

Terms of Reference
Community Governance Review of Romsey and Romsey Extra Parish
to be undertaken by
Test Valley Borough Council

Introduction

Romsey Town Council has formally requested that the Borough Council review the boundaries of Romsey Parish [Romsey Town]. It proposes that the boundary be extended to include “all current and planned urban areas identified as Romsey”.

Changes to boundaries of parishes such as that proposed by Romsey Town Council can only be made following a community governance review (CGR), which would be carried out by Test Valley Borough Council.

A Borough-wide community governance review was carried out in 2018, which considered governance arrangements of all parishes in the Borough. Changes were made as a result, which came into effect in 2019.

Following Romsey Town Council’s request, Test Valley Borough Council has agreed to undertake a CGR to decide what action (if any) should be taken in response to the Town Council’s request.

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 an area covering the parishes of Romsey and Romsey Extra. The effect on adjoining parishes as a result of possible changes to governance within this area will be considered, but 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 proposal from Romsey Town Council which has led to this CGR is to extend the boundaries of Romsey Town. Romsey Town is entirely surrounded by Romsey Extra parish, and therefore the area within the scope of the review has been set as the area covered by two parishes of Romsey Town and Romsey Extra Parishes.

Romsey Town Council has clarified that it is seeking to extend its boundaries so that the Romsey Town covers the same area as the three Test Valley Borough Council Romsey Wards (Abbey, Cupernham and Tadburn).

Possible options for governance arrangements will be set out on the Council's website (www.testvalley.gov.uk/cgr) to assist those who wish to respond and participate in the CGR. Representations will be welcomed from adjacent parishes who might be affected if one of these options were to be implemented.

Although the area under review is limited to Romsey and Romsey Extra parishes, anyone (regardless of where they live or work) can submit representations on the review. Representations are **NOT** limited to those who live or work in these two parishes.

Why is the Council carrying out a community governance review?

The 2018 CGR made various changes to parish governance arrangements, but in respect of Romsey/Romsey Extra, broadly no changes were made.

Since then, Romsey Town and Romsey Extra Parish Councils have begun working jointly on various matters such as planning. Romsey Town Council has also been looking again at the boundary question, and has now formally resolved to seek a change.

The Council considers that it is appropriate to carry out a CGR to look at the parish boundaries and governance arrangements in this area in the light of Romsey Town's request.

In agreeing to carry out a CGR, the Borough Council is not pre-judging the outcome of the CGR. No decisions have yet been made by the Council as to whether the boundary changes proposed by Romsey Town Council should be implemented. The CGR process will consider whether any changes are appropriate, and if so, what changes should be made. Boundaries and 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?

The review area comprises two parishes, Romsey Town (centred on Romsey itself) and Romsey Extra (which completely encircles Romsey Town). Romsey Town has fifteen councillors, and Romsey Extra has seven. Elections are held every four years, the next being due in 2023. More information on the current parish arrangements, including maps, is available at www.testvalley.gov.uk/cgr.

How will the review work?

Two phases of consultations on parish arrangements in Romsey/Romsey Extra parishes will be carried out during the CGR. The first phase of consultation will set out the current arrangements and Romsey Town Council’s request. As Romsey Town’s proposal does not cover the whole of Romsey Extra parish, it will also show possible options for the remainder of Romsey Extra (if the proposal were to be accepted), as well as setting out other options that could be chosen for the area. Comments on the proposal and the various options, as alternative proposals, will be invited. All responses received during this period of consultation will be used to draw up draft recommendations, setting out the changes (if any) to the existing parish arrangements in the area which are considered appropriate.

The Borough Council will then hold a second phase of consultation on these draft recommendations, during which time the public and interested parties will be able to comment on them and propose alternatives.

The first period of consultation will begin on 12 November 2021 and will run for 11 weeks.

Following the close of the first period of consultation, the draft set of recommendations will be published on 8 April 2022

These draft recommendations will then be the subject of a second period of consultation, which will run for 8 weeks from the date of publication.

Following the end of the second period of consultation, all comments received will be considered against the draft recommendations. The 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.

Role of Parish Councils in Community Governance Review

As the two parish councils within the review area, Romsey Town Council (who has made the request which led to the CGR) and Romsey Extra Parish Council are primarily involved in the review. However, those parishes adjacent to the review area may also be affected, as some options for change could include transferring a part of one parish within the review area to another outside the review area. The Borough Council will specifically consult all such potentially affected parishes as part of the CGR.

If Parish boundaries are to be altered, is the agreement of the Parish Council needed?

In addition, the Borough Council would expect Romsey Town Council to enter into dialogue with parish councils affected by its proposal. The Borough Council’s strong preference is to seek to achieve an outcome that is acceptable to all parish councils involved.

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.

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	10 November 2021
Publication of terms of reference (official start of review)	11 November 2021
First period of consultation	12 November 2021 – 28 January 2022 (11 weeks)
Publication of draft recommendations	8 April 2022
Second 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

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