

Harborough District Council Community Governance Review 2025–2026

Review of parish arrangements under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

Introduction

Harborough District Council has received a verified petition from registered electors in Medbourne Parish requesting a Community Governance Review (CGR). The petition asks the Council to consider increasing the number of councillors on Medbourne Parish Council from five to seven, in accordance with Section 83(2) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

In undertaking the review, the Council will be guided by the following legislation and guidance:

- Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (“the 2007 Act”)
- Relevant provisions of the Local Government Act 1972
- Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued under Section 100(4) of the 2007 Act by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010

The Council will also have regard to the following regulations, particularly in relation to consequential matters arising from the review:

- Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008
- Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008

Section 81 of the 2007 Act requires the Council to publish terms of reference that clearly set out the focus of the review. This document fulfils that requirement.

Purpose and scope of the review

A Community Governance Review is the process used to consider parish governance arrangements. In October 2025, Harborough District Council decided not to carry out a district-wide CGR. Parish and town councils were advised that any area wishing to be considered for review would need to submit a valid petition with sufficient eligible signatories. Medbourne Parish Council has followed that process, and a CGR should now be undertaken. This review will consider council size only: specifically, whether the number of councillors elected to Medbourne Parish Council should increase from five to seven.

Current parish governance in Harborough District

Harborough District Council believes parish councils play an important role in terms of community empowerment at a local level. The District is 230 square miles in size and mainly rural with a number of larger settlements. There are almost 100 parishes within the district at this time fairly equally split between parish councils and parish meetings.

Medbourne is a historic village in Harborough, with approximately 500 residents. The Parish Council has existed for some time, with a present maximum number of Councillors of 5.

The proposed Local Government Reorganisation across England has caused many local authorities to look at their governance arrangements to ensure that their communities continue to have a local voice regarding services within their area. We now have the model for the

arrangements going forward within Leicestershire, the abolishment of both County and District Councils to set up a Unitary style Council makes it more important to ensure that the governance arrangements in place within Harborough District are both robust and appropriate for any future changes.

Who will undertake the review?

As the principal authority, Harborough District Council is responsible for undertaking CGRs within its area at this time. All parish councils within the area were notified if they wanted the Council to consider a petition it would have to be received by 30th June 2026. This would allow the Council to commence the CGR process, whether the increase in council size can be brought in for May 2027 elections will depend on whether the structural order for the Leicestershire unitary authority is in place prior to the end of the review, if this is the case it will have to go to the new unitary Council after it begins to meet in May 2027. The changes if agreed would therefore not come into effect until at least 2031 or 2032.

The primary contacts for the review are:

- Sheena Mortimer, Electoral Services Manager
- Leah Mickleborough, Head of Democratic Services, Elections and Monitoring Officer

Consultation

These terms of reference provide the aims of the review, the legislation that guides the process and the areas that the council will consider as part of the review process. The Council will consult widely on the review including, but not limited to:

- Local government electors/residents within Medbourne
- Parish councils/Parish meetings whose boundaries connect the parish area
- District councillor/County councillor covering this area
- Members of Parliament
- Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils
- Community groups within Medbourne

The Council will carry out one period of consultation instead of the normal two periods. This is due to the clear-cut and simple reason for the request, whether to increase the number of councillors, that it would enable changes to be implemented for 2027 and try to avoid potential delays if the structural changes order is introduced before the review could be concluded. A second period of consultation has been built into the timetable should there be a need to do so. The following methods of consultation:

- The Council hopes to hold one consultation period, as the request is clear and should not require a second consultation.
- Interested parties will be contacted and directed to the relevant pages on the Council's website.
- Dedicated consultation webpages will be created to host the Terms of Reference, interactive maps, frequently asked questions and all documents relating to the review.
- An online consultation questionnaire will be provided, with paper copies available.
- The Council will use HDC social media channels to promote the consultation.
- A leaflet will be delivered to households in the review area during the consultation period.

- The consultation will be promoted through the HDC monthly email newsletter.

Community governance reviews should be conducted transparently so that local people and other local stakeholders who may have an interest are made aware of the outcome of the decisions taken on them and the reasons behind these decisions. Before making any recommendation or publishing final proposals the Council will take full account of the views and suggestions put forward by local people and organisations and will comply with the statutory consultation requirements by:

- Consulting local government electors and other persons or bodies which appear to the Council to have an interest in the review (see above),
- Taking into account any representations received in connection with the review,
- Notifying consultees of the outcome of the review
- Publishing all decisions taken and the reasons for such decisions.

Information about each stage of the review will be published on the Council's website and be available for inspection at The Symington Building, Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 7AG. Press releases and other publicity will be issued where appropriate.

Timeline and Key Stages

Stage	Action	Dates
Petition received from Medbourne Parish electorate to request a CGR	Elector details are checked against the electoral register to confirm eligibility and confirm that petition is valid.	30 th June to 7 th July 2026
	Take request and TOR to CGR Advisory committee for information	1 st September 2026
Authorisation	To approve the Terms of Reference	28 th September 2026
Commencement	Notice of review published (Review should be completed within 12 months of receipt of petition)	29 th September 2026
Consultation period	eight week consultation period, submissions are invited.	29 th September to 24 th November 2026
	Consideration of submissions received, final recommendations	25 th November to 8 December 2026
2 nd consultation period if required	Further four week period of consultation if required due to submissions received	9 th December to 5 th January 2027

	Council to approve recommendations prepared with resolution to make re-organisation order.	22 nd February 2027
	If the structural changes order for the new unitary council within Leicestershire is not yet in place by this time changes may come in for the May 2027 Parish elections.	May 6 th 2027
	If the structural changes order for the new unitary council within Leicestershire is in place by this time the responsibility for arrangements to put order in place will lay with the new unitary authority which will mean it will be brought in for 3031 elections.	May 3031 or 3032

Current Partish Council size

Though the number of councillors within a community council is not a matter of law the guidance from Local Association of Local Councils (NALC) suggests that for a council of up to 900 electors the maximum number of councillors should be seven. Principal councils in considering council size should have regard to the population, geography and also on its own merits. Though the conduct of parish council business does not usually require a large body of councillors, many smaller parish councils have found it difficult to attract sufficient candidates to fill seats by election or co-option.

There are a number of parish councils within Harborough District of a similar size to Medbourne (between 400 & 500 electors). The council size for these parishes are as follows –

- 4 councils (including Medbourne) with 5 Councillors
- 4 councils with 6 Councillors

Medbourne Parish Council have stated that they feel an increase in numbers will assist them in dealing with a workload which includes planning and neighbourhood plans as well as a possible local housing project they wish to pursue. Lack of volunteers does not appear to be an issue for Medbourne, a recent vacancy attracted three parishioners who wished to be considered for co-option onto the council, which indicates that it does not appear they would have difficulty in attracting volunteers.