Governance Review Regarding Merging Balsall Parish Council and Berkswell Parish Council

Balsall Parish Council and Berkswell Parish Council voted to request Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council undertake a governance review seeking to merge the two Parish Councils.

Solihull MBC Governance Committee agreed to undertake a review and the second public consultation has opened and runs until 1st February 2026.

The existing Parish Councils and the resultant boundaries were established following the Local Government Act of 1894, when Balsall Common did not exist. The settlement of Balsall Common is split between two Parish Councils, (broadly on the line of Meeting House Lane / Lavender Hall Park). Due to Government planning and housing policies, Balsall Common is set to grow significantly over the coming years. Changes to planning legislation means our ability to fight this is limited, but both Councils are committed to mitigate the impacts as far as possible, and lobby for infrastructure improvements to support the new developments.

Residents will recall there have been previous proposed reviews of the parish boundaries, which were rejected by referenda, however the Parish Councils believe that the increased development of Balsall Common now makes a unified approach crucial in ensuring we all get the best community we can.

The Parish Councils believe that if Balsall Common was to come under a single Parish Council, it would have greater influence upon planning matters and better serve the whole community. For example, it would facilitate the efficient spending of the Community Infrastructure Levy that will be received from developers to provide infrastructure that under current arrangements would be split between the two Parish Councils.

Many residents already see the two parishes as one community served by the same doctors, shops, supermarkets including the coming Aldi, football, cricket, tennis, rugby clubs etc. The churches work together and the various clubs and societies have members from across the whole of the two parishes.

The parish councils believe the proposed merger of the two parishes, as outlined with the introduction of parish wards, would provide a more representative structure that would continue to support all of Balsall Common, the conservation areas at Temple Balsall and Berkswell village along with the rural areas.

A merged Parish Council will also mirror the new Balsall and Berkswell Solihull Metropolitan Borough Ward resulting in easier and more efficient partnership working with the SMBC Ward Councillors.

In summary, a merger of the two parish councils is recommended for the following reasons:

- Since the original Parish boundaries were introduced, the settlement of Balsall Common has developed and grown and is now split across the two parishes.
- Balsall Common, Temple Balsall, Berkswell and the surrounding rural areas are intrinsically linked and share community services.
- Balsall Common will continue to grow significantly over the next few years, which would be better served by coming under one Council.
- The Community Infrastructure Levy funding from future developments will be more efficiently and effectively managed by one Council.
- The Parish Councils are already collaborating and working together on issues which impact the local community but this would be streamlined.

- There is currently a duplication of effort with each Council having to do the same thing to meet essential statutory requirements.
- The parish councils believe one council can take a more joined-up approach for the benefit of all.
- The parish councils consider there would be some benefits of scale and minor cost savings if the Councils were to merge.
- A merged Parish Council will mirror the new Solihull MBC Balsall and Berkswell Ward resulting in easier and more efficient partnership working with the SMBC Ward Councillors.
- A combined Parish Council will not impact on admissions policies for schools or ecclesiastical boundaries.

Solihull MBC has sent a letter to all households in the 2 parishes to draw attention to the consultation. *Note that if you prefer to read a hard copy there is a reference copy of the consultation in the library.*

https://yourvoicesolihull.uk.engagementhq.com/berkswell-balsall-parish-council

The Parish Councils believe that option **A** is demonstrably better than the other options provided within the Solihull MBC consultation review.

The options available to vote on are:

Option A – Merge the two parish councils and create four parish wards
Option B – Alter the current boundary to the existing railway line (West Coast Main Line)
Option C – Continue with the existing arrangements

To respond to the consultation, choose one of the following options:

- Text A, B or C followed by your postcode, house number and name to 0786 004 2424
- Email: cgr@solihull.gov.uk(External link)
- Complete the online questionnaire Give us your view (December 2025 - February 2026) | Your Voice Solihull
- Complete and return a paper questionnaire, available at: Balsall Common Library, 283 Kenilworth Road, Balsall Common, CV7 7EL
- Print and return a paper questionnaire by post: Electoral Services, Council House, Manor Square, Solihull B91 3QB

A public drop-in event hosted by SMBC is taking place at Berkswell and Balsall Common Tennis Club, Meeting House Lane, Balsall Common, CV7 7GE on Wednesday 7th January 2026 from 4pm - 7pm.

Berkswell Parish Council will also hold a public meeting 7.30pm Tuesday 13th January 2026 at the Jordan Room, St John Baptist Church, Church Lane, Berkswell CV7 7BJ

If you have any questions, please email either clerk@balsallparishcouncil.gov.uk or clerk@berkswellparishcouncil.org.uk.