



Borough of Telford & Wrekin

Community Governance Review 2025

Terms of Reference

A Review of the Parishes of Borough of Telford and Wrekin

1. Background

- 1.1. Telford and Wrekin Council ("the Council") has resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review (CGR) of its parishes across the Borough in accordance with Part 4, Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 1.2. The Council is required to have regard to the guidance on Community Governance Reviews published by the Government. This guidance has been taken into account when drawing up these terms of reference.
- 1.3. Specifically, the Council will be guided by the provisions of Part 4 of Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ("the 2007 Act"), the relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the LGA 1972"), the Guidance on CGR's issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010 and the following Regulations which guide, in particular, consequential matters arising from the review: Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 (SI2008/625); Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008 (SI2008/626).
- 1.4. Section 81 of the 2007 Act requires the Council to publish its Terms of Reference for the CGR which clearly set out the focus of the review. This document, when published, will fulfil this requirement.

2. What is a Community Governance Review?

- 2.1. A Community Governance Review ("CGR") provides an opportunity to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries, which reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government. It can take place for the whole or part of the Borough to consider one or more of the following:-
 - i. Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
 - ii. The electoral arrangements for parishes including:-
 - The number of councillors to be elected;
 - The warding (if any) of a Parish Council; and

- The ordinary year of elections
 - iii. The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes;
 - iv. Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.
- 2.2 For the purpose of these Terms of Reference, and throughout the CGR process, the term “parish” or “parish council” should also be read as “town” or “town council”.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 When reaching decisions about community governance, the Council 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.

3. Reason for the CGR

- 3.1. The Council has a duty to keep parish arrangements under review. This is particularly important taking account of:-
- changes made by a full Borough Electoral Boundary Review in 2022 which resulted in misalignment between the Borough and Town and Parish Wards;
 - the growth in certain town and parishes;
 - ensuring our communities are governed appropriately; and
 - ensuring that there is a clear rationale between the organisation and grouping of parishes.
- 3.2 Furthermore, guidance states that it is good practice to conduct a full CGR at least every 10 to 15 years. Whilst the Council commenced a review in 2023, this did not result in any changes being made and, consequently, it is considered appropriate to undertake a further review to identify whether or not any changes are now needed.
- 3.3 The Council wishes to review the matters set out above to ensure that there is clarity and transparency to the areas that parish council represent and that the electoral arrangements of parishes (the numbers of councillors, warding arrangements and allocation of councillors to wards) are appropriate, equitable and understood by their electorate.
- 3.4 A CGR must reflect the identities and interests of communities and should take account the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.
- 3.5 The review will consider the entire Borough to ensure that small changes in one area, do not impact others disproportionately. By taking a wide view of the Borough as a whole, it is hoped that any proposals ensure effective representation at Town and Parish levels across the entire local authority area.

4. Who will undertake the review?

- 4.1. The principal authority for an area is responsible for undertaking a CGR. A principal authority carries out the statutory duties of the local authority within the local government area. For the local government area of Telford & Wrekin, Telford & Wrekin Council is the principal authority.
- 4.2. As the principal authority, Telford and Wrekin Council is responsible for undertaking CGRs within its area. Full Council delegated authority for all matters relating to Community Governance Reviews to its Boundary Review Committee. The Committee will oversee the review and produce draft and final recommendations. A Community Governance Order will need to be made to give effect to the final recommendations when they have been agreed.

5. Areas under review

- 5.1. The Community Governance Review will look at the arrangements in respect of all Towns and Parishes within the Borough of Telford & Wrekin. As set out in section 2 above, such a review can result in significant changes to the way in which Parish Councils are arranged.
- 5.2. The Review includes all aspects of community governance arrangements of existing parishes, including:
- To consider the boundaries of any existing parish and:-
 - whether any existing parishes should be split to create new parishes;
 - whether or not any existing parishes should be amalgamated to constitute a new parish;
 - whether or not any new parish councils should be created;
 - whether or not any parish councils should be abolished and replaced with a parish meeting;
 - whether or not any parish meetings should be created into a new parish or included within an existing parish
 - The number of parish Councillors to be elected for any parish council, whether new or existing;
 - To consider whether any new or existing parish council should be divided into wards (or continue to be divided into wards,) including the number and boundaries of any such wards, the number of Councillors to be elected for any such ward, and the name of any such ward;
 - To consider if there should be any change to ward arrangements for any existing parish council;
 - The name of any parish council;
 - If considered desirable to effect any changes, whether or not any alterations should be made to the ordinary year of election for any new or existing

parish/town council; and

- To consider whether or not any recommendations should be made to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England for any subsequent alterations to the wards of the Borough Council.

5.2 The Council has the benefit of having undertaken consultation during the review that commenced in 2023. Whilst there was a limited number of responses provided during that review, the Council agreed to carry forward all representations to the next review it undertaken. The reports that were provided to the Boundary Review Committee for the last review are available online using the links below:-

[Agenda for Boundary Review Committee on Thursday 7 September 2023, 6.00 pm - Telford & Wrekin Council;](#)

[Agenda for Boundary Review Committee on Thursday 16 November 2023, 6.00 pm - Telford & Wrekin Council;](#)

[Agenda for Boundary Review Committee on Thursday 8 February 2024, 6.00 pm - Telford & Wrekin Council;](#)

[Agenda for Boundary Review Committee on Friday 19 July 2024, 6.00 pm - Telford & Wrekin Council;](#) and

[Agenda for Boundary Review Committee on Thursday 5 September 2024, 6.00 pm - Telford & Wrekin Council](#)

5.3 The best way of getting in touch about the CGR is to use the email address reviews@telford.gov.uk.

5.4 The primary contact for the review is:

- Jon Power – Policy, Insight, Performance and Elections Manager

6. Consultation

6.1. Before making any recommendations or publishing final proposals the Council will take full account of the views made by, and suggestions of, local people and organisations and will comply with the statutory consultation requirements by:

- consulting local government electors and other persons or bodies who appear to the Council to have an interest in the review;
- taking into account any representations received in connection with the review and those received in connection with the review commenced in 2023;
- notifying consultees of the outcome of the review; and,
- publishing all decisions taken and the reasons for such decisions.

6.2 In particular, the Council will consult:

- Local government electors/residents in its Parishes;

- The Town and Parish Councils across the Borough and their councillors;
- Borough Councillors;
- The Members of Parliament for the Telford and Wrekin constituencies; and
- Shropshire Association of Local Councils

6.3 Information about each stage of the review will be published on the Council's website and available for inspection at the Council's Offices at Darby House, Lawn Central, Telford, TF3 4JA. Press releases and other publicity will be issued where appropriate.

Timeline and Key Stages

BRC meets to agree Terms of Reference and Consultation	13 February 2025
Publication of Terms of Reference and Review Commences	17 February 2025
Initial Consultation - Invite initial submissions	17 February 2025 until 14 April 2025
BRC considers initial submissions and draft recommendations	TBC
Draft recommendations published	25 April 2025
Final round of public consultations	19 May 2025 until 14 July 2025
Final recommendations by BRC	30 July 2025
Publish final recommendations	31 July 2025
Consequential Order made	Summer – Winter 2025
Elections to Town and Parish Councils	May 2027

7. Electoral Forecasts

7.1. When considering the electoral arrangements of the parishes in the area the Council must consider any likely future change in the number or distribution of electors within five years from the day the review commences.

7.2 The review will use the latest electorate figures available at a parish level together with the estimated delivery of new dwellings within the five-year period taken from the Council's most recent Land Supply Statement.

8. Considerations

8.1. Legislation requires that the Council must ensure that community governance within the area:

- reflects the identities and interests of the communities in the area,
- is effective and convenient and takes into account any other arrangements for the purpose of community representation or engagement in the area.

8.2 In considering proposals for change, the Council will take the following into account the current status of the Parish (whether it has a Council or meeting) and the existing and the forecast growth of the electorate.

8.3 The review aims to ensure that parishes reflect community identity and interest and that they are viable administrative and democratic units. None of these take precedence over the other but must be considered as part of the process.

8.4 Parishes with 150 or fewer local government electors cannot have a council and can only be a parish meeting (unless the parish already has a council). For those with between 151 and 999 local government electors, the review can recommend that the parish should have a council (optional) and where the parish has 1000 or more local government electors the review must recommend that the parish has a council.

Parish boundaries

8.5 The Council will consider the effect of new and forecast development activity on existing parish boundaries. Parish boundaries should be easily identifiable and reflect the separation of settlements recognised locally as having their own identity. These boundaries should generally reflect the areas between communities with low populations or physical barriers such as water courses or man-made features such as railways or motorways.

Council size (number of Councillors)

8.6 The minimum number of parish Councillors that a council can have is five. A quorum for a parish council is three or a third, whichever is the greater number.

8.7 National research guidance suggests the following levels of representation for parish councils:

Electorate	Councillor Allocation
Less than 500	5 – 8
501 – 2,500	6 - 12
2,501 – 10,000	9 - 16
10,001 – 20,000	13 - 27
Greater than 20,000	8 - 31

8.8 Government guidance is that each area should be considered on its own merits having regard to population, geography and the pattern of communities. The Council will pay particular attention to existing levels of representation and existing council sizes and whether they remain appropriate.

8.9 In considering requests to change the number of Councillors on any individual parish council, the Council will review the electoral history for the parish including the number of contested elections that have been held, the number of vacant seats following normal parish elections (every 4 years) and the history of co-options (i.e., has the council been able to fill vacancies).

Parish Warding

8.10 The Council is required to consider the following points when deliberating whether a parish should be divided into wards for the purposes of elections:

- whether the number or distribution of the local government electors for the parish would make a single election of Councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
- whether it is desirable that any area, or areas, of the parish should be separately represented on the relevant council.

8.11 The Government's guidance is that warding of parishes may not be justified for largely rural areas based predominantly on a single centrally located village. Conversely, warding may be appropriate where a parish encompasses a number of villages with separate identities or where there has been urban overspill at the edge of a town into a parish.

8.12 In considering parish wards the Council will ensure that electoral equality is retained (the principle that each person's vote should be of equal weight so far as is possible). This will be achieved by keeping the councillor/elector ration similar across any warded areas.

Parish names and alternative styles for parishes

8.13 The Council will endeavour to reflect existing or historic place names and will consider any ward names proposed any local interested parties. The Council will be mindful of Section 75 of the Local Government Act 1972 with regards to changing the name of a parish and subsequent notification and to Sections 87 and 88 of the 2007 Act and related guidance.

8.14 Alternative styles for parishes were introduced by the 2007 Act which could replace the 'parish' style – community, neighbourhood or village. Town status continues to be available to a parish (S247 of the Local Government Act 1972) but for as long as a parish has an alternative style it will not be able to have the status of a town and vice versa.

8.15 At the request of a parish, the principal authority can change the name of a parish to reflect the style adopted.

8.16 If an existing parish is under review, the Council will make recommendations as to whether the geographical name of the parish should change, but it will be for the parish council or meeting to resolve whether the parish should have one of the alternative styles or retain the 'parish' style.

Grouping of parishes

- 8.17 Under Section 91 of the 2007 Act a CGR can recommend the grouping or de-grouping of parishes. In some instances, it may be appropriate to group parishes to allow a common parish council to be formed. De-grouping may also offer the reverse possibility where local communities have expanded.
- 8.18 Any grouping or de-grouping needs to be compatible with the retention of community interests and it would be inappropriate to use it to build artificially large units under single parish councils. However, it could offer a possibility for parishes with less than 150 electors to be grouped with other parishes under an elected parish council despite being unable to form a parish council in their own right.

Ordinary year of election

- 8.19 As Telford & Wrekin Council is elected every four years on an 'all out' basis, it is currently proposed to keep the ordinary year of election for parish councils on the same date. This allows some economies of scale in terms of the costs borne by parish councils for the conduct of elections. The Council does, however, welcome representations on this point.

9. Reorganisation of Community Governance Orders and Commencement

- 9.1. The review will be completed when the Council resolves to accept the final recommendations and authorises completion of the Reorganisation of Community Governance Order.
- 9.2. Copies of the Order, supporting maps and documents setting out the reasons for the decisions taken will be placed on deposit at the Council's Offices at Darby House, Lawn Central, Telford, TF3 4JA, on the Council's website and otherwise publicised in accordance with the requirements of the 2017 Act. All parishes will be notified of the outcomes of the review.
- 9.3. Copies of the Order will be sent to:
- the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
 - the Local Government Boundary Commission for England
 - the Office of National Statistics
 - the Director General of the Ordnance Survey
 - Shropshire Association of Local Councils

10. Consequential matters

- 10.1. In the interests of maintaining coterminous boundaries of principal authority electoral areas and the boundaries of parishes, recommendations may be made to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to make related changes to district and/or county electoral area boundaries.
- 10.2. Setting up new parish councils or grouping/de-grouping councils may require additional consequential provisions including:

- the transfer and management or custody of property
- the setting of precepts
- provisions with respect to the transfer of any functions, property, rights and liabilities
- provisions for the transfer of staff

10.3 In these matters the Council will be guided by the relevant legislation

11. Date of Publication

11.1. These terms of reference will be published on 17 February 2025.