

Community Governance Review

14/07/2026

**Full Council
14 July 2026**

PART I

**Community Governance Review
(ADCCC)**

1 Summary

- 1.1 To begin a Community Governance Review for the District.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That:

This Committee to proceed with a Community Governance Review as set out in the terms of reference.

Should Full Council agree to undertake a Community Governance Review, to agree to the terms of reference attached to appendix A.

Report prepared by: (Lucy Smith, Committee and Electoral Services Manager)

3 Details

- 3.1 Three Rivers District Council has been reviewing Parish arrangements since July 2025.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 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.

- 3.7 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:
- 3.7.1 The District Council publishes terms of reference setting out how the review will occur and commences a period of consultation.
- 3.7.2 Once the consultation concludes, the District Council makes recommendations – this is often followed by a secondary consultation if the Council believes changes are required.
- 3.7.3 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).
- 3.8 Only the Full Council can agree the final recommendations.
- 3.9 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.
- 3.10 In the event that the Full Council 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.
- 3.11 The overall recommended timescales for the CGR are as follows:

Full Council agree the CGR and the Terms of Reference	14 July 2026
Consultation begins	31 July 2026
Consultation ends	18 September 2026
Policy and Resources Committee agree draft proposals	05 October 2026
Consultation on draft proposals begin (if required)	16 October 2026
Consultation on draft proposals ends	15 January 2027
Final proposals considered by Policy and Resources Committee	08 February 2027
Final proposals agreed by Full Council	23 February 2027
Reorganisation order made	TBC
New boundaries come into effect	01 April 2027
First elections based on new boundaries	06 May 2027

4 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

There are two options available, to undertake CGR or not to undertake the review.

5 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

No implications to Three Rivers District Council.

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

None specific.

Appendix A – Full responses received to all questions

