Bromsgrove District Council

Terms of Reference

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW FOR PROPOSED BOUNDARY CHANGES OF FINSTALL PARISH

Bromsgrove District Council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

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GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007

Introduction

Bromsgrove District Council received a request from Finstall Parish Council to change the parish boundary. The Electoral Matters Committee of the Council agreed, at it's meeting held 23 February 2024, that a Community Governance Review (CGR) be carried out pursuant to Part 4, Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to consider the following Parish matter:

"The following boundary changes be made to the Parish:

a) Field View House: re-drawing of the parish boundary so that it runs alongside the railway line to the south of Field View House, thereby placing Field View House to the north of the parish boundary.
b) Rutherford Road area (otherwise known as Hazelcroft): to seek to move the parish boundary northwards to run alongside the railway line, to incorporate Hazelcroft within Finstall parish."

In undertaking the review, the Council will be guided by Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the 2007 Act); the relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972; Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued in accordance with section 100(4) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 by the Department of Communities and Local Government and Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) 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).

What is a Community Governance Review?

A CGR is a review of the whole or part of the Council area to consider one or more of the following:
• Creating, merging, altering or in extreme cases abolishing parishes
• The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes
• The electoral arrangements for parishes, such as the ordinary year of election, council size, number of councillors to be elected to the council and parish warding
• Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes

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

In doing so the Review is required to take into account:

• The impact of existing community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
• The size, population and boundaries of any local community or proposed parish or town Council

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The government has emphasised that recommendations made in Community Governance Reviews ought to bring about improved community engagement, more cohesive communities, better local democracy and result in more efficient delivery of local services.

What does a Parish Council do?

Parish Councils are the most local form of government. They collect money from Council Tax payers (via the District Council) known as a "precept" and this is used to invest in the area to improve services or facilities. Parish Councils can take different forms but usually are made up of local people who stand for election as Parish Councillors to represent their area. They can be the voice of the local community and work with other tiers of government and external organisations to co-ordinate and deliver services and work to improve the quality of life in the area.

Why is the Council undertaking the Review?

The Parish Council requested that the District Council review boundaries of the Parish where the railway line cuts the parish (which affects 22 electors) and the aggregation of an unparished area that is within the same District Ward as the Parish. This is the whole of the TAE Polling District which contains 706 electors.

Who undertakes the review?

Bromsgrove District Council is responsible for undertaking a CGR within its electoral area.

The Council's Electoral Matters Committee is responsible for overseeing this process but officers will produce draft and final recommendations for consideration before a Community Governance Order is made.

This Community Governance Review will consider:-

- The Parish Council based on any boundary changes that it may decide to make.
- The number of members for the Parish Council and if any warding is necessary.

The Community Governance Review will not consider:-

- Changes to any other electoral areas including wards or divisions within the Principal Council Area (Bromsgrove District Council). These must be done through the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

Consultation

The Act requires the Council to

- Consult the local government electors for the area under review.
- Consult any other person or body who appears to have an interest in the review.

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The Council will have regard to Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government which aims to ensure that:-

- Electors should be able to identify clearly with the parish in which they are resident. The guidance states that this sense of identity and community lends strength and legitimacy to the parish structure, creates a common interest in parish affairs, encourages participation in elections to the parish council, leads to representative and accountable government, engenders visionary leadership and generates a strong, inclusive community with a sense of civic values, responsibility and pride.
- Parishes should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity; the feeling of local community and the wishes of local inhabitants are primary considerations in a Review.
- A careful balance to the considerations of changes that have happened over time, through population shifts or additional development for example, and that have led to a different community identity with historic traditions in its area.
- Boundaries to parishes should be and likely to remain easily identifiable.

Two consultation stages will be held, and a full consultation document will be produced for each stage. The documents will be available electronically, being published on a dedicated page on the Bromsgrove District Council website.

All consultation responses will be logged and reported back to the Electoral Matters Committee for consideration. Names and addresses of individual respondents will not be included in the central log for data protection purposes.

Representations may also be made in writing (either in the form of email or letter) to Bromsgrove District Council.

Responses received from parish councils/residents groups will be highlighted as such, and will be assumed to be an official response on behalf of the whole parish council/residents group.

Bromsgrove District Council will publish its recommendations as soon as practicable and take such steps as it considers sufficient to ensure that persons who may be interested in the Community Governance Review are informed of the recommendations and the reasons behind them. All representations will be available for public inspection (any personal information will be redacted).

The Council will notify any persons or bodies who have made written representations of the outcome of the review at all stages (where requested) and full details of any recommendations will be available on the Bromsgrove District Council website.

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How to Respond to this Review

Representations in response to this review should be submitted within the specified timescales detailed below either by letter or email to:

Finstall Parish Community Governance Review
Electoral Services Manager
C/O Town Hall
Walter Stranz Square
Redditch
B98 8AH

Email elections@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Tel: 01527 881 421
Website Community Governance Review for Finstall Parish

Timetable for the Community Governance Review (revised October 2026)

Stage	What happens?	Timescales
Commencement	Terms of Reference are published	2 February 2026
Preliminary stage	Promotion of public consultation	2 to 12 February 2026
Stage one	Initial Submissions are invited	16 February to 17 April 2026
Stage two	Consideration of submissions received – Draft Recommendations are prepared	17 April to 12 June 2026 Delayed until 24 September
Stage three	Draft Recommendations are published. Public response invited	23 October to 4 November 2026
Stage four	Considerations of submissions received – final recommendations are prepared	4 November 2026
Stage five	Final recommendations are published – concluding review	11 November 2026
Stage six	Electoral Matters Committee resolves to make a Reorganisation Order	11 November 2026
Stage seven	Report outcome to Full Council	2 December 2026

Considerations

The final recommendations for this review may include:

- Boundary changes to the Parish Council.
- Warding of the Parish
- Future electoral arrangements of Parish.
- Future number of Councillors for each Parish Council Ward.
- Implementation of any Orders as a result of the Review and arrangements for when the Order comes into force.
- Any other matter not mentioned here that arises during the consultation period.

Glossary of Terms and explanation of guidance covering this review

What does 'Electoral Arrangements' mean?

An important part of our Review will comprise giving consideration to 'Electoral Arrangements'. The term covers the way in which a council is constituted for the parish. It covers:

- The ordinary year in which elections are held;
- The number of councillors to be elected to the council;
- The division (or not) of the parish into wards for the purpose of electing councillors;
- The number and boundaries of any such wards;
- The number of councillors to be elected for any such ward;
- The name of any such ward

Ordinary year of election

The Local Government Act 1972 states that ordinary election of parish councillors shall take place in 1976, 1979 and every fourth year thereafter. The Government has indicated that it would want the parish council electoral cycle to coincide with the cycle for the district council, so that the costs of elections can be shared. However, any changes which form part of the final recommendation where Council seats are re-distributed, it is possible to reduce the existing term of office to allow mid-term elections and revert thereafter to the 4 year cycle. Any costs associated with mid-term elections are wholly attributable to the Parish Council. It is not thought there would be any change to the ordinary year of election.

What considerations cover the number of parish councillors?

The number of parish councillors for each parish council shall not be less than five. There is no maximum number. There are no rules relating to the allocations of councillors.

In its survey, the Aston Business School found that the levels of representation varied and these are included in the following table.

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

The National Association of Local Councils has also issued the following guidelines:

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

The Government's guidance is that 'each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population geography and pattern of communities', and therefore the Council is prepared to pay particular attention to existing levels of representation, the broad pattern of existing council sizes which have stood the test of time and the take-up of seats at elections in its consideration of this matter. The Government makes the point 'that the conduct of parish council business does not usually require a large body of councillors'.

By law, the Council must have regard to the following factors when considering the number of councillors to be elected for the parish:

- The number of local government electors for the parish;
- Any change in that number which is likely to occur in the five years beginning with the day when the review starts.

Naming of a Parish

In the naming of a parish, the Council will be mindful of existing local or historic place names, and there will be a presumption in favour of names proposed by local interested parties.

Reorganisation of Community Governance Orders and Commencement

The Review will be completed when the Council adopts the Reorganisation of Community Governance Order. Copies of this Order, the map(s) that show the effects of the order in

detail, and the document(s) which set out the reasons for the decisions that the Council has taken (including where it has decided to make no change following a Review) will be deposited at the locations listed at the end of this document.

In accordance with the guidance issued by the government, the Council will issue maps to illustrate each recommendation at a scale. These maps will be deposited with the Secretary of State and at the Council Offices. Prints will also be supplied, in accordance with regulations to Ordnance Survey, the Registrar General, the Land Registry, the Valuation Agency, the Boundary Commission for England and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

Where a proposed change to a parish boundary gives rise to a need for a corresponding change to a district ward or county electoral division boundary, the Council may request a related alteration from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. Any such request will be supported by the information required by the Commission. The decision whether to make a related alteration rests with the Commission.

Any new electoral arrangements will come into force at the next ordinary elections to the council which are scheduled to be held in May 2027.

Consequential Matters

General Principles

The Council notes that a Reorganisation Order may cover any consequential matters that appear to the Council to be necessary or proper to give effect to the Order.

In these matters, the Council will be guided by Regulations that have been issued following the 2007 Act.

How to contact us

Should you require any further information or need clarification on the review process, please contact:

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Telephone: 01527 881650
Email: darren.whitney@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

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