

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Electoral Review

The Council's Response to The Local Government Boundary Commission for England's Draft Recommendations Published October 2021.

Following the publication of the Boundary Commission's Draft Recommendations on 5 October 2021, The Council's cross-party Task & Finish Group, Strategy and Resources Committee and Full Council have met and voted on the following consultation response.

The Council is pleased to note that the Boundary Commission's recommendations are largely based on the submissions made by this Council in July 2021, save for changes to Court ward and West Ewell.

The focus of this response is on the changes made by the Boundary Commission to the Council's submission on warding patterns. The Council sets out whether it agrees with the draft recommendations in the below table.

This is the Council's position. It reflects a majority view of the Council's members. It is not to be treated differently to any consultation responses received by the Boundary Commission from individual members and their respective political parties.

Council Size

The Council welcomes the Boundary Commission's recommendation to reduce the Council size to 35 from 38 Councillors which is based on the Council's submission dated March 2021. This has formed the basis for the Boundary Commission's recommendations and the Council relies on a proposed Council size of 35 in this response. The Council believes any change to that figure would require further consultation before the Boundary Commission publishes its final recommendations.

Community Identity

The Council is content that communities and their distinct identities have been reflected in the changes to ward boundaries. There has been a change in some wards to reduce electoral inequality. There have been changes to reflect the clear line boundaries along main roads. These changes are largely welcomed by the Council. Any repeat submissions and counter-proposals in the table below are based on the Council's view

that its proposals better balance Community identity and the other two criteria.

Electoral Equality

The Council acknowledges that excellent levels of electoral equality will be achieved across most wards, none of which go above the 10% benchmark before 2027. The proposed changes to the new Horton ward rely on the Boundary Commission's forecast of electoral inequality. The Council believes, even on a modest view, that the forecasts are wrong taking account of the allocation of sites for housing development in the Borough. Where the Council proposes reverting to its submission on West Ewell, the proposals will achieve a very good level of electoral equality.

Ward councillors

Other than the changes to boundaries detailed in the table below, the number of ward councillors proposed by the Boundary Commission reflects good representation.

Ward Names

The Council agree with the Boundary Commission's proposal to adopt the name Horton in line with the Commission's proposed naming of the new ward where its boundaries include the site of the former Hospital Cluster. The Council also agree with the Boundary Commission's proposal to rename Ewell as Ewell Village. The Council also believe that Woodcote should be renamed to Woodcote and Langley Vale to better reflect the ward.

Conclusion

The Council is confident its response addresses the three criteria of equality of representation, reflecting community interests and identities and providing for convenient & effective local government.

The Council would like to thank the Boundary Commission for its excellent work. The Council's arguments are made because the Council believes they will make important improvements to the Commission's proposals.

Ward name	Number of councillors	2021 Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Detail
Auriol	2	1%	3,689	1,845	-1%	<p>There is no change to the number of councillors.</p> <p>The Council accepts the Boundary Commission's recommendation to include the streets of Timbercroft, Sterry Drive and Chestnut Avenue in Auriol ward and remove Cuddington Community Primary school. This uses Salisbury Road as a clear boundary.</p>
College	3	-2%	5,215	1,738	-6%	<p>There is no change to the number of councillors.</p> <p>The Council accepts the Boundary Commission's recommendation to maintain the status quo and include St Martin's Avenue and Downside. This should include Orchard House and Giles Mead to ensure all of Downside is in the</p>

						<p>same ward.</p> <p>The Council also agrees with the inclusion of Church Road and Mill Road as a clearer North-West boundary.</p>
Court	3	-4%	5,222	1,741	-6%	<p>There is no change to the number of councillors.</p> <p>The Council believe the boundary with Horton should reflect the boundary proposed by this Council.</p> <p>It would use the B284 Hook Road to the point it meets Chantilly Way on the North-West boundary and Chessington Road on the North-East boundary.</p> <p>The Council challenges the Commission's assertion that residents on Hook Road will be divided between two wards. The only residents (approximately 3 electors) on the westerly side of the road are those of a working farm.</p> <p>The Council is concerned that the Boundary Commission's proposal deviates from the Council's submission and believes Parkview</p>

						<p>Way should be included in Court Ward for the following reasons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Community identity is an important consideration. The Parkview Way estate is separated from the former hospital cluster by Greater Horton Farm, open greenbelt of 36.61 hectares, and has no obvious connection with the rest of the proposed ward. ii) In the Council's Greenbelt Study¹ Stage 2, two land parcels (29 and 31) surrounding the former St Ebba's hospital site were considered suitable for release as development land, giving the potential for elector growth. These sites are easily identifiable in line with paragraph 85 of the NPPF and therefore unlikely to be subdivided. If combined with the four land parcels which fall in the proposed Horton ward (20, 21, 22, 28) the potential for elector growth could create a significant elector
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¹ <https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Epsom%20and%20Ewell%20Green%20Belt%20Study%20Stage%202%2030%20May%202018.pdf>

						<p>imbalance, enough to justify a third councillor in Horton ward.</p> <p>iii) As regards effective local government, electors on the Parkview Way estate do not have the same demands on political time compared to Electors in Horton (this is anecdotal).</p> <p>The Council disagrees that Revere Way should be moved to Court ward. There is no access from this estate to the rest of Court ward without crossing through West Ewell ward, creating the impression of a so called "doughnut" geography.</p> <p>The Council agree with the Commission's proposal to include the streets around Gibraltar Crescent in Court ward as they are otherwise isolated by Longmead Road from the rest of West Ewell ward.</p>
Cuddington	3	-3%	5,445	1,815	-2%	There are no changes to the proposed number of councillors in the Cuddington ward.

						<p>The Council accepts the Boundary Commission's recommendation to include Cuddington Community Primary School but exclude Timbercroft, Sterry Drive and Chestnut Avenue for the reasons identified above under Auriol.</p>
Ewell Court	2	8%	3,927	1,964	6%	<p>The Council accepts the Boundary Commission's proposed changes to the number of councillors.</p> <p>The Boundary Commission's boundary recommendation is identical to the Council's submission.</p>
Ewell Village	2	-4%	3,559	1,780	-4%	<p>The Council agree with the Boundary Commission's proposal to rename the ward of Ewell as Ewell Village.</p> <p>This ward has a stable population. The electoral variance will remain unchanged between now and 2027. Ewell Village has a distinct identity. The Council agree with the Boundary Commission's proposal to use the A24 as a clear boundary between Ewell Village and Nonsuch.</p>

Horton	2	4%	3,702	1,851	0%	<p>The Council agree with the proposal to create a new ward out of Court, Stamford and West Ewell and the Boundary Commission's proposals to make this a 2-councillor ward.</p> <p>The Council agree with the proposal to name this ward Horton.</p> <p>The Council consider that Parkview Way and St Ebba's Hospital should be excluded for reasons set out above (see Court ward).</p> <p>The eastern boundary with Court ward should use the B284 Hook Road up to the point where it meets Chantilly Way. The Council challenges the Commission's assertion that residents on Hook Road will be divided between two wards. The only residents (approximately 3 electors) on the westerly side of the road are those of a working farm. In the Council's Greenbelt Study Stage 2 four sites in the proposed ward were</p>

						identified as having potential for development (parcels 20, 21, 22, 28). These sites are easily identifiable in line with paragraph 85 of the NPPF.
Nonsuch	3	4%	5,652	1,884	2%	<p>There are no changes to the proposed number of councillors in the Cuddington Ward.</p> <p>The Council accepts the Boundary Commission's recommendation to include Windmill Avenue and Parkhill Road in the boundary of Nonsuch ward for the reasons set out above (see Ewell Village)</p>
Ruxley	2	9%	3,990	1,995	8%	<p>The Council agrees with the Boundary Commission's proposal to reduce the number of councillors to 2 (currently 3).</p> <p>The Council agrees with the Boundary Commission's recommendation on ward boundaries.</p>

Stamford	2	11%	4,019	2,010	8%	<p>The Council agrees with the Boundary Commission's proposal to reduce the number of councillors to 2 (currently 3).</p> <p>The Boundary Commission's boundary recommendation is identical to the Council's submission.</p>
Stoneleigh	2	9%	4,029	2,015	9%	<p>The Council agrees with the Boundary Commission's proposal to reduce the number of councillors to 2 (currently 3).</p> <p>There has been no change to the present boundaries of Stoneleigh ward.</p>
Town	3	2%	5,836	1,945	5%	<p>There are no changes to the proposed number of councillors in the Town ward.</p> <p>The Council agrees with the Boundary Commission's proposal to include Worple Road in the change to the ward boundary on the boundary with College ward.</p> <p>The Council contends that Orchard House and Giles Mead should be excluded from Town</p>

						ward for the reasons detailed above (see College ward).
West Ewell	3	-10%	5,305	1,768	-5%	<p>There are no changes to the proposed number of councillors in West Ewell.</p> <p>The Council disagrees that Revere Way should be excluded from West Ewell. To exclude it would create the impression of a so called "doughnut" geography in the neighbouring Court ward (see above).</p>
Woodcote	3	-12%	5,299	1,766	-5%	<p>There are no changes to the proposed number of councillors in West Ewell.</p> <p>The Council accepts the Boundary Commission's recommendation to exclude Worple Road and St Martin's Avenue and use the Ashley Road as a clear boundary for the Woodcote ward.</p> <p>The Council believes Woodcote should be renamed Woodcote and Langley Vale to reflect the large estate of that name. Accordingly, the Council submit that the Commission should</p>

						include a recommendation to rename this ward “Woodcote and Langley Vale” in its final proposals.
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