Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

What is a Community Governance Review?

A Community Governance Review is a review of the whole the council's area to consider one or more of the following:

- creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes
- the naming of parishes and the style of new parishes
- the electoral arrangements for parishes (the ordinary year of election, council size (the number of councillors to be elected to council), and parish warding); and
- grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes
- other types of local arrangements, including parish meetings

A Community Governance Review is required to take into account:

- the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
- the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish

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
- be effective and convenient

If the council is satisfied that the recommendation of a Community Governance Review would ensure that community governance within the area under review will reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area, and is effective and convenient, the council makes a Community Governance Order.

Why is the council carrying out this Community Governance Review?

The council is required to keep its area under review – every 10-15 years. The last CGR was in 2016 and a request from a Town Council for a Review, it was deemed appropriate to undertake a Review of the whole principal council area, rather than dealing with review requests piecemeal. A Community Governance Review offers an opportunity to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries, tied to firm ground features, and remove the many anomalous parish boundaries that may exist.

Scope of the Review

The Review will consider any Community Governance Review requests received following publication of the Terms of Reference.

2. Consultation

How the council proposes to conduct consultations during the Review?

Before making any recommendations or publishing final proposals, the council must consult local government electors for the area under review and any other person or body (including a local authority) which appears to the council to have an interest in the review.

The council will therefore:

- publish a Notice and these Terms of Reference on the council's website and arrange for copies to be available for public inspection at Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 2RL during normal office hours

- send a copy of the Notice and these Terms of Reference to all town and parish clerks
- seek to arrange for the notice to be published on parish council websites and notice boards;
- send a copy of the Notice and these Terms of Reference to all local Members of Parliament; and
- the Council will promote the consultation among electors using social media and press releases.

Before making any recommendations, the council will take account of any representations received. The 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. Alongside the recommendations, the Council will publish the representations received

The council will notify each consultee and any other persons or bodies who have made written representations of the outcome of the Review.

3. Timetable for the Community Governance Review

The council must complete a Community Governance Review within twelve months from the day on which the council publishes the Terms of Reference. A Community Governance Review is concluded on the day on which the council publishes the recommendations made by the Community Governance Review.

Following a decision made at the Full council meeting on 23 January 2025, the timetable for timetable is shown below.

Stage	Date/Timeline	Timescale	Outline of Activity
One – Invite initial submissions	31 January 2025	12 Weeks	Initial submission invited
Two – Consider submissions	18 April – 2 July 2025 23 July 2025	14 weeks	Consider submissions and prepare report of draft recommendations Council approves draft recommendations
Three – Publish Draft Recommendations	24 July 2025 – 13 November 2025	16 weeks	Commence consultation on draft recommendations.
Four – Final Recommendations	13 November 2025 22 January 2026 Full Council	10 weeks	Consideration of further submissions and prepare final recommendations Council resolves to make a Reorganisation Order
Implementation	May 2026/May 2027 Elections		Effective date of any changes to parish/town boundaries and electoral arrangements