

Dear Resident

Second Consultation – West Northamptonshire Council Community Governance Review

West Northamptonshire Council is conducting a community governance review (CGR). This is a process for reviewing parish and town council governance arrangements. Parish governance arrangements include town and parish council boundaries, the number of councillors each town or parish council has, arrangements for parish wards and meetings of groups and parish councils. It is not a review of West Northamptonshire Ward boundaries or Parliamentary Constituency boundaries.

Background

A Community Governance Review is carried out from time-to-time and is an opportunity to address certain issues which could have arisen due to population changes and shifts in 'natural settlements' caused by new development or historical issues that have not been addressed previously. A review offers an opportunity to reflect identifiable communities and to remove any parish boundary anomalies that may exist. Community governance arrangements should reflect local identities and support effective local government.

Not every area of West Northamptonshire is affected, but we do want to hear from those living in areas that may be affected, and other interested parties, on the most suitable ways of representing the people in the parishes identified in the review. This means making sure that those affected, and other interested groups, have a say in how their local communities are represented.

You can find more information on our website here: <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/have-your-say/community-governance-review>

How did we decide which areas to look at?

The proposals for change that are being consulted on during this phase of the review have generally arisen in one of two ways. Many of the proposals are a consequence of changes made by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (the Commission) during their recent review of the Council's boundaries. Other proposals have resulted from suggestions put forward by citizens, parish councils, district councillors or other interested parties.

Between November 2023 and January 2024, we held an open consultation to seek views from parishes and citizens who felt certain changes could be made to parish governance arrangements. This phase of consultation identified a range of proposals for change, including changes to parish boundaries, parish names, the number of parish councillors on certain parish councils and proposals to merge some parish meetings with neighbouring parishes.

What happens next?

We are now carrying out the second phase of consultation. In this phase we will be consulting on draft recommendations formed following analysis of the outcome of the first phase of consultation.

When consulting on these proposals, the Council must take account of whether the proposed change would better reflect local identities and interests and provide effective and convenient local government before making a final decision.

Proposals that could affect residents and businesses in Wootton and Hardingstone

During the first phase of consultation it was suggested that an area of land to the north of the Newport Pagnell Road, presently in Hardingstone Parish, could be incorporated within Wootton Parish. This would incorporate the total area of the new development of The Green (LAA1098), incorporating some 800 new homes and uses natural boundaries such as streams, roads, lanes, footpaths and hedgerows. This suggestion is on the basis that Wootton is the closest urban settlement to the new development. There is no proposal to increase the number of councillors on Wootton Parish Council as a result of this proposal.

A few things could change if this ward is moved from Hardingstone Parish to Wootton Parish.

Residents in the affected areas could:

- Go to a polling station in Wootton
- Elect parish councillors to Wootton Parish Council
- Pay the Wootton rate of Council Tax. Parish Councils are funded by a 'precept' which is the parish council's share of your council tax. We (West Northamptonshire Council) collect the precept on behalf of the parish councils. At the moment, a Band D property in Hardingstone pays £52.76 for the year and a Band D property in Wootton pays £40.65 for the year. These amounts may change in the future, as each parish council reviews the precept amount each year.
- For areas in Northampton, pay special expenses, which are levied to cover grounds maintenance charges on which fall within the parish boundary and which would normally be the responsibility of the parish council. Once the central maintenance contract ends, this will become part of the parish precept. The charge to residents in Wootton Parish is £4.28 per year.

A map showing the ward is set out at the end of this letter.

We would like to know if you feel this proposal would better reflect local identities and interests. This can relate to a number of factors that make a local area unique and detail that plays into communities' patterns of daily life. They could include local centres for childcare, education, places of worship, places for activities, leisure locations or facilities. It could also include historical or the geography of an area, the make-up of the local community, sense of identity, and whether people live in a rural, suburban, or urban area.

We would also like to know if you feel that the proposal will provide effective and convenient local government. This means that parish councils should be able to provide at least some local services, and if they are to be convenient, they need to be easy to reach and accessible to local people. It can also mean that parish (and town) councils are well managed and good at representing their local communities' views, which helps to work closely with partner authorities to take more responsibility for shaping their area's development and running of local services.

How do I have my say?

A second consultation is running until 28 July 2024 to find out what people think of the recommendations. The Council will consider all responses received up to and including that date and make final recommendations to a meeting of Full Council in September 2024. The final decision on any changes rests with Full Council. If, following the consultation, any changes go ahead they will take effect from May 2025, which is when both parish and town councils next hold elections.

Every household potentially directly affected by the boundary move has been sent a letter, but anyone who wants to can take part in the consultation. We are running an online survey which you

can find on our website here: <https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/cet/community-governance-review-phase2/consultation/>

You can also access the survey using this code:

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey. If more than one person in your household would like to reply, that's not a problem as you're not limited to one reply per household.

If you prefer, you can email us at cgrconsultation@westnorthants.gov.uk Please note that we won't be able to reply to individual emails, but every message will be included in the consultation.



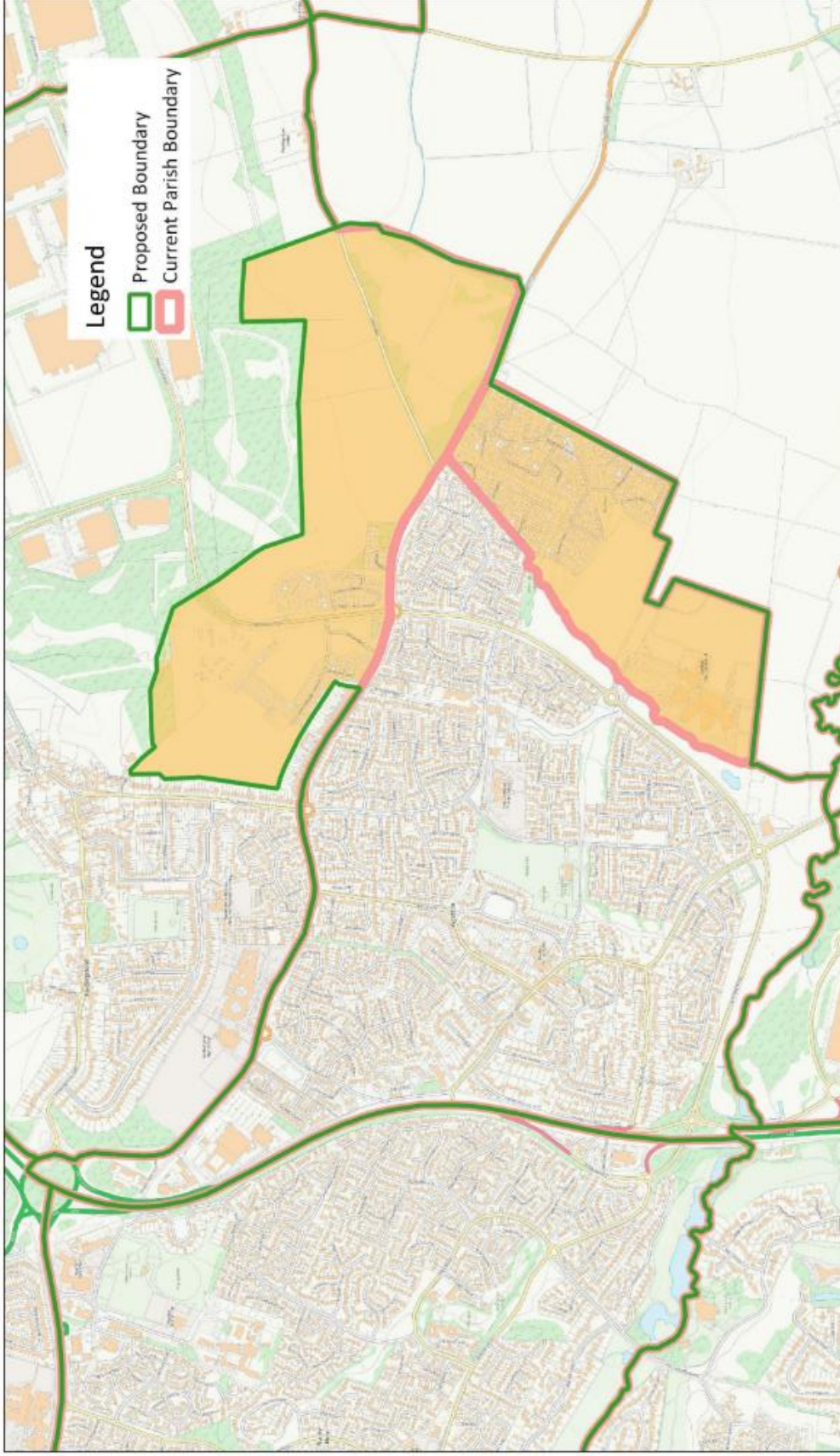
All responses should reach us by 28 July 2024 to be taken into consideration. The online survey will close at 11:59pm on the same date.



Yours sincerely

Democratic and Elections Team
West Northamptonshire Council

If you require this document in a different format (such as a large print version or special access facilities) please contact us via cgrconsultation@westnorthants.gov.uk

All information collected through this consultation will be treated appropriately to conform with data protection legislation. The Council has to publish all comments received in connection with a community governance review. If we receive a comment on behalf of a group, such as a parish council, political party or disability access group we will name the group, but we will not publish the names of individuals who have commented.



Legend
 Proposed Boundary
 Current Parish Boundary

Date: 28-03-2024
 Scale: 1:14,065 @A4
 Drawn by:

Title: **Wootton Parish Proposed Boundary**
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