

# Public Document Pack



## EPSOM & EWELL BOROUGH COUNCIL

### TOWN HALL

### EPSOM

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18 June 2025

SIR OR MADAM

I hereby summon you to attend an Extraordinary meeting of the Council of the Borough of Epsom and Ewell which will be held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall, Epsom on **THURSDAY, 26TH JUNE, 2025 at 7.30 pm**. The business to be transacted at the Meeting is set out on the Agenda overleaf. A link to the meeting is provided above.

Prayers will be said by the Mayor's Chaplain prior to the start of the meeting.

Chief Executive

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

No emergency drill is planned to take place during the meeting. If the fire alarm sounds continuously, or if you are instructed to do so, you must leave the building by the nearest available exit. You will be directed to the nearest exit by council staff. It is vital that you follow their instructions.

- You should proceed calmly; do not run and do not use the lifts;
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings;
- Once you are outside, please do not wait immediately next to the building, but move to the assembly point at Dullshot Green and await further instructions; and
- Do not re-enter the building until told that it is safe to do so.

### **Public information**

**Please note that this meeting will be held at the Town Hall, Epsom and will be available to observe live on the internet.**

A link to the online address for this meeting is provided on the first page of this agenda and on the Council's website. A limited number of seats will also be available in the public gallery at the Town Hall. For further information please contact Democratic Services, email: [democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk), telephone: 01372 732000.

Information about the terms of reference and membership of this Committee are available on the [Council's website](#). The website also provides copies of agendas, reports and minutes.

Agendas, reports and minutes for this Committee are also available on the free Modern.Gov app for iPad, Android and Windows devices. For further information on how to access information regarding this Committee, please email us at [democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk).

### **Exclusion of the Press and the Public**

There are no matters scheduled to be discussed at this meeting that would appear to disclose confidential or exempt information under the provisions Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). Should any such matters arise during the course of discussion of the below items or should the Mayor agree to discuss any other such matters on the grounds of urgency, the Council will wish to resolve to exclude the press and public by virtue of the private nature of the business to be transacted.

### **Questions and statements from the Public**

Questions and statements from the public are not permitted at meetings of the Council. [Annex 4.2](#) of the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Operating Framework sets out which Committees are able to receive public questions and statements, and the procedure for doing so.

### **Filming and recording of meetings:**

The Council allows filming, recording and photography at its public meetings. By entering the Council Chamber and using the public gallery, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings.

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Filming or recording must be overt and persons filming should not move around the room whilst filming nor should they obstruct proceedings or the public from viewing the meeting. The use of flash photography, additional lighting or any non-handheld devices, including tripods, will not be allowed.

## **EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL**

**Thursday 26 June 2025**

**7.30 pm**

**Council Chamber - Epsom Town Hall,  
<https://www.youtube.com/@epsomandewellBC/playlists>**

For further information, please contact [democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk) or tel: 01372 732000

### **AGENDA**

#### **1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive declarations of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or other registrable or non-registrable interests from Members in respect of any item to be considered at the meeting.

#### **2. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - CREATION OF COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS IN EPSOM & EWELL (Pages 5 - 50)**

This report sets out the necessary steps and timescale required to create one or more new parishes and Communities and Community Councils through a Community Governance Review (CGR), as mandated by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

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## COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – CREATION OF COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS IN EPSOM & EWELL

<b>Head of Service:</b>	Jackie King, Chief Executive
<b>Report Author:</b>	Piero Ionta
<b>Wards affected:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>Appendices (attached):</b>	<b>Appendix 1</b> – Terms of Reference <b>Appendix 2</b> – Consultation Material <b>Appendix 3</b> – Maps identifying proposed area boundaries <b>Appendix 4</b> – Table setting out key data relevant to each proposed area boundary <b>Appendix 5</b> – Consultation Strategy

### Summary

This report sets out the necessary steps and timescale required to create one or more new parishes and Communities and Community Councils through a Community Governance Review (CGR), as mandated by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Key stages include:

- seeking approval to start a CGR by way of a Full council resolution,
- deciding on and publishing the Terms of Reference for the review,
- public consultation on the options in the Terms of Reference,
- analysis of feedback,
- publication of recommendations,
- consideration of recommendations by Full council,
- (if approved) the making of the Reorganisation Order, and
- scheduling elections.

If Full Council decide to start a CGR further to resolving the recommendation that follows, it is likely that the earliest any Reorganisation Order would come into effect would be on 1 April 2027, with elections held in May 2027.

## **Recommendations**

### **The Council is asked to:**

- (1) Agree that a Community Governance Review be undertaken for the Borough of Epsom & Ewell.**
- (2) Authorise the Chief Executive and Head of Legal, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Chair of Standards and Constitution Committee, to approve the Consultation Questions & Terms of Reference once final typographical changes have been completed and to take all and any necessary action to progress the Community Governance Review.**

## **1 Reasons for Recommendation**

- 1.1 Epsom & Ewell Borough Council ('EEBC') is one of the few District Councils within Surrey that is unparished; in light of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), Full Council on 6 May 2025 adopted a Strategic Priority for 2025-27 to explore the creation of a Community Council.
- 1.2 This report seeks to formally start that process so that a public consultation may commence in July 2025. Any eventual decision to create civil parishes and parish councils within Epsom & Ewell will support the ambition of any eventual new unitary for the area to deliver double devolution alongside the LGR process.
- 1.3 The above recommendation invite Members to agree that
  - a Community Governance Review be undertaken;
  - approve the substance of the Terms of Reference as attached at Appendix 1, and
  - authorise the identified officer to have the necessary authority to approve the final wording of both the Consultation Questions & Terms of Reference to take account of any minor changes that may need to be made prior to the consultation commencing.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 The process for creating a new parish and parish council is known as a Community Governance Review (CGR), and this is set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the 2007 Act). CGRs are reviews of the whole or part of a district/borough area to consider creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes; creating or dissolving parish councils; and making or altering the electoral arrangements that should apply. This means making sure that those living in the area, and other interested groups, have a say in how their local communities are represented. Section 93 of the 2007 Act allows principal councils – such as this Council – to decide how to undertake a CGR, provided that it complies with certain duties in that Act including details set out relating to consultation, and the need to ensure any proposals reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area and are effective and convenient. The Council has to publish its recommendations but the manner in which the Council consults with its residents is not prescribed.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 6 May 2025, this Council adopted a Strategic Priority for 2025-27 to explore the creation of new parishes and a (or more than one) Community and Community Council. This report seeks to progress that Strategic Priority by inviting Members to consider formally starting the CGR process, in accordance with the provisions and requirements of the 2007 Act, which includes approving, with or without amendment, the Terms of Reference for the review for public consultation.

### **3 Key considerations**

#### **What is a Community Council?**

- 3.1 A Community Council is a form of parish council which serves a Community (another name for a parish). A parish or Community should have its own sense of identity, with strong, clearly-defined boundaries tied to ground features. Parish and Community Councils are the same in terms of their powers and abilities (they can also be styled Neighbourhood or Village Councils).
- 3.2 A Town Council is a parish council that has resolved that the parish should have the status of a town (which means it elects a Town Mayor instead of a Chair). This is a decision that can only be taken by an existing parish council, so the option of creating a Town Council is not open to this Review.

#### **What can a Community Council do?**

- 3.3 The powers of Community Councils are designed to enable them to manage local issues and represent the interests of their communities effectively. Community Councils can play a role in local governance by providing various community services and facilities. The following are examples of services that may be provided by Community Councils but it is not limited to these functions alone:

- 1 allotments,
  - 2 bus shelters,
  - 3 local crime prevention initiatives,
  - 4 street lighting,
  - 5 maintenance of roadside verges,
  - 6 community transport schemes,
  - 7 sport and recreation facilities, and
  - 8 tourism
- 3.4 Community Councils also have the authority to acquire, appropriate, and dispose of land. They can acquire land by agreement, compulsorily acquire land, appropriate land for different uses, and dispose of land, subject to certain conditions and procedures.

**What is proposed for public consultation?**

- 3.5 Further to discussions with the Leader of the Council and the Chairs of both Strategy and Resources & Standards and Constitution Committees, the following proposals have been identified as options to conduct a public consultation upon:
- 3.6 One or Two Community Councils that will represent the whole borough (adopting the current boundaries for district wards) which seeks to represent the East and West of the current borough, with four different boundaries for consideration by the public:

**Option 1:**

**West** – Ruxley, West Ewell, Court, Horton, Town, Stamford, Woodcote and Langley Vale

**East** – Cuddington, Ewell Court, Auriol, Stoneleigh, Ewell Village, Nonsuch, College

**Option 2:**

**West** – Court, Horton, Town, Stamford, Woodcote and Langley Vale, College

**East** – Cuddington, Ewell Court, Auriol, Ruxley, West Ewell, Stoneleigh, Ewell Village, Nonsuch

**Option 3:**

**West** – Cuddington, Ruxley, Auriol, Ewell Court, West Ewell, Court, Horton

**East** – Stoneleigh, Nonsuch, Ewell Village, Town, College, Stamford, Woodcote and Langley Vale

**Option 4:**

**All wards**

- 3.7 Maps detailing the specific boundaries suggested for each of the above options are attached at Appendix 3 to this report.
- 3.8 Options 1 to 3 above propose two Community Councils, each of which will carry out the list of functions noted above at paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3. Option 4 proposes a single Community Council serving the whole of the borough.
- 3.9 It is further proposed that those Community Councils shall have assets transferred to them from this Council; with any proposed transfer of assets following an appropriate legal process and complying with any legal duties applicable to such decisions.
- 3.10 It is important to note and highlight the critical role of financial sustainability in the asset transfer process from the Borough Council to the new parish councils. It is essential that a thorough financial assessment to understand the implications of transferring assets, including ongoing maintenance costs, potential revenue generation and the impact on councils' budgets. By ensuring that these assets are transferred with a clear understanding of their financial responsibilities will ensure that new parish councils can manage these assets effectively and sustainably. This careful planning will therefore ensure that the new parish councils can thrive and serve their communities efficiently.

**The CGR process**

- 3.11 As noted above, the creation of a Community and its Community Council is governed by the 2007 Act. The CGR Process can commence in two distinct ways:
  - 1 Public Petition / Application from a designated neighbourhood forum, or
  - 2 Full Council decision
- 3.12 Further to the decision taken by Full Council on 6 May 2025, it is a Council Strategic Priority to promote CGR via a Full Council decision, which has necessitated this meeting.
- 3.13 The 2007 Act requires that once a CGR commences (by publication of the terms of reference):

- 1 a public consultation process must take place,
- 2 recommendations must be published, and
- 3 the review must be concluded (by publication of the recommendations) within 12 months of its commencement, but only if it was initiated by a petition or application.

**How long is required to carry out CGR?**

3.14 Further to the decision taken by Full Council on 6 May 2025, an expedited timeline to progress a CGR has been proposed by the Leader of the Council and the Chairs of both Strategy and Resources & Standards and Constitution Committees.

3.15 An overview of the main steps is as follows:

- 1 Two all-member briefings were held on **28 May** and **25 June 2025**;
- 2 **17 June 2025** –Final Agenda for this Meeting was published;
- 3 **26 June 2025** – Meeting of Full Council.

Full Council will meet to resolve whether to start CGR or not & whether to approve or amend the proposed Terms of Reference. The Terms of Reference – as attached to this report as Appendix 1 – set out the extent and framework of the review. These must be approved by the Council and then published. Once published, the CGR can then formally start.

- 4 **July – September 2025** – Initial public consultation.

Following publication of the Terms of Reference, the Council undertakes a consultation. Residents in the affected areas, along with elected representatives at all levels, are invited to respond and give their views of community governance in the affected area. Whilst the Council will put forward its initial options (as set out above), this is an unrestricted consultation, which allows respondents to give their views on other options with reasons.

- 5 **October – November 2025** – Development of Proposed Recommendations.

Following the consultation, Officers will develop draft recommendations and present these to Full Council at its scheduled meeting on 9 December 2025 for approval. These will take the consultation responses into account, along with the statutory criteria, government guidance and best practice.

6     **9 December 2025** – Meeting of Full Council.

Full Council will consider and decide whether to proceed or not to proceed with CGR. If it is decided to proceed, Full Council will consider whether to approve the draft recommendations for publication and further consultation.

7     **January 2026 – March 2026** – Public consultation on Proposed Final recommendations.

Once approved by Council, the Recommendations are published, and a second public consultation commences. This sets out the specific recommendations and invites responses to support or disagree with them. Respondents are invited to give additional evidence to support their views where relevant.

8     **April – May 2026** – Review of the response to the public consultation on Proposed Final recommendations and preparation for Full Council.

Reviewing responses to the second rounds of consultation into account, ready for a final extraordinary Full Council meeting.

9     **June 2026** – Meeting of Full Council and Reorganisation Order.

The Final Recommendations must be considered by Full Council, which lead to the making of a Reorganisation Order to put in place any changes necessary following the conclusion of the CGR process.

10    **June – December 2026** – Consequential Matters.

A Polling District and Polling Place review must be undertaken before any elections to any new Community Council is held.

11    **February 2027** – Budget Setting.

12    **May 2027** - Elections to the newly established Community Councils.

**Public consultation:**

**How long should this last?**

3.16 In line with GOV.UK guidance<sup>1</sup>, the starting point is that the consultation periods should last at least 12 weeks.

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<sup>1</sup> House of Commons Library – Government Consultations – February 2025 - [CBP-10190.pdf](#)

- 3.17 The caselaw that lies behind the GOV.UK guidance is commonly known as the ‘Gunning principles’, established in the case of *R v The London Borough of Brent ex parte Gunning and others*. This case (as later upheld in another case before the Supreme Court) outlines the requirements for a fair public consultation. The principles are as follows:

- 1 *consultation must occur when proposals are still at a formative stage;*
- 2 *sufficient reasons must be provided for any proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response;*
- 3 *adequate time must be given for consideration and response; and*
- 4 *the product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising any statutory proposals*

- 3.18 Mindful of the Gunning principles, a full 12-week period is proposed for public consultation on both occasions.

**Who must be consulted?**

- 3.19 **Local residents** – usually by way of surveys, public meetings and inviting written submissions (see next section for more detail).
- 3.20 **Businesses & Local Organisations** – this includes chambers of commerce, voluntary groups and community associations.
- 3.21 **Existing parishes** – not applicable as this Borough is currently an unparished area.
- 3.22 **Neighbouring Councils** – as this is within the scope of LGR and borough boundaries are to be changed as of April 2027, this is particularly relevant (this includes Surrey County Council – to whom this Council has a statutory duty to inform and to supply its Terms of Reference to).
- 3.23 **Local politicians** – MP and County Councillors.
- 3.24 **Other stakeholders** – this will include schools, hospitals, religious institutions and any community group that may be impacted.

**How will consultation take place?**

- 3.25 Officers are working on a Communication Strategy which may include the use of:
- 1 Public Notices
  - 2 Press releases
  - 3 Public Meetings & Drop-in sessions

- 4 Online & hard copy surveys
- 5 Inviting written submissions, and
- 6 Stakeholder workshops

**What needs to happen after the close of the initial round of public consultation?**

3.26 As noted above,

- 1 Analysis of feedback and creating draft recommendations;
- 2 Officers review all submission and feedback from consultation events – akin to work carried out after Reg 18 consultation on the emerging Local Plan;
- 3 Officers prepare draft recommendations with associated governance arrangements based upon the review of the public consultation, to include:
  1. *Boundary and ward arrangements*
  2. *Number of councillors required*
  3. *Budget implications (e.g. precept)*

3.27 The remaining steps to be followed are set out above earlier in this report.

**How is CGR completed?**

3.28 Should the outcome of the CGR be a decision to create one or more civil parishes to be represented by Community Councils, Officers will need to draft a Reorganisation Order and comply with the necessary statutory requirements.

3.29 Once drafted, a further Full Council decision is required to make the Order (this needs to be mindful of the timescales required to update the Register of Electors in advance of an election to reflect the new civil parish/s covered by the community council/s), which will usually come into effect on 1st April of the following calendar year, whereupon, efforts begin to arrange for the holding of elections to the new Community Councils for the next available annual election date (i.e. date set by statute each May)

3.30 Should a Reorganisation Order be made creating Community Councils, there will be a two-year moratorium from the date that any reorganisation order is made before any successor new unitary council may conduct a further CGR process that impacts upon those new Community Councils.

**Other relevant considerations:**

- 3.31 Further to the recent Member briefing on this topic, two issues were raised by members that they sought further clarity upon:
- 1 The proposed creation of Neighbourhood Area Committees,
  - 2 The impact of a Section 24 direction under the 2007 Act, and
- 3.31 There are other questions and issues which are likely to be of equal interest to the public as they are to members, such as the issue of a Community Council being a precepting authority, which we have sought to address via the creation of a CGR web page within the Council's website that shall be published in advance of this meeting, containing a number of relevant FAQs.

### **Neighbourhood Area Committees**

- 3.32 It is noted that in the recent feedback provided by MHCLG on 3 June 2025 a preference for the establishment of Neighbourhood Area Committees was expressed. This is not said to be mandatory or required via statute or statutory guidance, nor does it exclude the possibility of creating new parish council.
- 3.33 The feedback also states: "Areas considering new town or parish councils should think carefully about how they might be funded, to avoid putting further pressure on local authority finances and/or new burdens on the taxpayer". This Council will need to consider the running cost (to be met by precept) that a new parish council or councils would be likely incur. It is noted, however, from commentary by the District Council Network on this subject that Neighbourhood Area Committees can also be very expensive to run and they are unable to raise a precept to cover their costs.

### **Section 24 direction under the 2007 Act**

- 3.34 Members will be aware that the Secretary of State has the discretion to serve upon any council subject to the Local Government Reorganisation process, a direction which impacts upon the disposal of assets, contracts and reserves.
- 3.35 Should this Council be subject to a direction under s 24 prior to the making of a Reorganisation Order, this should not preclude this Council from deciding to create a Community Council/s but it is capable of applying to any proposed decision to transfer assets from this Council to a Community Council, in accordance with any statutory power of disposal. Further clarification on this issue will be provided once the required Structural Changes Order is enacted.

## **4 Risk Assessment**

Legal or other duties

Equality Impact Assessment

- 4.1 It is proposed to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form after the close of the first round of public consultation. Should that determine that a full Equality Impact Assessment is required, that shall be presented with the report proposed to be brought back to Full Council at its scheduled meeting to be held on 9 December 2025.

Crime & Disorder

- 4.2 Not applicable.

Safeguarding

- 4.3 Not applicable.

Dependencies

- 4.4 Not applicable.

Other

- 4.5 Mindful of the work required to support LGR, seeking to run a parallel CGR process will be resource intensive (financial and officer capacity) with a risk that public consultation will throw up issues that may cause delay to the process and proposed timeline noted above.
- 4.6 It is imperative that should any Member suggests changes to the Terms of Reference or the above timeline, they should be mindful of:
- A decision to commence CGR is subject to the provisions of the 2007 Act; the Council must follow the process set out within the Act and any relevant guidance published to avoid risking reputational damage and/or legal challenge;
  - With reference to the LGR process, there is the risk as to the potential impact of a Section 24 direction under the 2007 Act – as such a Direction could impact upon the ability of this Council to make any decision following its service (i.e. any additional financial spend, who makes any eventual decision to make a Reorganisation Order, etc..)

## 5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 Costs for running CGRs are dependent upon the methods used to communicate and engage with residents and stakeholders and whether any consultancy is required to assist with process and ensure there is adequate capacity for this project.

- 5.2 A budget of £300,000 has been allocated further to the decision taken by Full Council on 6 May 2025, to include the costs of undertaking the consultation and costs of engaging a consultant. Those costs are limited to the anticipated spend with the current financial year. Once the process has commenced (including the settlement of a consultation plan), final costs including spend in financial year 2026-27 can be determined and any further allocations of funding shall be sought at that appropriate time.
- 5.3 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** The £300,000 cost will be covered from the strategic priorities reserve but will be closely monitored as part of budget management process.
- 5.4 It is important to understand, as highlighted at paragraph 3.10, that financial viability and sustainability will be crucial when establishing new parish councils. Specifically, any asset transfer must be financially viable, with a comprehensive assessment of the full financial implications. It is essential that all stakeholders thoroughly understand these implications to ensure informed decision-making and the long-term success of the new parish councils.

## 6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 Section 82 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 gives this Council (being the 'principal council') the authority to undertake a CGR. This includes the power to undertake a Community Governance Review, to make recommendations as to whether or not a parish should be constituted and whether or not that parish should have a parish council, and to give effect to any recommendations made.
- 6.2 The Act requires the Council to take account of certain criteria when conducting a review, namely:
- 1 the identities and interests of the community in an area; and
  - 2 the effective and convenient governance of the area.
- 6.3 They are also advised to consider factors such as:
- 1 what impact proposed community governance arrangements might have on community cohesion; and
  - 2 whether the size (area), population and boundaries proposed for local governance make sense on the ground and contribute to the above criteria.
- 6.4 As the legislation requires, the Council must consider a number of questions when deciding whether to recommend that a parish should be formed including:

- 1 whether the number, or distribution, of the local government electors for the parish would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient;
  - 2 whether it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the Council i.e. warded
  - 3 If the principal council decides to recommend that a parish should be divided into wards, then (a) the size and boundaries of the wards, and (b) the number of councillors to be elected for each ward
- 6.5 Epsom and Ewell currently has Borough status, which means it is entitled to have a Mayor. In the absence of any parish councils within the Borough, that status is considered to be at risk. In order to preserve the historic property, privileges, rights and traditions presently enjoyed by the residents of the Borough, it may be necessary (depending on the outcome of the LGR) to establish Charter Trustees for the unparished parts of the borough with effect from 1 April 2027.
- 6.6 **Legal Officer's comments:** In order to create Parish Councils for the Borough of Epsom and Ewell, a Community Governance Review must take place, including consultation with the public and other stakeholders. The body of this report contains relevant legal considerations that members must have in mind when conducting the CGR.

## 7 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 7.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:
- Effective Council
- 7.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 7.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** Not applicable.
- 7.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** Not applicable.
- 7.5 **Partnerships:** Not applicable.
- 7.6 **Local Government Reorganisation Implications:** In addition to the points made within the body of this report on the subject, The Statutory Guidance<sup>2</sup> for CGRs makes reference to the following, which is of limited relevance to LGR:

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<sup>2</sup> "Guidance on community governance reviews", March 2010, issued by the Secretary of State and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

7.7 *“...principal councils should avoid starting a community governance review if a review of district, London borough or county council electoral arrangements is being, or is about to be, undertaken. Ideally, community governance reviews should be undertaken well in advance of such electoral reviews, so that the LGBCE in its review of local authority electoral arrangements can take into account any parish boundary changes that are made.”*

7.8 This guidance is directed at and must have regard to it but need not follow it if there is good reason for a departure. In consideration of a good reason to depart from the said Guidance, it is noted that the preceding paragraph (paragraph 28) of the Guidance refers to reviews of county or district electoral arrangement reviews arrangements by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, ('LGBCE'), which may be affected by CGRs. The LGR is a different process. It should also be borne in mind that there is a limited window of opportunity for the Council to carry out a CGR before the LGR is concluded.

## 8 Background papers

8.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

### **Previous reports:**

- [EEBC Strategic Priorities 2025-2027, Full Council, 6 May 2025](#)

### **Other papers:**

- Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
- Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transfer of Functions, Property, Rights and Liabilities) Regulations 2008
- Charter Trustees Order 2009
- “Guidance on community governance reviews”, March 2010, issued by the Secretary of State and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

# **Terms of Reference**

## **Community Governance Review**

### **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council**

**June 2025**

## **Introduction**

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council has resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review (CGR) under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, to consider the emparishment of all or part of the current area of the Borough. This is consequential of Local Government Reorganisation which will see the formation of one or more unitary authorities for Surrey, and the abolition of the existing eleven District and Borough Councils and single County Council within Surrey.

## **Legal Framework**

In undertaking this review the Council will be guided by:

- Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
- the relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972
- Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued in accordance with section 100(4) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010
- Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008
- Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008

## **What is a Community Governance Review (CGR)?**

A CGR is a review of the whole or part of the Borough to consider one or more of the following:

- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes
- Constituting, retaining or dissolving parish councils
- The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes
- The electoral arrangements for parishes (the ordinary year of election, council size, the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding), and
- Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping

## **Why undertake a Community Governance review?**

A CGR provides an opportunity for principal authorities to review and make changes to community governance within their area. Such reviews can be undertaken when there have been changes in population or in reaction to specific, or local, new issues to ensure that the community governance for the area continues to be effective and convenient and it reflects the identities and interests of the community.

The government has emphasised that ultimately, recommendations made in a CGR ought to bring about improved community engagement, more cohesive communities, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

If the current proposals for local government reorganisation in the county proceed, eleven existing District and Borough councils will be dissolved in April 2027. At present there are no parishes in the whole of Epsom and Ewell Borough, and if the Borough Council is dissolved there will be no lower tier of local government below that of the new unitary authority. This will affect democratic engagement and representation and may influence the way local services are provided.

The Council decided on 26 June 2025 to conduct a CGR for the whole of Epsom and Ewell to establish the appetite, desire and suitability for potential parish council formations in the Borough.

## **Considerations of a Community Governance Review**

Section 93 of the 2007 Act requires the Borough Council to consider the need to secure that community governance within the area under review will be:

- a) reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and
- b) effective and convenient.

In doing so the review will take into account:

- a) the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
- b) the size, population and boundaries of the local community.

## Scope of this Review

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council has resolved to undertake a CGR to consider whether there is a desire and need to create one or more civil parishes and associated parish council(s) for the whole area of the existing Borough.

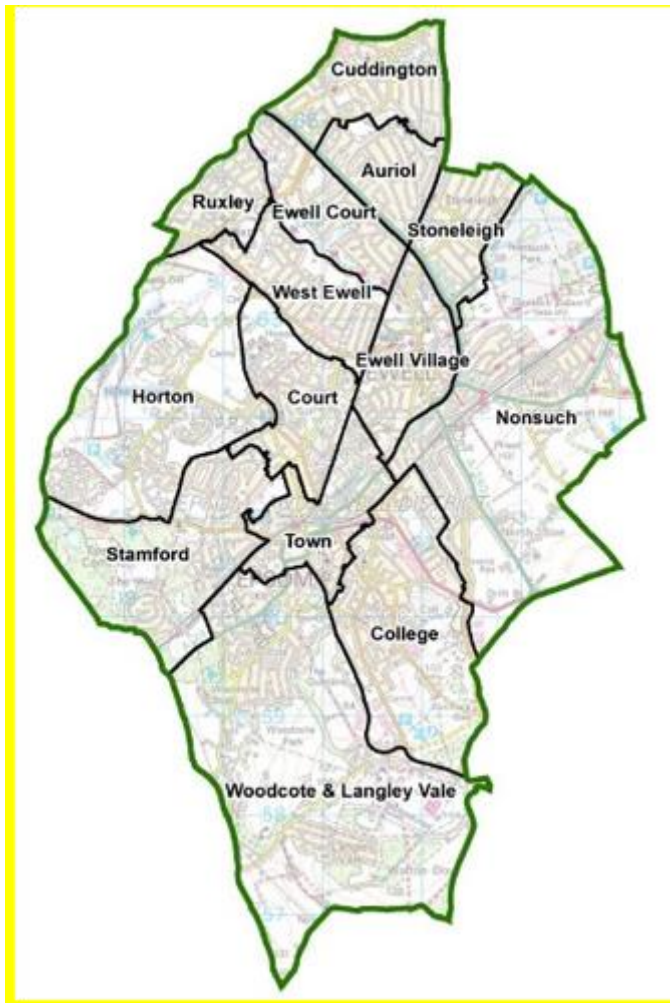
The preferred option of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is to create either one or two parishes, each with a parish council, to be named a “Community Council”, covering the whole of the current area of the borough.

This review seeks to ascertain the most appropriate boundary alignment and governance arrangements for any such new parishes. The area of Epsom and Ewell includes the following current wards:

	<i>Wards</i>	<i>Electorate (1 May 2025)</i>	<i>Households (1 May 2025)</i>
1	Auriol	3,406	1,713
2	College	5,122	2,857
3	Court	4,614	2,654
4	Cuddington	4,960	2,726
5	Ewell Court	3,631	1,932
6	Ewell Village	3,352	2,102
7	Horton	3,315	1,901
8	Nonsuch	5,265	2,497
9	Ruxley	3,648	2,101
10	Stamford	3,661	1,915
11	Stoneleigh	3,645	1,830
12	Town	5,268	3,973
13	West Ewell	5,027	2,703
14	Woodcote & Langley Vale	4,509	2,533

In conducting this review, the Council will consider the electorate forecasts for the next five years. These forecasts will be based on planned developments within the Borough and will also consider any forecasts relating to demographic trends.

If parish councils are not established across the whole area of the existing Borough, then the only tier of local government that electors in unparished areas will be represented by will be the new unitary authority for that area.



## **Who will undertake the community governance review?**

The review will be carried out by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council. In the event that, for whatever reason, the review cannot be completed by the 1 April 2027, then the successor authority to the Borough Council may complete and implement the review.

The conduct of the review will be overseen by the Borough Council, with all formal decisions required by the legislation being made by the Borough Council in line with the Council's constitution.

The review will comply with the legislative and procedural requirements set out in the 2007 Act, as well as statutory guidance. This includes guidance produced jointly by

the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) and issued under section 100 of the 2007 Act. This review will follow the approach set out in these Terms of Reference, including the following indicative timetable

### Timetable for review

Date	Action
26 June 2025	Council to approve Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Review
July – September 2025	Formal initial Community Governance Review consultation – with residents and other consultees as noted below
October – November 2025	Consideration of responses and drafting of recommendations
December 2025 – March 2026	Further public consultation on Draft Recommendations
March – May 2026	Formulation and publication of final recommendations
May – June 2026	Final recommendations to be considered by Full Council
May – June 2026	Reorganisation Order made
June – December 2026	Consequential matters
May 2027	Parish council elections to be held under any new arrangements that may be decided.

This document is being published on our website at: [www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk](http://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk) and a printed copy may be viewed at the Town Hall, The Parade, Epsom, KT18 5BY during normal business hours.

## Consultation

Before publishing final recommendations, in line with legislative requirements, the Borough Council will seek and take full account of the views of local people. The Council will comply with legislative requirements by,

- a) consulting local government electors for the area under review;
- b) consulting any other person or body (including a local authority or elected representative) who appears to the council to have an interest in the review;
- c) informing Surrey County Council of the review, and sending it a copy of this Terms of Reference document;
- d) taking into account any representations received in connection with the review.
- e) the Council will also be pleased to receive comments from any other person or body that wishes to make representations; any such person that makes

representations during the initial invitation to submit proposals will be invited to make comments in respect of the draft proposals.

When taking account of written representations the Council is bound to have regard to the need to secure that community governance within the area under review is:

- a) reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area;
- b) effective and convenient.

In order to ensure that this review is conducted transparently, as soon as practicable the Council will publish its recommendations and take such steps as it considers sufficient to ensure that persons who may be interested in the review are informed of the recommendations and the reasons behind them. This will consist of two phases of consultation. The first will seek the initial views and desires of local residents, groups and stakeholders, and will form the basis of the draft recommendations. The second phase will seek views upon those draft recommendations, to allow final recommendations to be formed.

Consultation and awareness raising will consist of various communication methods, such as direct mailings, media posts (digital and printed), in person workshops where viable, and each will explain how residents and stakeholders can submit their views.

## **The value of local councils**

Local parish councils play an important role in terms of community empowerment at a local level and we want to ensure that local governance in the area of the existing Borough Council continues to be robust, representative and enabled to meet the challenges that lie before it.

Parish councils have a key role to play in representing the views and promoting the needs of the borough's local communities and neighbourhoods and every opportunity should be afforded to them to express such views to the new unitary authority prior to any decisions taken which might affect local circumstances.

## **Other (non-parish) forms of community governance**

The Council is required by law to consider other forms of community governance. There may be other arrangements for community representation or community engagement in an area, including area committees, neighbourhood management programmes, tenant management organisations, area or community forums, residents' and tenants' associations or community associations, which may be more appropriate to some areas than parish councils.

The Council will be mindful of such other forms of community governance in its consideration of whether parish governance is most appropriate. However, the Council also notes that what sets parish councils apart from other kinds of

governance is the fact that they are a democratically elected tier of local government with directly elected representatives, independent of other council tiers and budgets, and possessing specific powers for which they are democratically accountable.

## **Parish boundaries**

The Council considers that 'natural' settlements, or settlements as they are defined in the Local Development Framework, should not in normal circumstances be partitioned by parish boundaries. The Council considers that the boundaries between parishes should where possible either reflect the 'no-man's land' between communities represented by areas of low population or by identifiable physical barriers. These physical barriers might include natural boundaries such as rivers or man-made features such as railways or roads. In the event of emparishment the council will endeavour to select boundaries that are, and are likely to remain, easily identifiable as well as taking into account any local ties which might be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.

## **Electoral arrangements and councillor representation**

An important part of the Review will be to consider the 'Electoral Arrangements' and this will cover how a council is constituted for any parish established by this review, comprising the following:

- The ordinary year in which elections are held;
- The number of Councillors to be elected to the council;
- The division (or not) of the parish into wards for the purpose of electing Councillors;
- The number and boundaries of any such wards;
- The number of Councillors to be elected for any such wards; and
- The name of any such wards.

The Local Government Act 1972 states that ordinary election of Parish Councillors shall take place every fourth year. However, parish elections may be held in other years to coincide with the cycle for the principal Council, so that the costs of elections can be shared. If the Review finds that it will be appropriate to hold an election for Parish Councillors, for a newly formed parish, at an earlier date than the next scheduled ordinary elections, the terms of office of any newly elected Parish Councillors will be so reduced as to enable the electoral cycle to revert to the normal cycle in the area at the next ordinary elections.

The number of Parish Councillors for each parish council must not be less than five. There is no maximum number and there are no rules relating to the allocation of Councillors. There are, however, guidelines produced both by the National Association of Local Councils and by the Aston Business School and the Council will

be mindful of these during the review. The Government's guidance is that "each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and the pattern of communities."

## **Consequential Matters**

A Reorganisation Order may cover any consequential matters that appear to the Council to be necessary or proper to give effect to the Order. These may include:

- The transfer and management or custody of property;
- The setting of precepts for new parishes;
- Provision with respect to the transfer of any functions, property, rights and liabilities;
- Provision for the transfer of staff, compensation for loss of office, pensions and other staffing matters.

In these matters the Council will be guided by the 2007 Act and the Regulations that have been issued under it, including the Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 and the Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008

Regulations regarding the transfer of property, rights and liabilities require that any apportionments shall use the population of the area as estimated by the Proper Officer of the Council as an appropriate proportion. The Regulations regarding the establishment of a precept for a new parish require the Council to calculate the first anticipated precept for a newly constituted parish council and for the amount of that precept to be included in the Reorganisation Order.

## **How to contact us**

If you would like to say how you view potential future arrangements under these Terms of Reference, please respond to the online consultations on the Epsom and Ewell Borough Council website:

The survey will also be available in other formats, please email [cgr@epsom-ewell.gov.uk](mailto:cgr@epsom-ewell.gov.uk) or call 01372 732000

# Stage 1 Consultation

## Community Governance Review

### Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

**July 2025**

#### **Background:**

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council has resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review (CGR) under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, to consider creating parishes and parish councils<sup>1</sup> in all of the current area of the Borough. This has been prompted by the process of Local Government Reorganisation across Surrey which is likely to see the formation of one or more unitary authorities for Surrey, and the abolition of the existing eleven district and borough councils within Surrey, along with the abolition of the County Council.

In the event the eleven existing district and borough councils along with the county council are dissolved in April 2027 then as the whole of Epsom and Ewell Borough does not have any parish councils there will be no lower tier of local government, below that of the new unitary authority.

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council consider it important that a tier of local government should continue to be available to residents of the borough at a more local level than any unitary authority could offer, and which will be able to offer locally provided services to residents which could include:

- Greater local voice for functions and assets managed by the parish council
- Reduced risk of loss of functions and assets due to decisions taken at a distance
- Greater financial flexibility to increase (or reduce) the precept than under current council tax capping rules

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<sup>1</sup> Parishes and parish councils may also be called “communities” and “community councils”, “neighbourhoods” and “neighbourhood councils”, “villages” and “village councils”.

- Services such as parks, playgrounds and community centres can be delivered locally
- Local ability to drive economic growth by attracting funding and grants to boost the local economy and to drive local projects
- Initiatives to enhance the quality of life via provision of green spaces and cultural events
- As statutory consultees on planning matters the parish council can reflect the concerns and aspirations of local residents
- Provision of support for local businesses through events and other initiatives
- Promotion of local health and well-being projects
- Potential for provision of local youth services

## **The proposals:**

The preferred option of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is to create either one or two parishes, each with a parish council, to be named a “Community Council”, covering the whole of the current area of the borough. The two-parish proposal seeks to represent the East and West of the current borough. There are four different options for boundary arrangements for consideration by the public.

### **Option 1 (two parishes each with a parish council):**

**West** – Ruxley, West Ewell, Court, Horton, Town, Stamford, Woodcote and Langley Vale

**East** – Cuddington, Ewell Court, Auriol, Stoneleigh, Ewell Village, Nonsuch, College

### **Option 2 (two parishes each with a parish council):**

**West** – Court, Horton, Town, Stamford, Woodcote and Langley Vale, College

**East** – Cuddington, Ewell Court, Auriol, Ruxley, West Ewell, Stoneleigh, Ewell Village, Nonsuch

### **Option 3 (two parishes each with a parish council):**

**West** – Cuddington, Ruxley, Auriol, Ewell Court, West Ewell, Court, Horton

**East** – Stoneleigh, Nonsuch, Ewell Village, Town, College, Stamford, Woodcote and Langley Vale

### **Option 4 (one parish and parish council):**

**All wards**

Maps detailing the specific boundaries suggested for each of the above options are attached at Appendix 1 to this consultation document.

However, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council also welcomes the submission of alternative suggestions as to how the area of the borough could be divided up into

parish councils in order to serve residents of the area most effectively, or, indeed, whether some other form of Community Governance such as Neighbourhood Forums, Residents Associations, etc, would better serve the area, or part of it.

## Number of Councillors and Warding:

As part of this review, Epsom and Ewell Council must consider the overall numbers of parish councillors, and whether or not to divide any new parish into wards for the purposes of representation and elections.

When considering this, we have to consider whether:

- the number, or distribution of the local government electors for the parish would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
- whether it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented

The number of electors (as at 1 May 2025) for each of the proposed options are provided below. These areas use the existing ward boundaries for the wards detailed above.

Option 1	
West: 30,042 electorate	East: 29,381 electorate
Option 2	
West: 26,489 electorate	East: 32,934 electorate
Option 3	
West: 28,601 electorate	East: 30,822 electorate
Option 4	
Total: 59,423 electorate	

We are seeking residents' views on:

1. The total number of councillors who should serve on the / each of the proposed parish councils.
2. Whether the proposed parish(es) should be warded or not.
3. If the proposed parish(es) are to be warded, the number of wards, the boundaries and names of those wards, and the number of councillors who should serve those wards.

Further details about the Community Governance Review can be found on our website at: <https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/>..... Which includes an electronic

version of this survey, and a link to the Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Review.

**About you:**

Please state which of the following best describes you **(please select any relevant answers)**

- ☐ I live in the Epsom and Ewell Borough Council area
- ☐ I work in the Epsom and Ewell Borough Council area
- ☐ I own a business or property in the Epsom and Ewell Borough Council area
- ☐ I am a representative of a community organisation in the Epsom and Ewell Borough Council area. The name of the community organisation is:  
\_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Other: (*Give details*) \_\_\_\_\_

Please state your postcode (based on your above selection) : \_\_\_\_\_

**Questions:** Please answer as many questions as you wish. You do not have to answer all of them. At the end of the survey is a section where you can add your own free-text comments.

**1) Do you agree** that one or more parish councils should be created across the whole of the area of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council area?

- ☐ Yes Please go to Question 2
- ☐ No Please go to Question 3
- ☐ Don't know / not sure Please go to Question 4
- ☐ Some other option Please go to Question 5

**2) Please tell us why you chose "Yes – create parish councils across the whole of the area of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council area"**

- 3) Please tell us why you chose “No - parish councils should not be created across the whole of the area of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council area”

- 4) Please tell us why you don't know or are not sure on which option you prefer.

- 5) Please provide details of other options you suggest.

- 6) The preferred option of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is to create either one or two parishes, each with a parish council, to serve the whole of the Borough Council area, as shown in the map attached,. Do you agree that this is the correct number, or would you prefer a different number of parishes and parish councils?

- ☐ There should be only one parish and parish council covering the whole of the Borough Council area
- ☐ There should be two parishes and parish councils covering the whole of the Borough Council area
- ☐ There should be three parishes and parish councils covering the whole of the Borough Council area
- ☐ Don't know / not sure
- ☐ Other: If you answered “Other” then please let us know how many parishes and parish councils should be established for the whole of the Epsom and Ewell Borough Council area, and give details of the areas they should cover

**7)** Assuming that all new parishes are of roughly the same size, how many councillors should serve on each (5 is the minimum), depending upon how many are created?

- ☐ If just one is created \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ If two are created \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ If three are created \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ If four or more are created \_\_\_\_\_

**8)** The preferred option of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is that the new parish(es) should be divided into wards, largely along the lines that the existing wards of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council use. Do you think that the new parish(es) should be divided into wards?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO
- ☐ Don't know / not sure

**9)** Epsom and Ewell Borough Council consider that any new parish should be styled a "community", and any new parish council should therefore be called a "community council" as this best reflects the nature of the areas that they will serve. However, the styles of "parish", "neighbourhood" or "village" could also be used. Please let us know your preference below:

- ☐ Community
- ☐ Parish
- ☐ Neighbourhood
- ☐ Village

**10)** Are you aware of any existing local community governance in the areas (e.g. community or neighbourhood forums, resident associations etc.) which would serve the local community as a better alternative to a parish council?

☐ YES

Please tell us more about the group, the area it covers, and the reason for your answer

☐ NO

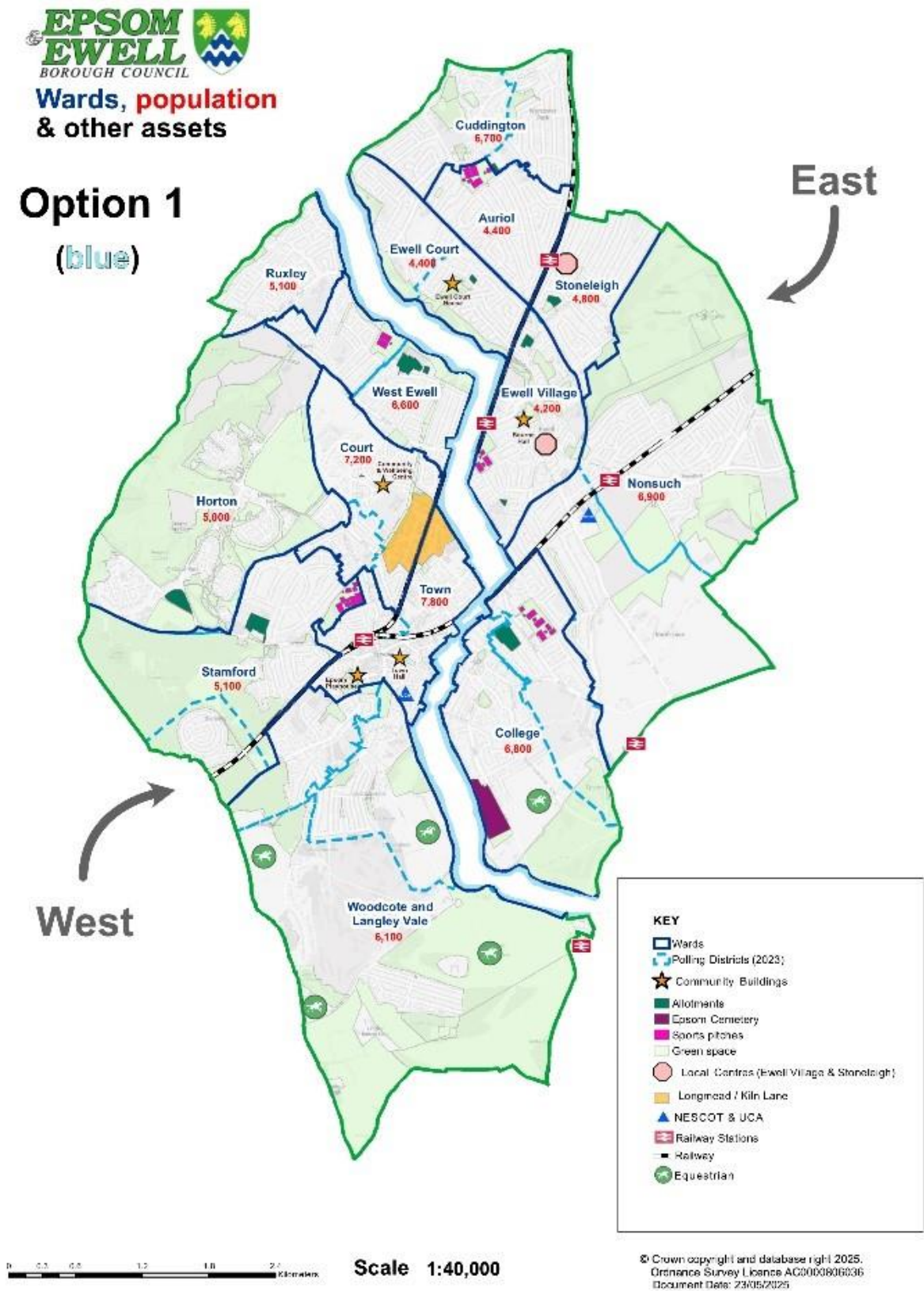
**11)** Are there any further comments you would like to add about the Community Governance Review or the proposal to create one or more parishes and parish councils in Epsom and Ewell?

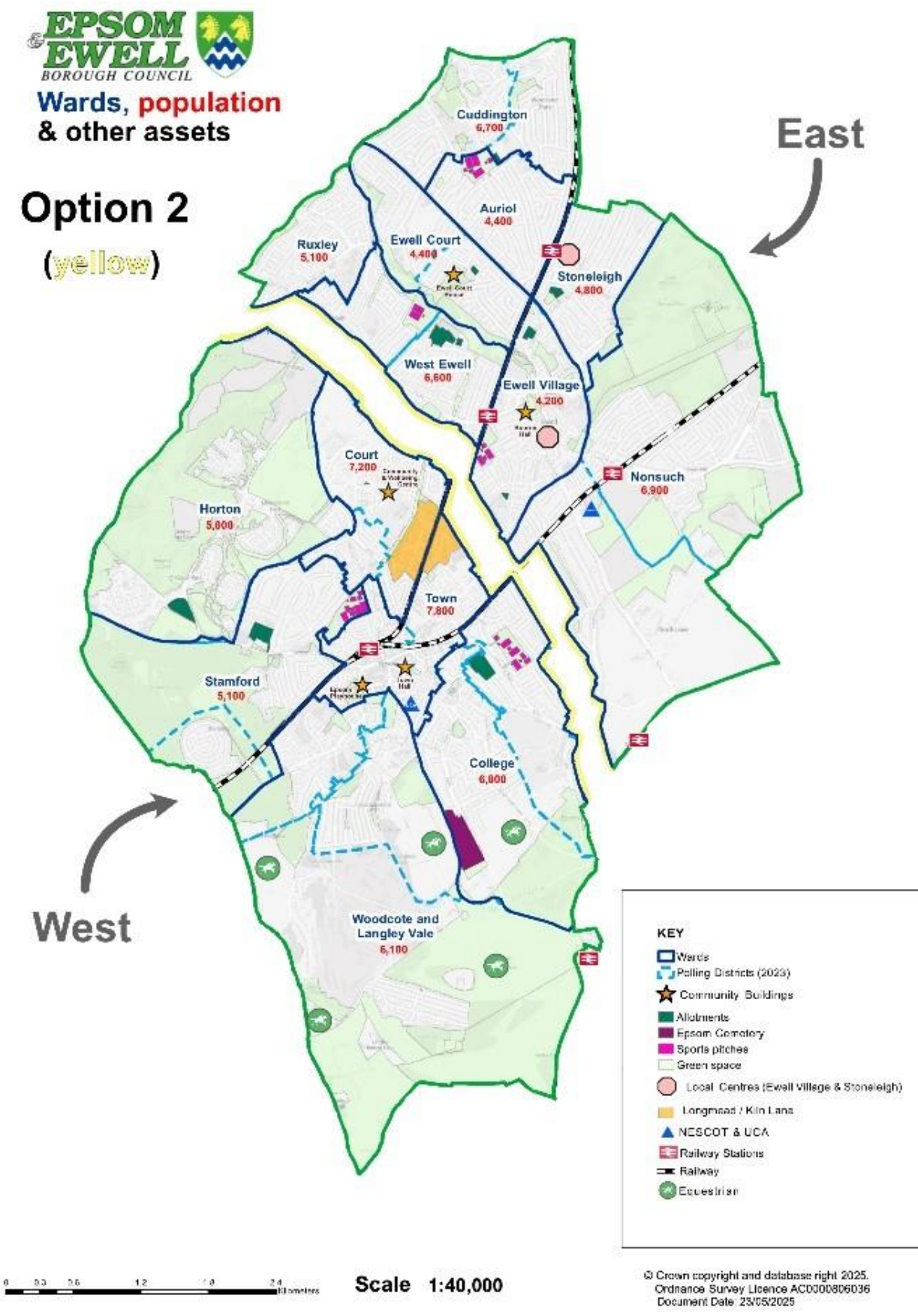
If you would like to be kept informed on the Community Governance Review and involved in the future development of draft recommendations following this initial consultation, please provide your email address below:

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Using your personal information:** Any information provided in this survey will be used in the strictest confidence and only for the use of the community governance review. Your response will form part of our published documents, but all responses will be fully anonymised. For further information on how we collect, use, share, secure and retain your personal information, and your legal rights, please see our Privacy Notice at <https://epsom-ewell.gov.uk/council/about-council/data-protection/privacy-and-cookies>

Appendix 1

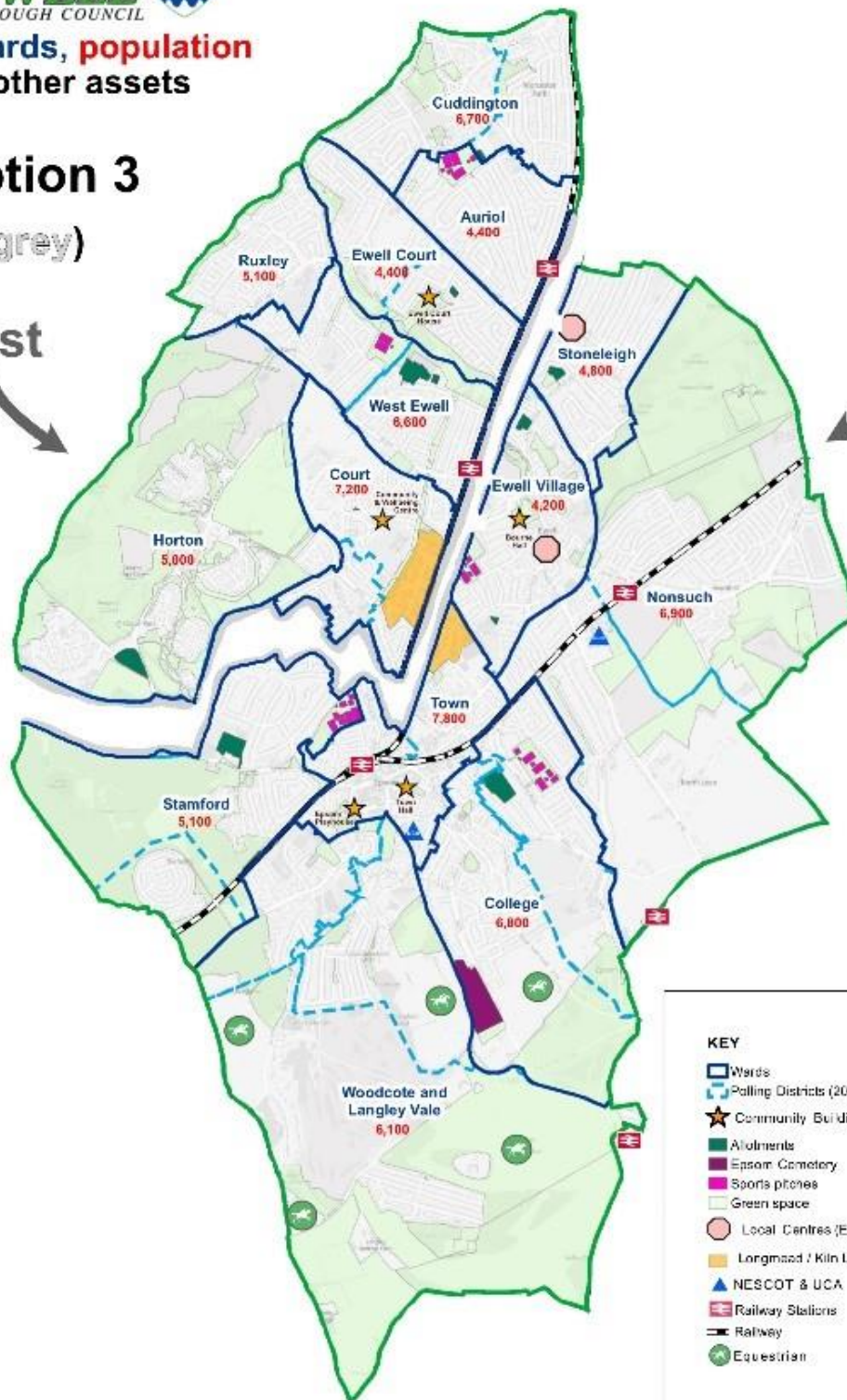




**Option 3**  
(grey)

West

East



0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1.0 1.2 1.4 1.6 1.8 2.0 2.2 2.4 Kilometers

Scale 1:40,000

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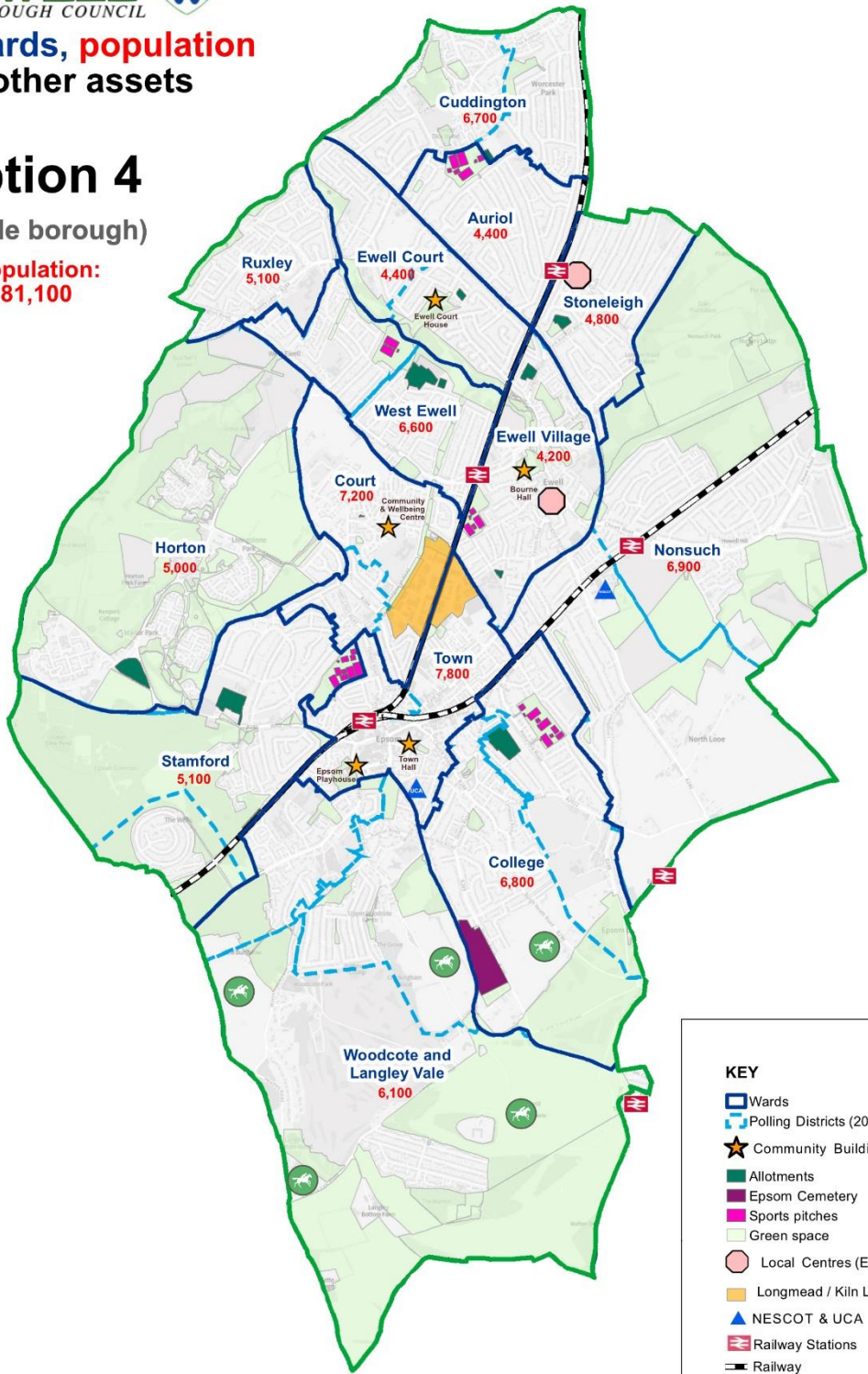


Wards, population  
& other assets

Option 4

(whole borough)

Population:  
81,100



**KEY**

- Wards
- Polling Districts (2023)
- Community Buildings
- Allotments
- Epsom Cemetery
- Sports pitches
- Green space
- Local Centres (Ewell Village & Stoneleigh)
- Longmead / Kiln Lane
- NEScot & UCA
- Railway Stations
- Railway
- Equestrian



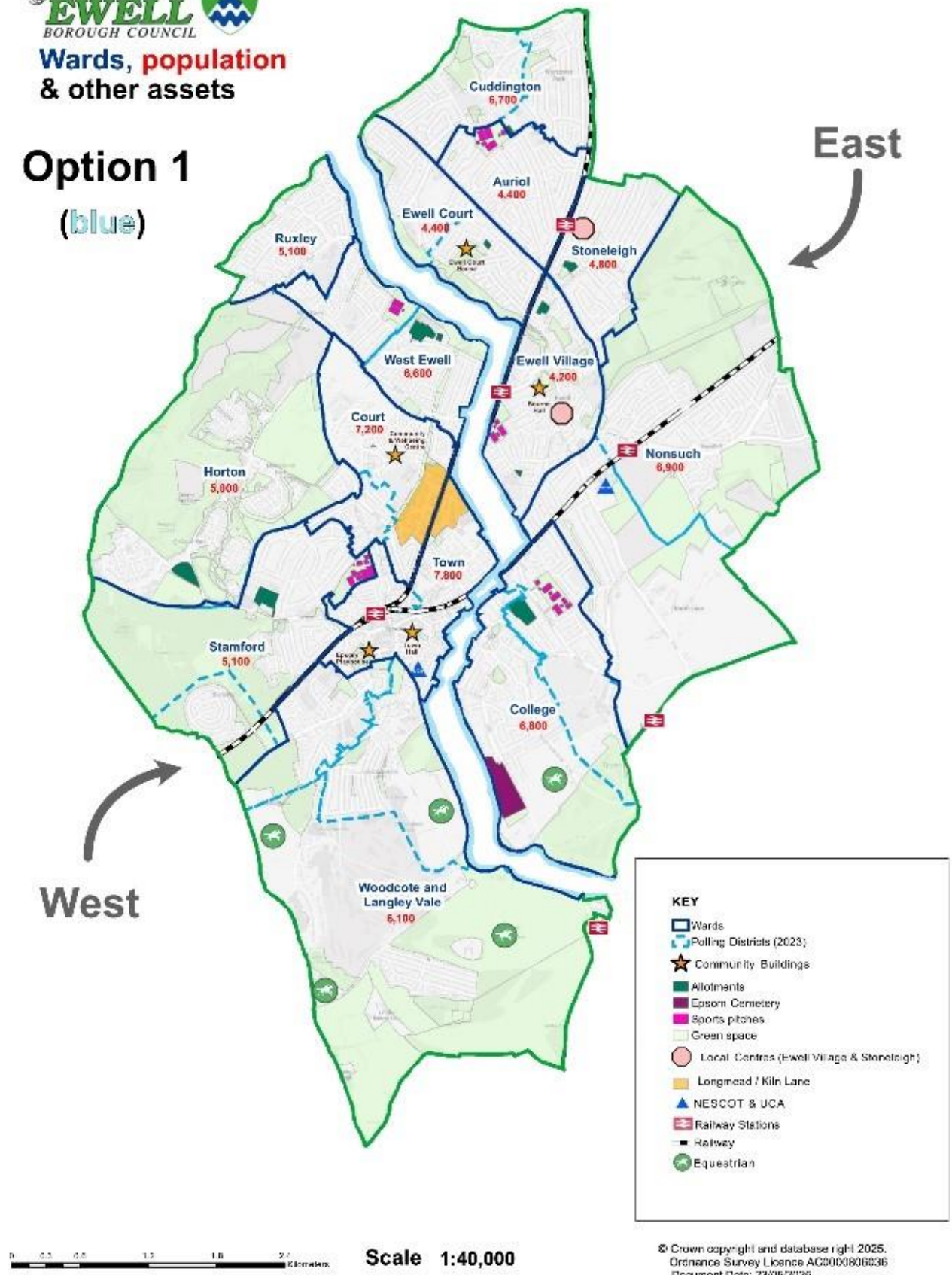
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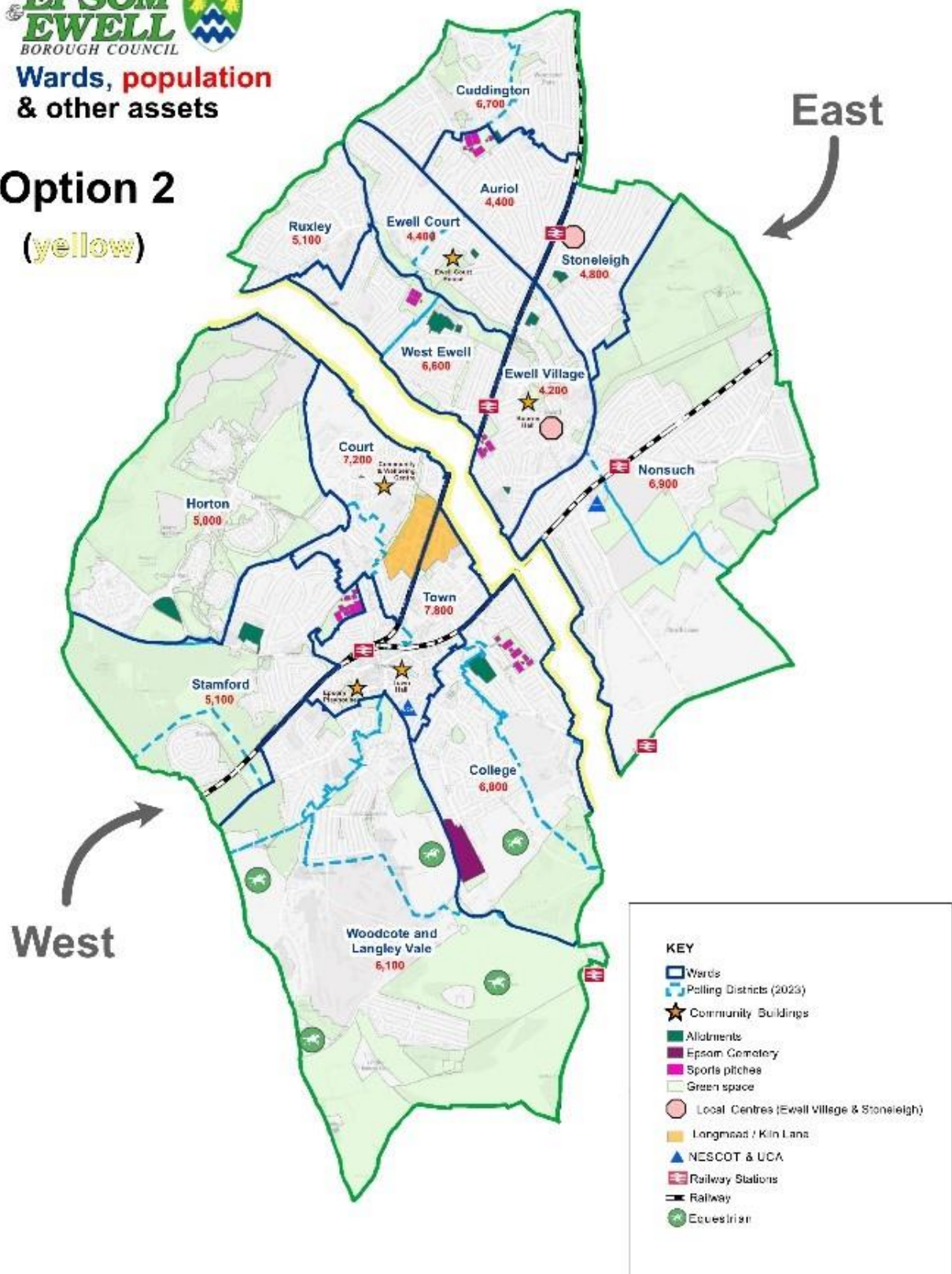


**Option 1**  
(blue)





**Option 2**  
(yellow)



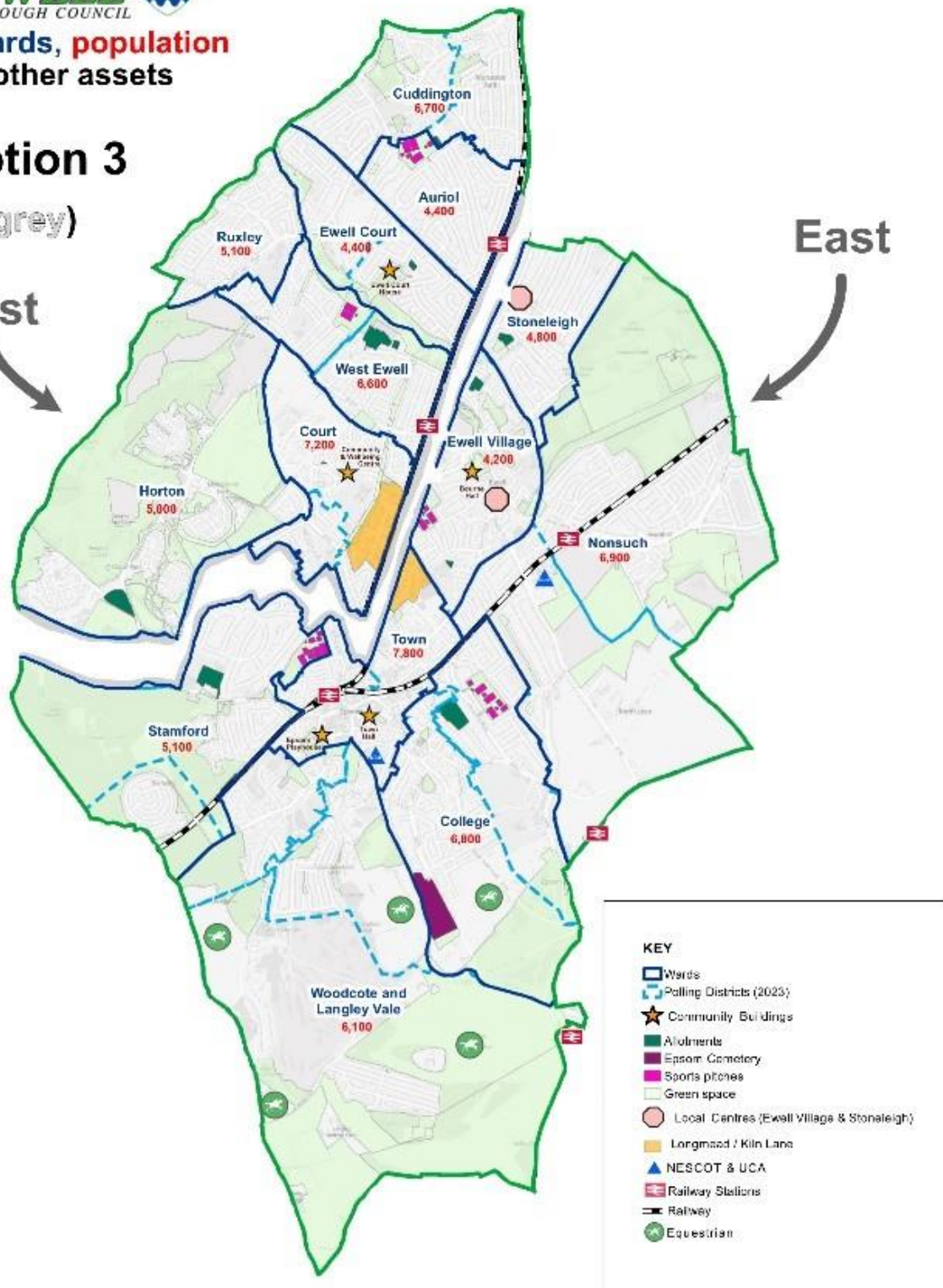


## Option 3

(grey)

West

East



0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1.0 1.2 1.4 1.6 1.8 2.0 2.2 2.4 Kilometers

Scale 1:40,000

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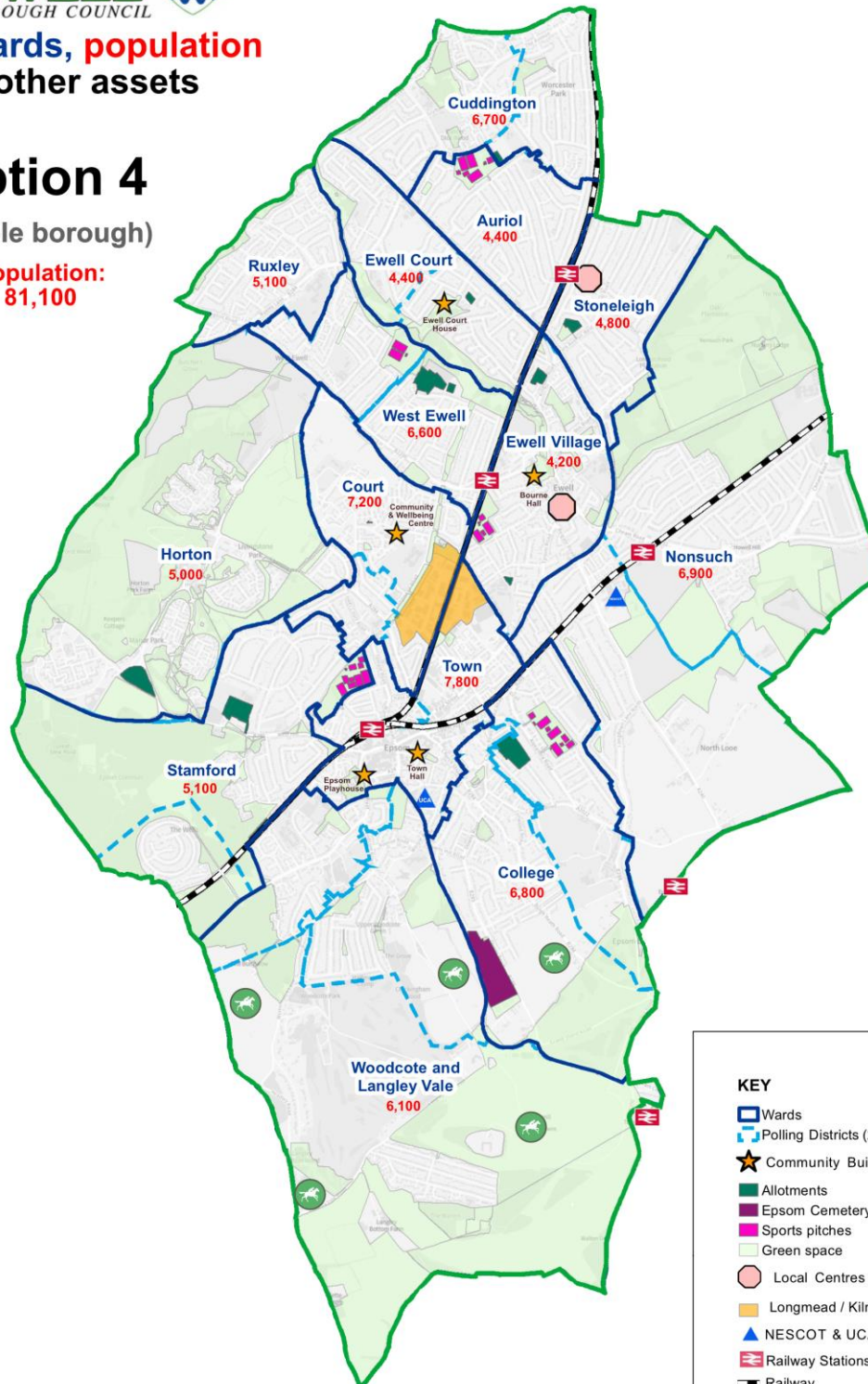


**Wards, population  
& other assets**

# Option 4

(whole borough)

**Population:  
81,100**



## KEY

- Wards
- Polling Districts (2023)
- ★ Community Buildings
- Allotments
- Epsom Cemetery
- Sports pitches
- Green space
- Local Centres (Ewell Village & Stoneleigh)
- Longmead / Kiln Lane
- ▲ NESCOL & UCA
- Railway Stations
- Railway
- Equestrian

0 0.3 0.6 1.2 1.8 2.4 Kilometers

Scale 1:40,000

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## Proposed Area Boundaries – Key Data

No. of Council owned facilities in east/west split or across the whole borough in each of the 4 options							
	Option 1 - Blue		Option 2 - Yellow		Option 3 - Grey		Option 4
	West	East	West	East	West	East	Whole Borough
<b>Community Buildings</b>	3	2	3	2	2	3	5
<b>Allotments</b>	5	6	5	6	5	6	11
<b>Cemetery</b>	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
<b>Sports facilities</b>	2	3	2	3	2	3	5
<b>Green spaces</b>	5	6	5	6	2*	10*	11

\*The Hogsmill Open Space is split across the West and East so has been included and counted in both areas.

	Population numbers (ONS 2022)	Percentage of total population	Households not deprived in any dimension (average across wards)
<b>Option 1 - Blue</b>			
<b>East</b>	38,200	47%	59%
<b>West</b>	42,900	53%	56%
<b>Option 2 - Yellow</b>			
<b>East</b>	43,100	53%	57%
<b>West</b>	38,000	47%	58%
<b>Option 3 - Grey</b>			
<b>East</b>	41,700	51%	60%
<b>West</b>	39,400	49%	56%
<b>Option 4</b>			
<b>Whole Borough</b>	81,100	100%	58%

## Epsom & Ewell Community Councils Consultation DRAFT COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Date last updated: 12 June 2025

### Corporate Priority

Strategic priority agreed at full council on 6 May 2025: Explore future local governance e.g., a Community Council.

### Campaign topic

Borough-wide consultation on the potential formation of community councils in Epsom & Ewell.

### Background

On 5 February 2025 the government identified Surrey as being on a fast track to local government reorganisation (LGR) to unlock devolution.

Councils in Surrey have submitted proposals to government outlining how local governance in Surrey could be reformed, replacing all district, borough and county councils with two or three unitary councils. The proposals are being considered by government who will respond autumn 2025.

In May 2025, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) also approved an amendment to the Council's Four-Year Plan, replacing it with strategic priorities for 2025-2027, the number one priority being to explore future local governance in Epsom & Ewell.

Community councils provide a vital link between residents and larger unitary authorities. They aim to enhance local representation by providing a direct route for the essential voices of residents and local communities, ensuring that residents are aware of local issues, and are involved in decision-making they are affected by.

This communications plan outlines how EEBC will communicate that process to residents and other stakeholders and how we will run an initial consultation, if it takes place. It covers the period between now (June 2025) and the end of September 2025.

### Current timeline:

26 June	Full Council meeting to decide whether to commence with a community governance review
July – September 2025	First public consultation on CGR (12 weeks)
9 December	Full council meeting
January 2026 – March 2026	Second consultation
31 March 2026	Pre-election period likely to start
May 2026	Elections to new shadow unitary authority
May-June 2026	Extraordinary council meeting

1 December 2026	Publish register of electors
February 2027	Full council meeting & decision on precept
TBC May 2027	Elections

## COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES

- To ensure residents, businesses, and stakeholders are **aware** of the CGR consultation, understand **why** they are being asked to respond, are **motivated** to submit a response, and understand **how** to submit a response.
- To convey the options for community governance, including pros and any cons, clearly and transparently.
- To garner relevant responses to the consultation from a range of audiences that are of a high quality and offer valuable feedback on whether they would like to see the formation of community councils in the borough, in light of LGR.
- To ensure Members and staff are aware of the CGR consultation, why it is taking place, the process that has to be followed in order to create community councils and are able to advise members of the public on both the process and how to submit a response.
- To ensure that appropriate channels and messaging are used to ensure that all audience groups, including harder-to-reach groups, are able to get information about the CGR, understand why it is relevant to them, and are able to respond.

## STRATEGY

### Audiences

Primary audiences (those who will fill in the consultation):

- Epsom & Ewell residents
- Epsom & Ewell businesses & local organisations
- Community groups
- Stakeholder groups
- Local Political groups

Secondary audiences (those who will help spread the word and facilitate individuals to fill in the consultation):

- Councillors
- Staff
- Media

The borough is made up of many thriving communities with strong local representation through Residents' Associations, civic bodies, and local interest groups. Similarly, the borough has many committed businesses and employers keen to invest in the borough's future, as well as institutions that enrich our communities.

Stakeholder groups to engage with include the following:

Local people

Resident Associations (through Councillors)  
Neighbourhood forums  
Civic society groups  
Local interest groups  
Traveller and travelling show people community

#### Local representatives and politicians

EEBC Councillors  
Member of Parliament  
Surrey County Council  
Neighbouring councils  
Epsom primary care network

#### Employers, local business and representative bodies

Business owners and employers  
Voluntary groups  
Surrey Chamber of Commerce  
Third sector groups  
BID  
Surrey Police

#### Educational Institutions

University of the Creative Arts  
NESCOT  
Laine Theatre Arts  
Schools and colleges

### **Key messages**

#### Primary messages

- Local government in Epsom & Ewell is changing. The government plans to reorganise how councils are structured in Surrey, abolishing district and borough councils and the county council, and replacing them with fewer unitary councils. **Epsom & Ewell Borough Council is reviewing local governance in our borough and whether to create new community councils to support local democracy. We want to know what you think.**
- Have your say on new community councils in Epsom & Ewell. Complete the online consultation, or you can email or write to us (TBC).

#### Secondary messages

- Community councils provide a vital link between residents and larger unitary authorities. They could offer a direct route for the essential voices of local communities in Epsom & Ewell, ensuring that residents are aware of local issues and are involved in decision-making they're affected by.
- Councillor Hannah Dalton, Leader of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, said "We're navigating the biggest change in local democracy for more than 50 years. We want to make sure that, whatever the outcome of local government reorganisation, the voices of our residents and local communities continue to be heard in years to come – this is a vital element of local democracy."
- Giving our residents a voice.

- NB key messages will include further messaging around specific benefits of a community council.

## Channels and tactics

The communications strategy must ensure that the Council engages with all these audiences to gain their views.

The Council will use a range of engagement methods to bring the consultation to these audiences in an accessible way.

- Electronic copy of consultation document and associated documents will be available on the Council's website and on the consultation website
- Hard copies of main consultation documents and any key associated documents for reference use will be available during normal opening hours at the Town Hall and in libraries within the local area.

### **Additional notification methods that could be used:**

- Social media incl. paid social media: previous Local Plan and Town Centre Masterplan consultations have shown that advertising on social media helped to boost responses.
- Posters on all borough boards, and at Bourne Hall, the Town Hall and the Playhouse
- Pre-recorded speech or speeches for YouTube, the consultation website and social media.

### **Additional comms channels will include:**

- Press release and pack for local media
  - Pitch for radio interviews on local radio
- Engagement in local Facebook groups
- We will also investigate how/if we can use WhatsApp
- Council's e-Borough Insight newsletter (email)
- Dedicated page on council website
- Regular engagement with Councillors
- News article for all groups represented on the council for inclusion in their newsletters
- News article for local school newsletters
- Banner and poster advertising in key locations
  - Posters to include QR codes
- Inclusion in borough-wide waste & recycling leaflet with QR code linking to consultation
- Working with local partners to distribute messaging through their networks
- Internal comms with staff
- Community events, at:
  - The Town Hall
  - Bourne Hall
  - Other venues TBC

**Additional paid promotion could include (if budget is identified – as not accounted for within the budget approved by full Council on 6 May 2025):**

- Wheelie bin hookies

## Timescales and resources

Key moments	Date	Next steps
Full council decision to proceed with consultation	26 June	Media release, social media
Launch of consultation	July	Launch campaign – plan below
End of consultation	September	Social media to say thank you for responding, now closed. Update on website.

## Risks and risk management

### Risks:

- People may feel they have not been consulted on this (this is a complaint about LGR in general)
- There may be some confusion around this consultation for community councils in Epsom & Ewell and the governments wider consultation on LGR as we will be promoting both.
- People may not understand what they are being consulted on and what the difference is between the borough council and community councils
- People may feel that this is not good value for money
- We may find it difficult to reach a large audience with a low budget for paid promotion (but also have to balance value for money for our residents)

### Risks reduced by:

- Maximising reach to ensure that as many residents as possible are aware of the consultation.
- Publishing a timeline on our website with background and process, including where we are in the process and at what stage consultations will take place.
- Publishing FAQs page on our website about borough councils and community councils.
- Clearly defining this consultation from the government LGR one in terms of how the consultations look (branding) and the messaging.
- Proactively engaging with staff, councillors, residents and businesses, encouraging them to respond and encouraging others to respond too.
- Targeted information e.g. for Councillors, as well as general information.
- Effectively managing proactive and reactive press, social media and other enquiries to minimise negative publicity and ensuring responses are prompt

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