

## **Community Governance Review & Parish, Town and Community Councils in the North Herts District**

As part of an ongoing review of its electoral arrangements by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE), in December 2021 North Herts Council passed a resolution to move to all-out elections. This means that from 2024 North Herts District elections will be held every 4 years, with its District Councillors elected for a 4-year term.

As you appreciate, at present, Parish, Town and Community Councils within the District hold elections in different years and you may therefore be wondering what the implications of the Council's decision is for your Council. After its own electoral arrangements are settled, North Herts Council is considering whether to conduct a District-wide 'Community Governance Review' to:

1. Align the election dates of Parish, Town and Community Councils to the election dates of the District Council. Aligning election dates will:
  - reduce costs for Parish, Town and Community Councils (as the dates of scheduled elections would coincide with those of North Herts);
  - simplify the process for Councillors, officers and electors;
  - potentially increase elector turnout; and reduce confusion for voters.
2. Review the numbers of Parish, Town and Community Councillors for each Council to ensure they remain appropriate given current and expected residential growth.

In respect of both, this will be undertaken in consultation with the Councils concerned.

The Community Governance Review is likely to commence around June 2024, with any changes taking effect ahead of the 2026 elections. It cannot begin before that date, due to the ongoing review of District wards (being undertaken by the LGBCE). The Community Governance Review includes two rounds of statutory consultation, and Parish, Town and Community Councils will be invited to make submissions in those consultations to ensure their needs are understood and met.

No decisions have yet been made on whether to hold the Community Governance Review, or what the outcomes would be if we did. However, if a review does take place and if Parish, Town and Community Council electoral cycles are brought into alignment with those of North Herts, these changes will take place at the scheduled elections from May 2026 onwards. This would mean (*if so*):

- Parishes electing in 2024 would have no change needed to their electoral cycle.
- Parishes electing in 2026 would have a shortened term of office (2 years) so their term of office expires in 2028.
- Parishes electing in 2027 would have an extended term of office to 5 years to bring them in line with the 2032 elections.

You will be contacted again near the time; however if you are interested in reading more about Community Governance reviews in the meantime [CLICK HERE](#) for Governance guidance.

**Melanie Stimpson**

**Returning Officer**