



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Appendix 1

**COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW
FOR PARISHES WITHIN THE BOROUGH'S STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT LOCATIONS
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Wokingham Town Council and Wokingham Without Parish Council



Introduction

Wokingham Borough Council has resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review (CGR) covering those parishes which are part of the North and South Wokingham Strategic Development Locations (SDLs). These SDLs have seen significant development in the past few years, and will continue to see significant further development and consequential increases in population, over the next 5 to 10 years.

The Review will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, and guidance issued by the department of Communities and Local Government, and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) in March 2010.

A Community Governance Review can consider one or more of the following:

- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
- Altering the boundaries of existing parishes;
- Making changes to the electoral arrangements of a parish council;
- The dissolution of a parish council.

The recommendations made in the Review should bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

The Council will undertake the review as the relevant 'Principal Council', and will decide whether to give effect to recommendations made. In making that decision, they will need to take account of the views of local people.

The 2007 Act requires the Council to publish the Terms of Reference for the Review. This is intended as a prompt for local consideration, initial discussions and the exchange of ideas, which will in turn assist the Council to prepare proposals.

Why is the council undertaking the review?

The Council is undertaking a Community Governance Review at this time as a result of a request from Wokingham Town Council to modify their existing parish boundary, so that it includes all of the South Wokingham SDL development, including the part that currently lies within the Wokingham Without parish boundary.



The new development is continuous with the existing Wokingham Town settlement, and is essentially an expansion of the existing community. The Town Council feel that new residents will naturally consider themselves as an integral part of the Town, and make use of the facilities and services it provides.

It is considered that the existing boundary between Wokingham Town Council and Wokingham Without Parish Council would become anomalous as new houses are built across it resulting in people being in different parishes from their neighbours.

In addition, the Council proposes to review the current allocation of councillors within Wokingham Town Council, to ensure that there are no significant differences in levels of representation between different wards due to the increased population. There are no plans to increase the overall number of councillors above the current number of 25.

The population increase within the Wokingham Town area is also driven by development within the North Wokingham SDL, which is wholly within the existing boundary.

The Review will ensure that community governance within the North and South Wokingham SDLs is based on areas which reflect community identity and interest, and which are viable as administrative units. It is important that electors should be able to identify clearly with the parish or town council area in which they are resident. This engenders a sense of identity and community and lends strength and legitimacy to the parish structure.

Wokingham Borough Council believes that town and parish councils play an important role in terms of community empowerment at the local level. It wants to ensure that there is clarity and transparency to the areas that the councils represent and that the electoral arrangements and the allocation of councillors are appropriate, equitable and readily understood by the electorate.

Proposals for Consideration

1. Boundary Change	
Matter Under Consideration	The South Wokingham Strategic Development Location (SDL) is continuous with the existing Wokingham Town development but straddles the existing parish boundary between Wokingham Town and Wokingham Without.
Parishes and Town Councils Affected	Wokingham Town Council, Wokingham Without Parish Council.



Proposal	<p>Redraw the current parish boundary so that the South Wokingham SDL is wholly within the Wokingham Town boundary, and is easily identifiable to local residents.</p> <p>The draft proposal can be found in Appendix A.</p> <p>Following consultation, a final recommendation will be made on the exact location of the new boundary.</p>
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2. Reallocating the Number of Seats per Ward

Matter Under Consideration	<p>The proposed boundary change (see 1. above) means that the South Wokingham SDL will be wholly within the extended Wokingham Town boundary, and will significantly increase the population within this council area. The North Wokingham SDL is already wholly within the Wokingham Town boundary, and will also significantly increase the population.</p> <p>To ensure that effective representation can continue, the number of councillors in each council ward should be proportionate to the expected number of constituents.</p>
Parishes and Town Councils Affected	Wokingham Town Council.
Proposal	<p>Review the number of councillors allocated to each ward, based on the current and projected populations.</p> <p>The draft proposal can be found in Appendix B.</p> <p>Following consultation, a final recommendation will be made on any changes required to ensure that the number of councillors in each ward is proportionate to the expected number of electors.</p> <p>Note that there are no plans to create any new wards, or to increase the overall number of councillors from the existing 25.</p> <p>The change would take effect from the next scheduled elections in 2019, so no additional cost will be incurred by local tax payers.</p>



There is no provision in legislation that each parish or town councillor should represent the same number of electors. However, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) believes it is not in the interests of effective and convenient local government, either for voters or councillors, to have significant differences in levels of representation between different wards. Such variations could make it difficult, in workload terms, for councillors to adequately represent the interests of residents.

How will the Council conduct consultations during the Review?

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires the Council to consult the local government electors for the area under review, and any other person or body who appears to have an interest in the review, and to take the representations that are received into account by judging them against the criteria in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

The Council will publish all decisions taken in the review and the reasons for taking those decisions. The Council will notify consultees of the outcome of the review. This will be done using the Council's website, general press releases and by personal communication.

Following the consultation, the Council will also consider making a request to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to make any related alterations to Borough Council ward boundaries. The Commission may agree to make any required alterations to ensure that parish and Borough ward boundaries are coterminous. It should be noted that the LGBCE may also choose to instigate its own Electoral Boundary Review within the Borough following the completion of the Review.



Timetable for Review

The 2007 Act requires that a principal council must complete a Community Governance Review within 12 months of the date of publication of terms of reference. The proposed timetable below complies with the legal requirement.

Action	Duration	Dates
Wokingham Borough Council (full Council) agrees Terms of Reference	1 day	Thursday 18 February 2016
Publication of Terms of Reference on the Council website and formal start of the review	1 day	Friday 19 February 2016
Consultation	8 weeks	Monday 22 February 2016 to Friday 15 April 2016
Prepare/publish final proposals	1 month	Late May/Early June 2016
Wokingham Borough Council approval of final proposals (by full Council)	1 day	July 2016 <i>(note that this may be deferred until the September meeting if a large volume of feedback is received)</i>
Publication of recommendations	1 day	Late July 2016
Implementation of changes	1 day	To be decided dependent on the published recommendations
Recommendation to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) for any consequential alterations to ward boundaries	1 day	To be decided dependent on the published recommendations



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How to take part in the Consultation

The Council invites feedback on the Review. All feedback received will also be considered when the final recommendations are formulated.

Full details of the consultation will be publicised on the Council's website, in the local media, and via community groups, including SDL Community Forums.

Representation will also be accepted in any written, typed or similarly recorded format and should be addressed to:

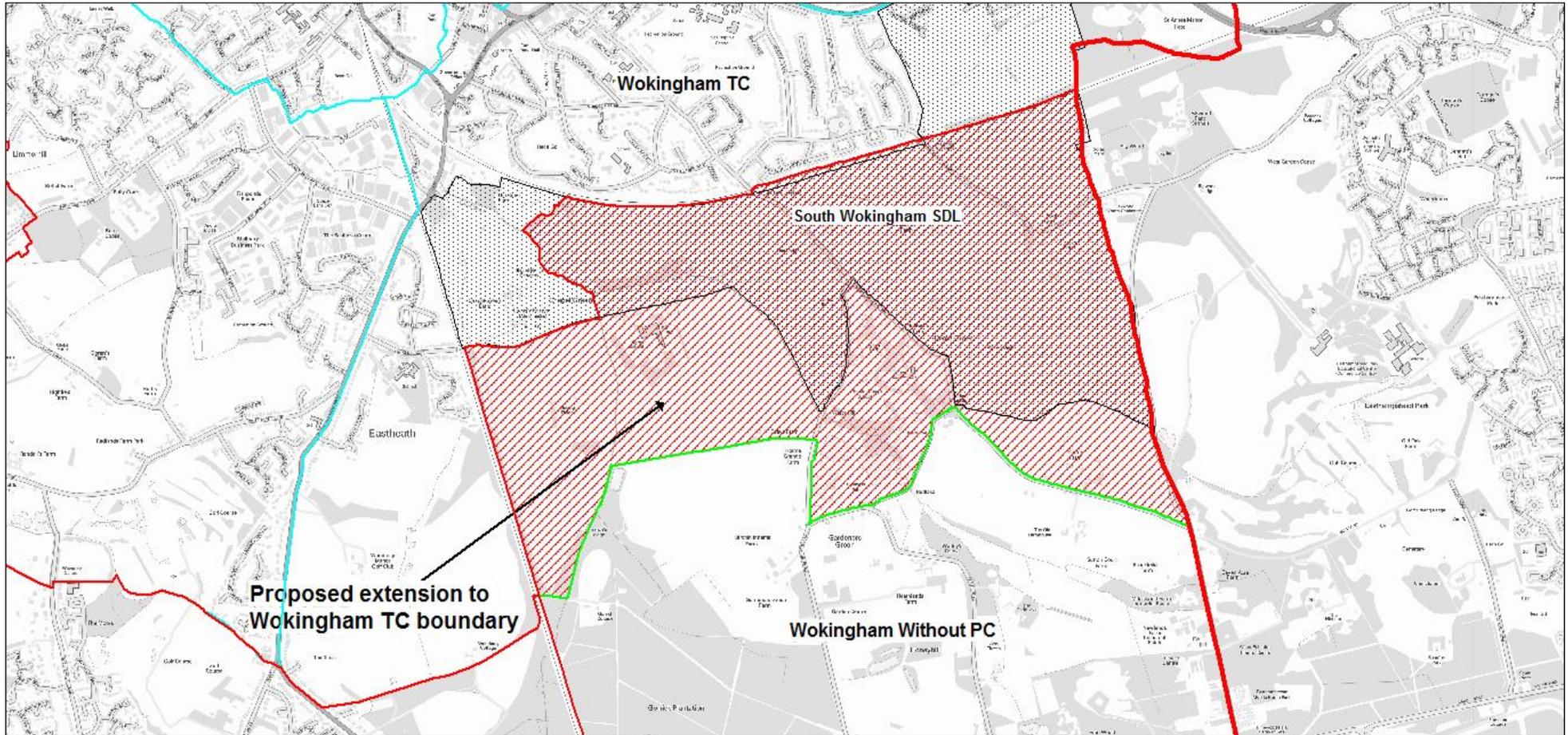
*Consultation Officer,
Wokingham Borough Council,
FREEPOST RG147,
Wokingham,
Berkshire,
RG40 1WN*

Or may be emailed to: Communityengagement@wokingham.gov.uk.

For further information about the consultation, please contact Customer Services on (0118) 974 6000.

Appendix A

A proposal for the new boundary between Wokingham Town Council and Wokingham Without Parish Council:



Appendix B:

Wokingham Town Council - Electorate Forecasts

When considering the electoral arrangements for a parish the Council must consider any change in the number or distribution of the electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts. The Council has used the most recent register of electors to provide the existing parish electorate figures. Projections are based on planning assumptions and likely growth within the current parish boundaries. It is assumed that the new homes in the proposed extension to the Town Council boundary will be equally split between the Westcott East and Westcott West wards.

Wokingham Town	Current (Sept. 2015 Register)			Projected 2021			Proposed Seat Allocation		
	Seats	Electorate	Avg. electors per seat	Seats	Electorate	Avg. electors per seat	Seats	Change	Avg. electors per seat
<i>Emmbrook North</i>	3	2,550	850	3	3,650	1,217	3		1,217
<i>Emmbrook South</i>	3	4,140	1,380	3	4,350	1,450	3		1,450
<i>Evendons East</i>	3	2,522	841	3	2,650	883	2	-1	1,325
<i>Evendons West</i>	5	4,590	918	5	4,820	964	3	-2	1,607
<i>Norreys East</i>	4	3,876	969	4	4,720	1,180	4		1,180
<i>Norreys West</i>	3	3,224	1,075	3	3,770	1,257	3		1,257
<i>Wescott East</i>	2	1,971	986	2	3,800	1,900	4	+2	950
<i>Westcott West</i>	2	2,397	1,199	2	3,080	1,540	3	+1	1,027

Whilst the proposal shows a lower ratio of electors per seat for the Wescott wards, this is expected to adjust as the South Wokingham SDL development completes around 2026, with the majority of the new dwellings being within the Wescott wards.

Wokingham Town	Current (Sept. 2015 Register)			Projected 2026			Proposed Seat Allocation		
	Seats	Electorate	Avg. electors per seat	Seats	Electorate	Avg. electors per seat	Seats	Change	Avg. electors per seat
<i>Emmbrook North</i>	3	2,550	850	3	4,250	1,417	3		1,417
<i>Emmbrook South</i>	3	4,140	1,380	3	4,550	1,517	3		1,517
<i>Evendons East</i>	3	2,522	841	3	2,770	923	2	-1	1,385
<i>Evendons West</i>	5	4,590	918	5	5,050	1,010	3	-2	1,683
<i>Norreys East</i>	4	3,876	969	4	4,900	1,225	4		1,225
<i>Norreys West</i>	3	3,224	1,075	3	3,930	1,310	3		1,310
<i>Wescott East</i>	2	1,971	986	2	5,010	2,505	4	+2	1,253
<i>Westcott West</i>	2	2,397	1,199	2	4,300	2,150	3	+1	1,433