

APPENDIX 1

Wokingham Borough Council response to the LGBCE Proposals Published on 31 January 2023

The Council established a cross party electoral review working group (ERWG) in February 2022 to lead the Council's engagement on the LGBCE's electoral review. The working group met throughout the process to undertake the detailed work in providing a set of proposals for Council. On the 31 January 2023 the Commission published its proposal. The ERWG met on the 15 February to consider the proposals and draft the Council's response. The group has sought to establish consensus on the proposals. Where consensus was not possible, we have outlined the different views of the group.

The Council has endorsed this response at its meeting on the 23 March 2023 and wishes to recognise the minority view expressed in the ERWG.

The Council welcomes the Commission's proposals for the Borough and believes that they provide a good reflection of the 3 criteria:

- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

Warding Arrangements

The ERWG was strongly supportive of the Commission's proposals for:

- Northern
- Woodley (North, East and South)
- Winnersh
- Wokingham (Emmbrook, Evendons, Norreys and Wescott)
- Earley (North, South West and South East)
- Shinfield
- Arborfield with Barkham
- Finchampstead
- Wokingham Without

The Council reiterates the arguments for these wards as set out in the original submission.

The Council supports the Commission's proposals for the adjustments to the wards:

- Extension of the Arborfield and Barkham boundary to the south to the Borough boundary
- Hartigan Place in Woodley moves to North Woodley
- Ryhill Way in Shinfield moves to Earley
- Ryeish Green in Shinfield moves to Southern

- Adjustment of the Emmbrook – Wescott boundary to the centre of Earle Crescent

The ERWG could not reach consensus on the following wards:

- Twyford and Hurst
- Southern

The Majority view supported the Commission's proposals that three member wards would best support the review's objectives. The Minority view was that a two member and one member warding arrangement would more accurately reflect the community identity of these areas. The detailed arguments for each of these views are detailed in the Council's original submission.

Ward Naming

The Council made the following comments on the names for wards:

The ERWG supports the naming of wards proposed by the Commission for:

- Winnersh
- Wokingham (Emmbrook, Evendons, Norreys and Wescott)
- Shinfield
- Arborfield with Barkham
- Finchampstead
- Wokingham Without

The Council notes the suggestion in the consultation that 'Wokingham Without' be named 'Pinewood'. The Council strongly supports 'Wokingham Without' given the alignment with the Parish Council and the long history of the current name.

The ERWG gave consideration to the naming convention and would suggest the following:

- Northern changed to 'Thames Ward'
- Twyford and Hurst changed to 'Twyford, Ruscombe and Hurst'
- North Woodley changed to 'Bulmershe and Coronation'
- East Woodley changed to 'Loddon'
- South Woodley changed to 'South Lake'
- North Earley changed to 'Maiden Erleigh and Whitegates'
- South East Earley changed to 'Hawkedon'
- South West Earley changed to 'Hillside'
- Southern changed to 'Spencer's Wood and Swallowfield'

Town and Parish Council Arrangements

The Council did not take a view on the proposed electoral arrangements for Town and Parish Councils. We believe that the warding arrangements for the Towns and Parish

Councils are principally a matter for them and that they are best placed to make representations to the Commission.

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