

**Terms of Reference**  
**Community Governance Reviews of Valley Park, Vernham Dean, Hurstbourne**  
**Tarrant and Charlton Parishes**  
**to be undertaken by**  
**Test Valley Borough Council**

## Introduction

Test valley Borough Council has decided to carry out Community Governance Reviews to consider:-

- **Valley Park Parish – dewarding parish and reverting to a single unwarded parish council;**
- **Vernham Dean –reduction in size from 8 to 7 parish councillors;**
- **Hurstbourne Tarrant –increase in size by one parish councillor;**
- **Charlton – [increase]/decrease] in size by [one] parish councillor.**

Changes to electoral arrangements of parishes such as those set out above can only be made following a community governance review (CGR), which would be carried out by Test Valley Borough Council.

The review will be conducted in accordance with the terms of reference contained in this document.

Unlike the previous Borough-wide review, this CGR will ONLY consider the issues set out above. Changes to governance arrangements in other parishes are not included within the scope of this CGR.

## **What is a community governance review?**

A community governance review is the process used to consider whether existing parish arrangements should be changed in any way. This includes:

- Altering the boundaries of existing parishes
- Changing the names of existing parishes
- Creating a new parish or abolishing an existing parish
- Creating or abolishing parish councils
- The electoral arrangements for parish councils (including the number of councillors and arrangements for parish warding)
- The grouping or de-grouping of parish councils (and consequential changes to their electoral arrangements)

- The “style” of a parish (enabling an area to be known as a town, community, neighbourhood or village rather than a parish)

### **Who is carrying out the review?**

Test Valley Borough Council is statutorily responsible for carrying out the review. The conduct of the review will be overseen by the Council’s Community Governance Review Members Group, which includes councillors from the three political groups. Formal decisions on the recommendations arising from the review will be made by the full Council.

### **What is the area under review?**

The parishes of Valley Park, Vernham Dean, Hurstbourne Tarrant and Charlton are the areas covered by this Review.

### **Why is the Council carrying out a community governance review?**

The issues subject of this review were raised immediately following the 2018 CGR. The Council considers it is appropriate to review these matters prior to the May 2023 elections, rather than delay them to a future CGR.

In agreeing to carry out a CGR, the Borough Council is not pre-judging the outcome of the CGR. The CGR process will consider whether any changes are appropriate, and if so, what changes should be made. Governance arrangements will only be altered at the end of the CGR, including the consultation process as set out below, and decisions on the outcome will take into account all representations received.

### **What are the rules which apply to a community governance review?**

The aim of this review is to ensure that the arrangements for community governance within the CGR area:-

- **reflect ‘the identities and interests of the community in the area; and**
- **are ‘effective and convenient’.**

Provisions in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 set out the process for carrying out community governance reviews, and include the above requirements.

In addition, the review will have regard to the “Guidance on Community Governance Reviews” issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. This advises that a CGR should take into account a number of influential factors, including the impact of

community governance arrangements on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.

### **What is the present structure of parishes and their electoral arrangements in the review area?**

Valley Park Parish currently comprises three wards, Valley Park (North), Valley Park (South-West) and Valley Park (South-East). The number of parish councillors for each ward is 7, 1 and 1 respectively.

Vernham Dean has 8 parish councillors.

Hurstbourne Tarrant currently has 6 parish councillors.

Charlton currently has 8 parish councillors.

All parishes have elections every four years, the next being in May 2023.

### **How will the review work?**

One phase of consultation on parish arrangements in these parishes will be carried out during the CGR. All responses received during this period of consultation will be used to draw up final recommendations, setting out the changes (if any) to the existing parish arrangements in the area which are considered appropriate.

The period of consultation will begin on 8 April 2022 and will run for 8 weeks, closing on 3 June 2022.

A final set of recommendations will then be submitted to full Council in September 2022.

If changes are made following the CGR process, it is intended that these will be implemented in time for the May 2023 elections.

Any changes will be implemented by a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order made by the Council. Such an Order may cover “consequential matters” required to give effect to the Order, such as the transfer of property or other assets, the setting of precepts for new parishes, and staffing matters.

Depending on the outcome of the CGR, the consent of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England may be required, if changes to the electoral arrangements of parish councils are proposed.

## **What matters will the review focus on?**

The final recommendations made at the end of the review will seek to ensure that community governance in the area of the CGR :

- Reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area
- Is effective and convenient

When responding to the consultation on parish arrangements, you should ensure that your proposal takes account of these two criteria.

The Council also has to take into account other arrangements for community representation or engagement in the area.

In considering the electoral arrangements of the parishes in its area, the Council is required to consider any change in the number or distribution of electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day the review starts. In order to support those who wish to make a proposal, we will provide information on current parish arrangements (including maps), as well as current and projected future electorate figures for parishes potentially affected by the CGR. These will be available at [www.testvalley.gov.uk/cgr](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/cgr).

## **Who will the Council consult?**

The Council is required to consult with local government electors living in the CGR area, as well as any other individuals and organisations (including local authorities such as parish councils) who “appear to have an interest in the review”.

The Council must take into account all representations that it receives during the review’s periods of consultation, and will make all representations available for public viewing.

## **How will consultation take place?**

Test Valley Borough Council will write to Hampshire County Council, all parish councils within and adjoining the CGR area, and identified umbrella organisations (including the Test Valley Association of Town and Parish Councils, Hampshire Association of Local Councils, and Test Valley Community Services) before the start of the first period of consultation, inviting them to submit their views.

The CGR will also be publicised on the Council’s website, through internal communication channels and on social media platforms to engage with residents, community groups and other stakeholders. The Council will also liaise with local media, to inform and involve as broad an audience as possible.

## What will happen to assets owned by the parish councils?

Legislation covers property and other assets owned by parish councils affected by a reorganisation following a CGR. In addition, the order which brings the changes into force can also make provision, if the parish councils are unable to agree who should hold such assets after the reorganisation.

## Provisional timetable for the review

The community governance review formally begins when the terms of reference are published. The timetable below outlines the main stages of the review (please note that these dates may be subject to slight alteration).

Action	Timescale
Full Council to approve Terms of Reference	26 January 2022
Period of consultation	8 April – 3 June 2022 (8 weeks)
Final recommendations to full Council	7 September 2022
Preparation of community governance order (if required)	September 2022
Publication of recommendations (official end of review)	October 2022

## How to submit your views

You can respond to the consultation in the following ways:

*Write to:*

Community Governance Review (Legal and Democratic Service)  
 Test Valley Borough Council  
 Beech Hurst  
 Weyhill Road  
 Andover  
 SP10 3AJ

*Send an email to:* [cgr@testvalley.gov.uk](mailto:cgr@testvalley.gov.uk)

If you have any questions about the community governance review, please contact Howard Bone, Senior Solicitor, on [hbone@testvalley.gov.uk](mailto:hbone@testvalley.gov.uk) or 01264 368467.