative format.

3.4 Submissions were accepted in any format, but the consultation documentation and questionnaire particularly encouraged respondents to provide feedback in relation to the themes of 'contact', 'representation', 'consultation', 'boundaries / wards' and 'serving the community'; and whether in their view any changes to parish arrangements were needed. Respondents were encouraged to refer to the terms of reference before making a submission.

3.5 Information on the current structure of the five parishes and their electoral arrangements, which included polling district(s), councillors, electorate, electoral forecast data and wards (where applicable) were provided, in addition to maps of the areas which are currently in a parish.

3.6 Key stakeholders were directly contacted and invited to make a submission. The main communication channels used to publicise the review were:

- A dedicated webpage containing information about the review and an online submission form, with options to submit responses via post or email
- Social media messaging at the start of the review, with reminder posts close to the end of the review
- Press release and article in Kirklees Together
- Email to Parish Clerks, providing them with all relevant information needed to publicise the review in their local communities and on Council websites and local noticeboards
- Information on the review was included in newsletters our Active Citizens and Places Team send out to contacts in each ward in September/ October - comprising of community groups, school, businesses, residents, councillors and Kirklees staff who have a community remit.
- Email to the borough's MPs informing them of the Review
- Email to all the borough's public libraries, requesting copies of the notice of the review be displayed on public noticeboards
- An article in 'Our Week' seeking support from Council staff in signposting stakeholders to the Council's website and encouraging participation
- Attendance at each of the Council's four place-based working meetings during October – led by the Council's Active Citizens and Places Team - to brief frontline, community-based staff on the Review

3.7 Stage 1 consultation closed on 12 December 2025. 155 Consultation responses were received from residents, local businesses, community groups and organisations, parish and town Councils, Kirklees borough councillors and the Returning Officer.

3.8 The volume and nature of responses varied across the five parish and town councils. In addition, several submissions addressed issues relating to parish and town councils in general terms, and there were some suggestions regarding the potential creation of new parishes. *Appendix 1* includes a detailed summary and analysis of all submissions.

3.9 The draft proposals emerging from the initial submissions are set out in the Options section below and if approved, will go out to consultation from 9th February until 20th April 2026.

3.10 Responses from the second phase of consultation will be used to formulate a set of Final Recommendations that will be presented to CG&AC at its August 2026 meeting.

3.11 The Council will notify any persons or bodies who have made written representations of the outcome of the Review.

4. Engagement

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

4.2 On 16th July 2025, Council considered a report on Community Governance and resolved to undertake a CGR in accordance with the relevant legal framework and Government guidance and to delegate to the CG&AC to agree the terms of reference of the review and oversee delivery.

4.3 CG&AC considered a report at its meeting on 1st August, seeking agreement on the arrangements for producing the terms of reference for the CGR, to enable formal sign-off at the September 2025 meeting of the Committee.

4.4 Informal conversations were held with Parish Councils prior to the commencement of the Review. As part of these conversations, support was sought in promoting the review within the communities they represent.

4.5 Frontline, community-based staff were briefed on the review at each of the Council's four place-based working meetings led by the Council's Active Citizens and Places Team during October.

5. Implications for the Council

5.1 **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.

5.2 **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. If the final recommendations result in residents' circumstances being changed in terms of moving into a parished area and having to pay a precept, the authority would be required to write out explaining the changes which could result in a cost.

5.3 **Legal Implications**

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.

5.4 **Climate Change and Air Quality**

N/A

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

There are risks associated with any delays in delivering the CGR which could have financial implications in terms of elections costings for parishes.

6. Key findings and options

6.1 Consultation responses received during first phase of the review have been analysed in accordance with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's guidance on community governance reviews and in line with the published terms of reference.

6.2 *Appendix 1* provides a detailed summary and analysis of all submissions. The key findings for each parished areas are as follows:

Denby Dale

- 23 specific responses, mostly suggestions and observations.
- Calls to review councillor numbers and ensure fairer representation across villages.
- Several other matters raised including transparency, a stronger influence over planning, and requests for better visibility, consultation, and regular updates/newsletters so residents can see actions and value delivered.

Holme Valley Parish Council (HVPC)

- 34 specific responses or mentions.
- Strong strand advocating a split of HVPC or new parish councils around Honley, Brockholes, and Netherton/South Crosland, to tighten local focus and priorities.
- Several other matters raised including support that HVPC currently provides for local groups and events, calls for more regular communication and clearer transparency on decisions and spending.

Kirkburton

- 40 specific responses or mentions.
- Several suggestions and calls to add Briestfield and Whitley communities to the parish councils.
- Most respondents felt the Parish Council is accessible, serves the whole community, represents the area well, and that the parish is divided into wards correctly.

Meltham

- 12 specific responses or mentions.
- Representation & councillor numbers, mentions in terms of calls for direct election of the mayor and review of councillor roles.
- Merge or boundary changes - ideas for merging Meltham with Almondbury/Dalton or adjusting boundaries for extremities like Knowle.
- Retain Meltham Town Council, comments on strong local identity and councillors' involvement.

Mirfield

- 17 specific responses or mentions, mostly descriptive or suggestion based.
- Calls for boundary alignment to address concerns about estates outside the Town Council boundary (e.g. Spring Place Gardens).
- Several other matters raised including visibility and governance, retaining the Town Council due to its strong community role, calls for improved outreach and updates, and councillor visibility.

6.3 Although the Terms of Reference specified that the Review would focus on areas of Kirklees that are already parished, several responses went beyond this scope requesting the creation of new parish or town councils. The 22 responses mentioning new parish or town councils were varied in terms of detail; some were brief statements of support for new councils, while others provided comprehensive proposals including maps, suggested wards and boundaries, along with indicative numbers of councillors.

6.4 For the more detailed responses, we will contact the individuals explaining the scope of this review and suggestions on how they can take their proposals forward in line with guidance provided by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

6.5 Members of a cross-service Community Governance Review Working Group have met to consider the responses to the consultation and draft the following proposals to CG&AC to explore as part of Stage 2 consultation.

6.6 Residents will be asked to submit their view on the following proposals.

- Honley Central and East Ward, Honley South Ward and Honley West Ward be merged into a single parish ward, represented by 6 councillors, in line with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) guidance, reflecting their strong shared community identity (*see map in section 3.1 of Appendix 1*).

- In line with the National Association of Local Councils guidance on Councillor numbers, the number of Councillors in Brockholes ward increase to 2.

- Propose the three Honley parish wards, together with the Brockholes Ward (currently part of Holme Valley Parish Council), are separated, to form a new 'Honley Parish Council'. This new Parish Council would comprise of 6,806 electors; the remaining Holme Valley Parish Council would be made up of 16,663 electors (*see map in section 3.1 of Appendix 1*).

- The names of Fulstone and Scholes Wards in Holme Valley Parish change to 'New Mill & Fulstone' and 'Scholes & Hade Edge' respectively.

- The external boundary of Kirkburton Parish Council is extended to include polling district KB1-D (*see map in section 3.2 of Appendix 1*) creating a new parish ward named Whitley and Briestfield. It will have 1 Councillor to represent the community on the parish council (additional Council Tax charge of £16.67 per year for Band D properties for 2025/26).

- Propose that Meltham Town Council is split into two wards following the existing polling district boundaries (*see map in section 3.3 of Appendix 1*).
    a. Polling district HN5-C would have approximately 2471 voters, this area could become Meltham North ward and be represented by 4 Councillors.
    b. Polling district HN6-C would have approximately 5169 voters, this area could become Meltham South ward and be represented by 8 Councillors.

- Mirfield Town Council boundary is amended to include the voters in the MF4B-D polling district (*see map in section 3.4 of Appendix 1)* residing in Spring Place Gardens, and this area be included in the adjoining Northorpe ward of the Town Council (additional Council Tax charge of £17.54 per year for Band D properties for 2025/26).

- All dwellings in the Calder View development, currently within the Kirkburton Parish Council boundary, be moved into the Mirfield Town Council Boundary. Should this proposal to amend the external Town Council Boundary receive support during stage 2 consultation, we would propose to seek a related alteration from the LGBCE to amend the Mirfield District ward boundary, so that the Town Council boundary is coterminous with the ward (*see map in section 3.4 of Appendix 1*).

- In line with the National Association of Local Councils guidance on Councillor numbers, the number of Councillors in Mirfield Town Council increase to 21 from 16.

7. Options considered

That Corporate Governance and Audit Committee:

- Consider the summary and analysis of responses received in the first stage of public consultation on the Community Governance Review.
- Approve the draft proposals arising from stage one consultation, set out above and in detail at *Appendix 1* of this report.
- Note arrangements for the second stage of consultation, scheduled to commence on 9th February 2026 until the 20th April, a 10-week period.

8. Next steps and timelines

- A second stage consultation on the draft proposals is scheduled to commence on 9th February 2026. Submissions to stage two consultation will be invited over a ten-week period, until 20th April 2026.

- Submissions received during stage two consultation will be considered and final recommendations will be prepared between April and June 2026.

- Corporate Governance and Audit Committee will be asked to make its final recommendations to Full Council in August 2026.

- Final recommendations are scheduled to be considered by Full Council, and a decision taken on the outcome of the review, in September 2026.

9. Contact officer

Nick Howe, Policy & Partnership Manager. Policy, Partnerships & Corporate Planning
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10. Background Papers and History of Decisions

- Community Governance Review, Council 16th July 2025: https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/documents/s64955/FINAL%20Council%2016%20July25.pdf

- Community Governance Review, Corporate Governance and Audit Committee, 1 August 2025: Community Governance Review report.pdf

- Community Governance Review, Corporate Governance and Audit Committee, 26th September 2025: Cover report 26th September 25.pdf

- Community Governance Review Terms of Reference and Timeline: Terms of Reference, Kirklees Community Governance Review

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

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

- Local Government Boundary Commission for England, New electoral arrangements for Kirklees Council, December 2024: kirklees_full_report.pdf

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 - KIRKLEES COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW, STAGE 1 CONSULTATION

12. Service Director responsible

Samantha Lawton, Service Director Legal & Commissioning