Council
12 March 2026

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW: FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Head of Service:	Jackie King, Chief Executive
Report Author:	Piero Ionta
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Appendices (attached):	**Appendix 1** – Phase 2 Consultation Pack (final, as consulted)
	Appendix 2 – Phase 2 Consultation Analysis (Detailed)

Summary

This report presents for decision the Final Recommendations of the Community Governance Review (CGR) under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

Recommendation (s)

The Council is asked to:

Resolve to conclude the Community Governance Review, on the grounds that the results of the recent public consultation does not demonstrate sufficient public support for the proposals that were consulted upon.

1 Reason for Recommendation

1.1 At its meeting on 9 December 2025, Full Council agreed to proceed to Phase 2 consultation on proposals to create two parish areas, each served by a community (parish) council, with warding aligned to existing Borough wards and two councillors per ward. The Council's CGR webpage and consultation pack set out the proposals, indicative precept illustrations and the intended timetable.

1.2 The CGR has been undertaken pursuant to Part 4, Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, having regard to the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews (March 2010) issued by the Secretary of State and LGBCE.

2 Background

2.1 CGR Terms of Reference were published in June 2025 and updated in December 2025. Phase 1 consultation took place between 17 July and 9 October 2025; the Phase 1 analysis and options were reported to Full Council (Dec 2025), including the proposed two parish model, warding based on the existing Borough wards and two councillors per ward.

2.2 Phase 2 consultation ran from 16 December 2025 to 1 February 2026, seeking views on creating Epsom Community Council and Ewell Community Council, warding aligned to the existing Borough wards, and a proposed councillor number of two per ward.

2.3 The proposals reflect the statutory criteria that community governance should (i) reflect the identities and interests of local communities and (ii) be effective and convenient, and the options are consistent with the guidance's approach to defining parishes, warding and electoral arrangements.

3 Phase 2 Consultation Results (16 December 2025 – 1 February 2026)

3.1 The Phase 2 consultation closed on 1 February 2026. The Council received a total of 2,203 responses. There were no rejected responses.

3.2 As noted within the last report brought in December 2025, the response to the Phase 2 consultation is believed to have led to the largest number of replies received from those that either own a business or property in the borough (1%), work in the borough (1%) or live in the borough (98%) to any public consultation held by this Council in recent memory. The highest number of responses to a consultation before this was for the Reg 18 Local Plan consultation (1,736 responses).

3.3 The Communications Plan as implemented (which included the use of a variety of channels over the course of the public consultation aimed at reaching a diverse range of residents including print and online channels, social media and video; events, outdoor advertising, advertising in council venues and a direct mail campaign) can be shown to have been effective as the level of replies from residents, businesses, and stakeholders show their motivation to submit a response and ensure that they were heard.

3.4 Of these 2,203 responses, 14% supported the creation of two community councils (Epsom and Ewell), 82% opposed, and 4% expressed no clear view. Detailed analysis of the replies is provided in Appendix 2 – Phase 2 Consultation Analysis (Detailed).

3.5 Warding arrangements: 1,570 out of the 2,203 respondents answered this question; of those that replied, 28% of respondents supported warding that is coterminous with existing Borough wards; 54% opposed this proposal; 18% expressed no preference.

3.6 Name of parish area, councils and wards: 1,543 out of the 2,203 respondents answered this question; of those that replied, 28% of respondents supported the proposed names; 53% opposed the proposed names; 19% expressed no preference.

3.7 Council size: 1,551 out of the 2,203 respondents answered this question; of those that replied, 21% supported two councillors per ward; 61% opposed this; 17% expressed no view.

3.8 Further comments: 856 out of the 2,203 respondents answered this question; of those that replied, 30% expressed concerns about whether the proposals were value for money; 25% expressed concerns about the increase to council tax that the proposal would lead to and 20% expressed their disagreement with the proposals overall.

4 Next steps:

4.1 The Council has considered the consultation feedback alongside the statutory criteria of community identity/interests and effective and convenient local government and is invited to resolve to end this Community Governance Review at this point.

4.2 The Council is obliged to act in accordance with Section 93(7) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, which requires:

"As soon as practicable after making any recommendations, the principal council must—

(a)publish the recommendations; and

(b)take such steps as it considers sufficient to secure that persons who may be interested in the review are informed of those recommendations."

4.3 If Council decides to give effect to the Final Recommendations, the proposed resolution to that effect will suffice to comply with the provisions noted above. This will be recorded in the minutes of this meeting which shall be published in the normal manner. As a further step, it is proposed that each respondent that provided their email contact details shall be sent an email to confirm the final recommendations as resolved.

5 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

5.1 Equality Impact Assessment

5.1.1 The EIA screening has not been updated on the basis that should Members resolve to adopt the final recommendations set out above, the screening produced for the December report will suffice.

5.2 Crime & Disorder

5.2.1 No direct implications arising from this decision.

5.3 Safeguarding

5.3.1 No direct implications arising from this decision.

5.4 Dependencies

5.4.1 No direct implications arising from this decision.

5.5 Other

5.5.1 No direct implications arising from this decision.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The Council approved a one-off budget allocation of £300,000 for CGR. As of 26 February, £70,770 has been spent. If it is decided by Members to resolve the final recommendations set out above, there will be some limited ongoing costs that will need to be accounted for after the decision is taken. After that, any unspent budget will remain within the council's Corporate Reserves.

6.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments**: Any relevant comments are included within the body of this report.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 The Council, as principal council, has power under section 82 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct a CGR, make recommendations and give effect to them. In doing so, it must have regard to the 2010 Guidance on Community Governance Reviews, including criteria concerning community identity and interests and effective and convenient local government.

7.2 The proposed Final Recommendations comply with the 2007 Act and statutory guidance.

7.3 **Legal Officer's comments**: Any relevant comments are included within the body of this report.

8 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

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

- Effective Council

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

8.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations**: No direct implications arising from this decision.

8.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications**: No direct implications arising from this decision.

8.5 **Partnerships**: No direct implications arising from this decision.

8.6 **Local Government Reorganisation Implications**: No direct implications arising from this decision.

9 Background papers

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

Previous reports:

- **Council Report (9 December 2025):** Community Governance Review – Creation of Civil Parishes and Associated Parish Councils in Epsom & Ewell (including Phase 1 analysis, options, proposed warding, councillor numbers and next steps).

Other papers:

- Epsom & Ewell CGR webpage: Phase 2 consultation notice, timetable, and precept illustration (Band D).
- GOV.UK Guidance and Model Order: Guidance on Community Governance Reviews (2010) and Model Community Governance Reorganisation Order.