



# **Balsall Heath Community Governance Review – Frequently Asked Questions**

February 2022

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## **What is Community Governance?**

Community governance is the way in which local communities are represented and governed at a local level, and the way local activities and services are organised through the involvement of other statutory and voluntary agencies and community groups and by the efforts of local people themselves. It is also about the way in which individuals and communities are listened to and able to influence decisions that affect them.

## **What is a parish/neighbourhood council?**

Parish/neighbourhood councils are the most local level of government. There is no legal difference between parish and neighbourhood councils – they have the same statutory powers and can provide the same services. The name 'neighbourhood (or town) council' is more common in urban areas, while 'parish council' is used more in rural areas.

They are made up of parish/neighbourhood councillors who are elected by electors (residents) in the affected area.

Parish/neighbourhood councils can own land and assets and can provide or run certain public services at a local level, for example grass cutting, street lighting, open spaces, community buildings, and allotments. For further information about what parish/neighbourhood councils can do, please see the [National Association of Local Councils report, "All about Local Councils"](#).

Parish/neighbourhood councils have two main roles: community representation and local administration. They should reflect a distinctive and recognisable community of place, with its own sense of identity.

Parish/neighbourhood councils offer the potential to:

x

### **Are parish/neighbourhood councillors paid an allowance or salary?**

Parish/neighbourhood councillors are not usually paid an allowance or salary but they may incur costs for which they can be reimbursed.

### **Are there any other parish/neighbourhood councils in Birmingham?**

There are currently two parish/neighbourhood councils in Birmingham:

- x [New Frankley Parish Council](#)
- x [Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council](#)

### **What is a Community Governance Review (CGR) and why is the City Council undertaking a CGR in Balsall Heath?**

CGRs provide the opportunity for principal councils (such as Birmingham City Council) to review and make changes to community governance within their areas. A CGR must make recommendations as to what new parish/parishes (if any) should be constituted in the area under review.

Under the [Working Together in Birmingham's Neighbourhoods Policy Statement \(2019\)](#) and [Statement of the Process for Creating New Parish Councils in Birmingham \(2021\)](#), the City Council is satisfied that there is a genuine interest in creating a parish/neighbourhood council in Balsall Heath. It is therefore using its powers to initiate a CGR to evaluate the proposal, consult the public and, if appropriate, test support for it in a consultative ballot. This is in accordance with the [Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007](#).

### **What is Birmingham City Council's role in the CGR?**

Principle authorities, such as Birmingham City Council, are required to work with communities who want to explore forming a parish/neighbourhood council in their area.

The City Council is committed to making sure:

- x The proposal is progressed appropriately
- x Residents and stakeholders in the area are made aware of the proposal and consulted, as part of a formal Community Governance Review (CGR)
- x Local people can find out about the proposal, get involved and have their say
- x A consultative ballot is carried out to enable affected residents (who are eligible to vote) to vote for or against the proposal

### **Who determines the Terms of Reference for Community Governance Reviews?**

The 2007 Act requires principle authorities (such as Birmingham City Council) to determine and publish the Terms of Reference under which a CGR is to be undertaken. The Council has done so under the provisions of the [Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007](#) and considering the Government's [Guidance on Community Governance Reviews \(2010\)](#).

The Terms of Reference for this CGR can be found here: [Balsall Heath Community Governance Review - Terms of Reference](#).

### **What area is covered by the proposal for a parish council in Balsall Heath?**

The proposed parish council in Balsall Heath affects two City Council wards: Balsall Heath West, and Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East. The area would be based on the boundary defined in the Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Plan. The population within this boundary is approximately 15,000.

This map shows the proposed area for the parish/neighbourhood council in Balsall Heath: [Balsall Heath Community Governance Review - map of the proposed area](#).

### **How will the CGR take place?**

As the principal authority, the City Council is responsible for conducting CGRs within its electoral area. The Parish Council Working Group (made up of cross-directorate City Council officers) will oversee the CGR and prepare recommendations for the City Council's Cabinet.

The CGR approach has been outlined in the CGR Terms of Reference: [Balsall Heath Community Governance Review - Terms of Reference](#).

These Terms of Reference were approved by the City Council's Cabinet in December 2021.

### **When does a CGR start?**

A CGR is deemed to commence CG0w 11.13 0 T4.3 ( R)o] BT /2.6 (t)-6 (o)10.p1313(t)-en ReCGu1313(t)





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