

Annex A - Community Governance Review 2026/27:

Draft Terms of Reference

Introduction

West Oxfordshire District Council (“The Council”) is carrying out a Community Governance Review (CGR) in accordance with Part 4, Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (LGPIHA 2007) to consider parish boundaries, parish ward boundaries and councillor representation in the areas Carterton, Chipping Norton and Witney.

As well as legislation, the Council is also required to have regard for the Guidance on CGRs issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. Both the legislation and the guidance have been considered in drawing up these terms of reference.

Why is the West Oxfordshire District Council undertaking the review?

A CGR provides an opportunity for a district council to review and make changes to community governance for the parishes within their area.

The Council is undertaking a CGR in response to a Council motion passed in January 2026 and a specific request from Witney Town Council. This review is taking place prior to local government reorganisation to ensure that any changes to civil parish boundaries can be agreed prior to an electoral review of the successor unitary council.

Scope of the review

The focus of this CGR is solely on the administrative boundaries and electoral arrangements for the parishes and town councils in the Carterton, Chipping Norton and Witney areas of the district only, as well as councillor numbers in all parishes within those areas. No other parish or town councils are being considered for administrative boundary changes as part of this review.

Given the scope outlined above, the CGR will initially involve an invitation to Carterton, Chipping Norton and Witney Town Councils and those parishes directly bordering the towns of Carterton, Chipping Norton and Witney to submit any proposals for boundary changes and councillor numbers.

The following town and parish councils will be notified of the review and invited to submit proposals:

Carterton Town Council and neighbouring parishes: Alvescot Parish Council, Black Bourton Parish Council, Brize Norton Parish Council, and Shilton Parish Council.

Chipping Norton Town Council and neighbouring parishes: Chadlington Parish Council, Churchill and Sarsden Parish Council, Cornwell Parish Meeting, Enstone Parish Council, Heythrop Parish Meeting, Over Norton Parish Council, Salford Parish Council, and Spelsbury Parish Council.

Witney Town Council and neighbouring parishes: Curbridge Parish Council, Ducklington Parish Council, Hailey Parish Council, and South Leigh Parish Council.

Process

Following the invitation to submit proposals, options will be drawn up based on the proposals received in consultation with the Constitution Working Group and Ward Members. Full Council will be recommended to agree to consult on the options. Upon approval of the options for consultation, in accordance with the Council's statutory duties under Section 93 of LGPIHA 2007, the Council will undertake a public consultation with the electors for the areas effected and any other persons or bodies appearing to have an interest in the review.

In considering the responses to the consultation, the Council will have regard to Section 93 LGPIHA 2007 and will ensure that community governance within the areas under review reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area and is effective and convenient.

Any changes will follow the decision-making process in the indicative timetable below.

The Council has a statutory duty under Section 79 LGPIHA 2007 to notify Oxfordshire County Council ("OCC") of its intention to undertake a review and of the contents of these Terms of Reference.

It is also good practice to contact the Local Government Boundary Commission for England ("LGBCE") prior to undertaking a review, officers have corresponded with this body in advance of the agreement of the Terms of Reference.

Indicative Timetable

<u>Indicative dates</u>	<u>Action</u>
16 September 2026	Full Council considers whether to undertake a CGR
October 2026 – 31 December 2026 (3 months)	Invitation to submit proposals (3 Months) Invite proposals from affected town and parish councils for changes to boundaries of Carterton, Chipping Norton and Witney and seek responses from them on changes to councillor numbers
January 2027 – March 2027	Officers review responses and work up options, in consultation with the Constitution Working Group and Ward Members
<i>Pre-election period, local elections, annual council meeting</i>	
July 2027	Council considers options and agrees to proceed to public consultation
September - October 2027 (two months)	Public consultation (2 months) Public consultation on options
November - January 2028	Officers review responses and work up final recommendations in consultation with Constitution Working Group and Ward Members

Latest March 2028	Recommendations published and considered/agreed
By October 2028	Reorganisation Order made
1 April 2029	Commencement date

(END)