

North Yorkshire Council

18 March 2026

Recommendations Following the First Phase of the 2025/26 Community Governance Review

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive, Legal and Democratic Services

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the recommendations of the Standards and Governance Committee made at the meeting of 11 February 2026 in relation to the results of the first phase consultation and to present to Council the recommendations for the second phase consultation on the 2025/26 Community Governance Reviews (CGR's).

2.0 Summary

- 2.1 This report provides information on the recent Stage 1 consultation and provides a summary of the consultation responses. An analysis of the responses is provided and draft recommendations made, based on the responses received.
- 2.2 The report asks Council to agree the draft recommendations for the CGRs which will form the basis of a second round of public and stakeholder consultations.
- 2.3 No decisions are confirmed at this stage. The consultation process on the Draft Recommendations is an essential part of the CGR, and responses will (by law) be taken into account in producing the Final Recommendations.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 On 16 July 2025 Full Council approved the Terms of Reference (TOR) for a CGR for a defined number of parish areas. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (LGPIH Act 2007) devolved power from the Secretary of State to principal councils to conduct CGRs and put in place or make changes to local community governance arrangements.
- 3.2 Following the meeting on 16 July 2025 the TOR were published and the CGR began with the Stage 1 consultation taking place over 12 weeks from 29 September to 22 December 2025.
- 3.3 The consultation results have been analysed and draft recommendations developed for each of the areas under review. Full details of each review including analysis and development of draft recommendations are available in the Appendices (1-19) to this report. Each individual survey is provided at

Annex 1-19 A and a summary and the full responses for each CGR is provided at Annex 1-19 B of this report.

3.4 A summary of the outcomes is shown in the table below:

CGR	No. of responses	Response as a % of households consulted	No of households consulted *
Parish areas without a Parish Council requesting a Community Governance Review			
Barden**	15	1.1	1399
Bolton on Swale	20	3.9	517
Dunsforths	43	1.3	3247
Rand Grange	10	0.6	1727
Spennithorne	24	2.1	1132
Thornthwaite with Padside	14	3.0	460
Parish Councils or residents requesting a Community Governance Review			
Kirby Hill and District	28	4.3	646
Lillings Ambo	26	3.0	866
Newall with Clifton	12	1.1	1053
Thorpe Willoughby	150	5.1	2919
Welburn	46	6.0	768
Parish Council has requested that the Parish Council be dissolved and a Parish Meeting be put in its place or a merger with a neighbouring parish			
Potto***	55	4.4	125
Grouped parish councils which are not currently represented in each parish area and a Community Governance Review is therefore recommended			
Constable Burton and Finghall	12	4.8	248
Hudswell and District	5	2.5	201
Kirklington with Sutton Howgrave	6	4.3	141
Thornton-le-Beans	22	16.6	132
Parish has internal ward boundaries which require clarification and would therefore benefit from a Community Governance Review			
Staintondale	37	26.6	139
Parish councils requesting a Community Governance Review with a view to reducing their council size to enable them to be quorate			
Escrick	31	7.6	407
Sherburn	48	11.9	402
Total	604	3.6	16529

* Figures correct as of December 2025.

** Whilst only Barden and Appletreewick were stated in the Terms of Reference all surrounding areas were consulted as per the map in Appendix 1.

*** Whilst Potto was the only parish written to, neighbouring parishes were contacted via E Mail.

3.5 It is noted that whilst the responses to the consultation were mixed, there were some concerns raised re accessing the surveys and using a QR code, this may have some bearing on the apparent low response rate in some cases. A low response rate for this type of consultation is not unusual.

- 3.6 Every property in the areas under review were sent an explanatory letter in the post. Residents were offered the option to request a paper copy of the survey if they were not able to complete the survey online. A QR code was included for ease of completion as well as directions to complete the review online. A frequently asked questions (FAQ) page was also created to help the public with any queries or questions.
- 3.7 The recommendations being suggested are whether to proceed with a Stage 2 consultation and details of the responses from that consultation then being considered before a final decision is made.
- 3.8 Members are invited to note that parish councils and divisional representatives were also invited to respond to the CGR. All submissions have been included within this document.

4.0 Consultation Methodology

- 4.1 The Stage 1 consultation commenced on 29 September 2025 to run for 12 weeks until 22 December 2025.
- 4.2 A dedicated page was set up on the CGR area of the North Yorkshire Council (NYC) website where detailed information was provided on the reasons and scope for the CGR, timescales and terms of reference. The webpage contained links to all 19 online surveys.
- 4.3 A letter informing residents that a CGR was taking place with instructions on completion of the survey was posted to each of the 16,529 effected households on the electoral register. The letter explained the reasons for the review and invited residents to have their say via the survey. The letter signposted residents to the NYC website. A QR code was included on the letter to enable residents to access the survey directly from their mobile phones.
- 4.4 An option was provided to request hard copies via telephone or email for those residents who preferred to complete a paper copy of the survey or who did not have access to the internet.
- 4.5 In addition to the letters to households, key stakeholders were also emailed a link to the consultation webpage and invited to give their views. This included local MPs, Divisional Councillors for the relevant area and parish councils adjoining the areas requesting a CGR. Information was also included in the parish liaison bulletin sent to all parish councils monthly.
- 4.6 The surveys used can be found in Annex 1-19 A of the report.

5.0 Stage 2 Public Consultation

- 5.1 If Council approves the draft recommendations contained within this report, the next stage in the review will be to publish the draft recommendations and invite representations on the detailed proposals contained therein.

Timescale:

19 March 2026 Stage 2 consultation commences (12 weeks)
 11 June 2026 Stage 2 consultation closes

5.2 The overall timescales for the CGR are as follows:

Date	Activity
29 September 2025	Terms of Reference published 1 st Stage consultation commences (12 weeks)
22 December 2025	1 st Stage consultation closes
11 February 2026	Standards and Governance Meeting to review stage 1 results and proposals for stage 2 consultation
18 March 2026	Full Council Meeting - consultation results and approval of proposals for 2 nd Stage Consultation
19 March 2026	2 nd Stage consultation commences (12 weeks)
11 June 2026	2 nd Stage consultation closes
Early July TBC	Standards and Governance Meeting to review stage 2 results and final proposals
15 July 2026	Council approves CGR outcome
August 2026	CGR Orders made
December 2026	1/12/26 Electoral register published
May 2027	Implement any changes at scheduled elections

6.0 Consideration of Statutory Criteria

6.1 In developing draft recommendations the LGPIHA 2007 requires the council to take account of certain criteria when conducting a review, which are listed below. These statutory criteria are discussed within each report.

- 6.2 The council must have regard of the need to secure that community governance within the area under review:
- reflects the identities and interests of the community in an area;
 - provides effective and convenient governance of the area; and
 - takes into account any other arrangements for community representation or community engagement.
- 6.3 Councils are also advised to consider factors such as:
- what impact proposed community governance arrangements might have on community cohesion; and
 - whether the size (area), population and boundaries proposed for local governance make sense on the ground and contribute to the above criteria.
- 6.4 When deciding whether to recommend that a parish should be formed, a council must consider the following factors:
- whether the number, or distribution, of the local government electors for the parish would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient;
 - whether it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the council i.e. warded
 - warding is a way of dividing a parish into smaller geographical areas, for the purpose of electing parish councillors. Each ward elects its own representatives, ensuring that different parts of the parish have a fair and balanced voice on the council. Warding is usually considered when a parish covers a large area or contains distinct communities that may benefit from separate representation.
 - if the principal council decides to recommend that a parish should be divided into wards, then (a) the size and boundaries of the wards, and (b) the number of councillors to be elected for each ward.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The appendices to this report set out the draft recommendations in relation to the CGR's detailed above. Members are requested to take account of the statutory criteria as set out at section 6 of this report in consideration of these draft recommendations.
- 7.2 Once approved, the final outcome of the CGR will be implemented ahead of the 2027 parish council elections. This means that new parish council areas (if any), changes to parish council areas (if any), changes in the number of parish councillors (if any), and any resulting changes in council tax arrangements for households all change at that time. Ahead of those changes, a review of polling districts and polling places will be conducted, to take account of changes to electoral areas.
- 7.3 There were some examples of concerns raised during the CGR relating to the performance of some, not all, parish councils. These matters fall outside the

remit of the CGR and could be more appropriately addressed by the electorate at future parish council elections through the democratic process.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 There will be a financial cost in conducting any CGR, both in terms of officer support and in respect of the consultation process. Once instigated, the CGR must be conducted within a one-year period.
- 8.2 It is anticipated that the staffing support costs would be absorbed within existing capacity in the electoral, democratic, GIS, communication and legal services teams.
- 8.3 Consultation documents were made available online, however some printing and posting was required where residents requested a paper copy of the consultation to complete and return. There were 34 requests for paper copies of the first phase consultation. This incurred a cost of approx. £0.92 per request.
- 8.4 The cost of parish elections is incurred by the council but is recharged to the parishes where a contested election is held. Any changes to the boundaries may affect the parish precept that residents affected by a boundary change will pay. Any changes to precepts and council tax bills would be applied from the date the adopted recommendations from the review become effective.
- 8.5 The Stage 1 consultation cost approx. £15,262 which consisted of printing, postage and digital marketing.
- 8.6 As the Council has already written to all parish councils, households, the Yorkshire Association of Local Councils, and the MP's covering the areas under review providing direction to the timetable for review and where further information on the Council's website is available, it is anticipated that the second stage consultation will be completely digital and promoted through the NYC website, parish councils, divisional members and parish clerks.
- 8.7 To anticipate the precept for a new parish council, the prospective billing authority must formally state the **budget requirement** (which equals the precept amount) in the reorganisation order that establishes the council.

9.0 Legal Implications

- 9.1 In order to amend any of the governance arrangements as set out below:
 - the creation, merger, alteration or abolition of parishes
 - the naming of parishes and the style of new parishes
 - the electoral arrangements for parishes, such as the ordinary year of election, council size, wards, and numbers of councillors
 - the grouping or de-grouping of parishes

a community governance review must take place, including consultation with the public and other stakeholders.

- 9.2 In undertaking the CGR, the council will comply with the requirements of Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and other relevant legislation and have regard to Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued in accordance with section 100(4) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010.
- 9.3 References in legislation to a 'parish' also include a parish which has an alternative style (such as 'town', 'village' or 'community' council) and parish meetings.

10.0 Climate Change Implications

- 10.1 The Climate Change Impact Assessment at appendix 20.

11.0 Equalities Implications

- 11.1 Every property in the areas under review were sent an explanatory letter in the post. Residents were offered the option to request a paper copy of the phase one survey if they were not able to complete the survey online. A QR code was included for ease of completion, as well as directions to complete the review online. An FAQ page was also created to help the public with any queries or questions.
The Equalities Impact Assessment is at appendix 21.

12.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 12.1 Draft recommendations should be prepared following the receipt and consideration of initial submissions in a review during the first public consultation stage of a CGR. These draft recommendations should be adopted by the principal council as the basis for a period of substantive consultation with local residents and other interested stakeholders.

13.0 Options

- 13.1 Council could choose to amend the recommendations or to not proceed with any recommendations and to cease the CGR. The review would not be able to progress to a Stage 2 consultation without draft recommendations on which to consult.
- 13.2 If the CGR were not to progress to stage 2 the electoral arrangements would remain as present.
- 13.3 It was noted in the draft recommendations for Lillings Ambo Parish Council that the recommendations were subject to support from Sheriff Hutton Parish Council for combining with Lillings Ambo Parish Council. This was subsequently not received, it is therefore recommended that Lillings Ambo Parish Council retains its current governance arrangements.

13.4 In considering all the options, the recommendations at 14.0 are recommended for approval. It is noted that there would be an opportunity during the Stage 2 consultation process for members of the public to also give their views to the proposal, before a final decision is made.

14.0 Recommendations

14.1 That the recommendation from Standards and Governance Committee to accept the results from the Stage 1 consultation process which took place following publication of the Terms of Reference in September 2025 be agreed.

14.2 That the draft recommendations as set out in Appendices 1-19 of the report be agreed and publicised as part of a second and final consultation commencing on 19 March 2026 for a further twelve weeks.

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25 March 2026

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Background Documents:

[Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act \(Part4\)](#)

[Guidance on Community Governance Reviews](#)

[Minutes from Full Council on 16 July 2025 \(Minute215\)](#)

Appendices 1-19 - Analysis and Draft Recommendations

Annexes 1-19A - Consultation Surveys

Annexes 1-19B - Summary of Consultation Responses

- 1) Barden
- 2) Bolton-on-Swale
- 3) Dunsforths
- 4) Rand Grange
- 5) Spennithorne
- 6) Thornthwaite with Padside
- 7) Kirby Hill and District
- 8) Lillings Ambo
- 9) Newall with Clifton
- 10) Thorpe Willoughby
- 11) Welburn
- 12) Potto

- 13) Constable Burton and Finghall
- 14) Hudswell and District
- 15) Kirklington with Sutton Howgrave
- 16) Thornton-le-Beans
- 17) Staintondale
- 18) Escrick
- 19) Sherburn

Appendix 20 CCIA
Appendix 21 EIA