

# **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.

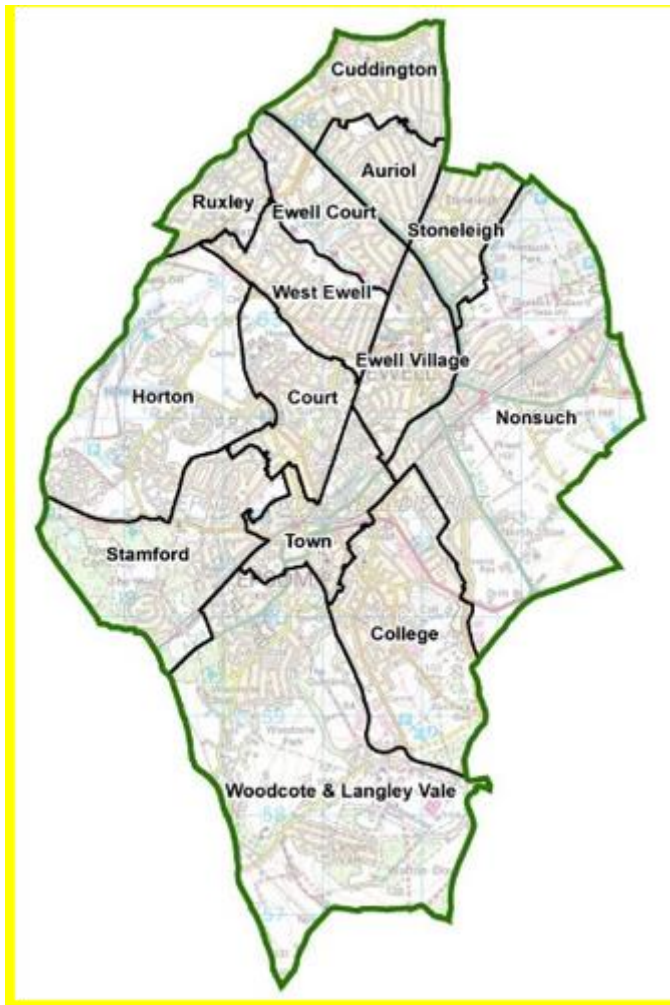
The preferred option of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is to create either one or two parishes, each with a parish council, to be named a “Community Council”, covering the whole of the current area of the borough.

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<br/>(1 May 2025)</i> | <i>Households<br/>(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**

| <b>Date</b>                | <b>Action</b>                                                                                                |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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