

# **Community Governance Review**

## **Terms of Reference**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Hertsmere Borough Council has been asked by the electors of Potters Bar to undertake a Community Governance Review for the unparished area of Potters Bar, by way of petition, to consult on the creation of a Civil Parish.
- 1.2 As the petition has been found to be valid, the Council must undertake a review in accordance with Section 83(2) of the LGPIHA 2007.
- 1.3 The Council is required to have regard to the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. This guidance has been considered when drawing up these Terms of Reference.

### **2. What is a Community Governance Review?**

- 2.1 A Community Governance Review (CGR) is the process used to consult on parish arrangements and may be used 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,
  - Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.
- 2.2 The Council believes parish councils play an important role for community empowerment at the local level.

### **3. Who undertakes the Review?**

- 3.1 Hertsmere Borough Council are statutorily responsible for carrying out the review.
- 3.2 The conduct of the review will be overseen by the Council's Constitution and Member Development Panel in collaboration with Hertsmere's Electoral Services.
- 3.3 The Council have developed a Community Governance Review Working Group, inclusive of relevant council officers and the Potters Bar Borough Councillors to collaborate on key stages of the Review.
- 3.4 Formal decisions on the recommendations arising from the review will be made by full Council, in accordance with the Council's constitution.
- 3.5 If you have any questions about the review, the Electoral Services team can be contacted by email: [elections@hertsmere.gov.uk](mailto:elections@hertsmere.gov.uk)

#### **4. How will the Review be conducted?**

4.1 The Council has drawn up and now publishes this Terms of Reference document. This document lays out the aims of the review, the legislation that guides it and some of the policies the Council considers important in the review.

4.2 The Council will consult by:

- writing to Hertfordshire County Council;
- writing to all parish councils within and adjoining the CGR area;
- writing to identified umbrella organisations;
- publicising the review on the councils website;
- encouraging participation through social media channels;
- general press releases.

4.3 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. This will be done by:

- the Council's website, through a dedicated Review webpage;
- general press releases;
- key documents on deposit at the Civic Office and contact points within Potters Bar;
- personal communication to each household;
- public drop in sessions.

## 5. Timetable for the Review

5.1 Publication of this Terms of Reference formally begins the review.

### 5.2 *Timetable*

Stage	What happens?	Timeframe
<b>Commencement of Review</b>	Terms of Reference are published by Council	25 March 2026
<b>Preliminary investigation</b>	Consider the requests from the petition and research local data	March 2026
<b>Stage One</b>	Initial submissions are invited via first consultation	01 April 2026 – 31 May 2026
<b>Stage Two</b>	Consideration of submissions received and Draft recommendations are prepared	1 June 2026 – 30 June 2026
<b>Stage Three</b>	Draft recommendations are published and consultations are invited	1 July 2026 – 23 August 2026
<b>Stage Four</b>	Consideration of submissions received and Final recommendations are prepared and published	1 September 2026
<b>Final Stage</b>	Council resolves to make a Reorganisation Order	16 September 2026

5.3 Any Order made following a CGR should, for administrative and financial reasons (for example setting up a new Parish Council and arranging for its first precept) take effect on 1 April following the date on which the Order is made. Electoral arrangements will come into force at the first elections to any new Parish Council following the making of the Order.

## **6. Electorate Forecasts**

6.1 When the Council considers the electoral arrangements of the parishes in its area, it must consider any change in the number or distribution of the electors which is likely to occur in the next five years beginning with the day when the review starts.

6.2 The Review will use the latest electorate figures, published March 2026, in conjunction with local planning and development data to project the five-year electorate forecast.

## **7. Parish Areas and their Boundaries**

7.1 The Council wants to ensure electors should be able to identify clearly with a parish in which they are resident. Identity and community should:

- Lend strength and legitimacy to a parish structure
- Create common interest in local affairs
- Encourage participation in elections
- Lead to representative and accountable governance

7.2 The Council notes the government's guidance that community cohesion should be taken into account in this Review.

7.3 The Council will endeavour to select boundaries that are and are likely to remain easily identifiable.

## **8. Names and Styles**

8.1 The Council will endeavour to reflect existing local or historic place names.

8.2 The Council will make recommendations as to the geographical name of the new parish. A new parish and parish council would be named in the style of:

- The parish of [name]; and [name] parish council.

8.3 The 2007 Act has introduced alternative styles for parishes. The Council may also recommend an adopted alternative name in the style of:

- The community of [name]; and [name] community council.
- The neighbourhood of [name]; and [name] neighbourhood council.
- The village of [name]; and [name] village council.

8.4 The Council will consult on the name and style of the possible parish and will take into consideration

8.5 The alternative style of "town" is available to a parish however, it will be for the parish council or parish meeting to resolve this style post review.

## **9. Electoral Arrangements**

9.1 An important part of the Review will include consideration to the “electoral arrangements”. This term covers the way in which a council is constituted for the parish and 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 of boundaries of any such wards;
- The name of any such wards.

9.2 The local Government Act 1972 states that ordinary election of parish councillors take place should take place every four years. Government indicated it would want the parish electoral cycle to coincide with the cycle of a borough/district. The ordinary year for Hertsmere’s parish electoral cycle would fall in May 2027.

9.3 The Council notes the number of parish councillors for each council shall not be less than five and there is no maximum number.

## **10. Reorganisation of Community Governance Orders and Commencement**

10.1 When the required consultation has been undertaken, and the Review completed, the Council may make an Order to bring into effect any decision that it may make taking account of the role of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. If the Council decides to take no action, then it will not be necessary to make an Order.

10.2 Copies of this Order, the map(s) that show the effects of the order and the document(s) which set out the reasons for the decisions the Council has taken, will be published on the Hertsmere website.

10.3 The financial and administrative provisions of the reorganisation order will come into force 1 April 2027.

10.4 The electoral arrangements for a new parish council will come into force following the next ordinary elections to the parish council, 6 May 2027.

## **11. Consequential Matters**

11.1 If an Order is made it may be necessary to cover certain consequential matters in that Order. These may include:

- The transfer and management or custody of any property;
- The setting of a precept (Council tax levy) for the new Parish Council;
- Provision with respect to the transfer of any functions, property, rights and liabilities;
- Provision for the transfer of staff, compensation for loss of office, pensions and other staffing matters.

11.2. The Council will also take into account the requirements of the Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008 when calculating the budget requirement of any new Parish Council when setting the Council tax levy to be charged.