

North Somerset Council

Community Governance Review 2025

Terms of Reference



1. Introduction

North Somerset Council is carrying out a full Community Governance Review (CGR) in accordance with Part 4, Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (LGPIHA 2007) to consider parish boundaries, parish ward boundaries and councillor representation throughout the local authority area.

North Somerset Council is required to have regard for the Guidance on CGRs issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. This guidance has been considered in drawing up these terms of reference.

2. Why is the North Somerset Council undertaking the review?

A CGR provides an opportunity for district councils to review and make changes to community governance for the parishes within their area. Such reviews can be undertaken when there have been changes in population or in reaction to specific, or local, new issues to ensure that the community governance for the area continues to be effective, convenient and reflective of the identities and interests of the community. The government has emphasised that ultimately recommendations made in a CGR ought to bring about improved community engagement, more cohesive communities, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

Government guidance further states that it is good practice to conduct a full review at least every 10 – 15 years and keep the area under review in the interim.

The last full CGR carried out by North Somerset Council concluded in 2010, therefore it is now timely to formally review the parish governance arrangements throughout the area.

3. Scope of the review

North Somerset Council will be reviewing parish governance arrangements across the **whole** of the local authority area and will be considering the following:

- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes
- The naming of parishes and the style of any new parishes
- The electoral arrangements for the parishes, including
 - the ordinary year of election
 - the number of councillors
 - the number and boundaries of wards (if warded)
 - the name of any ward (if warded).

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- Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.

Any final recommendations made on the above by North Somerset Council will have regard to Section 93 LGPIHA 2007 and will ensure that community governance within the areas under review reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area and is effective and convenient.

Note: North Somerset district wards are not within the scope of this review.

4. A timetable for the review

Publication of these Terms of Reference formally begins the review, which must be completed within twelve months.

The indicative 12-month timetable for the review is as follows. Depending on local circumstances some dates may change, although implementation ahead of the first quarter of 2025 is anticipated.

Date	Action
Feb 2025	Terms of reference for the review are prepared, agreed by North Somerset councillors at the February Planning and Regulatory Committee and published on Friday 28 February.
Feb – Apr 2025	First public consultation, lasting approx. 8 weeks.
May – Jun 2025	Review by Officers and development of Draft Recommendations.
Jun 2025	Draft Recommendations to be agreed by North Somerset councillors at the June Planning and Regulatory Committee and approved for publication on Friday 20 June.
Jun – Sep 2025	Second public consultation, on Draft Recommendations.
Oct – Nov 2025	Review by Officers and development of Final Recommendations.
Nov 2025	North Somerset councillors discuss and agree Final Recommendations at the November Planning and Regulatory Committee. Reorganisation Order made and published on Friday 21 November.

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5. Consultation

North Somerset Council are required to consult the local government electors and any other person or body who appears to have an interest in the review and to take the representations that are received into account by judging them against the criteria in the LGPIHA 2007.

North Somerset Council intends to consult with all households and interested parties in the area through inviting initial submissions and seeking views on the draft proposals.

North Somerset Council will also identify any other person or body who it feels may have an interest in the review and write to them inviting them to submit their views at both stages of consultation.

This will include:

- Ward members
- Parish council members

This may also include:

- Groups and societies
- Schools and colleges
- Members of Parliament
- Local political parties
- The police
- Local charities and voluntary organisations

North Somerset Council will also be pleased to receive comments from any other person or body that wishes to make representations. Any such person that makes representations during the initial invitation to submit proposals will be invited to make comments in respect of the draft proposals.

North Somerset Council intends to clearly publish all decisions taken in the review and the reasons for taking those decisions and will work towards the Government's view in undertaking the review that CGRs should be conducted transparently so that local people and other stakeholders who may have an interest are made aware of the outcome of the decisions taken and the reasons behind these decisions.

In accordance with the Act, representations received in connection with the review will be taken into account, and steps will be taken to notify consultees of the outcome of the review by publishing them on North Somerset Council's website at:

[Community Governance Review | North Somerset Council](#), through general press releases, placing key documents on public deposit at Council Offices and will communicate the final outcome of the review by November 2025.

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6. Following the review

A Reorganisation Order may be drafted which would cover any consequential matters that appear to North Somerset Council to be necessary as a result of the final agreed recommendations from the review that give effect to the Order.

These may include:

- The transfer and management or custody of property.
- The setting of precepts for new parishes; and
- Provision with respect to the transfer of any functions, property, rights and liabilities.

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

In particular, North Somerset Council notes that the Regulations regarding the transfer of property, rights and liabilities require that any apportionments shall use the population of the area as estimated by the proper officer of North Somerset Council as an appropriate proportion.

Furthermore, North Somerset Council notes that the regulations regarding the establishment of a precept for a new parish require North Somerset Council to calculate the first anticipated precept for a newly constituted parish council and for the amount of that precept to be included in the Reorganisation Order.

Where any such consequential matters affect North Somerset Council, the Council will also seek the views of that council with regard to alterations to electoral division boundaries in accordance with the government's guidance.

How to contact us:

Any queries regarding this review should be directed to:

Electoral Services

North Somerset Council

Town Hall

Weston-super-Mare

BS23 1UJ

E-Mail: electoral.services@n-somerset.gov.uk

Date of publication of these Terms of Reference: Friday 28 February 2025

Any modifications (if any) will be published as soon as practicable after they have been made.

