

**Response to the Local Government
Boundary Commission for England's Draft
Recommendations**

Portfolio:	Leader (non-Executive Function)
Ward(s) Affected:	All

Purpose: To consider the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's draft recommendations on new electoral arrangements for Surrey Heath and consider the Council's response to the consultation.

1. Background

- 1.1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) published, for consultation, its draft recommendations on new electoral arrangements for Surrey Heath on 24 January 2017. The consultation ends on 20 March 2017 after which the Commission will review its draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. The Commission will then publish its final recommendations. The changes proposed must be approved by Parliament. The Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the all-out elections for the Council in 2019.
- 1.2. It will be necessary to conduct a Polling District Review prior to the 2019 Borough and Parish elections, when the revised arrangements come into effect.
- 1.3. The Governance Working Group met on 3 February to consider the Commissions' draft recommendations and its comments and recommendations are as set out in 2 below.
- 1.4. Officers have also considered the draft proposals and any practical consequences arising from the LGBCE's recommendations and Karen Whelan, as Electoral Registration Officer, has formulated her own response to the draft recommendations as set out at Annex A.

2. Bagshot, Lightwater, Windlesham, Chobham, West End and Bisley

- 2.1. One of the principal recommendations of the Boundary Commission in this area results in the joining of Chobham and Windlesham wards into one ward with 3 councillors.
- 2.2. The recommendations for Bagshot ward are based on the current ward with the addition of the area to the north of Snows Ride and London Road, previously in Windlesham ward. 3 councillors would be elected to this ward.
- 2.3. It is proposed that the boundaries of the Lightwater ward remain unchanged and would elect 3 councillors. The Commission has not accepted the Council's proposed addition of Sundew Close and Blackstroud Lane West

from the West End ward as this would have created a parish ward with 57 electors.

- 2.4. The LGBCE has also provided revised parish electoral arrangements for Windlesham Parish as a consequence of its recommendations for borough warding arrangements. These arrangements, which aimed to provide electoral equality, will result in 3 parish councillors for Windlesham ward, 8 for Bagshot ward and 7 for Lightwater ward.
- 2.5. As regards West End and Bisley, the Commission has accepted the Council's proposal that the 2 wards be combined to be represented by 3 councillors.
- 2.6. The Governance Working Group was of the opinion that Chobham and Windlesham were 2 distinctly different communities and that a different solution should be proposed. Members expressed concern that, in any future polling district review or community governance review, the Valley End and Brickhill areas should remain within Chobham Parish.
- 2.7. **The Governance Working Group felt that a better solution could be formulated for the 6 current wards which would better reflect the community identities whilst achieving electoral equality and effective local government. It was therefore agreed that the ward councillors for these areas be asked to formulate an alternative proposal.**

3. Old Dean, Town, St Michaels, St Pauls and Watchetts

- 3.1. The Governance Working Group noted that the Commission's proposals included the moving of 529 electors and 235 properties from St Paul's Ward to Old Dean Ward. The Commission has used the railway line as the boundary instead of the A30. Each of these wards would have 2 councillors.
- 3.2. The Governance Working Group noted that the Commission has not provided any detailed explanation as to why the Council's proposals for Old Dean, Town and St Paul's Wards had not been included in its draft recommendations. The Governance Working Group considered that the A30 was a more recognisable boundary between the Old Dean and St Pauls wards. In addition the Governance Working Group considered that the electors identified to move from St Pauls ward did not share any community identity with the electors in the Old Dean ward.
- 3.3. The Governance Working Group noted that the Commission's proposals in relation to St Michaels Ward recommend the movement of an area north of the A30 to the Town Ward. This will mean that electors within this area will move to the Town Ward whilst remaining in a different county division from the rest of Town ward, therefore requiring the creation of a new Polling District, which would comprise approximately 21 electors and 13 households.
- 3.4. The Commission's proposals in relation to Town and Watchetts Wards recommend that the roads between Brackendale Road and Tekels Park move from the Town Ward to Watchetts Ward.

3.5. **The Governance Working Group was of the opinion that the proposals for the Old Dean, St Pauls and Town wards should be re-examined and a better solution sought to reflect the community identities whilst achieving electoral equality and effective local government. It was therefore agreed that the ward councillors for these areas be asked to formulate an alternative proposal.**

4. Heatherside and Parkside

4.1. The Governance Working Group noted that the Commission's draft recommendations included the proposal to move the boundary between Parkside and Heatherside by transferring an area which currently falls within Parkside to Heatherside Ward. This proposal reflected one of the options put forward by the Council in relation to these 2 wards. The Heatherside ward would return 3 councillors and the Parkside ward, 2 councillors.

5. Frimley and Mytchett

5.1. The Commission's draft recommendations involve moving a significant proportion of the settlement of Frimley, including its identifiable centre which incorporates Frimley High Street, Frimley Station and a number of community buildings, to Frimley Green ward.

5.2. Changes to the County Council Divisions prior to the 2013 County Council elections required the creation of the Frimley South (FC) Polling District, mostly comprising the Ansell Estate, as, due to the changes introduced, the electors in this area would be voting in the Frimley Borough Ward, whilst voting in the Frimley Green and Mytchett County Division; the remainder of Frimley Borough Ward continued to vote in the Camberley West County Division. The arrangements for Frimley South would remain the same under the Commission's draft proposals.

5.3. However, the Commission's draft proposals introduce the need to create a further Polling District: the proposed re-drawing of the Frimley Green boundary with the northern boundary at the A325 would mean the electors affected would thereafter vote in the Frimley Green Borough Ward, whilst continuing to vote in the Camberley West County Division.

5.4. **The Governance Working Group considered that the proposal to move a significant proportion of the settlement of Frimley, to Frimley Green ward is in conflict with the Commission's stated aim of recognising and reflecting community identity and results in further complication for voters as it introduces additional non-coterminous boundaries within the area. The Governance Working Group proposed that the current boundary between Frimley and Frimley Green be retained and the approximately 1000 electors remain in Frimley. However in order to achieve electoral equality it is proposed that the Frimley South (FC) Polling District, comprising 860 electors, be transferred to the Frimley Green ward. Frimley to elect 2 councillors and Frimley Green, 3**

councillors. This proposal will improve co-terminosity with the County Division and thereby reduce elector confusion, keep recognised communities together and provide for effective and convenient local government whilst achieving electoral equality.

6. Mytchett and Deepcut

- 6.1. The Commission agreed with the Council's submission and its draft recommendations are based on the current boundaries and would retain 3 councillors.

7. Delegated Authority

- 7.1. The consultation ends on 20 March 2017. In order to allow time for the respective ward members to formulate alternative proposals for the current wards of Bagshot, Lightwater, Windlesham, Chobham, West End, Bisley, Old Dean, Town, St Michaels, St Pauls and Watchetts, it is proposed that the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Members of the Governance Working Group, be authorised to submit representations to the Commission in respect of these wards.

8. Resource Implications

- 8.1. There are no resource implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1. The Council is asked to

- (i) note the Electoral Registration Officer's submission to the LGBCE, as attached at Annex A to this report;**
- (ii) note that a Polling District Review will be conducted prior to the 2019 Borough and Parish elections, when the revised arrangements come into effect;**

- (iii) make the following representations to the Local Government Boundary Commission :**

“For the reasons set out at paragraph 5.4 above, to object to the proposal to move a significant proportion of the settlement of Frimley, to Frimley Green ward and to propose that the current boundary between Frimley and Frimley Green be retained but that the Frimley South (FC) Polling District, comprising 860 electors, be transferred to the Frimley Green ward with Frimley electing 2 councillors and Frimley Green, 3 councillors.”

- (iv) make no comments in relation to the proposals for the Heatherside and Parkside wards and the Mytchett and Deepcut ward;**

- (v) **authorise the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Members of the Governance Working Group, to submit representations to the Commission in respect of the current wards of Bagshot, Lightwater, Windlesham, Chobham, West End, Bisley, Old Dean, Town, St Michaels, St Pauls and Watchetts.**

Background Papers: LGBCE's Draft Recommendations
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