

Full Council

10 February 2026

Shipton Gorge and Loders Community Governance Review – draft recommendations 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

Senior Leadership Team:

J Mair, Director of Legal & Democratic

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Statutory Authority:

Part 4, 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.
- 1.3 The report seeks a resolution agreeing draft recommendations in respect of parish boundaries for Shipton Gorge and Loders that will be subject to a period of public consultation.

2. **Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 To agree draft recommendations in respect of parish boundaries for the parishes of Shipton Gorge and Loders for public consultation between 23 February 2026 and 27 March 2026. The results of the consultation will be reported to Full Council on 16 April 2026.

3. **Reason for the recommendation(s)**

- 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, and comply with statutory guidance.

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 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 align (are coterminous).
- 5.3 The area of Loders parish that was moved into Shipton Gorge parish as a result of the previous community governance review contains 14 properties with 29 electors registered as at 1 December 2025.
- 5.4 Local residents have since raised concerns about the changes to the parish boundaries as they do not believe the current arrangements reflect community identity. The petition to Dorset Council seeking a further review was signed by

22 registered electors and asks that the boundary be returned to its previous line prior to the change that took effect in 2024.

6. Consultation undertaken

- 6.1 A public consultation exercise was undertaken between 3 November 2025 and 5 December 2025. This included an online consultation survey, direct communication with the petition organiser and the affected parish councils, local ward members, the DAPTC, the member of Parliament and 77 residents of Shipton Gorge and Loders parishes who have signed up for direct e-newsletter communications from the council.
- 6.2 In addition to the 22 registered electors that signed the original petition, Dorset Council received 29 responses to the consultation that was undertaken in November/December 2025. One respondent did not express a view about whether the boundaries should remain as currently drawn, and of the remaining respondents, 13 requested that the boundary remain unchanged and 15 requested a change to the existing boundary namely that it was moved to its pre 2024 position but noting that 3 properties should remain within the Shipton Gorge parish.

7. Working Group recommendations

- 7.1 A cross-party working group considered the petition and the responses received to the public consultation, together with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England Guidance on community governance reviews.
- 7.2 In particular, the working group paid particular attention to the requirement that any boundary should be aligned to an identifiable fixed line.
- 7.3 The working group did support the decision made in respect of the 2021/2022 community governance review moving the boundary to its current line along the A35 with this being a fixed geographical point. However, following information provided by the local ward members, the working group accepted that the line proposed by the petitioners and respondents to the recent consultation did offer a good natural boundary. The working group took all consultation responses into consideration and felt that a slight change to the line proposed by the petitioners was appropriate to achieve good community governance and cohesion. The working group's proposal was supported by the local ward members. The proposal of the working group is set out at Appendix A with the proposed new boundary being shown by a black dashed line. At Appendices B and C the western and eastern line of the boundary between the parishes is shown in closer detail.
- 7.4 If Full Council's final recommendations are to make a change to the parish boundary, the LGBCE will be notified so that they can take this into account as part of the electoral review process to ensure that the parish and ward boundaries align (they are coterminous).

8. **Legal considerations**

- 8.1 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 in April 2026.

9. **Financial implications**

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

10. **Natural environment, climate & ecology implications**

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

11. **Well-being and health implications**

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

12. **Other implications**

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

13. **Risk implications**

- 13.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:
Current Risk: Low
Residual Risk: Low

14. **Equalities**

- 14.1 Consideration to any equalities impact has been given and the report is attached to Appendix 2 of the [23 October 2025 Full Council](#) report on the community governance review.

15. **Appendices**

- 15.1 Appendix A – Draft recommendations for public consultation.
Appendices B and C – Draft recommendations in close up for the eastern and western ends of the boundary between Loders and Shipton Gorge.

16. **Background papers**

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

17. Report sign-off

- 17.1 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.

Revised Loders and Shipton Gorge

To include Boundary Cottage, High Rigg and Innsacre within Shipton Gorge

Date: 08/01/2026





