



CORNWALL
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CALC Conference

An Introduction to Cornwall's Community Governance Review

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Cornwall's parishes

- Local Councils: 197
 - 1 City Council
 - 28 Town Councils
 - 167 parish councils
 - 1 Community Council
 - Also: 16 parish meetings (NB: these are **not** councils)
 - So 213 parishes and 197 local councils
- Styles in use: Parish, City, Town, Community (other options: Neighbourhood or Village)
- Local Councils that had contested elections (May 2017): 41

“CGR: The Prequel”



- Electoral Review of Cornwall Council 2016-18
- Looked at size of Cornwall Council and then divisional boundaries
- Takes effect May 2021
- Cornwall Councillors will reduce from 123 to 87
- Parishes a key factor in shaping divisions
- Some limited changes affecting some parishes...

Electoral Review & parishes (1)

- LGBCE can only make limited changes to parish electoral arrangements where required as a direct consequence of its recommendations for [principal council] electoral divisions:
- If a parish gets divided between different CC divisions it must also be divided into parish wards, so each ward is wholly in a single division
- To meet this principle, electoral arrangements are changing in **29** parishes (again from 2021)...

Electoral Review & parishes (2)

- ...The changes relate only to wards (ward boundaries/number of councillors in each ward).
- LGBCE **cannot** change the external boundaries of parishes (CGR can).
- Where a CGR follows an electoral review, one consideration is whether any other changes are desirable specifically or partly as a consequence of the LGBCE recommendations.
- If CGR wants to change the LCBCE's parish ward changes, it must ask the LGBCE

CGR: Preliminary Steps To Date

- Full Council 11.9.18:
 - CGR delegated to Electoral Review Panel
 - However, proposed changes will be referred to full Council for decision if (i) they are not supported by all affected local councils/parish meetings or (ii) Panel chooses to do so
- Letter to all T&PCs (24.12.18):
 - Asked you to flag potential interest in having a CGR (on a no-commitment basis) via CGRs@cornwall.gov.uk by 8.2.19
 - And specify which review topics you think are relevant
 - NB: Further opportunities for EOIs will be given.
- Association of Electoral Administrators Training (9.1.19)

The Demand for Parish Reviews So Far

- **160 responses** (75% response rate) *[to 15.2.19]*
 - 62: review requests
 - 98: no change wanted

- The 62 review requests include:
 - 50: Review Parish Boundary
 - 22: Change Parish Wards
 - 20: Change Number of Councillors
 - 13: Change Parish Name

1st Electoral Review Panel Meeting 12.2.19

- A Single Review for Whole of Cornwall for May 2021
- Draft terms of reference agreed
- To explore public representation at ER Panel meetings
- Parishes to be involved and consulted fully
- Pragmatic approach to electorate forecasts
- Communication and consultation plan
- CALC Conference a source of guidance
- Principles behind the review to be discussed at next meeting
- Written advice on interests to be issued soon

CGR: Proposed Key Deadlines (2019-20)

- 5/19: Detailed proposals/options from Parish Councils
- 11/19: Liaison between Cornwall Council and Parishes
- 2/20: Consultation on Draft Recommendations Ends
- 5/20: Comments on Draft Recommendations Considered
- 7/20: Final Recommendations Justified & Considered
- 9/20: Reorganisation Order Made



Definition and Statutory Framework

- CGR: process by which principal councils review parish governance arrangements for whole or part of their area
- CGR governed by range of legislation; principal councils must also follow relevant statutory guidance
- In guidance, Government clear it values role of parishes and wants to build on existing parish structure to improve service delivery and community representation



The Three Legal Tests

- Reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area
- Provide effective and convenient local government
 - Viability in the provision of services and the promotion of wellbeing
- Take into account other arrangements for community representation and engagement
- The statutory framework emphasises need for transparency and robust engagement

Review Topic 1: Parish Areas

Consider whether or not to:

- **Establish new parishes**
- Abolish* parishes – *(highly discouraged)*
- **Make boundary alterations** between existing parishes
- **Group neighbouring parishes together**
- **Change parish names** *e.g. Lansallos to Polperro*

Decide:

- **Styles of any new parishes** *e.g. “parish” to “community”*



Establishing New parishes

- In Cornwall context, “new parishes” could be created by:
 - Aggregating parts of parishes
 - Amalgamating two or more parishes
 - Separating part of a parish



Boundary alterations between parishes

- A key reason for *considering* this step = development going across parish boundaries (e.g. towns into neighbouring parish; villages/hamlets doing likewise)
- As with all review topics, got to consider the legal tests and counter-arguments e.g. parish identity/history

Grouping parishes

- Typical use: to address viability of small parishes (e.g. as alternative to merging)
- How it works:
 - Parishes are grouped under a common parish council
 - Each parish survives and retains its parish meeting
 - Each parish elects a number of councillors to the common council
- Name of common council has to reflect names of constituent parishes
- Guidance: Not to be used to build artificially large parishes

Review Topic 2: Parish electoral arrangements

- Whether to have a parish **council** or not

Abolishing parish councils is strongly discouraged

Key relevance for Cornwall – parish meetings

- **Council size** (number of councillors on council)
- **Warding:** To ward or not to ward [57 Cornish parishes are currently warded]
- **Ward boundaries**
- **Number of councillors in each ward**

New Parish Council or Not?

Legal requirements

Situation	CGR Decision
Parish has 1000+ electors	Must have a Council
Parish has 150 or fewer electors and no Council	Must not have a Council
Parish has 150 or fewer electors and has a Council	Principal council has discretion
Parish has between 150 & 1000 electors	Principal council has discretion



Council Size: Numbers of Councillors on a Council

The law:

- Minimum: 5
- There is no maximum number, and no set ratio of councillors to electors (*although electorate size must be considered, projecting 5 years ahead*)

Guidance:

- NALC suggests sliding scale: minimum of 7 councillors (up to 900 electors); maximum of 25 councillors (23000+ electors)
- LGBCE: consider case-by-case (factors include: urban/rural differences; parish workload/precept; extent of co-options)

Parish Warding

To ward or not to ward (considerations):

- Electoral convenience & cost/practicality
- Community identity – is there a case that areas of the parish should be separately represented?

Ward size/boundaries (considerations include):

- No. of electors, projecting 5 years ahead
- (Guidance): Fit with electoral divisions
- (Guidance): Electoral Equality

Parish ward names



Communication and Consultation

- Statutory duty to consult – electors and other persons or bodies with an interest
- Communication and consultation plan
- Engage with Parish Councils direct and via CALC
- Use Community Network Panels when helpful
- Public Awareness Strategy
- Consultation proportionate to issues and interest in each area

Consequential Matters

Examples:

- Recommendations to LGBCE re Electoral Divisions
- Dealing with assets
- Staffing issues e.g. Transfer of staff; compensation for loss of office/pensions
- Setting precepts for new councils
- Date changes come into effect (1 April usually)



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