

## **SUBMISSION PROPOSALS FOR BOROUGH WARDING ARRANGEMENTS**

<b>Head of Service:</b>	Amardip Healy, Chief Legal Officer
<b>Wards affected:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>Urgent Decision?(yes/no)</b>	Yes
<b>If yes, reason urgent decision required:</b>	Decision by Council on 19 July 2021 to meet deadline for consultation response.
<b>Appendices (attached):</b>	1: Letter from Commission on Council Size 2: Forecasted electorate for 2027 based on 38 Members on current Wards 3: Forecasted electorate for 2027 based on 35 Members on current Wards 4: Map of the existing Wards 5: Option 14 Wards Boundary Maps 6: Overlay of current with 14 Ward Option 7: Option 13 Wards Boundary Maps 8: Overlay of current with 13 Ward Option 9: Ward summaries for proposed changes 10. Summary of Street Changes

### **Summary**

To agree a draft submission for Council's approval, in response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England consultation, on Warding Arrangements in the Borough.

### **Recommendation (s)**

**The Committee is asked to:**

- (1) Confirm whether they wish the Council to respond to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's ('the Commission') consultation on Warding Arrangements in the Borough;**
- (2) If they wish to make a submission, then to select an option from either 14 Wards or 13 Wards as set out in this report to take forward as the Council's Warding Arrangements Submission;**

# Strategy and Resources Committee

## 12 July 2021

- (3) Delegate to the Chief Legal Officer in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Strategy and Resources and the Chair of the Electoral Review Task & Finish Group, any changes to the draft Warding Arrangements submission as may be necessary;**
- (4) To refer to Council, the draft submission on Warding Arrangements for approval and final submission to the Commission.**

### **1 Reason for Recommendation**

- 1.1 In 2020, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England ('the Commission') agreed with the Council to start an electoral review. The next stage of the process, requires the Council, should it wish to do so, to submit its proposal on Warding Arrangements for the Borough. The Committee are asked to select the option they wish Council to approve, for submission to the Commission.

### **2 Background**

- 2.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent statutory body, whose objectives include the provision of electoral arrangements that are fair and that deliver electoral equality for voters.
- 2.2 The purpose of an electoral review is to examine the electoral arrangements of an area, so as to ensure they:
  - 2.2.1 are fair and deliver electoral equality for voters;
  - 2.1.2 help them deliver effective and convenient local government to citizens.
- 2.3 An electoral review process is an examination of a Council's electoral arrangements. This includes consideration of:
  - 2.2.1 the total numbers of councillors to be elected;
  - 2.3.3 the number of wards or divisions;
  - 2.2.3 the number of councillors for each Ward and also the name of such Ward.
- 2.4 The aim of a review is to recommend ward boundaries that mean each councillor represents approximately the same number of voters. Ward boundaries are drawn up to reflect the interests and identities of local communities and promoting good local government.

# Strategy and Resources Committee

## 12 July 2021

### **Member Task & Finish Group**

- 2.5 To support and inform the process, Strategy & Resources Committee set up a cross party Member Task & Finish Group last year. The Group have supported the stages of the electoral review process, with reports being brought to Strategy & Resources Committee to meet the milestone dates of the review processes.

### **Preliminary Stage: Council Size**

- 2.6 The preliminary stage of the Electoral Review looked to the Council to make a submission on Council size. Following the work of the Member Task & Finish Group on Council Size, a report on a proposal for a submission was considered by the Strategy & Resources Committee on the 16 March 2021. This was approved and at its meeting on the 25 March 2021, Council approved the Submission of reducing the number of Members from 38 to 35.
- 2.7 The Commission have confirmed they are minded to recommend that Epsom & Ewell Borough Council should have 35 councillors in the future (3 fewer than the current number of councillors), see Appendix 1.

### **Next Stage: Warding Arrangements**

- 2.8 Following completion of the Preliminary Stage, the next Stage is to consider Warding Arrangements in the Borough.
- 2.9 The Commission started a public consultation process in May 2021 to help it to produce new ward boundaries to accommodate the minded to decision of 35 councillors. They have issued a press release and have also held a community groups stakeholder session on the 17 May 2021 to raise awareness and explain the process. The Council has also promoted this stage of the Electoral Review process through its communications channels.
- 2.10 The aim of this stage of the Review, is to recommend Ward boundaries which results in each councillor representing approximately the same number of voters. The Commission will be looking to ensure that the Ward boundaries reflect the interests and identities of local communities, as well as promoting effective local government. This process can result in existing Ward boundaries being re-drawn.
- 2.11 The approach the Commission adopt, is to:
- 2.11.1 start with a blank map of the Authority's Area; and
  - 2.11.2 ask the Council, the Councillors, local groups/ people to provide evidence about community interactions, geographical features and local circumstances which help to draw up new ward boundaries,

This builds up the Warding map for the Borough.

# Strategy and Resources Committee

## 12 July 2021

### **Stage after close of Warding Arrangements Consultation**

- 2.12 At the close of the consultation period, the Commission will consider all the evidence. They will then draw up draft recommendations for new electoral arrangements, which will go out to another public consultation exercise. This is set to start on the 5 October and run until the 13 December 2020.

### **3.0 Developing the Council's submission on Warding arrangements**

#### **Commission's Forecasting Data Spreadsheets**

- 3.1 The Commission have confirmed the forecasted electorate figures for 2027. The forecasted electorate in the Borough is shown to be 64,889 (Appendix 2). On the basis of these figures, based on 35 Members the ratio for electorate to Member in 2027 is estimated to be 1: 1853.9 (Appendix 3). For the purposes of calculation for equality of Ward representation, the Council has worked to the 2027 figures at a ratio of 1:1854. It is important to note that the Electoral Review changes will take effect from 2023, which is before the next local Borough elections.
- 3.2 The forecasting of electorate, a formula which emanates from the Commission, takes into account anticipated changes in population which includes the deliverable planning permissions. A copy of the spreadsheet which estimates this is attached at Appendix 2. It is important to note that this is based on the Ward boundaries as they currently exist.
- 3.3 The Member Task and Finish Group have considered a range of options for Warding arrangements to equalise representation figures, in line with the Commission's guidance. As explained, the ratio of Members to electors is based on a membership of 35 on the estimated electorate forecast for 2027 (see Appendix 3), albeit this is based on current Ward boundaries. Please note that the 'Number of councillors' in the 'Check your data' box in the top right shows 35 councillors for 2021 as well as for 2027. The reason for this is that the spreadsheet is designed to allow for calculations for electoral variances and therefore the Commission have advised it is easier to keep both the number of councillors the same in both columns, when using the spreadsheet for forecasting purposes.

#### **Approach to Warding Arrangements**

- 3.4 The growth in population since the last Review in areas which have been developed, also add to the Borough's features. For example the development of the Hospital Cluster since the last Review, has led to a number of electoral imbalances. The Member Task & Finish Group identified very early on that a new Ward for the hospital development would need to come forward. They agreed to move forward with the creation of a new Ward, which would be known as Horton to help address the variances. The effect of this would be to adjust the boundaries of neighbouring Wards, so as to address the need for electoral equality across the Borough.

# Strategy and Resources Committee

## 12 July 2021

- 3.5 With the need for new Ward established, along with the necessary refinements to the adjoining Wards, the Task & Finish Group then looked at building the remainder of the Borough's Wards. The Borough has a number of features which have helped define the its Wards. The roads, railway lines, open spaces and rivers, criss cross the Borough. These features have helped to shape the Wards which currently exist. For this reason, there are key challenges to building a Warding Map which is distinctly different from what currently exists, because to the nature of the natural and built constraints.

### **Options for Warding Arrangements Submission**

- 3.6 The Member Task & Finish Group has considered a range of possible options taking into account: Council Size; reflecting, as far as possible, the identities of the Borough's communities; identifiable boundaries; electoral equality for voters and the delivery of effective and convenient local government to citizens.
- 3.7 The Member Task & Finish Group have considered the arrangements in terms of Ward representation along with the concerns around resilience which Members have raised. It was accepted that single member Ward arrangements do not offer resilience in circumstances of indisposition (be this through illness or official duties, such as being the Mayor), or when there is conflict on any local issue. It is also the practice, that all Members within a Ward will offer support with any matter which may they may be asked to deal with. Some will develop a specialism as a result of sitting on a particular Committee, however, this will invariably mean they will not be able to involve themselves in local issues which may come before them as a decision maker. Avoiding having a single member ward, helps to ensure those residents and businesses who seek their Members' support with issues, are able to receive it promptly.
- 3.8 There is also concern around two Member Wards and the effect this could have on Member workloads. Issues around resilience and being able to support communities while still being able to attract a diverse make up of councillors, is a matter which many Members have raised.
- 3.9 Taking into account all of the requirements for an Electoral Review and the concerns which have been raised, the Member Task & Finish Group have concluded as follows:
- a. they consider the creation of a new Ward of Horton as a necessity,
  - b. they have considered the advantages and disadvantages of different forms of Ward representation. This has ranged from 2 to 7 Members per Ward, along with a range of options for those Wards.

# Strategy and Resources Committee

## 12 July 2021

- c. They have narrowed down the options to two options, which they have agreed addresses as many of the concerns raised, as possible, namely:

Option 1 - of 14 Wards

Option 2 - of 13 Wards

The only difference between the two options, is the number of two Member Wards in the Borough.

### **Option 1 - 14 Wards**

- 3.10 This option takes forward the current arrangements of 13 Wards and adds one, by introducing a new Ward of Horton, to rebalance electoral numbers. There is then an adjustment to refine Ward boundaries across the Borough, to secure fair and electoral equality.
- 3.11 Table 1 below sets out the Ward Arrangements if a 14 Ward structure was created. The table sets out the current elector for the existing Ward, it then sets out the number of electors if the boundaries were changed, ie for the new Ward arrangements, and how that would translate in terms of the new number of Councillors per Ward. In addition, the ratios of Councillor to elector is also provided for both current and proposed.

# Strategy and Resources Committee

## 12 July 2021

**Table 1:** Proposed 14 Wards Option for 35 Councillors

Wards	Current Councillors per Ward	Electors in Current Ward Boundary & Ratio on 38		Electors in Proposed Ward Boundary & Ratio on 35		Proposed Councillors per Ward
Auriol	2	3126	1:1563	3045	1:1522	2
College	3	4330	1:1443	5018	1:1672	3
Court	3	5113	1:1704	5124	1:1708	3
Cuddington	3	4558	1:1519	5376	1:1792	3
Ewell Court	3	4379	1:1459	3642	1:1821	2
Ewell	3	4409	1:1469	3324	1:1662	2
Horton	3	0	0	2980	1:1490	2
Nonsuch	3	4796	1:1589	5089	1:1696	3
Ruxley	3	4706	1:1568	3736	1:1868	2
Stamford	3	5563	1:1854	3729	1:1864	2
Stoneleigh	2	3693	1:1231	3693	1:1846	2
Town	3	5593	1:1864	5008	1:1669	3
West Ewell	3	4762	1:1587	4853	1:1617	3
Woodcote	3	4572	1:1524	4983	1:1661	3

3.12 The individual maps for each for the new and adjusted Ward boundaries for the 14 Ward option can be found at Appendix 5. The overlay with current existing Wards and the option of 14 Wards can be found at Appendix 6.

3.13 At Appendix 9 there is a summary of the proposed changes and Appendix 10 contains summary of the street changes in relation to the proposed Ward changes.

# Strategy and Resources Committee

## 12 July 2021

### Option 2 - 13 Wards

- 3.14 Table 2 below sets out the Ward Arrangements if a 13 Ward structure was created. The only difference between the 13 Ward option and the 14 Ward option, is that for the 13 Ward option, the current Wards of Stoneleigh and Auriol are merged together, to reduce, where possible, the number of two Member Wards.
- 3.15 The table below, sets out the current electors for the existing Wards, it then sets out the number of electors if the boundaries were changed as per the 13 ward option and how that would translate in terms of the new number of Councillors per Ward. The ratios for the Councillor to electorate are not repeated as they remain the same as for the 14 Ward Option, but a breakdown is set out in Table 7 below. The individual maps for each for the new and adjusted Ward boundaries for the 13 Ward option can be found at Appendix 7. The overlay with current existing Wards and the option of 14 Wards can be found at Appendix 8.

**Table 2:** Proposed 13 Ward Option for 35 Councillors

Ward	Councillors per Ward	Electors in Existing Boundary	Electors in Proposed Ward Boundary
Stoneleigh & Auriol	4	6819	6738
College	3	4330	5018
Court	3	5113	5124
Cuddington	3	4558	5376
Ewell Court	2	4379	3642
Ewell	2	4409	3324
Horton	2	0	2980
Nonsuch	3	4796	5089
Ruxley	2	4706	3736
Stamford	2	5563	3729
Town	3	5593	5008
West Ewell	3	4762	4853
Woodcote	3	4572	4983



# Strategy and Resources Committee

## 12 July 2021

### Options considered & discounted

#### - Five Wards

- 3.16 The Task & Finish Group have considered the current County Council boundaries of 5 Wards, as a way of rearranging the Borough's Warding arrangements. With a Council size of 35 Members, this would require the 5 Wards to be made up of 7 Members each.
- 3.17 On average the numbers of those standing in Wards across the Borough fluctuates. Table 3 below sets out the number of candidates who stood for election in the Local Borough Elections in 2019 and 2015. In summary in 2019, 148 candidates stood and in 2015, 128 stood. On an average this would mean 29 candidates standing in each of the 5 Wards. Electors do find it hard to complete ballots papers when there are lots of options, or where the ballot paper carries a lot of information.

**Table 3** : Number of Candidates in Local Elections 2019 and 2015

<b>Election Area</b>	<b>Candidates in 2019</b>	<b>Candidates in 2015</b>
Auriol	7	7
College	11	10
Court	12	9
Cuddington	11	10
Ewell	12	10
Ewell Court	10	9
Nonsuch	11	9
Ruxley	12	10
Stamford	13	12
Stoneleigh	12	10
Town	13	11
West Ewell	12	10
Woodcote	12	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>128</b>

- 3.18 Creating five 'super Wards' would make it challenging in terms of elections. The recent example of the London Mayoral elections, where there were 20 candidates standing for the role of Mayor, helps to evidence how challenging it would be to produce a ballot paper, under current elections guidance, where 7 Councillors were due to be elected in each area.
- 3.19 Although it is practically possible and would address the concerns around resilience, it was felt 'super Wards' would not support the delivery of effective and convenient local government to citizens. The areas within the current 5

# Strategy and Resources Committee

## 12 July 2021

Country boundaries are diverse in terms of population make up, features of their areas and the nature of their communities. It may also undermine the diversity of political representation, which the Borough currently has. The essences of these areas would be lost if the Borough divided into 5, with each Ward having 7 Councillors to represent it.

3.20 As such the Task & Finish Group felt it could not support a 5 Ward Option for the Borough.

### - Twelve Wards

3.21 The Task & Finish Group also considered a Warding Arrangement of 12 Wards. This option takes forward the current model of 13 Wards, adds the new Ward Horton, it merges the Wards of Stoneleigh and Auriol together, and merges the Wards of West Ewell and Ruxley together. It refines the Ward boundaries across the Borough in line with the 14 and 13 Wards options.

3.22 The summary of the data is set out in Table 4 below:

**Table 4:** 12 Ward Option for 35 Councillors

Ward	Councillors per Ward	Electors in Existing Boundary	Electors in Proposed Ward Boundary
Stoneleigh & Auriol	4	6819	6738
College	3	4330	5018
Court	3	5113	5124
Cuddington	3	4558	5376
Ewell Court	2	4379	3642
Ewell	2	4409	3324
Horton	2	0	2980
Nonsuch	3	4796	5089
West Ewell & Ruxley	5	9468	8589
Stamford	2	5563	3729
Town	3	5593	5008
Woodcote	3	4572	4983

# Strategy and Resources Committee

## 12 July 2021

- 3.23 The Task & Finish Group felt the 12 Ward option created too many 2 Members Member Wards. It also created 4 and 5 Member Wards. It was felt a 5 Member Ward option may be too large. As a result, it was felt the range of Warding representation was unnecessarily complex and would lead to confusion during elections. It was therefore discounted by the Task & Finish Group as an option.

### **Conclusions**

- 3.24 The 14 Ward and 13 Ward options both have their own benefits and challenges. One issue, which has been raised is around resilience, namely the effect on Members' workloads of too many smaller Wards with lower ratios of Councillors to electorate, particularly in areas which have higher needs of support. The key difference between the two options of 14 and 13, is that 13 would reduce the number of two Member Wards in the Borough, by two.
- 3.25 If the Council size number goes down further than the current proposed 35, then this would result in a higher electorate per Councillor ratio. In turn this would need the amalgamation of Wards to create larger Ward areas.
- 3.26 The Council's submission on Council Size sought to achieve an important balance. The balance between not just trends in terms of increased electorate ratios, but also by supporting and encouraging diversity amongst those who wish to stand as councillors and ensuring residents maintain the access to their Members they current have.
- 3.27 Diversity of community leadership brings its own benefits. It was and remains an important feature of the Council's submission on Council Size, because it is critically important to the Authority to ensure it continues to attract candidates from elements of its communities. The support which the Borough's Councillors provide in terms of casework and community leadership has always been high at Epsom & Ewell. The nature of the economic challenges which most face, will mean residents will continue to seek the advice and support of their Councillors. The Council believes very strongly that this expectation needs to be met.

### **Ratios**

- 3.28 By way of example, Table 5 below sets out, the electorate per councillor ratios across Surrey (collated by Elmbridge Council in 2015, as a part of their review process):

# Strategy and Resources Committee

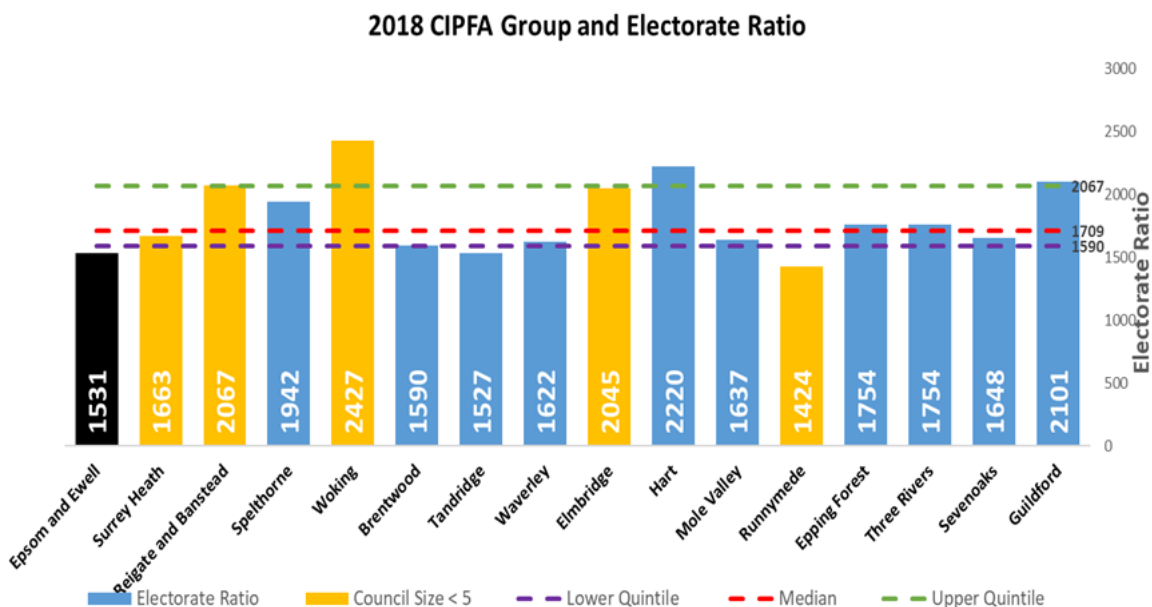
## 12 July 2021

**Table 5:** Surrey Councillor to Elector figures:

Council	Electorate	Electorate Per Councillor	Number of Councillors	Type of Borough Election
Guildford	106,406	2,217	48	Every 4 Years
Reigate & Banstead	103,449	2,028	51	By Thirds
<b>Elmbridge</b>	<b>98,048</b>	<b>1,634</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>By Thirds</b>
Waverley	94,840	1,664	57	Every 4 Years
Spelthorne	75,580	1,938	39	Every 4 Years
Woking	73,901	2,053	36	By Thirds
Mole Valley	68,000	1,659	41	By Thirds
Surrey Heath	66,139	1,653	40	Every 4 Years
Runnymede	63,654	1,516	42	By Thirds
Tandridge	60,186	1,433	42	By Thirds
Epsom & Ewell	58,000	1,526	38	Every 4 Years

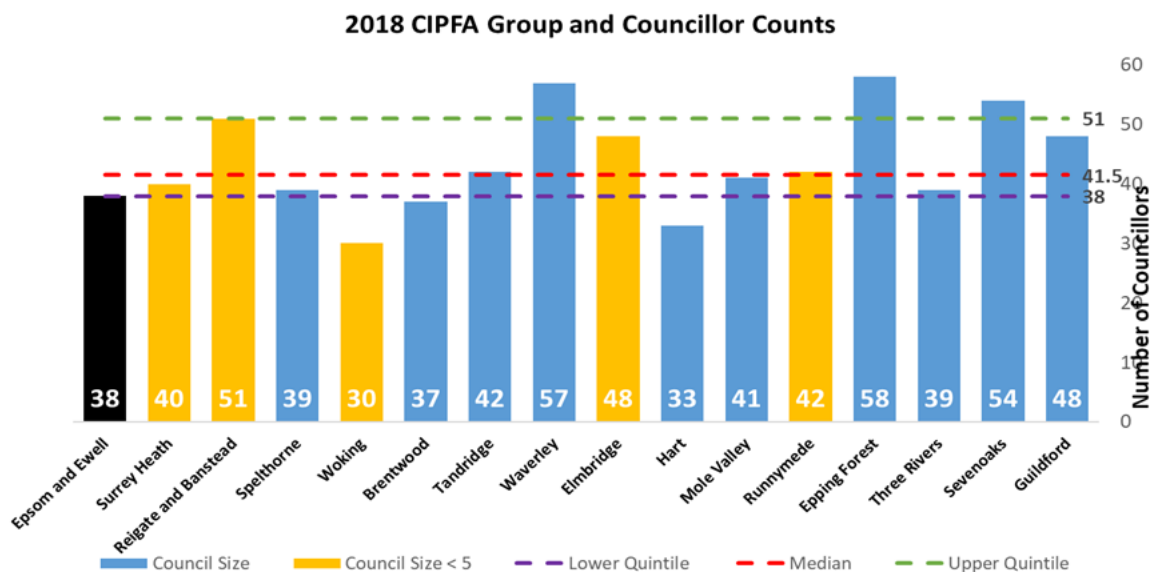
3.29 Noting that some of those listed have not had an electoral review, it is clear that the ratio of this Council's electorate to councillor, based on the proposed Council size, of 1:1854, is within a comparable range. Although the context of the London Borough of Sutton is not directly comparable to Epsom & Ewell, the Commission did recently finalise their recommendations on average is a ratio of 1:3000 with a population forecast from 2019 of 153,329 to 167,000 in 2025.

3.30 The Commission looks across CIPFA benchmarking data when it looks at Council size and electorate ratio. The 2018 benchmarking data to the nearest Council comparators demonstrates the current below average ratios of Epsom & Ewell:



# Strategy and Resources Committee

## 12 July 2021



3.31 The option of reducing the number of Wards does mean a higher number of Councillors per Ward. However, even with a reduced number of 35 proposed councillors, this potentially leads to more Wards with 3 or more Councillors. Recent elections experiences have helped to demonstrate that there is an optimum number of names which can go on a ballot paper. Table 6 sets the comparison between all the options the Task & Finish Group considered in terms of the number of Councillors per Ward.

**Table 6:** Comparison of all Options considered

Options	2x Councillors per Ward	3 x Councillors per Ward	4 x Councillors per Ward	5 x Councillors per Ward	7x Councillors per Ward
<b>5 Wards</b>	-	--	-		5 Wards
<b>14 Wards*</b>	7 Wards	7 Wards	-	-	-
<b>13 Wards*</b>	5 Wards	7 Wards	1 Ward	-	-
<b>12 Wards</b>	4 Wards	6 Wards	1 Ward	1 Ward	-

\* Options taken forward

3.32 The comparison of the 14 and 13 Ward options in terms of representation and ratios both current alongside the proposed options are set out in Table 7 below:

# Strategy and Resources Committee

## 12 July 2021

**Table 7:** Comparison of Current, Proposed 14 & 13 Wards Option in terms of number of Councillors

Ward	Current		14 Wards		13 Wards		Change to Cllr numbers
	Cllrs per Ward & Ratio		Cllr per Ward & Ratio		Cllr per Ward & Ratio		
Auriol	2	1:1563	2	1:1522	-	-	No change
Stoneleigh & Auriol <sup>1</sup>	-		-	-	4	1:1684	-
College	3	1:1443	3	1:1672	3	1:1672	No change
Court	3	1:1704	3	1:1708	3	1:1708	No change
Cuddington	3	1:1519	3	1:1792	3	1:1792	No change
Ewell Court	3	1:1459	2	1:1821	2	1:1821	Change
Ewell	3	1:1469	2	1:1662	2	1:1662	Change
Horton <sup>2</sup>	-	-	2	1:1490	2	1:1490	-
Nonsuch	3	1:1589	3	1:1696	3	1:1696	No change
Ruxley	3	1:1568	2	1:1868	2	1:1868	Change
Stamford	3	1:1854	2	1:1864	2	1:1864	Change
Stoneleigh	3	1:1231	2	1:1846	-	1:1846	Change
Town	3	1:1864	3	1:1669	3	1:1669	No change
West Ewell	3	1:1587	3	1:1617	3	1:1617	No change
Woodcote	3	1:1524	3	1:1661	3	1:1661	No change

<sup>1</sup> For 13 Ward Option only

<sup>2</sup> For both 14 and 13 Ward Options

# Strategy and Resources Committee

## 12 July 2021

- 3.33 As Table 7 demonstrates, proposed Ward boundaries and nature of representation is changing to meet the Commissions tests. When looking at ratios, all the individual circumstances of a Ward, need to be considered.
- 3.34 Tables 6 and 7 help to highlight why the 14 and 13 Ward Options have come forward as the preferred options within the context of all the drivers of supporting electoral equality, the delivery of effective and convenient local government to the Borough's citizens while drawing on and reflecting the interests and identities of the Borough's communities.
- 3.35 The Task & Finish Group felt that since the two options were so finely balanced, that it would present both to Strategy & Resources Committee for consideration on which option should be taken forward to Council for approval.

#### 4. Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

##### 4.1 Impact Assessment

none arising from the contents of this report.

##### 4.2 Crime & Disorder

none arising from the contents of this report.

##### 4.3 Safeguarding

none arising from the contents of this report.

##### 4.4 Dependencies

none arising from the contents of this report.

##### 4.5 Other

none arising from the contents of this report.

#### 5 Financial Implications

5.0 None arising from the contents of this report

5.1 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** none arising from the contents of this report.

#### 6 Legal Implications

6.1 None arising from the contents of this report

# Strategy and Resources Committee

## 12 July 2021

6.2 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** none arising from the contents of this report.

### 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:** none arising from the contents of this report.

7.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** none arising from the contents of this report.

7.5 **Partnerships:** none arising from the contents of this report.

### 8 Background papers

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

#### Previous reports:

- Strategy & Resources Committee, 2 July 2020

<https://democracy.epsomewell.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&MId=1019&Ver=4>

- Council, 14 July 2020

<https://democracy.epsomewell.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=146&MId=1021&Ver=4>

- Strategy & Resources Committee, 16 March 2021

<https://democracy.epsomewell.gov.uk/documents/s19240/Submission%20to%20The%20Local%20Government%20Boundary%20Commission%20For%20England%20On%20Council%20Size.pdf>

- Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on Council Size, 25 March 2021

<https://democracy.epsomewell.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=146&MId=1080&Ver=4>

#### Other papers:

- How Reviews work

<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/how-reviews-work>



# Strategy and Resources Committee

## 12 July 2021

- EEBC Review Page on Commissions web page  
<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/surrey/epsom-and-ewell>