

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – CREATION OF CIVIL PARISHES AND ASSOCIATED PARISH COUNCILS IN EPSOM & EWELL

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Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Appendices (attached):	<p>Appendix 1 – Background Information (including CGR Terms of Reference from June)</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Phase 1 Consultation Questionnaire Thematic Analysis</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Phase 1 Consultation Written Submissions (inc. Surrey County Council's Response)</p> <p>Appendix 4 – Phase 2 Consultation Pack</p> <p>Appendix 5 – Map of the proposed Community Boundaries</p> <p>Appendix 6 – Updated Communications Strategy</p> <p>Appendix 7 – Calculations relevant to consideration of a Potential Transfer of Asset/s (inc. financial implications)</p> <p>Appendix 8 – Updated CGR Terms of Reference</p>

Summary

This report presents the findings of the Community Governance Review's Phase 1 consultation regarding the creation of Civil Parishes and associated Parish Councils in the Borough of Epsom and Ewell. It also provides information related to the potential financial implications, including estimated precepts and the implications of the possible transfer of key community assets.

Members of the Council are asked to review this information and make a decision as to whether the Council proceeds to the next stage of its Community Governance Review (CGR), or whether the CGR process is stopped now following the completion of the Phase 1 consultation. If Members decide to continue to the next stage of CGR, they are invited to consider what the recommendations should be that are consulted upon, based upon the outcome of the Phase 1 consultation and the further information contained within this report.

Recommendations

The Council is asked to:

- (1) Decide whether the Community Governance Review should either, A) proceed to a Phase 2 consultation, or B) cease at this stage.**
- (2) If option A is approved, Members are invited to agree the recommendations to be subject to a further public consultation, as follows:**
 - (i) Arrangements - The creation of two civil parishes for which there will be two parish councils (one for each parish), which would be responsible for the legal minimum (e.g. allotments) and could be responsible for more services in the future (where this is agreed with the new unitary East Surrey Council at some future date)**
 - (ii) Names and style of the two parishes –**
 - a. The Community of Epsom, and**
 - b. The Community of Ewell**
 - (iii) Warding (and names of wards) – The external boundaries of the two parishes to be created shall be co-terminus with existing ward boundaries; existing borough wards will be adopted as will their existing names –**
 - a. Epsom Community – College, Court, Horton, Stamford, Town, Woodcote and Langley Vale**
 - b. Ewell Community – Auriol, Cuddington, Ewell Court, Ewell Village, Nonsuch, Ruxley, Stoneleigh, West Ewell**
 - (iv) Proposed number of councillors – Two councillors per ward per newly created parish resulting in:**
 - a. Twelve councillors to be elected to Epsom Community Council (there are six wards) and**

- b. Sixteen councillors to be elected to Ewell Community Council (there are eight wards).**
- (v) Agree to the establishment of a potential precept payable for the Council Tax Financial Year 2027-28, to support the general parish administration and running of services.**
- (vi) Agree and adopt the updated Terms of Reference, as set out in Appendix 8**
- (vii) Authorise the Chief Executive and Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Chair of Standards and Constitution Committee, to approve the Phase 2 Consultation Questions and Questionnaire of Reference once final typographical changes have been completed and to take all and any necessary action to progress the Community Governance Review.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 Following a decision by Full Council on the 26th of June 2025 to proceed with a Phase 1 consultation regarding the creation of parish councils, via the processes of a Community Governance Review (CGR), Full Council now needs to decide whether it would like to proceed with the CGR or stop the process at this stage, that is, upon completion of the Phase 1 consultation.
- 1.2 If it is decided by Members to proceed to the next stage of CGR, Members are required to have considered and agree what the recommendations will be so that a final public consultation may take place in consideration of those recommendations.
- 1.3 It is then necessary to authorise the named officers to approve the final wording of both the recommendations and consultation questions, taking account of any minor changes that may need to be made prior to the consultation commencing, along with authorising them to progress CGR to the end of this next stage.

2 Background

- 2.1 This report presents the findings of the Community Governance Review's Phase 1 consultation regarding the creation of Civil Parishes and associated Parish Councils in the Borough of Epsom and Ewell. The Terms of Reference of the Community Governance Review were published on 18th June 2025, following which Phase 1 consultation took place between 17th July and 9th October 2025. The total number of responses to the consultation was 352. A full analysis of the responses is shared at **Appendix 2**.

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- 2.2 To put into context the total number of responses noted above, this can be compared against the response rate across a number of recent borough-wide public consultations held by this Council within the last two-year period:

Consultation	Dates	Responses
Polling Districts and Places	October 2023 – December 2023	6
Draft Epsom Town Centre Masterplan	November 2023 – December 2023	203
Community Safety Action Plan	November 2023 – December 2023	5
Public Spaces Protection Order	November 2024 – January 2025	209
Proposed Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19)	December 2024 – February 2025	180
Polling Districts and Places	October 2024 – January 2025	5
Compliance and Enforcement Policy	February 2025 – March 2025	0
Draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2028	April 2025 – May 2025	114

- 2.3 This Council is one of the few District / Borough Councils within Surrey that is unparished. In light of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), a number have commenced their own Community Governance Reviews in recent months and are at various stages of the process.
- 2.4 Members will be aware that at its meeting on 6th May 2025, this Council adopted a Strategic Priority for 2025-27 to carry out and complete a major Asset Review (Priority 4). Part of this priority was to identify assets that could transfer to a new local governance entity (subject to the creation of new entity/ies) and likely revenue / maintenance costs for that new entity. Although the proposal at this stage does not include the transfer of any assets as part of the CGR, for completeness **Appendix 7** to this report sets out information in relation to potential community asset transfer and associated financial implications.

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2.5 Should Members decide to proceed, they will then need to consider the recommendations that will be consulted on for a Phase 2 CGR Consultation. A copy of the proposed Phase 2 Consultation Pack is provided at **Appendix 4**.

2.6 For further background information please see **Appendix 1**.

3 Financial Considerations Associated with Creating Parish Councils

3.1 Establishing a parish council comes with financial responsibilities. These are normally funded through a parish precept, which is an additional charge added to residents' Council Tax bills. There may be an opportunity to obtain funding through government grants, especially if Community Councils take on additional responsibilities from East Surrey unitary council post 2027.

3.2 The parish precept would be collected by the billing authority, currently Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) or, in the future, a new unitary authority once established. The collected funds would then be passed on in full to the parish council to deliver its services.

3.3 The more services the parish council delivers, such as running general parish duties, allotments, community assets, parks, supporting local events, or maintaining community buildings, the higher the cost and more reliance on council tax precept and other funding sources.

3.4 The council tax base (measured in Band D equivalents) determines how much a parish can raise in council tax precept. EEBC currently has around 33,932 Band D equivalent properties across the whole of the Borough. This is roughly halved in the event of two parish councils as outlined in the tables below.

3.5 Officers have developed a high-level revenue cost estimate for the general running of a community council informed by discussions with officers in the sector and additional research. It's important to note that this is a broad approximation, intended to provide an initial understanding of the potential financial implications.

3.6 We have estimated a cost of approximately £750,000 per civil parish to deliver general parish council functions, in the event the borough is divided into two parishes (East and West). This represents 60% of £1.250 million, the estimated administration cost of just running the one parish council, recognising that there will be an element of duplication.

3.7 Allotments are a default function of parish councils. Therefore, using the budget book 2024/25 an estimated cost for running and managing allotments has also been calculated.

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3.8 The information below provides an estimate of the annual council tax precept per band D property for each option consulted on in Phase 1 of the consultation, for the general running of a parish council including the statutory duty of allotments.

4 Estimated running costs for both proposed Community Councils on the basis of General Administration & Allotments Only

4.1 As noted above, costings for all the Options publicly consulted upon are included, as follows:

Option 1	Admin	Allotments	Total	Base	Precept
Ewell	£750,000	£9,900	£759,900	17,123	£44.38
Epsom	£750,000	£10,100	£760,100	16,809	£45.22
Total	£1,500,000	£20,000	£1,520,000	33,932	

Option 2	Admin	Allotments	Total	Base	Precept
Ewell	£750,000	£9,176	£759,176	16,449	£46.15
Epsom	£750,000	£10,824	£760,824	17,483	£43.52
Total	£1,500,000	£20,000	£1,520,000	33,932	

Option 3	Admin	Allotments	Total	Base	Precept
Ewell	£750,000	£13,799	£763,799	16,727	£45.66
Epsom	£750,000	£6,201	£756,201	17,205	£43.95
Total	£1,500,000	£20,000	£1,520,000	33,932	

Option 4	Admin	Allotments	Total	Base	Precept
EEBC	£1,250,000	£20,000	£1,270,000	33,932	£37.43

5 The proposed recommendations

5.1 Further to consideration of the Phase 1 consultation replies (see Appendix 2), the proposed recommendations, should Members decide to proceed, are:

5.2 The creation of two civil parishes, to be named and styled the Community of Epsom and the Community of Ewell. For these parishes, two parish councils are to be created:

5.2.1 the Community Council of Epsom; and

5.2.2 the Community Council of Ewell.

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- 5.3 That each parish is to be warded, the electoral boundaries of each parish ward is to be based upon existing Borough ward boundaries and names (see Map at Appendix 5), as follows:
 - 5.3.1 Ewell Community – Auriol, Cuddington, Ewell Court, Ewell Village, Nonsuch, Ruxley, Stoneleigh, West Ewell.
 - 5.3.2 Epsom Community – College, Court, Horton, Stamford, Town, Woodcote and Langley Vale
- 5.4 That there be 2 councillors per ward, per newly created parish resulting in:
 - 5.4.1 12 councillors on Epsom Community Council (there are 6 wards), and
 - 5.4.2 16 councillors on Ewell Community Council (there are 8 wards).
- 5.5 That a precept for each Community Council be established, which initial calculations estimate for a Band D property would be:
 - 5.5.1 Epsom Community Council: £43.52 pa
 - 5.5.2 Ewell Community Council: £46.15 pa

6 Considerations and alternative options

- 6.1 The proposal set out above is based upon the most popular of the Options consulted upon within the CGR Phase 1 Consultation held between July and October – i.e. Option 2 of those options consulted upon in July-Oct regarding whether one or two parish areas should be created and, if so, where the boundaries and wards would fall (see Appendix 2).
- 6.2 The warding pattern proposed for adoption was established by the 2021 Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) review of Epsom & Ewell Borough¹, and there can be confidence that such boundaries continue to appropriately reflect the various communities within the borough.
- 6.3 In deciding what recommendations to make, Members must have regard to the need to secure that community governance within the borough–
 - (a) reflects the identities and interests of the community in the borough, and
 - (b) is effective and convenient.
- 6.4 Members must take into account any other arrangements (apart from those relating to parishes and their institutions)
 - (a) that have already been made, or
 - (b) that could be made,

¹ The Epsom and Ewell (Electoral Changes) Order 2022 was made on 9 November 2022

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for the purposes of community representation or community engagement in the borough.

- 6.5 Members must also take into account the representations received in the review.
- 6.6 Where, as here, electoral arrangements for new parish councils are under consideration, the legislation requires that certain matters are looked at. These are set out in the Legal Implications section of this report below.
- 6.7 In putting forward these proposed recommendations, officers have had regard to the requirements in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the statutory guidance in *Guidance on community governance reviews* (March 2010). Should Members wish to propose modifications to the above recommendations, or entirely different recommendations, they should consider how that would be consistent with (i) the Terms of Reference, (ii) the Phase 1 consultation that has been carried out, (iii) the responses received to date, and (iv) the statutory considerations and guidance. Depending on what is proposed, it may be necessary to run a Phase 1 consultation again.
- 6.8 Details of calculations and considerations made by officers further to the analysis of the replies received to the Phase 1 public consultation are set out within Appendix 7.

7 Next steps:

- 7.1 If it is decided by Members to make the recommendations proposed above and to proceed to the next stage of CGR, it is anticipated that:
 - 7.1.1 the public consultation will start on 16th December 2025 and end on 1st February 2026
 - 7.1.2 with an Extraordinary Full Council to be held on or before 23rd March 2026 to consider the outcome of the consultation and to determine if a Reorganisation Order will be made at that meeting.
- 7.2 Mindful that:
 - 7.2.1 The East Surrey Shadow Authority is due to come into existence as of 1st April 2026,
 - 7.2.2 That further to the Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) Regulations 2008, the power to make a Reorganisation Order passes to the Shadow Authority after the beginning of the "transitional period" as defined in Regulations – which is expected to be on or around 1st -14th April 2026, and

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7.2.3 Further to notification on behalf of the Returning Officers for East and West Surrey, the pre-election period is now expected to commence on 23rd March 2026 – rather than 30th March, which is the statutory deadline – for elections to the said Shadow Authority to be held on 7 May 2026,

Should this Council wish to ensure it retains the power to make the Reorganisation Order (subject to consideration of the Phase 2 Consultation responses), it is necessary for this Council to consider that decision on or before 23rd March 2026.

7.3 To that end,

7.3.1 A Phase 2 consultation pack has been prepared (see **Appendix 4**). The Consultation Pack is the document that residents would review and provide their feedback on via the consultation process.

7.3.2 An updated Communication Strategy has been produced (see **Appendix 6**) setting out the ways that the Council will promote a Phase 2 consultation, and

7.3.3 An updated Terms of Reference has been produced (see **Appendix 8**) setting out the revised Phase 2 consultation time.

8 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

8.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1.1 An EIA screening has been completed. It indicated that there may be impacts related to the protected characteristics of age and disability, both for running a Phase 2 consultation and for potential parish councils delivering services to residents. However, these are uncertain at this stage.

8.2 Crime & Disorder

8.2.1 No direct implications.

8.3 Safeguarding

8.3.1 No direct implications.

8.4 Dependencies

8.4.1 Not applicable.

8.5 Other

- 8.5.1 Mindful of the work required to support Local Government Reorganisation, seeking to run a parallel CGR process will be resource intensive (financial and officer capacity) which could pose a risk CGR process and timeline. There is also 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.).

9 Financial Implications

- 9.1 The Council approved a one-off budget allocation of £300,000 for CGR. As of 14 November, £36,566 has been spent, leaving a remaining balance of £263,434. If it is decided by Members to proceed to the next stage of CGR, any unspent budget will be carried over into the next financial year to help fund the next stages of CGR.

- 9.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** Included in the main body of this report.

10 Legal Implications

- 10.1 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.

- 10.2 The Act requires the Council to take account of certain criteria when conducting a review, namely:

10.2.1 the identities and interests of the community in an area; and

10.2.2 the effective and convenient governance of the area.

- 10.3 They are also advised to consider factors such as:

10.3.1 what impact proposed community governance arrangements might have on community cohesion; and

10.3.2 whether the size (area), population and boundaries proposed for local governance make sense on the ground and contribute to the above criteria.

- 10.4 As the legislation requires, the Council must consider a number of questions when deciding whether to recommend that a parish should be formed including:

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- 10.4.1 whether the number, or distribution, of the local government electors for the parish would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient;
- 10.4.2 whether it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the Council i.e. warded
- 10.4.3 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
- 10.5 When considering what electoral arrangements should apply to a new parish council, this Council should ask itself (a) whether the number, or distribution, of the local government electors for the parish would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and (b) whether it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the council.
- 10.6 When considering the warding of a parish, this Council should consider:
- (a) the number of local government electors for the parish;
 - (b) any change in the number, or distribution, of the local government electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts;
 - (c) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are, and will remain, easily identifiable;
 - (d) any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries
- 10.7 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 for the new East Surrey Unitary Council to establish Charter Trustees for the unparished parts of the borough with effect from 1 April 2027.
- 10.8 **Legal Officer's comments:** The body of this report contains relevant legal considerations that Members must have in mind when conducting the CGR.

11 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

11.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:

- At its meeting on the 6 May 2025, the Council agreed that the investigation into the creation of parish councils would be the Council's number one priority.

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- 11.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 11.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** No direct implications.
- 11.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** No direct implications.
- 11.5 **Partnerships:** No direct implications.
- 11.6 **Local Government Reorganisation Implications:** In addition to the points made above on the subject, attention is drawn to a separate report brought to this meeting entitled “Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation – Update” that sets out the recent decision by the Secretary of State to create an East and West Surrey unitary, with election held to their predecessor Shadow authorities on 7 May 2026.

12 Background papers

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

- **Previous reports:**
 - Epsom and Ewell Borough Council (2025) *Community Governance Review - Creation of Communities and Community Councils in Epsom & Ewell*, Full Council, 26th June 2025. Online available: [Epsom and Ewell Democracy](#)
 - Epsom and Ewell Borough Council (2025) *EEBC Strategic Priorities 2025-2027*, Full Council, 6th May 2025. Online available: [Epsom and Ewell Democracy](#)
- **Other papers:**
 - *Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007*, HM Government. Online available: [Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007](#)
 - *Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transfer of Functions, Property, Rights and Liabilities) Regulations 2008*, HM Government. Online available: [The Local Government \(Structural Changes\) \(Transfer of Functions, Property, Rights and Liabilities\) Regulations 2008](#)
 - *The Charter Trustees Regulations 2009*, HM Government. Online available: [The Charter Trustees Regulations 2009](#)
 - *Community governance reviews: guidance*, 31 March 2010, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2018 to 2021). Online available: [Community governance reviews: guidance - GOV.UK](#)