

**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**  
**21 July 2025**

PART I

**Community Governance Review  
(ADCCC)**

**1. Summary**

- 1.1 This report seeks the views of Members on whether to undertake a review of the unparished areas of Three Rivers District Council, and if so, to agree the suggested terms of reference.

**2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That Policy and Resources Committee determines whether to undertake a Community Governance Review of the unparished areas of the district.
- 2.2 Should the Committee agree to undertake a Community Governance Review, to agree to the terms of reference attached at appendix A.

**3. Details**

- 3.1 Through the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, district councils were given the power to amend parish council boundaries within their area. This is known as a “community governance review” (CGR). There are two situations where this may occur: because the Council decides to do so, or it receives a petition with sufficient public support.
- 3.2 If the Council does elect to undertake a CGR, the first step is to agree terms of reference, which sets out how the review may be undertaken. A phase of consultation follows, after which the Council decides what to do. It could decide to make no changes; make changes to a parish boundary; create a new parish or change warding arrangements in a parish.
- 3.3 If changes are proposed, consideration then needs to be given to any consequential matters; this depends on the nature of the changes but can include matters such as division of assets, the number of councillors in each Parish and when the changes shall come into effect.
- 3.4 If it elects to undertake the review, the Council is required to have regard to the guidance issued by Secretary of State and Local Government Boundary Commission for England. This requires the Council to undertake consultation with local government electors in the area, and any other parties we consider interested in it.
- 3.5 The guidance, although primarily focused on the creation of new parishes, sets out the type of factors that should be taken into account in determining these factors. References in legislation to a ‘parish’ also include a parish which has an alternative style (such as ‘town’, ‘village’ or ‘community’ council) and parish meetings.
- 3.6 The timeframes involved in reviews can vary significantly. If the review is very straightforward, it can be concluded within a year; more complex reviews, usually those involving the division of existing parishes or creation of new parishes, can take upwards of two years. The process works as follows:

- 3.6.1 The District Council publishes terms of reference setting out how the review will occur and commences a period of consultation.
- 3.6.2 Once the consultation concludes, the District Council makes recommendations – this is often followed by a secondary consultation if the Council believes changes are required.
- 3.6.3 The District Council meets to make final recommendations and agree the reorganisation order (as the reorganisation order includes consequential amendments, in some cases this will come at a later date than the final recommendations).
- 3.7 Only the Full Council can agree the final recommendations.
- 3.8 The proposed terms of reference for the CGR are deliberately broad, allowing for a review of all aspects of community governance within the unparished council area. This includes, for example, the creation or naming of a parish, the establishment of a separate parish from an existing parish, alteration of parish boundaries, abolition or dissolution of a parish, change to parish electoral arrangements or parish grouping.
- 3.9 In the event that the Policy and Resources Committee agrees to commence a review, potential terms of reference are included at appendix A for approval. These have been developed in line with terms used by other councils, helping the public to understand what the review is and why it's being undertaken.
- 3.10 The timetable in the terms of reference envisage that if it was decided to make changes to the boundary the proposals would not come into effect until 1 April 2027, for the following reasons:
- 3.10.1 The parishes will have already set their precept and anticipated their council tax levels based on their council tax base for 2026/27
- 3.10.2 Following the final recommendations being made, time needs to be allocated to sort any matters for the reorganisation order
- 3.10.3 This date nicely aligns with the next Parish Council elections in May 2027 and enables the District Council to deal with any electoral matters – such as re-establishing polling districts – for those elections.
- 3.11 The overall recommended timescales for the CGR are as follows:

Policy & Resources Committee agree CGR and terms of reference	21 June 2025
Consultation begins	28 June 2025
Consultation ends	19 September 2025
Policy & Resources Committee agree draft proposals	10 November 2025
Consultation on draft proposals begin (if required)	17 November 2025
Consultation on draft proposals ends	9 January 2026
Final proposals considered by Policy & Resources Committee	26 January 2026
Final proposals agreed by Council	By June 2026
Reorganisation order made (inc any consequential matters)	TBC
New boundaries come into effect	1 April 2027
First elections based on new boundaries	6 May 2027

#### **4. Options and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 4.1. There are two options available to the Policy and Resources Committee at this stage: to undertake the review, or not to undertake the review.

#### **5. Policy/Budget Reference and Implications**

- 5.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets.
- 5.2 The recommendations in this report do not impact on the achievement of specific performance indicators

#### **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1 Section 82 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 gives district councils the power to undertake Community Governance Reviews of its area. At this stage, the Council is not obliged to undertake a review, but may elect to do so; if it does, it must comply with both the law and the statutory guidance.
- 6.2 The proposed terms of reference have been developed in line with the guidance. Section 81 of the Act states it is for the Council to decide the terms of reference of any CGR which the Council is to undertake and it must then publish them.
- 6.3 A District Council that is undertaking a review, must notify the County Council that the review for its area is to be undertaken and the terms of reference (including any modifications to those terms), as per section 79(3) of the above Act.

#### **7. Financial, Staffing, Equal Opportunities, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Communications & Website, Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications**

- 7.1 None specific.

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#### **Data Quality**

Data sources: Maps within Appendix A have been produced by the Council's GIS officer from its mapping system

Data checked by: GIS officer  
Data rating: Sufficient

**Appendix A** – Proposed terms of reference for unparished areas of Three Rivers District Council, including maps of relevant areas.