

Annex 2

Ross-on-Wye Community Governance Review

Summary of Consultation Responses

The Ross-on-Wye Community Governance Review considered whether the town and parish councils should become one council. It set out how such a change might affect residents, and also considered the number of councillors needed in any newly merged council. The consultation ran from 5 March to 16 April 2014.

1. There were 98 responses
2. 64% of respondents lived in the town, and 30% lived in the rural area. 6% lived in Herefordshire but outside the Ross-on-Wye area.
3. Of the 63 respondents who lived in the town, 60 (95%) said they would like to be represented by councillors who were able to express views on possible housing and employment developments in the Ross rural area. This represents 66% of all those who responded to the question about representation.
4. Of the 29 respondents who lived in the rural area, 15 (57%), said they would like to be represented by councillors considering matters relating to current and future facilities and assets in the town. 10 said they would not, and four did not know. The 10 who replied No to this question represent 11% of the total responses to the question.
5. A total of 92 people responded to the question 'Do you agree with the proposal to merge Ross-on-Wye Town Council and Ross-on-Wye Rural Parish Council; to form one council representing the whole area?' Of these, 78% said Yes, and 15% said No.
6. Of the 63 responses from people living in the town, 92% answered Yes to the question, while 48.5% of those living in the rural area said Yes.
7. The reasons given for agreeing with the proposal are attached at Annex A.
8. 68% of a total of 95 respondents thought that the proposals reflected the interests and identities of their local community. 60 respondents lived in the town area, and 82% of these answered Yes. 29 respondents lived in the rural area, and 48% of these answered Yes.
9. 18% (17), of the total number of respondents said they did not reflect the interests and identities of their community. Of these, three (3%), lived in the town and 11 (12%), lived in the rural area.
10. Nearly all respondents suggested a name for any newly formed council. The list of suggestions is at Annex B. The most frequently suggested name was 'Ross-on-Wye Council, with 27 respondents suggesting it. The next most frequently suggested name was Ross-on-Wye Town Council, suggested by nine respondents.

11. Just 18% of respondents thought that 15 would be the appropriate number of councillors. 50% of respondents thought 15 would be too few, while 12% thought it would be too many.
12. The majority of both town and rural residents thought 15 would be too few, with 57% of town residents and 41% of rural residents saying it would be too few. 10% of town residents and 14% of rural residents thought 15 would be too many.
13. The reasons given for disagreeing with the proposal are set out in Annex C.
14. Suggestions for improving the proposals are set out in Annex D.
15. Question 8 asked how respondents' own proposals reflected the interests and identifies of their community. Most respondents seem to have misunderstood this question, but the responses are set out in Annex E for completeness.
16. 80% of respondents agreed that it would be fairer for all residents to make the same contribution to the cost of the local council and to be equally represented. 92% of the town residents agreed, while 56% of the rural residents agreed. 37% of rural residents disagreed, while only 1% of town residents disagreed.
17. Other relevant views or comments are set out in Annex F.
18. 52% of respondents were male, and 48% were female. 91% of respondents were in the over 45 age group. 43% were 45-64; 26% were 65 – 74; and 22% were age 75 or over. 75% had no disability, long-term illness or health problems, while 25% were limited to some degree by health issues. These proportions are similar in both town and rural areas.
19. 99% of respondents were white British, while one respondent was Asian.
20. 91% of respondents did not think the proposed changes would affect any particular group of people more than any other. These proportions are similar in both town and rural areas.

Annex A – Reasons given for agreeing with proposals

Annex B – Suggestions given for name

Annex C – Reasons given for disagreeing with proposals

Annex D – Suggestions given for improving the proposals

Annex E – Residents own proposals

Annex F – Other views and comments

Annex G – Other information

Annex H – Tables with answer percentage breakdowns

Annex A: Question 4a: If you agree with the proposal to merge Ross-on-Wye Town Council and Ross-on-Wye Rural Parish Council to form one council representing the whole area, please tell us why you agree:

It is an unfair and undemocratic situation where Ross Town Council funds and manages facilities used by non-residents of the town.
I have been a parish councillor in Hereford, not far from Ross and it was one of the most frustrating experiences of my life. Parish Councils are too small and parochial to get anything done and too many people are just there for the kudos of being on the council.
It is better to have one body looking after the interests of Ross
residents in Hildersley & Greytree will be able to engage in decisions on facilities for the area as a whole, it will also be an advantage to be able to have an holistic approach to developing industrial and housing across the whole area
The facilities in Ross-on-Wye town benefit both parishes, and merge would enable more joined up thinking and enable Ross to fund more of its own services in face of county council cuts
This must be an opportunity to reduce any duplication in running to councils and do would be looking for some efficiency savings
Ross Rural is a part of Ross town and should be making a bigger contribution to the running of the town.
Both use same facilities. All residents then able to express views via Cllrs. Falling residents in rural area mean more balanced view overall by combining.
I have no other "centre" to use and therefore I do not mind paying extra if it improves the facilities in the town for residents of both the town and rural. I rely on the town for all my health centres, shopping, church, library and many others and therefore I think I should contribute towards the costs of the benefits.
The two areas roll seamlessly into one on the ground - so why have two public bodies - so sensible on the ground, will save and should give a chance of more democratic and competitive elections to be a Cllr.
The town of Ross would benefit from having more councillors to man committees and would represent the whole town as opposed to the current arrangement.
I agree but only if the other neighbouring parish councils are considered for combining with Ross Town
I think it's obviously much easier to have the area controlled by one council
We will be involved in decisions taken in the Town
Most of the decisions to be made affect all
Most of the decisions to be made affect all
Ross needs more councillors to carry out all the work it needs to do. One council representing the whole town's interests including Hildersley and Greytree makes much more sense. Everyone who lives in Ross and enjoys the same facilities should pay the same precept.
I believe that it will be much more efficient.
It seems superfluous to have two councils to look after such a comparatively small area.
councillors should think of ROSS AS A WHOLE not just the town
It would share the cost of running town services more fairly across the whole of the users.
It is far better to have one body of councillors to look out for the whole Ross area.
More efficient and sensible to look at the whole area together
This will ensure a greater equality of representation between the 2 councils and people that use the facilities of the town that currently live within the rural council will contribute equally.
will improve governance for whole area
I have relatives and friends who live in Ross rural and we all consider ourselves to live in the same town
I believe the interest of town and rural communities are linked. Most parts of Ross Rural council are so close to the Town geographically the problems are just the same for both areas.
Logically, this would result in more 'joined-up' decisions, and expand knowledge to all councillors of the area, its householders and their concerns.
It should reduce the overhead associated with having 2 separate entities doing the same job
As Ross is getting ever bigger, it seems sensible to have one Council with an overall view of the whole Town.
Ross on Wye Rural housing is expanding. More Councillors are needed to support the area. More facilities

will be needed in the Town.
Because it does not make any sense to have two Parish Councils representing one market town.
The rural areas should have more say on what happens in the town and locality (more rural councillors).
cost effective, stronger and more informed
The people in Ross Rural use the same facilities in Ross as I do. I live 1 mile out of centre of Ross
Ross rural just seems pointless its residents use the Towns assets without contributing to them.
Things the town council do, often impact on the rural area and vice versa. Fewer area councils should have more democratic power with Herefordshire Council who tries their best to ignore them
it's silly that it's a different council because I'm the other side of a roundabout
It's time we all came together for the good of the town, and to take it forward.
Comprehensive coverage of a geographical area which forms a viable local authority unit.
Because I consider Ross on Wye to be one community. The residents of Greytrees have a stronger relationship with Ross itself than Hildersley.
because we are all part of Ross
The concept of Ross town distinct from Ross rural is arbitrary and the combined area can plan and develop the combined interests much more efficiently.
Ross Rural does not do anything or own anything - all facilities are owned and run by Ross Town.
Equitable distribution of workload for councillors to handle the considerable number of tasks, notably, asset transfers and those generated by the extensive house building programme. A larger Council can accommodate problems easier, especially when needing to form sub-committees at short notice. No "price tag" is required for the cash-strapped Authority, as. Members are unpaid. Personal employment commitments limit available time for local politics. An equal council tax precept for all properties.
Ross needs effective parish governance and the present arrangements are nonsensical. One Council has the Council Tax base and responsibility for most of the assets; the other has most of the potential growth areas in terms of new housing and industry. We need a strong and unified council able to speak on behalf of the whole community and where everyone pays the same precept and has the same say.
Residents of Ross Rural use Ross facilities. The rural and town are becoming more as one. Would benefit everyone's interests and develop a sensible area as a whole
As a new-comer to the town, this seems common sense. I worked for local government in Surrey and remember the difficulties of the forced local areas in the 1970s which resolved themselves by the 1980s.
Wider provision of facilities to all residents
It makes economic sense
More comprehensive picture of area
More cohesive approach
Less waste of public money on bureaucracy. Less chance of domination by minority interests.
With the asset transfer, those who live in town and rural will be affected - the town will need as many councillors as possible to make it all work.
One council representing the whole area will be able to take integrated decisions on matters which concern both town and rural residents.
Town should not be split in two parts. One town, one council
Ridiculous 2 councils for one small town.
With the very close proximity of the Rural and Town areas, all services and facilities within the town are accessible and used by the Ross Rural Parishioners on a regular routine, who in turn should financially support the Town Council. Based on this reasoning, the merger of the two councils would enhance the above situation.
Rural development impacts upon the town and extended town development will affect the surrounding area.
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We all share the same facilities. Combining would mean a better balance in terms of representation and a better balance of parish precept on the council tax
Most of rural precept used to pay clerk, RRPC is not good value for money. With new electoral boundaries for Ross, makes sense to make town/parish council more cohesive. Need combined approach to retail and

employment, e.g. Over Ross and town businesses. Model farm would benefit from same councillors representing all Council Tax increase for rural residents would be less than £1 a week Hildersley development: rural CIL better spent to benefit whole area.
Pooling all resources is a more efficient way of administering matters related to the total area.
Because it is fairer that people in Ross rural benefitting from initiatives paid for by Ross town taxpayers should pay for them too. They would also get more of a say in what happens within the town, especially important now with the asset transfers. Ross rural is generally pointless as an organisation since its budget is so small, and they often have to co-opt councillors due to lack of interest/candidates.
Present situation is unfair and doesn't serve needs of the community.
The current split between town and rural seems rather illogical. It would make more sense to have a single, larger council for the two areas combined.
Ross town needs the merger to meet the district needs and challenges ahead.
Economies of scale i.e. one clerk etc.
Ross Rural do not get a chance to comment on aspects of the town which can affect us greatly.
I feel that if as a local resident I use the facilities of ross town and as I live so close it would make sense to combine the 2 councils
Because it make sense to have just one parish council to cover Ross
Ross needs a united plan for all of Ross
Democracy is hampered by two such weak parish councils - they need to merge in order to strengthen especially as there is a transfer of assets underway
Common Sense
Ross-on-Wye & District' makes a more cohesive body. Two councils, one with a large population and one with a relatively small population, must be less effective than one body.

Ross-on-Wye Council	
Ross-on-Wye Council	
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Ross-on-Wye Council	
Ross-on-Wye Council	
Ross-on-Wye Council	
Ross-on-Wye Council	
Ross-on-Wye District Council	1
Ross-on-Wye Group Town Council	1
Ross-on-Wye Kyrle Council	1
Ross-on-Wye local council	2
Ross-on-Wye Local Council	
Ross-on-Wye locality council	1
Ross-on-Wye Parish Council	3
Ross-on-Wye parish council	
Ross-on-Wye Parish Council Ross-on-Wye Community Council	
Ross-on-Wye Town & District Council	1
Ross-on-Wye town & rural council	2
Ross-on-Wye Town & Rural Council	
Ross-on-Wye Town council	9
Ross-on-Wye Town council	
Ross-on-Wye Town Council	
Ross-on-Wye Town Council	
Ross-on-Wye Town Council	
Ross-on-Wye Town Council	
Ross-on-Wye Town Council	
Ross-on-Wye Town Council	
Ross-on-Wye Township Council.	1
South Herefordshire District Council	2
Wye Council	1

Annex C: Question 7a: If you do not agree with any part of the proposal, please tell us why you do not agree.

Does not go far enough.
Having been a chairman I know that 15 is too big a group to manage properly and the good ones will get fed up with the slowness of the process and leave-I did.
The Town Council carries out a great deal of work with even more on the horizon with transfer of assets, the proposed number of councillors of 15 is too low, a figure of at least 18 would be needed to man the committees and outside bodies, the numbers need to be more equitable with the other market Towns
Not sure there will ever be consensus as too many councillors have their own "pet" interests which they support and show little or no interest in other parts of the community. Same old faces - nothing changes!
18 councillors would be a better number when you consider the new assets that the town council are taking on.
I would prefer 16. Most towns have an even number which helps limit political majorities in parish councils: something that should be encouraged. The number would then better reflect the same as in another town However, as stated elsewhere, I am not sure that Ross Rural should be the only one to merge as other neighbouring areas will also benefit from the town's facilities and should therefore contribute to them.
The number of Councillors should be the same as representing both councils at present
Ross should have 18 councillors the same as other market towns of a similar size. Having an odd number is irrelevant as not all councillors are always able to attend full council meetings.
I would suggest 18 councillors on the new merged council.
I think there should be at least 18 councillors based on our need and comparisons with the other market towns in Herefordshire. This would still be a reduction on the total current number of town and rural councillors
The role of councillor is expanding and this should be reflected in the number of them
18 councillors will be a more appropriate way to spread the work load
I notice that the combined councillors for the town and rural areas are 20 we need the same representation which is similar to other market towns
At least 18 Councillors will be needed to support new committees needed.
15 are not enough. There are 12 Town Councillors and this is not enough to do all the work now. With asset transfers there will be more work. Ledbury has 18 Councillors, Leominster 16, Bromyard 18 and Kington 15, Even Walford has 13. This is a once in a lifetime chance to get the numbers right, there has been no review since the Parishes were last thrown into the air in 1974. With the planned growth in population we need enough Councillors to be able to do the work in 10, 20 and 30 years' time. We need at least 18.
All local councils should be free of party politics. Depending on the area the council is going to represent, there should be a person to cover each area.
15 councillors does not offer enough opportunity to gather skills necessary in the current situation/s e.g. new housing + more residents
I believe there will need to be between 16 and 18 councillors to serve the community they will represent
Governance review was to look at 3 items, not just merger of the 2 councils. 1. Number of councillors on Town Council, 12 is not enough. 2. Number of councillors on Parish Council, 8 is too many 3. Possibility of merge of the 2 councils.
I think that Ross on Wye Town council on its own should have a similar number to Ledbury, and other towns, 15 would be a fair number.
Rural ross and town are very different and have different needs , if it is one the debates will favour which ever gets more ,
not enough councillors to do what's needed
We should have approx. 18 Councillors as has been suggested.

<p>Ross Town is failing and this suggested merger seems to be The Ross Town Council's cure for their financial problems. Why do they have assets transferred from the county and where is the cost of these assets going to come from? The Town Councillors had no mandate to do this!! There will be NO benefit in the proposed merger to Residents of Ross Rural - only a financial loss! And not just the present substantial precept difference - I fear that the future will be rather bleak. I have been expecting to hear what benefit Ross Rural residents can expect. Assets which are presently available in town to us are equally available to people from farther afield. People in Lea for example come in to Ross for school, shops swimming pool, and skate park. So what will be next - Brampton Abbots -Bridstow, Weston??? All part of Ross Town.</p>
<p>We have 20 councillors between the two councils we should try to keep the same representation particularly if it is not going to cost us any more</p>
<p>I understand that some town councillors do an incredible amount of work which should be shared more equally. The area would be bigger and if compared with other Herefordshire market towns would warrant a greater number of councillors than 15.</p>
<p>15 members are too few for the reasons already explained</p>
<p>Currently the area has 12 + 8 parish councillors. The town councillors are seriously stretched in terms of the workload. Although the administrative workload of two councils will be less, this is more than compensated for by the increased responsibilities currently being taken on by the Town Council. Ross needs at least 18 councillors. The tied vote argument is nonsense because it assumes no absences and no abstentions. If a council has a propensity to split across equally weighted sides, this will happen no matter how many the total number of councillors is, odd or even.</p>
<p>With more councillors, less likely to have the possibility of self-interests creeping in.</p>
<p>I see it as no more than a money-grabbing exercise for Ross Parish to waste on futile plans of asset transfers.</p>
<p>Additional responsibilities as a result of Hereford Councils withdrawal for numerous facilities.</p>
<p>More duties for council with assets transferred. Therefore I suggest around 18 councillors, 6 for each ward.</p>
<p>No thought has been given to the future, all the new houses for Ross are being built in rural not the town, so why do away with the rural parish council. The larger the council the less agreement there will be. Too much huffing and puffing with no outcomes.</p>
<p>Increase in council tax + WATER + any increase to support town council taking over market house etc. What will happen to the un adopted roads with no street lights. Could end up paying more than somebody in the town in same council tax band.</p>
<p>Single ward representation saves money and improves decision-making.</p>
<p>More councillors will be able to help with the increased workload.</p>
<p>The proposed 15 councillors would be insufficient to cover the workload, which in the present climate of asset takeover will be heavy. 18 councillors would be a more appropriate number.</p>
<p>15 councillors would not be enough</p>
<p>18 councillors necessary</p>
<p>I have in the recent past had occasion to question the spending of Ross Town Council in relation to the issue of grants. Having spoken to a particular Councillor, I found it necessary to use the Freedom of Information Act to drag out the facts which gave me cause for concern. I had an interview with the then Mayor in the presence of the Town Clerk, and at the end of the process I concluded that as a body, the Town Council is indiscreet, fails to follow its own rules when using tax payers money and fails to ensure value for money for its local tax payers. With possibly one exception, I consider the members of Ross Town Council to be incapable of properly caring for my and my area's needs and I certainly do not want it representing me in any way. In fact it is because of Ross-on-Wye Town Council's failure to ensure value for money for its local residents, and this history of miss-spending, that I prefer to use facilities at Monmouth where I have seen that the Council has community awareness and insists upon a community benefit for the grants it issues. Facilities in Ross-on-Wye town, whilst possibly being used by residents of Ross Rural area, mainly benefit Ross town residents. The facilities mentioned in the Ross-on-Wye Community Governance</p>

<p>Review Consultation document are in place to encourage visitors into the town, and to spend their money in the town. Whenever I go into Ross on Wye town I do so as a visitor, and if I use a car park, or attend a function in the Larruperz centre, I pay for a "service," not an "amenity." If I visit the town having walked along the Rope Walk, or passed through an open space bordering the river which is used for a summer event, or attend a recital at the band stand, I do so as a "visitor," and I then contribute to the local economy of Ross-on-Wye town by going to the local shops, pubs, restaurants and coffee shops. All the listed attributes within Ross-on-Wye are for the sole benefit of the town and if it is felt that these are unfairly benefiting those of us in Ross Rural area, then by all means take them away. I regularly go to Hereford and Monmouth to use the same type of facility highlighted but I note that their councils do not begrudge it because I am not paying my community charge to them. It has been highlighted in the document that the Town Council is in negotiation for the transfer of buildings such as The Old Chapel, and The Market House. I have had no vote as to whether these so called facilities are transferred, and neither have my current representatives. It is not acceptable that the Town Council take on responsibilities for which they are not in a position to fund, and then transfer the charges onto me. As far as I am concerned, I am happy for The Old Chapel and The Market House to be sold off. At least in private hands there would be some possibility of them being properly cared for! Where will the Ross Town Council go the next time they realise they are failing to manage their finances and need an injection of funds; Bridstow perhaps, or Brampton Abbots, Walford or any other adjoining parish? The suggestion is that this is to do with increasing the number of Councillors, thereby relieving the work load on individuals. As they are unpaid, there would be no cost implication. The reality is that this merger will cost me in excess of £75 per annum extra, and for that I will receive nothing in terms or enhancement of services. Will Hildersley get a car park for this extra tax, to accommodate the ramblers who currently park in The Glebe whilst they go off for their walks? Will the bus service be extended to the Rural areas? The Ross Run Around local bus service currently operates as a 30 minute service around the town. According to the Town Council it is exclusively restricted to the Town Council's area and not for use by those of us living in the Ross Rural area. Will this service be extended to serve Hildersley, or will it be acceptable for us to pay towards it, yet still be excluded from it? Has this even been thought about? Have our existing Rural Councillors been allowed to contribute to these proposals - or have they, as I suspect, been presented with a "take it or leave it" plan? This is not value for money and it is a clear attempt to broaden the limits of the town boundary to extract extra funding from existing neighbours and those who will be occupying the new developments within the rural area.</p>
<p>This is hardly a merger of 2 councils but a takeover of a smaller one by a larger one. There is little benefit to those living in the RRPC area; the only beneficiaries are those living in Ross Town through greater council tax receipts and S 106 and CIL payments from new developments in the rural area.</p>
<p>Rural people do not use the town facilities any more than visitors. I do not know where most of them are.</p>
<p>I am worried that with the smaller number of councillors than the current combined councils, important decisions will be made by too small a group.</p>
<p>15 councillors are too few. Ross needs as many councillors as possible in order to be able to do the increased work associated with the asset transfers. Councillors are essentially unpaid volunteers and this is a resource that Ross really needs.</p>
<p>Need more than 15 councillors to undertake work involved, especially following transfer of assets</p>
<p>15 councillors would be too few: there should be at least 18.</p>
<p>Insufficient information Hildersley is about a mile from the town centre. Why should we pay more than residents of Bridstow, Brampton Abbots etc.?</p>
<p>Ross Rural Parish Council meets the needs of the local community</p>
<p>Government, with all its layers is too expensive</p>
<p>Things work well as they are</p>
<p>Insufficient information re consequences; Hildersley residents would pay more than Bridstow, Brampton Abbots etc. despite being one mile from the town centre.</p>
<p>I think that more councillors will be needed and as they cost almost nothing I don't understand why</p>

there would be an issue to more. The town is looking at a huge amount of extra work with the transfer of the county liabilities and we will need more councillors to help make decisions and see that the work needed is carried out.

If the merger goes ahead then, yet again, the minority (Ross Rural residents) will be dictated to by the majority (Ross Town) whose interests are very different. This situation already exists on the unitary authority with Hereford views dominating and the outlying parts of the county being disadvantaged. To merge the two councils will exacerbate the already bad situation. The residents of Ross rural will be further disenfranchised.

The work of councillors has increased exponentially in recent years and is due to increase even more with the transfer of assets

Annex D. Question 7b: If you do not agree with any part of the proposal, please tell us your suggestions about how we could improve them

The proposals should also include residents of other adjacent parishes.
Half of that number (well, not exactly half!)
By merging the two councils this would allow residents in the old rural areas to actively engage in areas such as the Community Centres, Allotments, the increase in numbers of councillors would allow greater access to their local councillor and also with a greater overall budget available more facilities such as play areas could be provided.
Independent councillors who will work for the good of the whole community and not become in it for tat petty party politics. Councillors who have a track record of doing good - not just someone young or a trader in the town - they seem to serve only one small part of the community. Better communication with the people of Ross - either via local newspaper or social media - even better - both!
Care needs to be taken not to subsume the rural residents within the new council. By making it a Group Parish, certain rural aspects could still be dealt with separately in that area.
A bigger council covering all the area will be good for our area of Greytrees
The new council should look at providing services to the rural area which has been. 'neglected over the years
Increase the proposed number of councillors for Ross to 18.
18 Councillors at least for the new Parish Council.
You could hold council meetings in local community halls etc., within the Ross area, so local people in these areas can vent their views.
Use brains and look at town and work it properly for everyone. Rural people also use town and most of it is badly designed and or unusable for most of the year, New leisure pool and football ground at spur for everyone including rural people, Should have sold e pool to Aldi and built new one which bring in people. Housing and tesco on land at spur where road a in place already. One way system reversed as not worked and impossible for tourists to understand.
you need at least 18 councillors
Let matters be as they are. We already contribute to Ross Town by spending money there! One of the reasons we considered when deciding to live here was the cost of living and as a retired person I am in no mood for a sudden increase. If you seriously want to join up Ross Town with Ross Rural you must do it in a more open way. We have not, as a population, been consulted in any way until this review reared its ugly head.
Give us the same number of councillors as we have now e.g. 20
18 councillors (I appreciate it is not an even number but rarely is there a meeting with all councillors present.
20 councillors would be an ideal balance to deal with the demands of Ross
Give Ross at least 18 councillors, six per ward.
Happy with the way it is at present.
Maintain support of organisations such as ART
Leave as it is.
Effective scheme of delegation to improve accountability and waste less time, e.g. a cabinet method like Herefordshire Council.
18 councillors needed to do all the work
If the existing town councillors find that there is altogether too much work involved, then there is assistance available from the rural councillors who I am sure would be only too willing to help. Joint working parties etc., for benefit of us all are available.
Increase the number of councillors on RTC if necessary but do not absorb the rural parish.
If Ross rural is counted as 'town', then all the un adopted roads need to be adopted by them and all need re-tarmacking.
I would prefer to see 17 councillors.
At least 18 councillors seems sensible. Why not 20, replacing the number lost by merging with the

parish council? There are always plenty of candidates standing for election for Ross town council because it gets things done

There should be 18-20 councillors in the new, larger council.

Leave the rural council out of the review

One has to be closer to an area in order to make relevant suggestions

Increase the number of town councillors but leave the rural area as it is

Leave the status quo as it is

Merge the councils with all councillors intact to start with

Annex E. Question 8: How do your proposals reflect the interests and identities of your local community?

A more manageable, higher profile group that can perhaps get things done
For the majority of residents in Greytree and Hildersley the already identify with the town and consider themselves as part of the Town, by merging they will have a right to services that they currently have to pay extra for such as burial rights etc.
We have an ageing population in Ross - how is this reflected? So many charity shops - so little choice. ART promoting their own interests - what about a strategic, long-term local plan which has engaged with the local community - easier said than done.
Residents of Ross on wye refer to themselves as such regardless of whether they live in 'Ross Town' or 'Ross Rural'.
They remove the rural interests and overwhelm the needs of the Rural Parish currently existing
I live in Greytree and consider myself a Ross person
The community needs more councillors to represent it and work on its behalf.
Balance the whole area
All the people who live in the new area will be able to be involved in decisions about the whole town
Ross-on-Wye needs to be seen as a single progressing entity, thus attracting the attention of possible new dynamic Industries/Enterprises/new shops and of course, new residents to fill all the new proposed houses in our area.
Looking after such a large area needs more committees and more councillors to act on the behalf of its residents
The 18 Councillors will be better able to do this as there will be enough of them to do the work.
They don't.
would allow for greater spread of representation
2 parish councillors representing Greytree, and 1 parish councillor representing Hildersley on a combined council
Better for everyone
Combining both councils should give the new council more democratic power with the County Council so that we have more of a voice to address the imbalance that currently exists that favours the City of Hereford.
better representation
No comment. I do not represent anyone else!
My family and friends feel we are part of the town even though we live in Greytree
They would be better represented. As a community Ross Rural does not exist - there is no meeting place and is divided into two distinct geographical areas - split by the town.
Would meet the needs of a wide cross-section of tasks.
In fact, the larger the number of councillors, the less likely that the council can be dominated by a particular faction. Given the extreme non-proportionality of the first past the post system in multi-member wards, this is a very important point. Even well organised political parties are unlikely to be able to field six electable candidates in each of three wards.
Friends and neighbours look towards the support for local traders, and their facilities for our benefit and encouragement of tourist to Ross.
They don't
Cannot see it making any difference.
Single member wards to prevent in-fighting and arguing. Makes members more accountable for servicing wards.
A greater spread of councillors will provide a more efficient service for all residents.
The RRPC has been functioning well since 1974. There is no reason to change. The benefits are solely for the town council and not the rural area.
At the Larruperz meeting re the take-over of assets there was overwhelming support for the proposition.

<p>The roads would be the same as town.</p>
<p>Ensures a greater spread of representation.</p>
<p>They ensure that voters get more of a say in the people representing them on the parish council as their preferred candidates will be more likely to get elected. There will also be a greater mix of town councillors better able to reflect the various community interests and identities.</p>
<p>Not sure I understand this question.</p>
<p>The council for the rural area works well so there is no need for the town council to take it over.</p>
<p>The review is primarily for the benefit of the town. The suggestion that those in the rural area use facilities in the town is spurious. Residents in all the other parishes adjoining the town also use the facilities but there is no suggestion that their parish should be taken over. We all use the facilities in Hereford city on the same basis.</p>
<p>It will be better to have one unifying council that looks after the whole area. Easier for residents to understand who they can seek out if they have a problem etc. Ross rural councillors are not known to many.</p>
<p>I believe that the majority of Ross Rural residents would hold these views.</p>

Annex F: Question 10: Please let us have any other relevant views or comments:

<p>The current and proposed structure reflects the continuing problem of an out-of-touch Herefordshire Council being too remote from the problems and issues facing local residents in market towns and small parishes. Much more needs to be done to place local matters into the hands of local people. Bring back South Herefordshire District Council!</p>
<p>If anyone wants to know the views of local people get outside Morrisons and ask there-it is the focal point of the town-everyone has to eat!</p>
<p>It is fair that all residents in the area who enjoy the facilities in the urban area contribute to the cost and with the new Community Infrastructure Levy that will come with new developments it will be possible to provide new facilities for the benefit of the whole area. With the asset transfers that are being negotiated at the moment and the neighbourhood plan that is being developed this is a really exciting period, and merging the two councils will bring us firmly into the 21st century. In short I think that to create a new council from the two old ones will be a Win-Win situation for the whole area</p>
<p>There are many good people in Ross but most work out of the town as there are few jobs for skilled people - what would persuade them to stay here? So little choice in shopping. Scruffy town centre. Empty shops turned over to charity shops which are messy and unattractive. What on earth is "cakehol" in the former Bylaw building at the Millpond? Is this how we want to promote our town? When I read some of the councillors views about so much happening in the town I wonder am I living in the same place? Poor PR - list of events. Even cinema showings aren't published in local rag. Come on Ross - let's raise our game and aim high - honestly feel this is the last chance saloon.</p>
<p>The reason I have answered 9 as "Don't know" is because the same contributions should come from other neighbouring areas. A gradual up-lift over three years should be introduced so as not to cause a major financial up-lift Ross rural should not go-it-alone with merging.</p>
<p>I feel that because of the asset transfer from the county council more councillors will be needed to share the huge work load this will generate and hopefully mean a wider pool of expertise too</p>
<p>when we get our new combined council we will hopefully get some of the benefits that are only enjoyed by Ross Town at the moment</p>
<p>This review is a long time coming and should be carried out in a timely fashion to enable the new arrangements to be in place for next year's elections. It is nonsense that some residents of Ross pay less Council Tax than others. All major future development in the town will occur in the rural area and those living in the town should have a say over this.</p>
<p>if we are all treated the same and get the same service</p>
<p>Just that my friends and I think this is a very good idea that should have happened years ago</p>
<p>Provided views of every 'new' resident (i.e.: rural householders) are given exactly the same weight as those within the town; Facilities currently existing in rural areas do not suffer, e.g.: bus routes, road cleaning and repair remain as current.</p>
<p>In a democratic land, all residents should have equal representation. One gets a little tired of pessimistic views of the future of Ross-on-Wye. The Town is in a superb position, (probably one of the best in the whole County and Region), which should be the envy of all those who visit it.</p>
<p>18 Councillors will be a reduction on the number of Parish Councillors representing Ross at the moment. Ross Town has 12, Ross Rural 8, total 18.</p>
<p>Local councils don't have enough say on local matters. They can always be overruled by the county council, who know nothing of local conditions etc.</p>
<p>I feel that the review is being carried out by 4 members of the Town Council who are also County Councillors. Ross Rural Parish is not being represented on this review. The Town council have previously stated that they wish to take over Ross Rural Parish Council and wish to have a say on the planning gain money obtained from the proposed erection of about 280 houses in Hildersley.</p>
<p>No it's fair to pay what we can afford</p>
<p>Unfortunately Herefordshire Council spends most of its money in the City of Hereford, on things like unwanted shopping centres and ignores the wishes of people who live outside Herefordshire. I</p>

doubt that changes to rural and town councils will make a scrap of difference and wonder what the real aim of this is.
I think this should have happened years ago
With all the developments taking place like transfer of assets and proposed new housing, an amalgamation at the earliest practical opportunity seems sensible.
I cannot answer Q9 because we pay for no representation. I have never had an opportunity to vote for a parish councillor. I have voted in all elections* available to me all my life - but no election has ever taken place for parish councillor in the 15 years since we settled here. I have voted for a county councillor but no one ever bothered to show face around here. *except police commissioner because I had not had information to make a decision!
We would like improvements in facilities such as a playground for the children in Greytrees
The sooner the better
No decision on numbers must rest on covert party politics, that is, arrangements envisaged for political gain.
I believe Ross Council are well aware and capable of managing to the increase in its population and expansion of facilities for the benefit of its residents and encouragement of tourism to the town.
In the news one hears about keeping parishes, villages, pubs, shops etc. alive for its community. By taking away Ross Rural you are denying people that choice.
It would be unfair to treat certain wards as inferior in terms of contribution to corporate whole.
This has all the hallmarks of a done deal, going through the motions of a pretend consultation. I would be surprised if there has been any meaningful discussion with local rural councillors, and I am sure that there has not been sufficient regard to the enhancement of facilities available to Rural residents. The only consideration here is financial benefit to the Town Council. Every town in the country has individual attributes for which it has to pay, maintain and manage. Most towns are prepared to share those attributes, happy in the knowledge that they can, if properly managed, generate income for the town. They provide value to the larger community, and benefit from goodwill by giving the Town an air of generosity and community. If Ross Town Council doesn't want us to benefit from riverside walks, or strolls along the Rope Walk without payment, perhaps they should follow the French Riviera example and cordon the area off, making a charge for entry for non-town residents.
What is the 'Ross Area'? All residents of the adjoining parishes also use facilities in the town without the additional cost to their local precept and the town council is not proposing a merger with those. By transferring assets from the County, the town council is merely moving cost from one public body to another
Ross-on-Wye Rural Parish Council receives an income, based on the Council Tax precept, of £3000 p.a. but their only assets and liabilities are two notice boards and two public benches! The Rural Parish Council has to hire the Larruperz Community Centre for council meetings, basically paying the Town Council to hire one of their assets! The general public has very little contact with the Ross Rural Councillors and there is complete apathy regarding public attendance at the Rural Council AGMs and the bi-monthly Council meetings.
Where I live is totally different from town.
I would like it to be ensured that the new council, if approved, is clearly a separate entity from its predecessors, and not a take-over by the larger one.
Let the town council have more members if it wishes. This is not a matter for those in the rural area.
This review is merely to serve the interests of Ross town Council. Residents in the rural area will see no benefit other than an increase in their council tax.
Inadequate data Poorly designed/written questionnaire
We need a minimum of 18 Councillors - work load distribution mainly as well as fairer representation. All Councillors should never bring their political views to the council table.
We should all be working together for Ross
I think it would be fair for all constituents in new council's area to pay equally for the use of services and facilities in the town and wider district.

Annex G: Other information

What is your gender?

	Number	%
Total responses	94	100
Male	49	52%
Female	45	48%
Total	94	100%

What is your age band:

	Number	%
Total responses	98	100
0 – 15 years	0	0%
16 – 24 years	1	1%
25 – 44 years	8	8%
45 – 64 years	42	43%
65 – 74 years	26	26%
75 + years	21	22%
Total	98	100%

Do you have a disability, long-term illness or health problem (12 months or more) which limits daily activities or the work you can do?

	Number	%
Total responses	95	100
Yes – limited a little	18	19%
Yes – limited a lot	6	6%
No	71	75%
Total	95	100%

How would you describe your national identity? (Tick as many as apply)

	Number	%
Total responses	96	100
White British/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish	95	99%
Other White	0	0%
Any other ethnic group	1(Asian)	1%
Total	96	100%

We want to ensure that the changes made are fair to everyone.

To help us do this, please tell us if you think the changes suggested will particularly affect any group of people due to characteristics such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

	Number	%
Total responses	86	100
Yes	8	9%
No	78	91%
Total	86	100%

If yes, please describe why.

Council meetings are seen as boring by the young and male by women. If you want to get women interested in what's happening get into the Children's Centres, particularly the Ryefield Centre and ask there!
not sure I think someone will be left out bit like government will rob Peter to pay for Paul
People in the Ross area are getting older. It would be useful if they could get to council meetings (in their local area) with transport provided if need be.
If the Town Council and residents of Ross take over the assets being sold off by the County Council, Ross residents and Ross residents only should have control of the way they are run. It is also in my humble opinion after living in Herefordshire for some thirty years, it is possibly the worst Council in the whole of the UK and has nothing in my opinion to commend it. I would like all that's south of the A40/M50 to be part of Gloucestershire, Don't be afraid to share this opinion with the full council.
Why do you try to divide people into different groups- you cannot compartmentalise people!
The extra costs of rates one for rural and one for parish will be too much of an extra cost for a lot of families and OAPs.
Town facilities are too far away.
It all depends on what changes are introduced
We have an aging population so should consider this carefully when proposing/implement changes

Annex H; Tables

Q.1 Please say where you live

	Number	%
Total responses	98	100
Ross-on-Wye Town	63	64%
Ross-on-Wye Rural	29	30%
Outside Ross area, but in Herefordshire	6	6%
Outside Herefordshire	0	0%
Total	98	100%

Q.2a If you live in the town area, would you like to be represented by councillors able to express views on possible housing and employment developments in the Ross rural area?

	Number	%
Total responses	63	100
Yes	60	95%
No	1	2%
Don't know	2	3%
Total	63	100%

Q.2b If you live in the rural area, would you like to be represented by councillors considering matters relating to current and future facilities and assets in the town, such as the parks and Christmas lights?

	Number	%
Total responses	32	100
Yes	18	57%
No	10	32%
Don't know	4	1%
Total	32	100%

Q.3 Do you agree with the proposal to merge Ross-on-Wye Town Council and Ross-on-Wye Rural Parish Council; to form one council representing the whole area?

	Number	%
Total responses	92	100
Yes	72	78%
No	14	15%
Undecided	6	7%
Total	92	100%

Q.3 Ross Town respondents only

Do you agree with the proposal to merge Ross-on-Wye Town Council and Ross-on-Wye Rural Parish Council; to form one council representing the whole area?

	Number	%
Total responses	63	100
Yes	58	92%
No	2	3%
Undecided	3	5%
Total	63	100%

Q.3 Ross Rural respondents only

Do you agree with the proposal to merge Ross-on-Wye Town Council and Ross-on-Wye Rural Parish Council; to form one council representing the whole area?

	Number	%
Total responses	29	100
Yes	14	48.5%
No	12	41.5%
Undecided	3	10%
Total	29	100%

Q.4b If you agree, do the proposals reflect the interests and identities of your local community?

	Number	%
Total responses	95	100
Yes	65	68%
No	17	18%
Undecided	13	14%
Total	95	100%

Q.4b Ross Town respondents only

If you agree, do the proposals reflect the interests and identities of your local community (Town residents only)?

	Number	%
Total responses	60	100
Yes	49	82%
No	3	5%
Undecided	8	13%
Total	60	100%

Q.4b Ross Rural residents only

If you agree, do the proposals reflect the interests and identities of your local community (Rural residents only)?

	Number	%
Total responses	29	100
Yes	14	48%
No	11	38%
Undecided	4	14%
Total	29	100%
	Number	%

Q.6 The review group considers that 15 councillors would be the appropriate number for a new, merged council. Do you think this is:

	Number	%
Total responses	98	100
The right number	18	18%
Too many	12	12%
Too few	50	50%
No view on the matter	18	18%
Total	98	100

Q.6 Ross Town respondents only

The review group considers that 15 councillors would be the appropriate number for a new, merged council. Do you think this is:

	Number	%
Total responses	63	100
The right number	12	19%
Too many	6	10%
Too few	36	57%
No view on the matter	9	14%
Total	63	100

Q.6 Ross Rural residents only

The review group considers that 15 councillors would be the appropriate number for a new, merged council. Do you think this is:

	Number	%
Total responses	29	100
The right number	4	14%
Too many	4	14%
Too few	12	41%
No view on the matter	9	31%
Total	29	100

Q.9 Would you agree that it would be fairer for all residents of the Ross area to pay the same contribution to the cost of the local council and to be equally represented?

	Number	%
Total responses	94	100
Yes	75	80%
No	12	13%
Don't know	7	7%
Total	94	100%

Q.9 Ross Town residents only

Would you agree that it would be fairer for all residents of the Ross area to pay the same contribution to the cost of the local council and to be equally represented?

	Number	%
Total responses	61	100
Yes	56	92%
No	1	2%
Don't know	4	6%
Total	61	100%

Q.9 Ross Rural residents only

Would you agree that it would be fairer for all residents of the Ross area to pay the same contribution to the cost of the local council and to be equally represented?

	Number	%
Total responses	27	100
Yes	15	56%
No	10	37%
Don't know	2	7%
Total	27	100%