

Full Council

23 October 2025

Community Governance Review – Shipton Gorge and Loders Parish Councils

For Decision

Cabinet Member:

Cllr N Ireland, Leader of the Council, Climate, Performance and Safeguarding

Local Councillor(s): Cllr Neil Eysenck and Cllr Sally Holland

Executive Director:

J Mair, Director of Legal & Democratic

Report author and job title: Jacqui Andrews, Service Manager, Democratic and Electoral Services

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Statutory Authority: Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

Report status: Public

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 A community governance review looks at the governance arrangements of parishes in the area under review – in this case Shipton Gorge Parish and Loders Parish – and seeks to ensure that these are reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area.
- 1.2 In undertaking a review, Dorset Council (“the council”) will comply with the requirements of Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (“the 2007 Act”), the relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972 (“the 1972 Act”), and have regard to the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued in accordance with section 100(4) of the 2007 Act. The council will also give due consideration to the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government published in 2008.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 To adopt terms of reference for a community governance review (“CGR”) of the parishes of Shipton Gorge and Loders.

- 2.2 To agree that the cross-party task group established by Full Council on 10 July 2025 to make recommendations to Full Council on a submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on the electoral review of Dorset Council also be asked to prepare recommendations in respect of the CGR.

3. Reason for the recommendation

- 3.1 To ensure that community governance arrangements within the area under review are reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area.

4. What is a Community Governance Review?

- 4.1 A Community Governance Review is a legal process whereby the Council will consult with those living in the area, and other interested parties, on the most suitable ways of representing the people in the area identified in the review. This means making sure that those living in the area, and other interested groups, have a say in how their local communities are represented.
- 4.2 Section 93 of the 2007 Act allows principal councils to decide how to undertake a Review, provided that it complies with certain duties in that Act including details set out relating to consultation, the need to ensure any proposals reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area and is effective and convenient. The Council has to publish its recommendations but that manner in which the Council consults with its residents is not prescribed.

5. Why is the council undertaking a review?

- 5.1 On 7 July 2025, Dorset Council received a petition seeking a review of part of the boundary between the parishes of Shipton Gorge and Loders. Following receipt of a petition, the council has a duty to undertake a review which must be concluded within 1 year of receipt of the petition ie 6 July 2026.
- 5.2 At its meeting on 14 July 2022, Dorset Council agreed to change the parish boundary between these parishes following no adverse comments from either parish council or any local residents, and a related change to Dorset Council's ward boundaries was subsequently made by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to ensure that the parish and ward boundaries were coterminous.
- 5.3 Local residents have since raised concerns about the changes to the parish boundaries as they do not believe the current arrangements reflect community identity and have petitioned Dorset Council for a further review, asking that the boundary be returned to its previous line prior to the change that took effect in 2024.

6. Terms of reference

- 6.1 Council is asked to agree terms of reference for the review (attached at Appendix 1), that sets out the scope of the review, and also a timetable for the review including dates for public consultation. The review must be concluded by 6 July 2026. The timetable runs alongside the timetable for the electoral review of Dorset Council being undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. Whilst the Commission recommend against undertaking a CGR at the same time as an electoral review, the council is under a duty to do so when a petition is received. The council will work closely with the Commission to ensure that any proposals can be considered together.

7. Implementation

- 7.1 If Full Council chooses to accept the final recommendations of the review, it will be necessary to prepare a reorganisation order and publish this together with the reasons for any changes and making maps available for public inspection. Any changes that are made will take effect at the next ordinary elections ie May 2029.

8. Alternative options considered

- 8.1 The receipt of a petition puts the council under a duty to undertake a CGR so no alternative options have been considered.

9. Legal considerations

- 9.1 The Community Governance Review will be undertaken under Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and any changes will be implemented via an order, the terms of which will be agreed by Full Council.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 There are no financial implications to Dorset Council associated with this report.

11. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

- 11.1 There are no natural environment, climate and ecology implications associated with this report.

12. Well-being and health implications

- 12.1 There are no well-being and health implications associated with this report.

13. Other implications

- 13.1 There are no other implications associated with this report.

14. Risk implications

- 14.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: LOW

Residual Risk: LOW

15. Equalities

- 15.1 Consideration to any equalities impact has been given and the report is attached at Appendix 2.

16. Appendices

- 16.1 Draft terms of reference – Appendix 1
Equalities Impact Assessment – Appendix 2.

17. Background papers

- 17.1 [Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007](#)
[Local Government Boundary Commission for England - Guidance on Community Governance Reviews](#)

18. Report sign-off

- 18.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Corporate Director Finance and Commercial (Acting Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder.