

SUBMISSION FOR BOROUGH WARDING ARRANGEMENTS

Head of Service:	Amardip Healy, Chief Legal Officer
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	Yes
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	To meet deadline for consultation responses.
Appendices (attached):	1: Ward Arrangements 2: Overlay of new ward arrangements 3: Ward Arrangements Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Summary

To approve the Council's submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England consultation, on Warding Arrangements in the Borough.

Recommendation (s)

The Council is asked to:

- (1) Approve the submission on Warding Arrangements, as set out in Appendix 1 and 3;**
- (2) 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 Warding Arrangements submission (Appendix 3) as may be necessary;**
- (3) Authorise the Chief Executive to submit the Council's Submission on Warding Arrangements (Appendix 3) to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 The submission on Warding Arrangements requires the approval of Council before it can be submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England ('the Commission').

2 Background

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- 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;
 - 2.2.2 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:
 - 2.3.1 the total numbers of councillors to be elected;
 - 2.3.2 the number of wards or divisions;
 - 2.3.3 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.

Preliminary Stage: Council Size

- 2.5 The preliminary stage of the Electoral Review looked to the Council to make a submission on Council size. Council approved a submission on Council Size at its meeting on the 25 March 2021. The Submission proposed a reduction of the number of Members from 38 to 35.
- 2.6 In May 2021, the Commission confirmed they were minded to recommend that Epsom & Ewell Borough Council should have 35 councillors in the future, and commenced a consultation process on the Borough' Warding Arrangements on the 11 May 2021.

Warding Arrangements

- 2.7 The Commission will draw up new electoral arrangements that provide the best balance of statutory criteria. The criteria include three main elements:
 - 2.7.1 Delivering electoral equality for local voters - ensuring that each councillor represents roughly the same number of voters so that the value of vote is the same regardless of where anyone lives;

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- 2.7.2 Interests and identities of local communities. - establishing electoral arrangements which, as far as possible, avoid splitting local ties and where boundaries are easily identifiable;
- 2.7.3 Effective and convenient local government - ensuring that the wards can be represented effectively by their elected representative(s) and that the new electoral arrangements, including both the Council Size decision and warding arrangements, allow the local authority to conduct its business effectively.
- 2.8 The aim of this stage of the Review, is to meet the necessary balance between the three elements of the statutory criteria. For this Council, this process has resulted in changes to Wards and Ward boundaries.
- 2.9 The approach the Commission adopt, is to:
 - 2.9.1 start with a blank map of the Authority's Area; and
 - 2.9.2 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.

Stage after close of Warding Arrangements Consultation

- 2.10 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.

Developing the Council's submission on Warding arrangements

- 2.11 The Commission have confirmed the forecasted electorate figures for 2027. The forecasted electorate in the Borough is shown to be 64,889. 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. 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.
- 2.12 The Council's Strategy & Resources Committee considered proposals for the Borough's Warding Arrangements, on the 12 July 2021. It agreed to recommend that the Council make a submission on Warding Arrangements, and recommend take forward to Council a proposal based on 14 Wards.

Summary of Warding Arrangements Submission

- 2.13 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.
- 2.14 The development of the Hospital Cluster since the last review, identified a clear need for the creation of a new Ward which encompassed the settlement. The creation of this new Ward directly helps to address the electoral variances which had grown over time.
- 2.15 The mapping of the Borough in terms of Warding, focused on the natural and built divisions which have themselves, created distinct communities. In turn these communities have built their own local support infrastructure and arrangements. Although the advice on an Electoral Review is to start with a blank map, it is also to note the nature of the environment and the settled communities which exist.
- 2.16 The proposals being put forward for submission include:
- 2.16.1 the creation of a new Ward of Horton which would address electoral variances within key existing Wards;
- 2.16.2 to redistribute the electoral variances and addressing anomalies in Ward boundaries which have developed over time.
- All within the context of ensuring a balance is achieved between the three elements of the statutory criteria.
- 2.17 The proposed new warding arrangements are set out at Appendix 1, with map of each of the Wards. Appendix 2 is an overlay of the current wards with the new proposed Wards and Appendix 3 is a copy of the submission to the Commission.
- 2.18 To help summarise the Council's submission, Table 1 below sets out the comparison between the current arrangements alongside with those which Strategy & Resources have recommended to Council for approval. The proposal for Warding consists of 14 Wards as follows:

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

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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	3	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

2.19 The Electoral Review process, though set in terms of its objectives and processes, seeks to address electoral imbalances. Reviewing arrangements which have often been in place for a substantial period of time is not without its challenges. Inevitably there will be tensions around the need for change and what that change needs to look like. However, the work of the cross party Member Task & Finish Group, has allowed for a non-partisan approach to an outcome, which has been designed to support equality within the democratic process.

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Impact Assessment

3.1.1 none arising from the contents of this report.

3.2 Crime & Disorder

3.2.1 none arising from the contents of this report.

3.3 Safeguarding

3.3.1 none arising from the contents of this report.

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3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 none arising from the contents of this report.

3.5 Other

3.5.1 none arising from the contents of this report.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

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

5 Legal Implications

5.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

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

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged: Effective Council.

6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** none arising from the contents of this report.

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

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

7 Background papers

7.1 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

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<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>

- Strategy & Resources Committee, 12 July 2021

<https://democracy.epsomewell.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&MId=1192&Ver=4>

Other papers:

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