CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER COUNCIL

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF HELSBY conducted under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

FINAL TERMS OF REFERENCE

9 July 2025
Updated 12 September 2025

1 INTRODUCTION

Helsby Parish Council has written to the Council advising that it is currently finding it difficult to find people to stand as parish councillors. Its current council size is 15 Parish Councillors (split over 3 wards (as below) but it would like to reduce to 12 seats (4 over the two wards).

Elector Numbers:

Helsby Central - 1,333 (5 seats)
Helsby North - 1,360 (5 Seats)
Helsby South - 1,517 (5 Seats)

Polling Districts and Household numbers:

Helsby Central - YC1- 720 households
Helsby North - YC2- 783 households
Helsby South - YC3- 813 households

The next scheduled local elections will take place on 7 May 2027 and any amendments the size of the Parish Council, if agreed, would need to be approved by full council no later than December 2026 and come into place for the next scheduled local elections in May 2027.

2 WHAT IS COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE?

In the context of Community Governance Reviews, the provisions of the 2007 Act, are intended to improve the development and co-ordination of support for citizens and community groups so that they can make the best use of empowerment opportunities. The Government (through the 2007 Act and the Localism Act 2011)

and the Council (through its Borough Plan) both recognise the importance of active communities taking pride in their neighbourhoods and the role parish councils play in relation to this.

3 WHAT IS A COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW?

A Community Governance Review provides the opportunity for councils to review the whole or part of an area to consider one or more of the following:

- the creation, merger, alteration or abolition of parishes;
- the naming of parishes and the style of new parishes (i.e. parish, community, neighbourhood or village);
- the electoral arrangements for parishes (the ordinary year of election; council size; the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding), and
- the grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping of parishes.
- Redrawing of parish boundaries to fix any boundaries which are, and will remain, easily identifiable, as well as taking into account any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries

4 WHY UNDERTAKE A COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW?

A Community Governance Review provides an opportunity for principal authorities to review and make changes to community governance within their area. Such reviews can be undertaken when:

- there have been changes in population
- reaction to specific issue
- changes to ward boundaries
- a petition has been received

It is also good practice for a principal council to consider conducting a community governance review every 10-15 years.

The Government has emphasised that recommendations made in Community Governance Reviews should bring about improvements to community engagement, cohesive communities and local democracy

5 WHO WILL UNDERTAKE THIS REVIEW?

Under the provisions of the 2007 Act, Cheshire West and Chester Council is responsible for undertaking any Community Governance Review within its area, as the principal authority. The Council has established a Community Governance Review Committee with delegated authority to make recommendations to the Council on the outcomes of each Community Governance Review. Council will be

required to approve the final recommendations before a Community Governance Order is made.

In addition, the Committee will:

(i) Agree the terms of reference for each Community Governance Review;
(ii) Determine a detailed timetable and consultation programme for each Community Governance Review;
(iii) Progress each review in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and The Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010;
(iv) Consider all options for future community governance of the area under review, taking into account current community representation and community engagement arrangements and electorate and demographic forecasts;
(v) Determine appropriate electoral arrangements for the area under review, where necessary; and
(vi) Consider any consequential matters arising from the review which are required to give effect to any subsequent Community Governance Order, e.g. the transfer and management or custody of property, the setting of precepts for new parishes, provision for the transfer of any functions, rights, liabilities, staff, etc.

6 SCOPE OF THIS COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The review will focus on households within the parish of Helsby.

Helsby Central - 1,333 (5 seats)
Helsby North - 1,360 (5 Seats)
Helsby South - 1,517 (5 Seats)

Households and Polling Districts:

Helsby Central - YC1- 720 households
Helsby North - YC2- 783 households
Helsby South - YC3- 813 households

This Community Governance Review will:

- Undertake several consultations with the residents of Helsby parish and key stakeholders.
- Publish the Terms of Reference for the review on the Council's website.
- Take full account of the views of those consulted.

The Community Governance Review will not consider:

- The boundaries of UK parliamentary constituencies; and
- The boundaries and names of Cheshire West and Chester Council wards.

- The boundaries of any other parish councils.

7 CONSULTATION

The 2007 Act requires that the Council consults the local government electors for the area under review and any other person or body who appears to have an interest in the review. The Council must take representations into account by judging them against criteria laid out in the Act. However, the Act does not go as far to specify how the consultation is undertaken.

The timetable for the review provides for a number opportunities for local residents and Councillors to express their views on any proposals.

The Council, through the Community Governance Review Committee, will conduct the review transparently with decisions being made in public and reasons given for those decisions. This is in line with Government's guidance on conducting Community Governance Reviews. Meetings of the Community Governance Review Committee will take place in public and information will be available on the Council's website. The Council is keen to conduct meaningful consultation that leads to effective proposals.

The Council proposes to use the following mechanisms to consult:

- An article in the Helsby Parish Council newsletter – which goes out to **all households** in Helsby.
- An article on Helsby Parish Council's Website
- A post on Helsby village Social Media accounts
- Ask the Ward Councillor to post on his social media accounts
- Posters on the village notice boards
- Press release from the Council and on its website
- Hard copy questionnaires available from Helsby Library and from the Parish Councillors
- Write to the Parish Council, local Ward Councillors – Helsby, Frodsham, Sandstone, Gowy Rural,
- MP for Runcorn and Helsby
- Online Questionnaire (via MS Forms).

The Community Governance Review Committee will be asked to agree the following timeframe for the review to be conducted. The Committee will endeavour to keep to the dates listed below. However, if changes to dates are required, these will be published on the Council's website. A Community Governance Review is a lengthy process but the regulations require that they are concluded within a 12 month period following publication of the terms of reference.

TIMELINE:

Stage	Action	Dates	
Stage 1	Community Governance Review Committee to meet to consider the Terms of Reference	July 2025	CWAC
	Publish Terms of Reference	1 September 2025	CWAC
	Prepare and publish stage 1 consultation	September	CWAC
	Phase 1 **Public Consultation** – Initial consultation - 8 weeks	1 October – 26 November 2025	CWAC
Stage 2	Review responses Prepare draft recommendations and stage 2 consultation	January 2026	CWAC
	Phase 2 **Public Consultation** - Draft Recommendations – 8 weeks	February – March 2026	CWAC
	Review responses	March – April 2026	CWAC
Stage 3	Develop Final recommendations	April 2026	CWAC
	Phase 3 **Public Consultation** - Final proposals - 6 weeks	May – July 2026	CWAC
	Review responses	August 2026	CWAC
	Community Governance Review Committee to agree final recommendations to Council	September 2026	CWAC
Stage 4	Council resolves to agree the final recommendations	October/December 2026	CWAC
	Order laid	December 2026	CWAC
	Electoral Register amendments	February 2027	CWAC
Stage 5	Implementation of changes	February 2027	CWAC

8 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

If a boundary is to be redrawn, it will commence from May 2027 to coincide with the next local elections scheduled for May 2027.

9 PROGRESSING THE REVIEW

Residents and key stakeholders who have a clear interest in this review, or are impacted by its outcome as a resident, are encouraged to respond to the consultations.

There will be several opportunities throughout the review to contribute. The Consultation will involve an online form, along with a paper copy.

10 STAKEHOLDERS

The Council will ensure that those effected by the area under review will be provided with opportunities to engage and have their say.

Stakeholders will include:

- Ward Councillor for Helsby, Frodsham and neighbouring wards
- MP for Runcorn and Helsby
- Helsby Parish Council
- Residents in the Parish of Helsby (Via Newsletter)
- Local Primary School in Helsby – Helsby Hillside Primary School and Horns Mill Primary School
- Helsby High School
- Local organisations - Local Clubs and Associations

11 HOW TO CONTACT US

Should you wish to submit a written representation regarding this review, please address to:

Andrea Thwaite
Cheshire West and Chester Council,
The Portal, Wellington Road,
Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH65 0BA

Alternatively, your submission may be emailed to:

democraticservices@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

quoting ‘Community Governance Review – Helsby in the subject field.

Should you require any further information or need clarification on the review process, please contact:

Andrea Thwaite
Email: andrea.thwaite@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
Tel: 01244 972283

These terms of reference will be published on the Cheshire West and Chester Council website: www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/communitygovernance and will be available for inspection at the address above.

Date of Publication: September 2025 (Updated)

** The 2007 Act transferred powers to principal councils which previously, under the Local Government Act 1997, had been shared with the Electoral Commission's Boundary Committee for England. The Council is required to have regard to Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010. This Guidance has been considered in drawing up the Terms of Reference.