

Community Governance Review

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What is community governance?

Community Governance refers to the ways local communities are represented and governed, particularly at the parish level, through community engagement, local participation, and the involvement of various stakeholders.

What is a Community Governance Review?

A CGR provides an opportunity to review and make changes to parish arrangements by consulting with residents and other interested groups on how their local communities are represented. A CGR can consider:

- 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 the council, and any division of parishes.
- Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.

The Review must consider any existing electoral arrangements and ensure that future community governance reflects the identities and interests of its community areas and is effective and convenient:

- The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion

- The size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish

Any changes will only be made if there is clear evidence to do so. Any proposals should not act against the interests of either the local or surrounding communities, particularly where the effect would be likely to damage community cohesion.

A Review cannot change:

- Number of County Councillors
- County electoral division boundaries
- Parliamentary boundaries

Who will conduct the Review?

As the relevant principal authority, Gloucester City Council is responsible for conducting any CGR within its electoral area. The council will oversee the review and produce draft and final recommendations; Full Council will approve the final recommendations before a Community Governance Order (Order) is made.

Current community governance in Gloucester and Gloucestershire

Quedgeley Town Council is the only parish council in Gloucester. The rest of the area is unparished.

Across the rest of Gloucestershire, there are currently 267 parish and town councils. Only Gloucester and Cheltenham local authority areas have unparished areas. Cheltenham Borough Council has recently made the decision to proceed with parishing its unparished area.

Why is a Community Governance Review happening now?

In February 2025, the Government announced proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) aimed at replacing two-tier authority areas, like Gloucestershire, with unitary councils. A number of different options were considered for Gloucestershire, and, on 16th July 2026, the Government announced its decision to create a single unitary council for Gloucestershire, which will replace existing county, city, district and borough councils on 1 April 2028.

We are carrying out this CGR to find out whether, in light of the Government's decision, there is support for setting up a parish or town council or councils for the unparished area of the Gloucester and what the preferred arrangements might be for the whole of the local authority area, noting that there is already a town council for Quedgeley.

Another key driver for the review is to explore the options for preserving the historic offices of Mayor and Sheriff of Gloucester in a unitary model of local government. Civic arrangements can be transferred to a successor parish or town council or to charter trustees. An area can have both town and parish councils and charter trustees if the boundaries historically associated with the area's civic identity are not reflected by the boundaries of any parish or town council.

To find out more about Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Gloucestershire, please visit [Future Gloucestershire : Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation in Gloucestershire](#).

What is a Parish or Town Council?

A parish or town council is the lowest tier of local government in England and is the level closest to local residents. It is an elected body made up of local councillors who represent the interests of their community, ensuring residents' views are heard by district, county or unitary councils.

Parish and town councils can also support and deliver services. It is not possible to confirm exactly what services any new parish or town council or councils would deliver because this would be decided by the new parish or town council or councils and the new unitary authority, however, it could include local services and facilities, such as parks, play areas, allotments, community halls and local events, as well as supporting community projects and wellbeing initiatives.

Parish and town councils are legally the same and have the same powers; a town council is simply a parish council that has chosen to style itself differently (often in larger areas) and a town council can elect a Mayor instead of a Chairman.

Civic functions and offices can be transferred to a successor parish or town council, but this can depend on whether the boundaries reflect those associated with the area's civic identity.

How are Parish and Town Councils funded?

Parish and town councils are funded through a sum of money called a 'precept'. This is a separate charge which is added to your Council Tax bill and collected by the collection authority on behalf of the parish or town. It is essentially the shortfall in funding that results in a parish's estimated annual expenses minus its expected income, divided by the number of Band D equivalent properties in the parish.

Once the parish or town council has set its budget and calculated its precept, it will submit a 'precept demand' to the collection authority, who will calculate the charge per household in the parish or town and add this to your Council Tax bill. Parish and town councils rely on the precept as their primary source of funding, as they do not receive direct funding from central government. Without the precept, they would be unable to carry out their responsibilities of maintaining local amenities, providing services and representing the community.

It is not possible to confirm exactly how much the precept for any new parish or town council or councils would cost because this would be decided by the new parish or town council or councils based on the services it would provide rather than the population of the area. The following is provided for information and should not be taken as an indication of how much residents could pay if any new parish or town councils are created:

- precepts for existing parish and town councils across Gloucestershire range from non-precepting authorities with minimal responsibilities, up to an annual precept of £269.81 for 2026/27 for a Band D Property in the Cirencester Town Council area, which has responsibility for services such as parks, open spaces, sport and recreation facilities, markets, community and civic events.
- The 2026/27 annual precept for Band D properties in the Quedgeley Town Council area is £45.82, which has responsibility for services such as community and sports centres,

some allotment sites, a small number of the play areas within the council area and community events.

What are Charter Trustees?

Charter trustees are a local body created to preserve the historic and ceremonial traditions of a town or city. They are often established during local government reorganisation, temporarily or permanently, when a former borough or city council is abolished and:

- (a) there is no parish or town council in place to continue its civic role; or
- (b) there is no parish or town council with boundaries that reflect those associated with the area's civic identity.

Charter trustees are not elected separately, they are made up of the already elected local councillors for the area falling wholly or partly within the town or city concerned and their role is limited to ceremonial functions, such as appointing a town or city mayor, maintaining civic traditions, safeguarding historic items such as charters, insignia and regalia.

Charter trustees do not provide local services or exercise the wider powers of a parish or town council.

How are Charter Trustees funded?

Charter trustees are primarily funded by a charge (a precept) on Council Tax, collected from residents within the charter trustee area. This funding is used to support their limited civic and ceremonial functions.

Because their role is restricted, their financial responsibilities are also limited. Funding typically covers the cost of civic events and ceremonies, expenses associated with a mayor or civic functions, the maintenance of historic items, such as charters, insignia and regalia. Charter trustees do not receive funding for delivering services, as they have no responsibility for local service provision.

What will happen to Quedgeley Town Council?

No decisions have been made about the future of Quedgeley Town Council. The CGR is seeking views on community governance arrangements across Gloucester and that includes Quedgeley. The Council will consider the responses carefully and prepare draft recommendations that reflect public opinion. Existing community governance arrangements will only be affected if there is clear evidence for change.

What if there is no support for creating an additional Parish or Town Council or Councils?

Depending on the strength of opinion, we will decide whether to proceed directly to a recommendation of no change to community governance arrangements or continue with a second stage of consultation to confirm public opinion.

If no suitable successor parish or town council is created in Gloucester, arrangements will be made for charter trustees to be created to preserve the city's historic and ceremonial traditions, including the offices of Mayor and Sheriff.

If any part of Gloucester remains unparished when the new unitary council comes into existence, all services will be the responsibility of the new council, which could decide to add an additional charge, called special expenses, to the council tax paid by residents of the area for services carried out by parish councils elsewhere in the authority's area.