

Have your say on how your
community is represented

YOUR
AREA

YOUR
SAY



YOUR AREA

YOUR SAY

INTRODUCTION

Middlesbrough Council is undertaking a Community Governance Review to consider future parish council and community council arrangements within the Middlesbrough Council area.

This review will run from January 2022 to 4 January 2023 and will involve two public consultations.

The first consultation will gather the ideas of local communities. The second will make concrete proposals on future arrangements.

You can find the terms of reference for the review here:

<https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/community-governance-review>

What is a community governance review?

Principal councils like Middlesbrough Council have the responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews.

A community governance review enables a principal council such as Middlesbrough Council to review, put in place or make changes to community governance systems and structures e.g. by creating, merging, abolishing or changing parish councils in the review area.

The process for carrying out a community governance review is set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and associated guidance published by the Boundary Commission, which you can find here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/8312/1527635.pdf

Why are we consulting?

A community governance review must take account of the views of local people.

We want your views on parish council and community council arrangements in the Middlesbrough Council local authority area and whether these should change in the future so Middlesbrough Council can work together to better engage with you and your community in the future.

This is the first community governance review that Middlesbrough Council has ever undertaken and they are usually only undertaken once a decade, so make sure you have your say!

As part of the review we are considering how we;

- **Improve community engagement;**
- **Bring communities closer together;**
- **Create better local democracy; and**
- **Deliver local services more efficiently.**

At this stage, we are seeking your thoughts and feedback on the current parish council arrangements, this is formally known as a community governance review as per the Local Government and Public Health Act 2007. The process for carrying out a review is outlined in the legislation and guidelines.

Community councils operate on a less formal footing than parish councils, however, they play an equally strong part in representing communities and acting as another mechanism for the Council to consult with communities at a very local level. Therefore we are including community council's in the consultation.

The review will not automatically mean there will be changes but will examine whether there is a case for change and therefore at this stage we are asking for feedback from the communities we serve or any other party that may have an interest in Middlesbrough.

The aim is to ensure that the arrangements for community governance / representation across the town reflect 'the identities and interests of the community in the area' and are 'effective and convenient'. The review will be conducted within the Terms of Reference contained in this document.

At this stage, we are asking for your thoughts and views on;

a) Parish councils

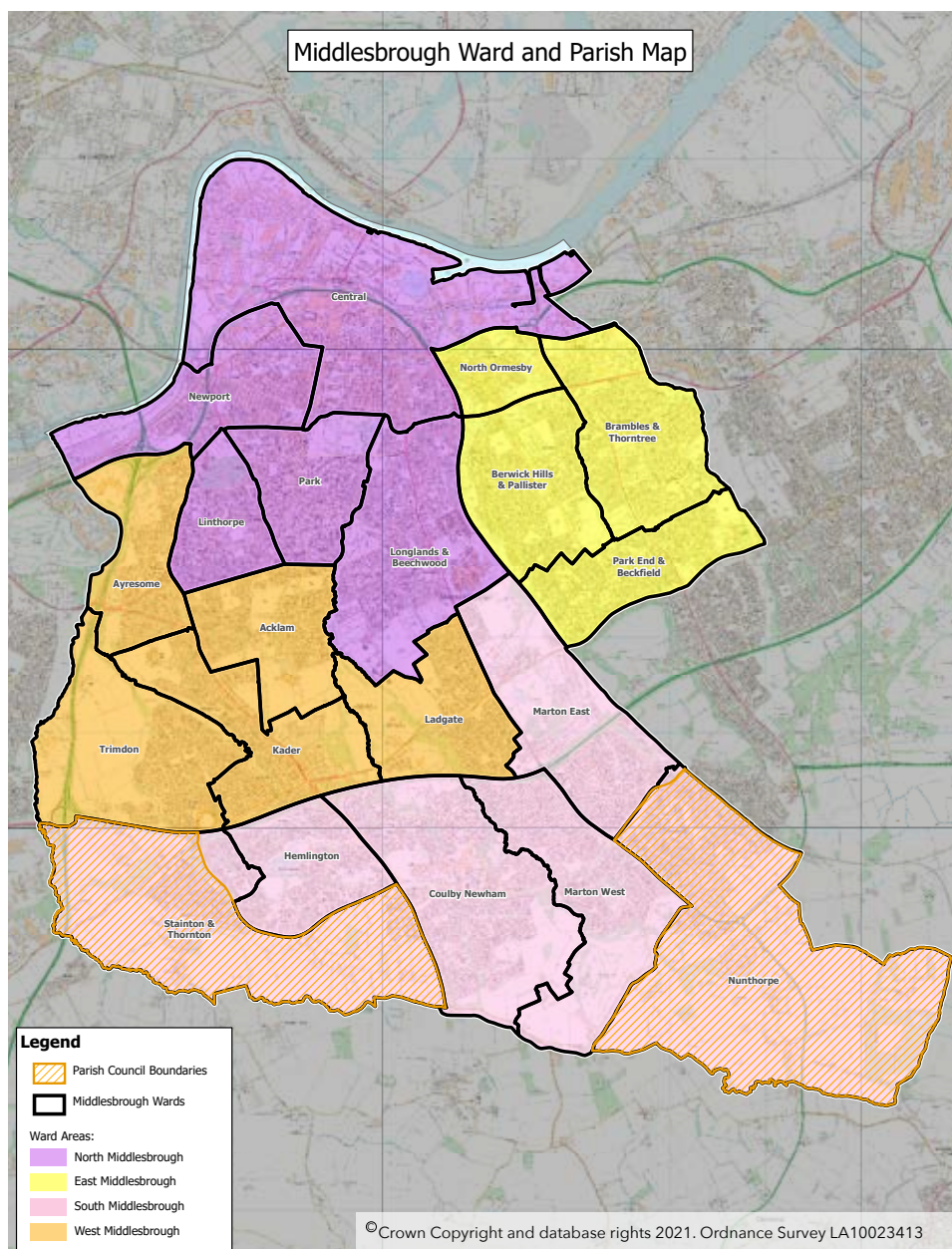
and

b) Community councils

Current arrangements and key issues

Middlesbrough Council

Middlesbrough Council is the principal local authority for the areas shown in the map below.



Middlesbrough Council is currently split into four areas and twenty electoral wards, returning 46 councillors and an elected Mayor.

As the principal local authority, Middlesbrough Council is responsible for providing a wide range of local services, including social care, planning, licensing and waste collection. Middlesbrough Council is a partner in the Tees Valley Combined Authority, which drives economic growth in the Tees Valley.

Middlesbrough Council also decides what local structures will exist in its area, including parish councils and community councils, and it is this that we are seeking your views on.

We are not seeking your views on the structure of Middlesbrough Council, though the outcome of this consultation may inform future reviews of electoral wards within the town which are undertaken by the Local Boundary Commission for England.



Parish Councils

There is no legal requirement for parish councils to exist, but principal local authorities may choose to put them in place, change or abolish them following a community governance review.

Parish councils are independent, democratically-elected local councils, with parish councillors elected by the local community every four years. About 30% of England's population lives in areas covered by parish councils, though the figure is much less in urban areas, like Middlesbrough.

Parish council boundaries typically reflect natural geographical communities. There is no set size, though areas with fewer than 150 electors are usually deemed too small to have a parish council.

Once created, parish councils have discretionary legal powers and no duties. This means that there is no set way of doing things, and parish councils can fulfil a range of roles within their communities in response to local needs.

Parish councils actively encourage input from residents on community needs. They use their knowledge of the area they serve to influence and respond to plans for that area (e.g. planning applications) and the services it receives. They also alert relevant authorities to problems that arise in their communities or work that needs to be undertaken. They can mobilise local people to work together to address local priorities.

Parish councils are responsible for managing their own budgets. These are financed through a precept, which is set by the parish council and collected from residents by the principal council as part of the Council Tax. Parish councils can also apply for other funding, such as grants and awards, to supplement the precept.

Services delivered by parish councils vary, based on the size of the parish council and its resources, local need, and agreements with the principal council. So far, Middlesbrough Council has not given to the parish councils in its area responsibility for undertaking services on behalf of Middlesbrough Council.

However, a parish council could look after a wide range of functions such as allotments, bus shelters, parks, playgrounds, public seating, public toilets, public clocks, village or town halls and maintain footpaths, cemeteries, village greens and various leisure and recreation facilities.

You can find out more about parish councils here:

www.nalc.gov.uk/library/publications/800-all-about-local-councils/file

At present, Middlesbrough has two parish councils:

- **Nunthorpe Parish Council; and**
- **Stainton and Thornton Parish Council.**

Updates on the activities of Nunthorpe Parish Council appear frequently on the website:

<https://nunthorpepc.org.uk> and Facebook page, are circulated quarterly to all residents in the magazine "Greater Nunthorpe News", posted on parish noticeboards, and summarised in the annual report.

The parish council initiated and plays a leading role in the Nunthorpe Vision Group, which ensures implementation of the Mayor's "Nunthorpe Nineteen" commitments about the strategic development of the area. Nunthorpe Parish Council also impacts on such current priorities as trees, flowers, public rights of way, traffic, anti-social behaviour, and planning applications from residents and developers.

Stainton and Thornton Parish Council has its own dedicated website:

www.staintonandthorntonparishcouncil.org.uk where you can find the minutes and agendas of all parish council meetings, annual reports and links to "local groups" including Stainton and Thornton Community Council, The Friends of Stainton and Thornton Green Spaces and the Environment Group. The parish council prints a quarterly newsletter and the parish clerk posts a weekly email "What's on in Stainton ". The parish council financially supports The Friends Group who are responsible for the maintenance of green spaces in the parish including Maelor's Wood and the Quarry as well as the seats and notice boards in the parish and the Environment Group look after the flower beds and planters in the parish. The parish council has recently developed its own Neighbourhood Plan which is currently with the borough council and we hope it should go to referendum early in 2022.

The precepts (the amount the parish require to fund elements of the parish) for these parish councils in 2021/22 were as follows:

Parish council	Precept	Charge per household per annum for Band D property
Nunthorpe Parish Council	£9,272	£4.30
Stainton and Thornton Parish Council	£10,129	£9.31

The average (median) precept in England is between £11,000 - £12,000 per annum.

In thinking about current parish councils, Middlesbrough Council will be particularly interested in the following issues:

- **Are our parish councils effective and do they provide value for money?**
- **Are all seats on parish councils contested?**
- **Are there too many / too few parish councillors?**
- **Are the boundaries of parish councils still appropriate in view of recent housebuilding?**
- **Do the boundaries cause any issues within / between electoral wards?**
- **Is there any unnecessary duplication between the parish councils and community councils?**
- **Do the names of parish councils accurately reflect their roles and the communities they serve?**

In thinking about establishing new parish councils, Middlesbrough Council will be particularly interested in the following issues:

- **The proposed boundary and role of the parish council;**
- **How the parish council would fit with other local governance arrangements in the town; and**
- **Avoiding 'patchwork provision' or 'double taxation' within the town.**

Community Councils

Middlesbrough also has 19 community councils in place across four areas.

Community councils provide a forum for local residents to:

- **Voice their opinions and concerns about their local area;**
- **Receive reports from the police and Middlesbrough Council's street wardens;**
- **Discuss and comment on local planning applications; and**
- **Receive and make decisions on small grants to local groups.**

The boundaries of community councils are intended to be in line with Middlesbrough Council's electoral wards and this is currently the case, with two exceptions:

- **Only the Middlehaven area of Central ward is currently served by a community council.**
- **Linthorpe ward is not served by a community council at all.**

While fulfilling some of the same functions, community councils are different to parish councils in that they are not democratically elected, have no legal powers and have no power to levy a precept.

Community councils operate in line with a model constitution and a code of conduct provided by Middlesbrough Council. Local residents elect an executive committee to manage the community council at an annual general meeting. The community council receives a grant of £750 per annum from Middlesbrough Council towards administration costs, and can supplement this with funds raised from local events.



In thinking about community councils, Middlesbrough Council will be particularly interested in the following issues:

- **Are current community councils effective and do they provide value for money?**
- **Are they well attended?**
- **Are all executive committee roles filled?**
- **Should community council boundaries match electoral wards, groups of wards, or areas of the town?**
- **Is there a need for a community council if there is a parish council operating to the same boundary?**
- **If parish councils and community councils overlap, how do we make sure that there is no duplication of roles?**

Have your say

As part of this consultation we are seeking your views and suggestions on;

- **The role of community councils and how effective they are;**
- **The possible creation of new community councils;**
- **Whether community councils should be merged with other community councils or with parish councils (where they exist);**
- **Alteration of current community council ward boundaries;**
- **Abolition of community councils;**
- **How well does the community council engage with and represent their community; and**
- **Should Middlesbrough Council engage with and / support community councils more? If so, how?**

How can I take part?

The consultation is open until 31 March 2022. You can have your say by emailing your comments to **CGR@middlesbrough.gov.uk** or fill in an online questionnaire at **<https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/community-governance-review>** or you can complete the survey contained within this document.



What next?

The feedback from this consultation will be considered at the Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee meeting in May 2022. A further consultation on the resulting proposals for change will take place in August 2022.

A final decision about changes will be made in January 2023. If approved, a Reorganisation Order is made to put the recommendations into effect.

If required changes implemented in time for the next elections for town and parish councils in May 2023. The full timetable for the review is as follows:

Stage	Action	Dates
Council	Agreement	28 July 2021
Commencement	Terms of reference published Stakeholders notified with clear definition of remit of review	4 January 2022
Preliminary Stage	Local briefings and meetings (members/parish councils)	March 2022
Stage One	Initial submissions invited from stakeholders on future arrangements under terms of reference	March 2022
Stage Two	Consideration of submissions received Draft recommendations prepared Draft recommendations to be considered by Council	May 2022-July 2022
Stage Three	Draft recommendations published for consultation Stakeholders notified	August 2022-September 2022
Stage Four	Consideration of submissions received by Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee Final recommendations prepared Final recommendations published concluding the review Final recommendations approved by Council and decision made on arrangements with resolution to make a Reorganisation Order Reorganisation Order made	October 2022-January 2023
	Orders come into effect at next elections	May 2023





Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey, your views are important to us. You can find out more about this consultation or complete the survey online via:

<https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/community-governance-review>

Please note a response will not be provided for individual comments or submissions, however a summary of the comments and responses will be made in the report to the Corporate Affairs and Audit committee.

Please submit your completed survey, free of charge to: **FREEPOST RTBT-CHET-UAZK, Middlesbrough Council, PO Box 500, Middlesbrough, TS1 9FT**

Please note that the consultation period closes at midnight on 31 March 2022 and any responses received after this date will not be taken into consideration.

If you have any queries relating to this survey, or if you would like to request this survey in an alternative language or format that meets your needs then please contact us via email **CGR@middlesbrough.gov.uk** or call **01642 728329**.

Details of Middlesbrough Council's Consultation Privacy Notice is available online via **www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/consultationsprivacy**

Details of Middlesbrough Council's Equality Monitoring Privacy Notice is available online via **www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/equalityprivacy** Requests for information should be made via the relevant channels and not using the survey as these are for comments only.

Guidance is available online via **www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/foi**

If you want to know more about the information the Authority holds about you, or the way the Authority uses that information please contact: **Data Protection Officer, PO Box 503, Town Hall, Middlesbrough, TS1 9FX**. Middlesbrough Council is the Data Controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act.