

Appendix 8 – Draft Recommendations for Lillings Ambo Parish Council

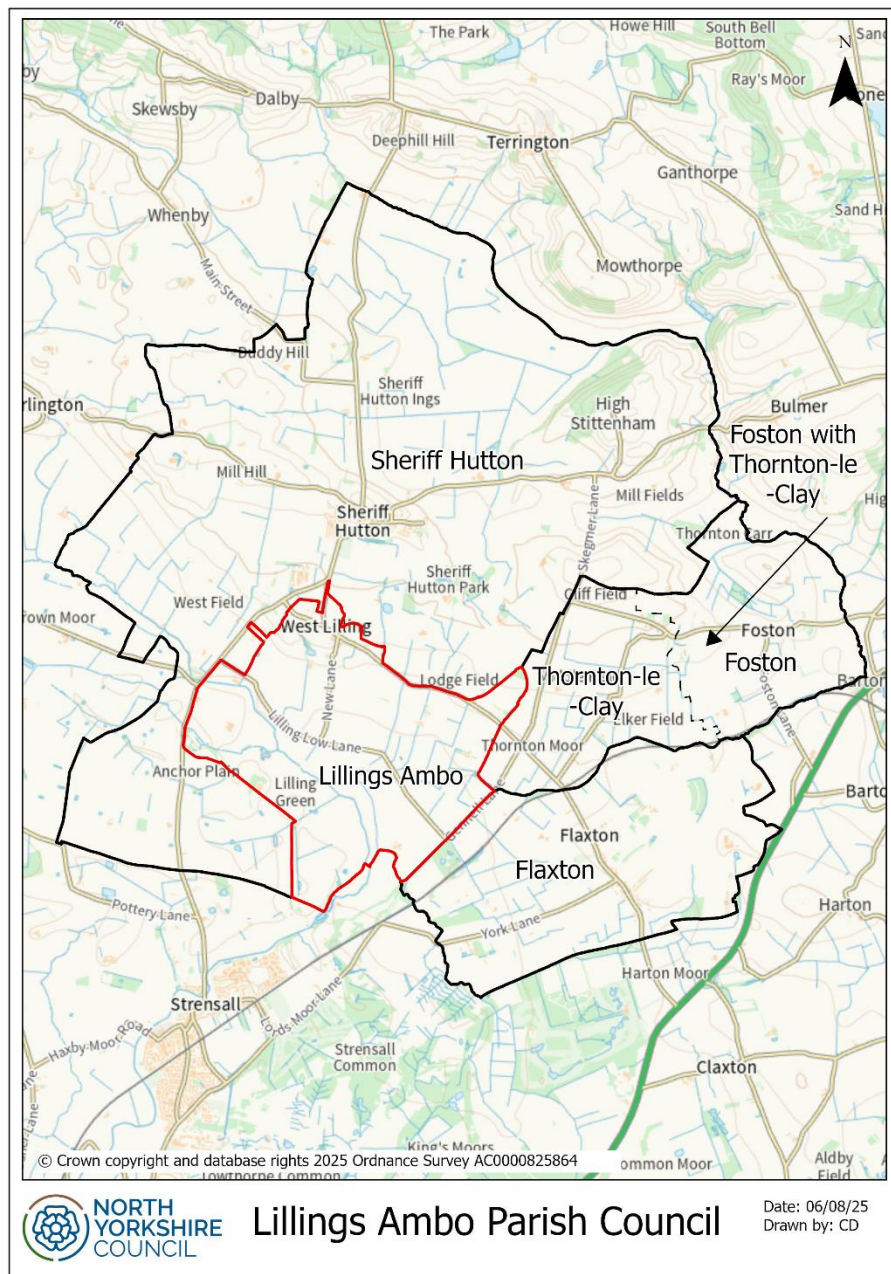
Contents

1.0 Current governance arrangements and history of the area	2
Current governance arrangements	2
History of the area	3
Five year electorate forecast	4
2.0 Assessment of consultation responses for Lillings Ambo Parish Council	5
3.0 Final assessment and draft recommendations	8
Annex 8A – Consultation survey	9
Annex 8B – Summary of consultation responses	9

1.0 Current governance arrangements and history of the area

Current governance arrangements

- 1.1 Lillings Ambo Parish Council is situated within the Sheriff Hutton and Derwent division and is part of the Thirsk and Malton parliamentary constituency. The parish is comprised of the village of West Lilling and the area known as Lilling Green.
- 1.2 Lillings Ambo parish currently has 129 electors and 70 properties.
- 1.3 Lillings Ambo Parish Council has 3 neighbouring parish areas as shown in the map below including Flaxton Parish Council, Foston with Thornton-le-Clay grouped Parish Council and Sheriff Hutton Parish Council.



- 1.4 Lillings Ambo Parish Council is comprised of 5 elected parish councillors. In order to meet and take decisions at least 3 councillors must be present. Parish Councils must hold an annual meeting and at least 3 other meetings each year.
- 1.5 Parish councils can raise a precept to raise monies for spending for the benefit of the parish. Lillings Ambo Parish Council raised a precept of £1,000 for the 2025/26 financial year.

History of the area

- 1.6 In February 2024, North Yorkshire Council (NYC) was contacted by the Lillings Ambo Parish Clerk who explained that the parish council had been struggling to recruit parish councillors, and a new Clerk for some time, and that the cost of running the parish council was excessive considering the small number of properties it represented. As a result, Lillings Ambo Parish Council had resolved at a parish council meeting to consider amalgamating with another parish council, with Sheriff Hutton being their preference, subject to ensuring some local representation on the parish council and Sheriff Hutton Parish Council's views.
- 1.7 In February 2025, NYC was notified that Lillings Ambo Parish Council had become inquorate due to several resignations. The usual vacancy procedures were followed but there was no subsequent interest in the vacancies. The Parish Council therefore became inactive.
- 1.8 Section 91(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that the principal authority (NYC) can make an order to appoint to a parish council until such time as the vacancies on it have been filled by either election or co-option. Since 6 September 2024, the Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Democratic Services has had delegated powers to make such a temporary appointment.
- 1.9 On 10 June 2025 3 NYC Division Members, Councillors Caroline Goodrick, Nigel Knapton and Janet Sanderson were temporarily appointed to Lillings Ambo Parish Council to maintain quoracy and allow the parish council to conduct business and co-opt additional members.
- 1.10 Following the temporary appointments to Lillings Ambo Parish Council, Democratic Services contacted the Division Member for Sheriff Hutton and Derwent, Councillor Caroline Goodrick who agreed that Sheriff Hutton Parish Council was the most suitable option for being combined with Lillings Ambo Parish Council, and that the lack of interest in the vacancies suggested that the parish council was unlikely to be co-opt new councillors.
- 1.11 In July 2025, the Sheriff Hutton Parish Clerk was contacted about the possibility of combining both parish councils. In response, the Clerk advised that the matter would be brought forward to the councillors at the next parish council meeting in August.
- 1.12 After consultation with Democratic Services, it was suggested that a CGR be carried out for Lillings Ambo Parish Council. Following the Standards and Governance Committee on 20 June 2025, Full Council approved the terms of reference of the 2025/26 Community Governance Review, which included Lillings Ambo Parish Council on 16 July 2025.
- 1.13 As Lillings Ambo Parish Council has remained inactive for a year, it is not within the interest of the public to keep the current governance arrangements as local electors

are not currently represented by an active parish council. Combining Lillings Ambo Parish Council with Sheriff Hutton Parish Council would ensure that electors are represented by a parish council. Sheriff Hutton Parish Council has since advised that they wish to see the results of the Stage 1 consultation before making a decision.

1.14 Sheriff Hutton Parish Council currently has 870 electors and 511 properties.

Five year electorate forecast

1.15 The electorate and 5 year electorate forecast for Lillings Ambo parish and Sheriff Hutton parish is as follows:

Parish	Electorate (2025)	Electorate prediction (2030)*	Predicted electorate increase
Lillings Ambo	129	141	12
Sheriff Hutton	870	915	45

2.0 Assessment of consultation responses for Lillings Ambo Parish Council

2.1 The following table shows the number of households written to, with the number of consultation responses received, and response rate.

Households sent CGR consultation letter	866
Consultation responses received	26
Response rate	3.0%

2.2 Consultation letters were sent to households in Flaxton parish, Foston parish, Thornton-le-Clay parish, Lillings Ambo parish and Sheriff Hutton parish as following the CGR request made by Lillings Ambo Parish Council to merge with a neighbour, these were the areas under review.

2.3 A copy of the consultation survey can be found at Annex 8A. A summary of consultation responses received can be found at Annex 8B.

2.4 For the avoidance of doubt, the free text comments received through the consultation process reflect the views of the individual respondents alone. These comments do not represent the views of North Yorkshire Council and should not be construed as being endorsed by the Council.

2.5 The response rate in the table above was calculated by comparing the number of consultation responses with the number of households directly consulted by means of a letter sent to all properties in the areas under review. The total number of responses for Lillings Ambo Parish Council was 26.

2.6 Of the 26 respondents, 8 reported that they lived in Lillings Ambo, with one of these respondents also stating that they worked and owned a business in Lillings Ambo. 15 respondents were residents of a neighbouring parish. 5 of these respondents were from Flaxton, 6 were from Sheriff Hutton and one was from Foston with Thornton-le-Clay grouped Parish Council. A further 3 respondents did not indicate which neighbouring parish they lived in.

2.7 76% (19) of respondents indicated that they were aware that Lillings Ambo Parish Council had experienced difficulty finding residents to stand as parish councillors.

2.8 100% (26) of respondents were in favour of combining Lillings Ambo Parish Council with one of the neighbouring parish councils, either by forming a single parish council which could be warded, or by forming a grouped parish council.

2.9 The majority of respondents chose to combine Lillings Ambo Parish Council with one of the neighbouring parish councils and dissolve Lillings Ambo Parish Council and merge with a neighbouring parish council to form a single parish council, which could be warded, as detailed in the table below.

Option	Number	Percentage
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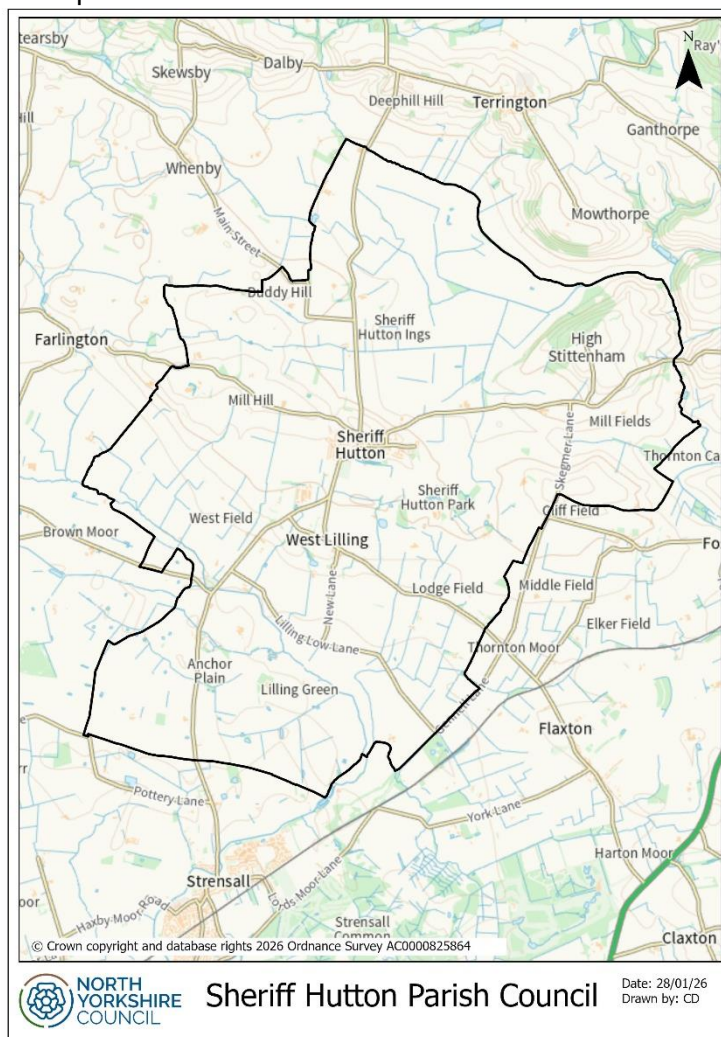
Combine Lillings Ambo Parish Council with one of the neighbouring parish councils and dissolve Lillings Ambo Parish Council and merge with a neighbouring parish council to form a single parish council, which could be warded	14	54%
Combine Lillings Ambo Parish Council with one of the neighbouring parish councils and dissolve Lillings Ambo Parish Council and form a grouped parish council	12	46%
I am unsure	0	0%
Other suggestion, please describe below	0	0%
Total	26	100%

- 2.10 Of the 26 respondents, 22 were in favour of Lillings Ambo Parish Council being combined with Sheriff Hutton Parish Council, two were in favour of Lillings Ambo being combined with Flaxton Parish Council, and one suggested Foston with Thornton-le-Clay Parish Council.
- 2.11 Annex 8B summarises at page 2 the reasons people gave for their preferred option. The most popular reason for the choice to merge Lillings Ambo Parish Council with Sheriff Hutton Parish Council was geographical proximity which was referenced by 15 respondents. Several respondents commented that the current boundary line between both parishes would be better made into one cohesive block. A sense of a shared community identity with Sheriff Hutton was also referenced. One resident of Lillings Ambo commented *“we very much consider ourselves part of the Sheriff Hutton community. We have little to do with Flaxton and Foston”*.
- 2.12 Respondents also commented that both parishes have shared facilities and amenities, such as a village hall, church, market days, post office, leisure activities and clubs and a shared village newsletter, implying that combining both parishes into one would make sense from a community cohesion perspective.
- 2.13 Other reasons in favour of Lillings Ambo being combined with Sheriff Hutton Parish Council were the fact that when active, Lillings Ambo Parish Council had advised NYC that their preference was Sheriff Hutton, as well as the fact that Sheriff Hutton Parish Council is perceived as an active and well run parish council with a much larger electorate to find parish council members. One respondent commented *“West Lilling is too small and has very little to take decisions about and therefore the meetings lack purpose. Hence little interest for councillors.”*
- 2.14 Two respondents, who were both residents of Flaxton, were in support of Lillings Ambo Parish Council being combined with Flaxton Parish Council. The reason given for this choice was that Flaxton Parish Council was well run.

- 2.15 Sheriff Hutton Parish Council submitted a consultation response outlining their support of combining Lillings Ambo Parish Council with Foston with Thornton-le-Clay Parish Council. The reasons for this being that both parish councils were of similar size, and both had few facilities. A suggestion was also made that Lillings Ambo Parish Council be dissolved and a parish meeting created in its place. These comments have been taken on board however a parish meeting still requires a level of interest from residents and a Clerk and Chair to be appointed.
- 2.16 Flaxton Parish Council and Foston with Thornton-le-Clay Parish Council both submitted consultation responses in favour of Lillings Ambo being combined with Sheriff Hutton Parish Council. Flaxton Parish Council commented that there was greater synergy between Lillings Ambo and Sheriff Hutton and Foston with Thornton-le-Clay Parish Council felt that Sheriff Hutton has the closest association with Lillings Ambo.
- 2.17 The Division Member for Sheriff Hutton and Derwent, Councillor Caroline Goodrick agreed that Sheriff Hutton Parish Council is the most suitable option for a merger but has advised that if Sheriff Hutton Parish Council do not wish to combine with Lillings Ambo, Lillings Ambo Parish Council could be dissolved and a parish meeting formed.
- 2.18 Additional comments about the CGR included that some residents found the covering letters distributed to households difficult to understand, as they did not contain information specific to this individual community governance response. These comments have been taken on board, although each letter included a QR code for residents to access the CGR webpage and online survey. Alternative ways of responding to the survey included an email address and telephone number to request a paper copy of the consultation survey. One respondent commented that a paper copy of the survey should have been posted to each affected resident, however the cost implications of this were considered too great.
- 2.19 Other comments included the view that a CGR to combine Lillings Ambo Parish Council with a neighbour would be effective in reducing costs. One respondent also commented that they did not want to see the current Sheriff Hutton parish councillors forced to resign to make way for Lillings Ambo councillors. In response to this comment, Lillings Ambo Parish Council has struggled to attract interest from residents in the past so it is not felt that there would be strong competition for seats if the two parish areas were combined. Sheriff Hutton Parish Council currently has 7 councillors, and if the two parishes were combined, it is proposed that the new parish council be represented by 8 councillors.

3.0 Final assessment and draft recommendations

- 3.1 The majority of responses (100%) indicated support for combining Lillings Ambo Parish Council with a neighbouring parish council, with the majority of these responses in favour of a single parish council, which could be warded. 88% of respondents were in favour of a merger specifically with Sheriff Hutton Parish Council. It is therefore proposed to combine the parish of Lillings Ambo with the parish of Sheriff Hutton to create a single parish council which would not be warded.
- 3.2 Discussions with the Clerk of Sheriff Hutton Parish Council have been ongoing throughout the review. Concerns have been raised by Sheriff Hutton Parish Council about the additional workload involved, as well as the capacity of the parish council to take on more issues from an increased electorate as a result of extending the parish council boundary. A further meeting of Sheriff Hutton Parish Council is scheduled to take place on 12 February, at which point councillors will be in a position to discuss the outcome of the Stage 1 consultation.
- 3.3 The recommendations listed below are therefore subject to support from Sheriff Hutton Parish Council for combining with Lillings Ambo Parish Council. If this is not received, it is recommended that Lillings Ambo Parish Council retains its current governance arrangements.
- 3.4 A map of the recommended new Sheriff Hutton Parish Council is shown below:



3.5 A list of recommendations can be viewed below:

Recommendation 1 – the existing parishes of Lillings Ambo and Sheriff Hutton shall be amalgamated to constitute a new parish comprising the area outlined in black on the map

Recommendation 2 – the new parish shall be known as Sheriff Hutton

Recommendation 3 – there shall be a parish council for the parish of Sheriff Hutton

Recommendation 4 – the name of that council shall be Sheriff Hutton Parish Council

Recommendation 5 – the existing parishes of Lillings Ambo and Sheriff Hutton shall cease to exist

Recommendation 6 – the number of councillors to be elected for the parish of Sheriff Hutton shall be 8

Recommendation 7 – implementation is recommended to take effect administratively on 1 April 2027 with elections to the new arrangements at the next scheduled elections in May 2027, and that changes to the electoral register required for the above take effect on the revised publication ahead of that election (planned for December 2026).

Recommendation 8 – recommendations 1 - 6 are subject to support from Sheriff Hutton Parish Council. If this is not received, Lillings Ambo Parish Council will retain its existing governance arrangements, and no further action will be taken.

3.6 The recommendations detailed above will form the basis of the Stage 2 consultation which will commence on 19 March 2026, subject to receiving support from Lillings Ambo Parish Council.

Annex 8A – Consultation survey

Annex 8B – Summary of consultation responses