



Community Governance Review of Haywards Heath Town Council (2025)

Terms of Reference



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1. Introduction

1.1 - What is a community governance review?

A community governance review is a way for councils to make sure that, at the town/parish level, governance arrangements are working as efficiently and effectively as they should be. This is achieved by asking the public, town/parish councils and any interested parties whether they feel their communities are suitably represented and whether town/parish councils would like to see any changes made to their current governance arrangements.

A review may consider one or more of the following options:

- creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
- the naming of parishes and the style of new parishes;
- the electoral arrangements for parishes, including:
 - the ordinary year of election
 - the number of councillors to be elected; and
 - the warding of parishes
- grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.

The Council must ensure that community governance within the area under review is effective, convenient and reflective of the identities and interest of different communities within the district. To achieve this, the community governance review must take into account:

- the impact of boundary and ward changes recommended by the Local Government Boundary Commission England (LGBCE)
- the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
- the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish

1.2 - What is the aim of this review?

The Council believes town/parish councils play an important role in terms of community empowerment. The Council wants to ensure town/parish governance in our district continues to be robust, representative and able to meet the challenges that lie before it. Furthermore, it wants to ensure there is clarity and transparency to the areas that town/parish councils represent. It wants to ensure that the electoral arrangements of towns/parishes, their warding arrangements and the allocations of councillors are appropriate, equitable and readily understood by their electorate.

The aim of this review is to bring about:

- improved and stronger community engagement
- more cohesive communities
- better local democracy
- efficient, more effective and convenient delivery of local services ensuring residents across the respective areas are treated equally and fairly

1.3 - What is the scope of this review?

This community governance review is being undertaken to take account of electoral boundary changes being applied because of the LGBCEs review of Mid Sussex District Council in 2021.

The outcome of the LGBCE review can be found on their website [here](#).

Specifically, the town and parish council boundaries to be considered are:

- Haywards Heath Town Council – Whether to move the south-western boundary to include the existing parish wards of Rocky Lane North and Rocky Lane South. The proposal is that these parish wards would move from Ansty & Staplefield Parish Council to Haywards Heath Town Council.
- Lindfield Parish Council – Whether to move the existing town council ward of Haywards Heath North East to Lindfield Parish Council. This proposal is that this town council ward would move from Haywards Heath Town Council to Lindfield Parish Council.
- Other related matters which may arise during the review in response to representations received, will be considered as appropriate.

Please refer to the maps in Appendix 1 which show the existing and proposed new boundaries. Dynamic maps can also be found online by visiting [Electoral Boundary Map - Mid Sussex District Council](#).

A key aim is to complete this review and give effect to any new boundaries at the next ordinary local government elections in May 2027.

1.4 - Electorate forecasts and parish boundaries

When considering electoral arrangements, the Council must consider any likely future change in the number or distribution of electors within five years from the day the review commences.

The review will use the latest electorate figures available at a town/parish level, together with the estimated delivery of new dwellings within the five-year period taken from the Council's most recent Five-Year Housing Land Supply Statement.

This information will be included as part of our draft and final recommendations.

The Council will consider the effect of new and forecasted development activity on existing town/parish boundaries. Town/parish boundaries should be easily identifiable and reflect the separation of settlements recognised locally as having their own identity. These boundaries should generally reflect the areas between communities with low populations or physical barriers such as rivers or man-made features such as railways or motorways.

1.5 - The legal framework

In undertaking the review, the Council will be guided by:

- part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
- the relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972
- “Guidance on Community Governance Reviews”, issued in accordance with section 100(4) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March. Additionally, the following regulations which guide consequential matters arising from the review:
 - Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008
 - Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008

[The 2007 Act has transferred powers to the principal councils which previously, under the Local Government Act 1997, had been shared with the Electoral Commission's Boundary Committee for England.]

Section 81 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires the Council to publish its Terms of Reference in a review.

2. Timetable for the Review

A community governance review is concluded on the day on which the Council publishes the recommendations made by the community governance review.

The table below sets out the timetable for the review.

The programme and timeline may be adjusted after representations have been received by local people and interested bodies in response to the initial public consultation. This will allow the Council a degree of flexibility in the interests of ensuring that it manages the review process efficiently. Any adjustments to the programme and timetable will be approved by the Council and published on its website.

Action	Date	Outline of Action
Start Date	9 th June 2025	Council publishes the Public Notice, Terms of Reference and Guidance for Respondents.
Public Consultation 1 Opens	9 th June 2025	8-week consultation begins. This starts following the publication of the Public Notice, Terms of Reference and Guidance for Respondents.
Public Consultation 1 Ends	8 th August 2025	N/A
Evaluation Panel	11 th August – 15 th August 2025	All representations are considered by an evaluation panel.
Draft proposals considered by the Scrutiny Committee	3 rd September 2025	Any additional recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee are recorded and added to the draft proposals.
Draft proposals re-published if the Scrutiny Committee proposes any amendments	15 th September 2025	Council publishes draft proposals.
Public Consultation 2 Opens	15 th September 2025	A further 8-week consultation begins.
Public Consultation 2 Ends	14 th November 2025	All representations are considered by an evaluation panel.
Evaluation Panel	17 th November – 21 st November 2025	All representations are considered by an evaluation panel.
Final Recommendations published	December 2025/January 2026	These will be available on our website.

Action	Date	Outline of Action
Final Recommendations considered by the Scrutiny Committee	21 st January 2026	Scrutiny Committee will consider the extent to which the Council should give effect to the recommendations and make recommendations to Full Council.
Final Recommendations (as amended, if applicable) considered by Full Council for adoption	25 th February 2026	Full Council considers and determines the extent to which the Council shall give effect to the recommendations.
Order made	By October 2026	Council publishes Order.
Order takes effect	May 2027	Next scheduled local government elections.

3. Background Information

The Local Government Act 1972 provides that any town/parish council must have at least five councillors. No maximum number is prescribed.

When considering the number of councillors to be elected for a town/parish, the Council must have regard to the number of local government electors for the town/parish and any change to that number that is likely to occur within five years of the date on which these terms of reference are published.

[Joint guidance](#) issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in 2010 provides further information on community governance reviews and the factors influencing size and membership of town/parish councils. On size, the guidance says:

“

- **154.** *In practice, there is a wide variation of council size between parish councils. That variation appears to be influenced by population. Research by the Aston Business School Parish and Town Councils in England (HMSO, 1992), found that the typical parish council representing less than 500 people had between five and eight councillors; those between 501 and 2,500 had six to 12 councillors; and those between 2,501 and 10,000 had nine to 16 councillors. Most parish councils with a population of between 10,001 and 20,000 had between 13 and 27 councillors, while almost all councils representing a population of over 20,000 had between 13 and 31 councillors.*

- **155.** *The LGBCE has no reason to believe that this pattern of council size to population has altered significantly since the research was conducted. Although not an exact match, it broadly reflects the council size range set out in the National Association of Local Councils Circular 1126; the Circular suggested that the minimum number of councillors for any parish should be seven and the maximum 25.*
- **156.** *In considering the issue of council size, the LGBCE is of the view that each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and the pattern of communities. Nevertheless, having regard to the current powers of parish councils, it should consider the broad pattern of existing council sizes. This pattern appears to have stood the test of time and, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, to have provided for effective and convenient local government.*
- **157.** *Principal councils should also bear in mind that the conduct of parish council business does not usually require a large body of councillors. In addition, historically many parish councils, particularly smaller ones, have found difficulty in attracting sufficient candidates to stand for election. This has led to uncontested elections and/or a need to co-opt members in order to fill vacancies. However, a parish council's budget and planned or actual level of service provision may also be important factors in reaching conclusions on council size.*

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The National Association of Local Council's Circular 1126 recommends:

Electors	Councillors	Electors	Councillors
Up to 900	7	10,400	17
1,400	8	11,900	18
2,000	9	13,500	19
2,700	10	15,200	20
3,500	11	17,000	21
4,400	12	18,900	22
5,400	13	20,900	23
6,500	14	23,000	24
7,700	15	45,000	25
9,000	16		

The current number of councillors versus the number of electors in the town and parish wards being considered under this community governance review are as follows:

Haywards Heath Town Council

Ward Name	Electors	Councillors
Haywards Heath Franklands	4,378	3
Haywards Heath Bentswood & Heath East	4,544	3
Haywards Heath Bentswood & Heath West	1,307	1
Haywards Heath Ashenground	4,507	2
Haywards Heath Lucastes & Bolnore	5,040	3
Haywards Heath Lucastes Boltro	343	1
Haywards Heath North Central	2,296	1
Haywards Heath North West	617	1
Haywards Heath North East	649	1
Haywards Heath Town Council	23,681	16

Ansty & Staplefield Parish Council

Ward Name	Electors	Councillors
Staplefield	371	3
Brook Street and Borde Hill	186	1
Rocky Lane North	733	2
Rocky Lane South	389	1
Ansty	738	4
Ansty & Staplefield Parish Council	2,417	11

Lindfield Parish Council

Ward Name	Electors	Councillors
Lindfield	4,748	12
Lindfield Parish Council	4,478	12

The Council has used the Register of Electors of April 2025 in providing the existing town/parish, and town/parish ward electorate figures in the tables above.

Town/parish council elections occur every four years, with the next scheduled elections set for May 2027.

4. Consultation

4.1 - How the Council proposes to conduct consultations during the review

This document lays out the aims of the review, the legislation that guides it and some of the policies the Council considers important in the review.

Before making any recommendations or publishing final proposals, the Council must consult local government electors for the areas under review (set out on page 3), and any other person or body (including a local authority) which appears to the Council to have an interest in the review. The Council will therefore:

- publish a notice and this Terms of Reference (ToR) on the Council's website (<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/elections-voting/community-governance-reviews/>) and arrange for copies to be available for public inspection at Mid Sussex District Council, Oaklands, Oaklands Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1SS during normal office hours (Monday-Thursday 8:45am-5:15pm, and Friday 8:45am-4:15pm)
- send a copy of the notice and this ToR to the town/parish councils listed on page 3, ward members and the MP for the Mid Sussex constituency
- write to all residential properties in the town/parish areas listed on page 3
- send a copy of the notice and this ToR to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE), and to the relevant officers of West Sussex County Council

Before making any recommendations, the Council will take account of any representations received from interested parties. The Council will publish its recommendations as soon as practicable, accompanied by any representations received throughout the consultation period.

5. Responding to the Review

Mid Sussex District Council welcomes representations from any person or body who may wish to comment or make proposals on any aspect of the matters under review. If you wish to respond to the community governance review, please refer to our Guidance for Respondents found on our website [here](#).

You can submit representations to the review via a number of methods, these include:



Online Form: [Response Form Link](#)



Email: communitygovernancereviews@midsussex.gov.uk



Post:

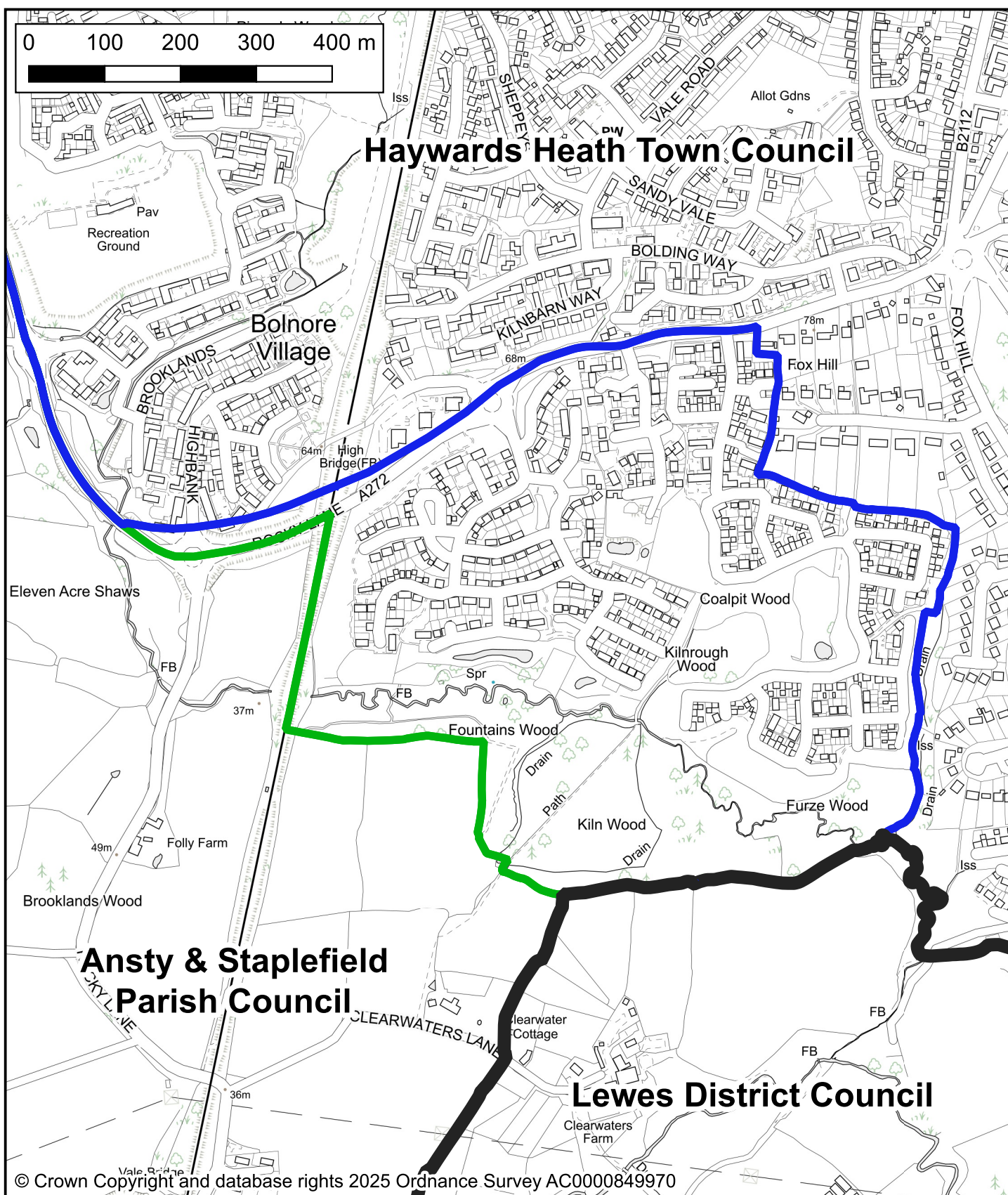
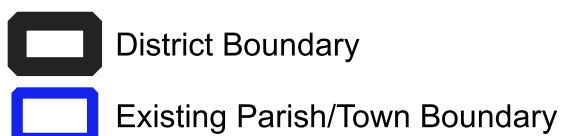
HHTC Community Governance Review
Electoral Services
Mid Sussex District Council
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

All representations to our first stage of consultation must be received by the 8th August 2025. Please note that no decisions will be made until all representations have been carefully considered.

6. Further Information & Contact Details

Should you have any questions or require any further information regarding the review, please contact the Electoral Services Team via the contact information below:

- **E-mail:** communitygovernancereviews@midsussex.gov.uk
- **Telephone:** 01444 477003



 Existing Parish/Town Boundary  Proposed Parish/Town Boundary

