



Community Governance Review 2023-24



Objectives

- Overview of the Community Governance Review (CGR) process.
- Background to the review
- Timescales involved
- Review process
- What a review can and cannot achieve.
- There will be time set aside to ask questions at the end.



What is a CGR?

A CGR is a review of parish electoral arrangements undertaken by a principal authority. A CGR can:

- Create, merge or abolish parishes.
- Parish previously un-parished areas.
- Change parish names and styles.
- Make boundary alterations between parishes.
- Group parishes under a common council.

What else can a CGR do?

- Put in place a parish council where there was previously a parish meeting, subject to number of electors.
- Change the year of ordinary elections.
- Alter the size of the council (how many parish councillors)
- Create parish wards, subject to legal tests and if so, draw up ward boundaries and allocate councillors to wards.

Background to the WNC Review (1)

- Each district council undertook a CGR prior to the reorganisation of local government in West Northamptonshire
 - Daventry CGR concluded in 2020.
 - Northampton also concluded in 2020
 - South Northamptonshire review concluded in 2018

Background to the WNC Review (2)

- WNC vesting day 1 April 2021
- LGCE review of WNC electoral boundaries 30 Aug 2022 to 1 August 2023
- Changes:
 - Reduction in number of members (93 to 76)
 - Increase in number of wards (31 to 35)
 - Combination of 1 (7), 2 (15) and 3 (13) member wards
 - Corresponding changes to ward boundaries
 - LGCE generally use parishes as building blocks for wards, but not always. Some Parish wards were created as a consequence of review.

Issues for West Northamptonshire...

- LGBCE created new WNC ward boundaries for May 2025.
- Some new ward boundaries don't align with parish boundaries, so LGBCE created parish wards.
- The CGR is necessary to realign boundaries and ensure future elections can be managed efficiently.
- We can make other changes too.



Engagement and Terms of Reference

- As CGRs carried out recently, WNC carried out engagement to gauge interest in CGR.
- Over 70 parishes expressed an interest.
- We have included any parish who may be affected by a proposal we have received so far.
- Terms of reference were agreed on 28th Sept.
- More info on our website: [Community Governance Review | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/community-governance-review)

Consultation

- Statutory consultation.
- Nov to Jan: consultation on whether any changes should be made to areas within scope
- End of April to July: consultation on firm proposals.
- The final decision: September 2024.

Review Timetable

Activity	Start	End
Pre-consultation engagement		18/08/2023
Council approves Terms of Reference. CGR starts		28/09/2023
Desk research, information gathering etc.	28/09/2023	26/11/2023
First stage consultation	27/11/2023	31/01/2024
Consideration of consultation responses	01/02/2024	24/04/2024
Second stage consultation: draft recommendations published	25/04/2024	24/07/2024
Consideration of submissions	24/07/2024	06/09/2024
Final proposals adopted by Council		19/09/2024
Polling district/place review	30/09/2024	30/11/2024

Considerations for WNC

- The Council must:
 - Secure that community governance reflects the identities and interests of the community - effective and convenient.
 - Take into account any other arrangements already been made for the purposes of community representation or community engagement.
 - Take account of any representations received/evidence which demonstrates the recommended community governance arrangements would meet the criteria set out in the Act.

Parish input

- Are changes required to the existing boundaries of a parish to better reflect local communities?
- Are changes needed to the number of councillors
- Any parish meetings which should be incorporated into a parish council?
- Should any parish councils be merged with another parish council or parish meeting?
- Are there any parish councils that should be renamed?

Input from other interested parties

- Duty to consult electors and interested parties.
- Consultation must be reasonable and proportionate.
- Anything you can do to encourage electors or interested parties to take part will be helpful.
- Online survey: <https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/cet/community-governance-review-2023-24-phase-1>
- Second stage consultation will be more targeted – those affected by proposals

Recommendations

- Recommendations must be supported by evidence.
- Statistics – electorate forecasts, precept etc.
- Representations – viewpoints recorded in detail.
- Recommendations must take account of exceptions (i.e. principal area – more on this later).

Legal Requirements

- Three tests:
- Reflective of community identities and interests.
- Effective and convenient local government
- Take into account other arrangements for community representation and engagement (i.e. WNC wards etc.)

Order

- Will be made following final decision in Sept 2024
- Follow model order
- Maps to show changes
- Commencement date – for May 2025.

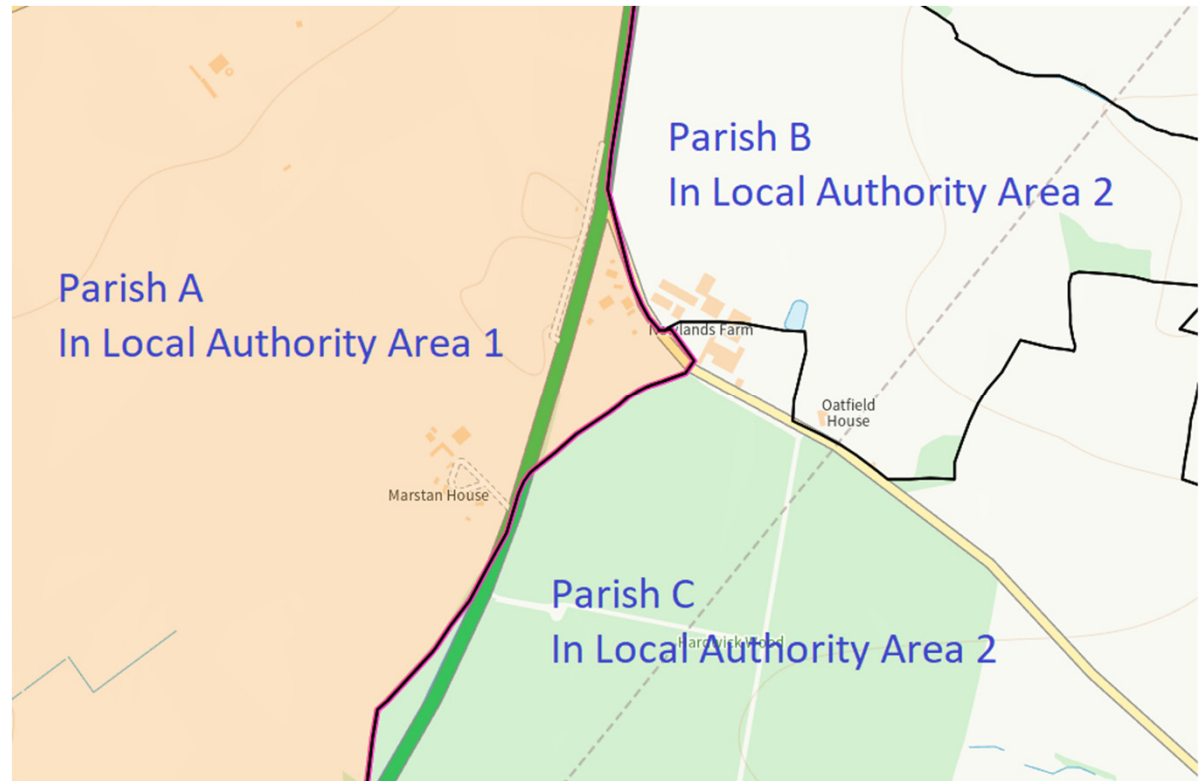
Issues to be aware of

- We cannot change the principal area.
- We cannot change Parliamentary boundaries.
- Proposals put in place by the LGBCE in the recent review are protected for a period of five years. Burden of evidence to propose changes is high.
- We cannot deal with issues relating to the conduct of parish councils or meetings.



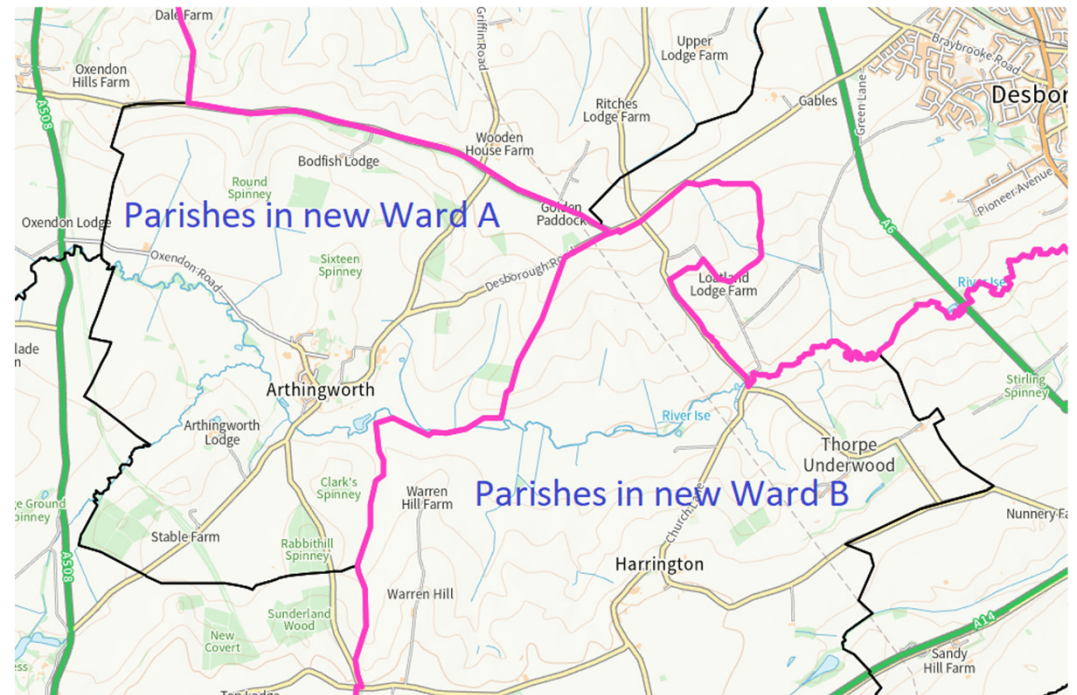
Issues to be aware of: the principal area

- We can't change the principal area (the boundary of West Northamptonshire) as part of a CGR.
- In this example, we wouldn't be able to align the parish boundary with the road it would cross the boundary between North and West Northamptonshire



Issues to be aware of: new boundaries

- Proposals conflicting with new ward boundaries cannot form part of the recommendations.
- LGBCE will expect significant evidence and consultation outcomes to support such proposals.
- No power to change new wards.



Issues to be aware of: change to parishes

- If WNC wishes to alter the electoral arrangements for a parish whose electoral arrangements were put in place within the previous five years, the consent of the LGBCE is required.
- Includes proposals to change the names of parish wards.
- WNC must write to the LGBCE detailing its proposal and requesting consent. The LGBCE will consider the request.
- The LGBCE will expect to receive evidence WNC has consulted with electors in the relevant parish(es) and will wish to receive details of the outcome.

Issues to be aware of: number of clrs

- NALC recommendations:

Electors	Councillors	Electors	Councillors
Up to 900	7	9,000	16
1,400	8	10,400	17
2,000	9	11,900	18
2,700	10	13,500	19
3,500	11	15,200	20
4,400	12	17,000	21
5,400	13	18,900	22
6,500	14	20,900	23
7,700	15	23,000	24
		Over 23,000	25

Issues to be aware of: parish meetings

- Where a CGR has to recommend whether a new or existing parish has a parish council, the following applies:

Parish has:	Review must recommend:
> 1000 electors	Parish has a council
150 or fewer electors and no current council	Parish does not have a council
Parish has:	Councillors
150 or fewer electors and has a council or is part of a parish with a council	Whether or not the parish has a council
151 – 999 electors	Whether or not the parish has a council

Questions

