



## **Community Governance Review 2025 - Market Harborough**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**This document will help you to understand what a Community Governance Review is. If you have questions about the possible implications if Market Harborough has a parish council, please see our separate guidance document “What could a parish council mean for Market Harborough?”**

#### **Why are you doing the Community Governance Review now?**

In November, Harborough District Council received a petition, signed by over 1,800 people, calling on us to look at whether Harborough should have a parish council. As the petition included more than 7.5% of electors for the area, we have to do the review now.

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

A Community Governance Review allows Harborough District Council to review the arrangements in place within Market Harborough. It can decide whether or not Market Harborough should have a parish council for the area, where the boundaries of the parish council should be and how many councillors it should have.

#### **What can't a Community Governance Review do?**

A Community Governance Review cannot:

- Change the number of district or county councillors
- Change a district or county council ward boundary
- Change or remove individual councillors

#### **Will it affect my council tax?**

We appreciate this is really important for residents. It is possible your council tax could change but it's also possible it won't. This is because if a new parish council is created, it gets to set its own level of council tax and we can't say what that will be (in the same way that Harborough District Council can create its own level of council tax). However, we do expect there will be some additional costs in the first year that could mean higher council tax for that year.

That's why we can't take that into account when we make decisions about the community governance review – we have to follow guidance which requires us to make the decision based on what we feel is best for community governance, taking into account the consultation. There is more information on this in our separate guidance on what a parish council could mean for Market Harborough.

## **If a new parish council is created, when will it come into being?**

We are hoping to be able to set up the parish council for April 2027, although it is possible we may need to wait until April 2028. The first elections to the new council will take place in May 2027 or May 2028.

Until the new council is elected and gets up and running, Harborough District Council will continue to look after services so that residents of the local area don't see any disruption.

## **If you set up a parish council, will it take on the running of local services?**

At the moment, Harborough District Council provides services to residents of Market Harborough that it doesn't provide in other areas of the district and charges local residents a "special expense" for this in their council tax. This includes things like allotments, the cemetery, local parks, toilets, the bus shelters and other town centre facilities and running events in the town. All of these services could be transferred to the new parish council, but they don't have to be – if a new council is created, Harborough District Council can work with it to understand what it would like to do. That's another reason why it's hard to say exactly what the impact on council tax will be for residents – it can depend on who provides the services, and how they chose to run them.

## **Will everyone get to vote on whether we should have a new council?**

We're encouraging everyone to take part in the consultation so we can understand what they think about the issue. However, Harborough District Council has also agreed to undertake a non-binding local poll, which will allow all registered electors to say whether they want a new council or not. If you are eligible to vote but haven't yet registered, please sign up at [Register to vote - GOV.UK](#) so you can take part.

## **When the local poll takes place, will I know exactly what's proposed for the area?**

We know that some people may want to make a decision based on exactly what will happen in future. However, as explained above, once the new town council is in place, it can make decisions about how to operate services, what services it may want to provide, and the level of council tax it needs. As a result, the poll can only take place on the principle of whether or not to have a town council.

## **Would estates that pay to be privately managed be included in a parish council in Market Harborough?**

Potentially. There is nothing to say they should be excluded from the process. We know some management companies are very good at representing their residents and areas and so there may be arguments for them to be considered separately. On the other hand, residents in these areas may still want access to services such as cemeteries or allotments and would still benefit from town centre management.

All households within a town or parish are required to pay council tax and any precepts that may be set and would be included in the parish area.

## **What are the terms of reference?**

The council is required by law to draw up terms of reference for a Community Governance Review. As a minimum, the terms of reference must specify the area under review and be published. Terms of reference can also include information such as:

- Purpose of the review
- What issues and areas will be considered
- The timetable for the review and details of the process we will follow

## **What is meant by an alternative style of governance?**

Forming a new parish or town council, is not the only option available to the council. Other options include:

- Area or community forums
- Residents and tenants' associations
- Area committees

The government has announced that in new unitary council areas (see below) councils will be required to have some form of area-based committees, but it isn't clear what this will look like.

## **How can I find out more about Community Governance Reviews?**

The Government have published a guide to Community Governance Reviews which can be found at [www.harborough.gov.uk/cgr25](http://www.harborough.gov.uk/cgr25) . You can also find documents there with regard to this Community Governance Review which may help you in completing the online questionnaire.

## **How is this different to the Local Government Reorganisation Programme?**

The government have announced their intention to create new unitary tier authorities across Leicestershire. We don't yet know exactly what that will look like, but it would mean abolishing Harborough District Council and Leicestershire County Council and replacing it with new councils that will come into being on 1 April 2028. That's why it's important now to look at the arrangements in place for the many local communities within Harborough, to ensure that governance is effective for whatever the future may hold.

## **What is the difference between a parish/town council and a parish meeting?**

A parish meeting is an informal gathering of residents. The meeting has no legal power but must meet at least twice a year. The meeting will have a chairperson who does not have the power to make decisions for the parish. Though it may have limited impact on making decisions it is a way for residents to be able to talk about concerns and voice their opinions.

Parish and town councils are usually made up of local people who are elected or invited onto the council by co-option. They take on issues or problems within the community and work with district and county councils to make sure the services within the area fit the community. They can be responsible for providing services such as community centres, public toilets, local parks as well as involvement in planning applications. Parish and town councils will set what is called a 'precept' - this is part of the money paid in council tax and will be used to improve services for the community or to invest in local facilities.

Harborough District Council can establish a parish council. Once it has been set up, it can meet and decide to be called a "Town Council"

## How can I have a say on the review?

To share your views on the review please complete our online survey by visiting [www.harborough.gov.uk/cgr25](http://www.harborough.gov.uk/cgr25) your involvement will help us to decide changes that may be needed within the communities in Harborough District. Make sure you are clear on the area you are commenting on and what your views are, supply as much background information as you can. We have published guidance with regard to review including relevant information regarding the areas we will be reviewing. If you would rather email your comments or questions send them to [cgr@harborough.gov.uk](mailto:cgr@harborough.gov.uk) or in writing to –

CGR Consultation  
The Elections Team  
The Symington Building  
Adam & Eve Street  
Market Harborough  
LE16 7AG

**Please note: All responses received to the Community Governance Review will be published on our website and may be included in relevant reports.**

As you will see from the terms of reference, this is the first phase of the consultation process. Once we have reviewed the feedback from this consultation exercise, we will make recommendations and can then undertake further consultation if this is required.