

Report Title:	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Electoral Review – Submission on Draft Recommendations
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information?	NO - Part I
Member reporting:	Councillor McWilliams - Principal Member for Housing and Communications Councillor Dudley - Leader of the Council
Meeting and Date:	Council – 24 April 2018
Responsible Officer(s):	Alison Alexander - Managing Director and Returning Officer
Wards affected:	All

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REPORT SUMMARY

1. In September 2017, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) stated that it was minded to recommend a future council size for the Royal Borough of 43 members from May 2019.
2. The LGBCE ran its phase of public consultation from September to December 2018, inviting representations on how ward boundaries could be drawn to accommodate 43 members.
3. On 6 March 2018, the LGBCE published its draft recommendations for the Royal Borough based on the evidence received during the first public consultation. It recommended that there should be 42 members representing the Borough and proposed a pattern of nineteen wards, four fewer than there are now.
4. From 6 March until 7 May 2018, the LGBCE are running a second phase of public consultation and inviting comments on its draft recommendations. The Royal Borough's Electoral Review Working Group (ERWG) have formulated a response to the draft recommendations, supporting the drawing of wards in some areas and proposing alternative ward boundaries where appropriate. This report sets out the ERWG's recommendations to Full Council to amend the boundaries of 3 new wards, as set out in the draft recommendations.

1 DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Council:

- i) **Agrees that the Royal Borough's representation on the electoral review draft recommendations be submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.**

2 REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Royal Borough submitted its Stage Two report on warding patterns to the LGBCE on 15 December 2017 as part of the first phase of public consultation. The LGBCE received fifty-five submissions in total in response to their consultation on ward

boundaries. The evidence outlined in the fifty-five submissions was used by the LGBCE to inform the formulation of their draft recommendations.

- 2.2 On 6 March 2018, the LGBCE published its draft recommendations and proposed a revised future council size of 42 members representing nineteen wards. They will be accepting comments and representations on their draft recommendations during a nine-week consultation period which runs until 7 May 2018. The Royal Borough has been encouraged to engage in the second phase of public consultation and to make a submission in the same way as it has done at earlier stages of the review. This is the most effective way for the Borough to influence the outcome of the review.
- 2.3 The cross-party Working Group that was assembled for Stages One and Two of the review reconvened to discuss the details of the draft recommendations. The Group, after considering comments from individual ward councillors on specific areas of concern, have formulated counter-proposals to the LGBCE's draft recommendations for 3 wards in Windsor which they believe better reflects and protects established community identities. The ERWG is recommending to register support of the draft recommendations proposed for the wards in Maidenhead constituency and to present two alternative warding patterns in relation to three wards in Windsor; Ascot & Sunninghill, Clewer East and Great Park & Old Windsor.
- 2.4 The two alternative warding patterns are referred to as Option A and Option B. Option A is the preferred option as it better reflects community identities. Under this pattern Ascot and Sunninghill would return a ward -16% under the average number of electors per councillor, Clewer East would sit at +25% and Great Park & Old Windsor would sit at -25%.
- 2.5 Option B delivers better electoral equality but the case for defending community identities is less robust. Under Option B, Ascot & Sunninghill would return a ward -16% under the average number of electors per councillor, Clewer East would sit at +9% and Great Park & Old Windsor would sit at -13%.
- 2.6 It is proposed to offer the LGBCE two alternative solutions which may both be considered for adoption. It has been observed that other local authorities have provided more than one mapping option when making representations to the LGBCE for their own electoral reviews. This is standard practice and following a similar approach allows the Royal Borough to show how both the importance of delivering electoral equality and community interests have been given equal weighting.

Table 1: Options

Option	Comments
Support the cross-party member Working Group draft recommendations report which proposes changes to 3 wards in Windsor via Options A and B, and supports the boundaries drawn for Maidenhead.	This option proposes altering 3 wards in Windsor with no changes proposed for Maidenhead. With Option A, 3 of the wards will exceed the average number of electors per councillor at 2,829. With Option B, 2 of the 3 wards would exceed the variance.
The recommended option	
Reject the cross-party Member Working Group draft	If the Borough's submission were to be rejected by Full Council, the LGBCE

Option	Comments
<p>recommendations report which proposes changes to 3 wards in Windsor via Options A and B and supports the boundaries drawn for Maidenhead.</p> <p>Not recommended</p>	<p>would not receive a formal representation and RBWM would be unable to influence the formulation of the LGBCE's final recommendations which are due to be published in July 2018. Furthermore, the LGBCE would use the evidence of other submissions received from parish councils and members of the public etc. to shape their final recommendations.</p>

3 KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The LGBCE committed to conduct an electoral review of the Royal Borough and to conclude the process by summer of 2018. The changes brought about by the outcome of the review will take effect at the next scheduled local elections in May 2019. There is no feasibility to suspend or defer the process now that a commitment to undertake the review has been made and the LGBCE have indicated that the Royal Borough's new electoral arrangements will take effect for the next scheduled local elections on 2 May 2019.
- 3.2 Stage One of the review (the determination of council size) concluded in September 2017 when the LGBCE announced its provisional recommendation on future council size. Stage Two (warding pattern boundaries) commenced on 26 September and will conclude on 10 July 2018 once the final recommendations on the Royal Borough's future warding patterns have been published. The review in its entirety will complete by the end of 2018, when the Statutory Order to legally formalise the new electoral arrangements has been made.

Table 2: Key implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
Draft recommendations report prepared for Full Council and submitted to the LGBCE.	After 7 May 2018 deadline set by the LGBCE.	By 7 May 2018 deadline set by the LGBCE.	Before 7 May 2018 deadline set by the LGBCE.	Before 30 April 2018	Final recommendations published in July 2018. Statutory Order made by end of 2018.

4 FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

- 4.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising as a direct result of this report. However, it should be noted that as the number of elected members will reduce by 25% at the next scheduled elections (the reduction of fourteen members), there will be efficiency savings from May 2019.

- 4.2 The draft recommendations report proposes alternative warding arrangements for 3 wards for consideration for the LGBCE. These are the Royal Borough's recommendations and the LGBCE may or may not decide to adopt these alternative patterns. The LGBCE will consider all of the evidence submitted to them during the second phase of consultation and each consultee's representation will be considered on merit and the strength of the arguments presented. The final recommendations published in July 2018 may or may not partially or fully mirror the Royal Borough's proposals. The final number of members and the corresponding ward boundaries will not be known until the final recommendations are published in July 2018, and the extent of the savings will be realised at this point.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The second stage of the electoral review has been conducted in accordance with the advice and guidance provided by officers at the LGBCE and written materials made available by the LGBCE on their website.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The risks identified are set out in Table 4.

Table 4: Impact of risk and mitigation

Risks	Uncontrolled Risk	Controls	Controlled Risk
The draft recommendations report is not submitted by the 7 May 2018 deadline set by the LGBCE.	Medium	Report submitted to Full Council in April 2018 following agreed recommendation from the Working Group	Low
The warding pattern proposals outlined in the report are not supported by the LGBCE, and as a result, the LGBCE does not use the Borough's alternative warding patterns to form its final recommendations in July 2018.	High	A compelling case is made to demonstrate how the alternative warding patterns best reflect community identity.	Low
The LGBCE approves an alternative pattern of wards supplied by another	High	RBWM's submission on the draft recommendations report will	Low

Risks	Uncontrolled Risk	Controls	Controlled Risk
stakeholder in the process, e.g parish council(s), political parties, member(s) of the public, community organisation(s)		demonstrate how the alternative patterns proposed by the Royal Borough are the best solution for addressing the preservation of existing communities and local ties.	

7 POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- 7.1 The reduction of the council size by 25% from 57 to 42 members will have a significant impact on the future structure of the organisation from May 2019. These implications were highlighted in the Stage One report on council size.
- 7.2 The LGBCE's draft recommendations propose improve electoral equality on the basis of 2,829 electors per councillor.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 On 12/13 March 2018, all Royal Borough members were invited to a briefing by officers on the detail of the LGBCE's proposed draft recommendations and were advised on how they could refer their views to a representative of the Working Group for consideration at a meeting of the group, or how they could make their own independent representation to the LGBCE where their views were not endorsed by the Working Group collective. In addition, all members were invited to a second briefing by officers on 16 April on the Working Group's agreed recommendation to Full Council on a response to the draft recommendations. Between March and April 2018, all members were sent copies of the working drafts of maps for Windsor for their comments.
- 8.2 The LGBCE do not provide definitive advice on how local authorities should approach consulting with their members as part of the Stage 2 process. They did however, advise that it is common practice for local authorities to use a cross-party Working Group to make recommendations to Full Council and that they supported the Royal Borough's adoption of this approach.
- 8.3 As facilitator of the review, the LGBCE consult with certain stakeholders directly as part of the wider public engagement strategy for promoting the review. Parish councillors, elected members, political parties and local organisations operating within the Royal Borough were contacted by the LGBCE and told how they could make their own representations on the draft recommendations, in the same way as the first consultation on warding patterns which ran from September to December 2017. RBWM is a consultee in the electoral review process and the administration of the review is facilitated by the LGBCE.

- 8.4 In order to maximise engagement of the review and to support the LGBCE, the Royal Borough reminded parish councils of the importance of making their own representations to the LGBCE during the consultation, and to register their approval of how the draft boundaries have been drawn where the parish councils supported them.
- 8.5 The LGBCE will publish all of the representations they received from March to May 2018 on their website in July 2018 when their Final Recommendations are published.

9 TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Table 5: Implementation timetable

Date	Details
2 May 2018 following approval by Full Council on 24 April 2018.	Submit Stage Two warding pattern report to LGBCE.
8 May – 10 July 2018	LGBCE considers all of the representations they have received from March to May (second phase of public consultation).
10 July 2018	LGBCE publishes its Final Recommendations
1 October 2018	Polling district & polling places review commences
September 2018	LGBCE lays Statutory Order before Parliament.
November 2018	Statutory Order expected to be made
May 2019	New council size takes effect

10 APPENDICES

- 10.1 Appendix A: The RBWM Electoral Review Stage Two – Response to Draft Recommendations

11 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 11.1 The background documents to this report to Council are:
- Report to Full Council on 27 September 2016 requesting an electoral review
 - Report to Full Council on 27 June 2017 on future council size.
 - Report to Full Council on 12 December 2017 on future warding patterns.
- 11.2 All reports are available on the Council website.

12 CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Comment ed & returned
Cllr McWilliams	Principal Member	13/04/2018	Returned
Alison Alexander	Managing Director	13/04/2018	Returned

REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?
Key decision	No
Report Author: Suzanne Martin, Electoral Services Manager, 01628 682935.	

Electoral Review

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Response to Draft Recommendations

April 2018

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Map 6 – Great Park & Old Windsor (Option A)

Map 7 – Great Park & Old Windsor (Option B)

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is in the process of reviewing the electoral arrangements for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM). Any changes, through the review, will take effect at the next scheduled local elections on 2 May 2019.
- 1.2 An electoral review determines the number of elected members in the council, the number and naming of the new wards and their corresponding boundaries to accommodate the new number of elected members for these wards.

2. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS OVERVIEW

- 2.1 The LGBCE ran a public consultation from September to December 2017 inviting comments on proposed warding patterns to the proposal for 43 members. The Commission used the evidence supplied during this consultation to inform the formulation of its draft recommendations, which were published on 6 March 2018.
- 2.2 The LGBCE's draft recommendations recommend that the Royal Borough should be represented by 42 members, 15 fewer than there are currently, and proposed a borough-wide warding scheme comprising 19 wards, see table 1. The recommended number of elected Members, 42, means that the average number of electors each councillor will represent from 2019 is 2,829.

Table 1: LGBCE's draft recommendations for RBWM

Ward	Electors (2023)	Cllrs	Electors Per Cllr	Variance from Avg*
Ascot & Sunninghill	7,381	3	2,460	-13%
Belmont	6,141	2	3,071	+9%
Bisham & Cookham	5,912	2	2,956	+4%
Boyn Hill	5,532	2	2,766	-2%
Bray	6,144	2	3,072	+9%
Clewer & Dedworth East	5,691	2	2,892	+1%
Clewer & Dedworth West	5,912	2	2,910	+4%
Clewer East	5,452	2	2,726	-4%
Cox Green	6,038	2	3,019	7%
Datchet, Horton & Wraysbury	8,481	3	2,827	0%
Eton & Castle	9,038	3	3,013	+6%
Furze Platt	6,083	2	3,042	+7%
Hurley & Walthams	5,190	2	2,595	-8%
Oldfield	6,006	2	3,003	+6%
Old Windsor	5,630	2	2,815	-1%
Pinkneys Green	5,931	2	2,966	5%
Riverside	5,727	2	2,864	+1%
South Ascot & Sunningdale	7,345	3	2,448	-13%
St Mary's	5,204	2	2,602	-8%
Total	118,838	42		

- 2.3 The draft recommendation of 19 wards means four fewer than current. Comprising eleven two-member wards in the Maidenhead constituency area and four two-member and four three-member wards in the Windsor constituency area. Five wards in Maidenhead will remain unchanged, all other existing wards will change. In addition it is proposed to create a new ward for the town centre of Maidenhead.
- 2.4 As part of the draft recommendations, the LGBCE are proposing to make consequential changes to three parishes' electoral arrangements; Bray, Old Windsor and Sunninghill & Ascot. The LGBCE does not have the power to change the external boundaries of the parishes, but has proposed alterations to the warding arrangements and distribution of seats within these parishes which need to occur as a direct consequence of amending the borough's ward boundaries.

3. RBWM's REACTIONS TO DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Whilst the Royal Borough has been keenly awaiting the publication of the draft recommendations and notes their detail with acute interest, it has been with an element of surprise to learn that the LGBCE has proposed a revised council size of 42 and has not been able to formulate a scheme on its original recommended figure of 43. Similarly, the Royal Borough has observed with interest that the LGBCE found that constructing a warding pattern under both a 42 and 43 member pattern for the south of the borough (the Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale area) particularly challenging due to the geographical constraints of the local authority's external boundaries; an experience that was shared by RBWM's Working Group in the process of devising the Borough's warding pattern proposal during the first consultation.
- 3.2 RBWM are pleased that the LGBCE have based the foundations of their warding scheme on the evidence supplied in the Royal Borough's submission and that as a result, the disruption to existing parish electoral arrangements is kept to a minimum.
- 3.3 The Royal Borough, does refute, however that the council submission deviated from the agreed electoral forecasts and suggests instead that a difference in methodology for constructing warding patterns accounts for the discrepancies of electorate figures between RBWM and the LGBCE.
- 3.4 RBWM is on the whole, satisfied with the warding scheme proposed for Maidenhead. This is due to the fact that the pattern very closely resembles the council's scheme and five wards in Maidenhead; Bisham & Cookham, Bray, Cox Green, Furze Platt and Hurley & Walthams remain unchanged, as recommended by the council. Where the LGBCE have digressed from the Royal Borough's scheme and proposed drawing boundary lines in the town centre elsewhere, it is noted that these deviations are relatively minor in nature, which have been proposed in order to deliver improved electoral equality.

- 3.5 The pattern proposed for the Windsor constituency area, however, is a greater cause for concern and is not supported by RBWM. Whilst the warding scheme proposed for the two Windsor wards north of the Thames is supported, (Datchet, Horton & Wraysbury and Eton & Castle wards), and two of the central Windsor wards (Clewes & Dedworth East and Clewes & Dedworth West), there are fundamental issues arising from the way in which the boundary between Ascot and Sunninghill ward and Old Windsor has been drawn and the knock-on effects with the neighbouring ward of Clewes East. The Royal Borough does not believe these boundaries support cohesive local government as they do not best reflect the communities they represent. As a result, the boundaries are not endorsed by the council and RBWM is making alternative proposals on how the Ascot & Sunninghill, Old Windsor and Clewes East boundaries should be drawn.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 RBWM has endeavoured to support the LGBCE in raising awareness about the draft recommendations since their publication in March 2018. The parish councils in particular, have been encouraged to respond to the LGBCE directly and to lodge their support of the proposals where relevant, so as to ensure that the LGBCE receives a balanced view on their recommendations and does not receive solely adverse comments on their draft warding scheme. As the draft recommendations do not affect the vast majority of parishes' existing electoral arrangements and the borough ward to which they relate, it is expected that the parishes will broadly favour the recommendations and it is hoped that they make submissions to the LGBCE to this effect.
- 4.2 The Royal Borough hopes that by maximising awareness of the draft recommendations and encouraging residents' engagement with the proposed changes, the LGBCE will receive a substantive amount of evidence from the public to support the assertion that the proposed division of Windsor is not in existing communities' interests. It is hoped that the evidence base for community identity put forward by the public regarding the Old Windsor and Ascot and Sunninghill area will complement the alternative warding pattern for the area proposed by RBWM.

5. RBWM METHODOLOGY FOR DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS RESPONSE

- 5.1 To formulate an alternative pattern of wards for submission to the LGBCE in response to their draft recommendations, the Cross-Party Working Group appointed for stages one and two of the review was reconvened. The Group consisted of the same members as at previous stages of the review.
- 5.2 The Working Group met three times between 6 March and 11 April in order to compose a recommendation to put forward to Full Council in April. Members of the Working Group requested that officers brief all 57 members on the detail of the draft recommendations in March, and share developing mapping options for alternative wards with all members. Feedback and suggestions from members about the developing patterns were collated by officers and presented to members for discussion at meetings of the working group.

- 5.3 The Working Group agreed to formulate a submission based on alternative patterns to address the problematic warding of Windsor and to express its support of the drafting of Maidenhead. The Group's strategy has been to propose a pattern of wards that prioritises the LGBCE's consideration of community identity, which has taken precedence over the need to improve electoral equality and ensuring that all wards fall within the 10% tolerance level recommended by the LGBCE in certain circumstances.
- 5.4 The Group has taken stock of the LGBCE's own admission that on occasions it is impossible to deliver both electoral equality and preserve community identities and that these two priorities can contradict one another more often than not. It can be inferred that it is the endorsement of this philosophy which has led the LGBCE to make final recommendations for other local authorities which exceed the 10% tolerance threshold, most notably in the electoral reviews of Cambridgeshire County Council and its Abbey ward at -16% and Chester and Cheshire West Council and its Blacon ward at -15%.
- 5.5 It is noted with interest that the LGBCE has proposed as part of RBWM's draft recommendations boundaries for Ascot & Sunninghill and South Ascot & Sunningdale wards which exceed the recommended tolerance levels at -13%. The Group believes that it is imperative at this stage of the review to defend the case for community identity and is prepared to offer an alternative pattern which exceeds the tolerance levels in specific alternative wards for Windsor using the same philosophy endorsed and subsequently applied by the LGBCE for other electoral reviews and for their draft recommendations of RBWM. RBWM has provided a compelling set of evidence to support its case in the interests of preserving existing communities.
- 5.6 That said, the Group has recognised the importance of balancing the preservation of community identity and the feeling of local ties with the delivery of electoral equality, and has strived to deliver alternative patterns that fall within the 10% tolerance level in the first instance. When calculating the future electorate of alternative warding patterns, the Group has used the LGBCE's forecasting methodology of electors to councillors by current polling district. (This differs from the methodology applied during the first consultation where the average of 1.79 electors to each property was applied to the whole of the local authority area.)
- 5.7 With a revised average of 2,829 electors per councillor under a scheme of 42 councillors, the following tolerance levels were observed by the Working Group when drawing an alternative pattern of wards.

Table 2: Ward elector target range

Balanced Pattern	Elector Target Range		
Draft Ward	-10%	0%	+10%
1-Member Ward	2,456	2,829	3,112
2-Member Ward	5,092	5,658	6,224
3-Member Ward	7,638	8,487	9,336

- 5.8 The Working Group has endeavoured to ensure that there is as little electoral variance as possible by geographical region across the borough. In Maidenhead, for example, the greatest electoral variance between neighbouring wards is 17%. (Belmont at 9% and St Mary's at -8%) Likewise it is acknowledged that in the south of the borough, electors will be considerably under-represented (Ascot & Sunninghill, South Ascot & Sunningdale and Great Park & Old Windsor wards) all falling below the 10% threshold. The geographical constraints of the south and the remoteness of some of these areas justifies the overrepresentation in these particular circumstances.
- 5.9 The Working Group has not focused on providing alternative names to those proposed by the LGBCE, mainly because the names selected in the draft recommendations are based on the council's submission which is welcomed. The exception to this is the alternative name proposed for the Great Park and Old Windsor area. The Working Group hopes that the LGBCE will take heed of the names suggested by the public during the second consultation stage, as local people are best placed to make suggestions on the names assigned to their own communities.

6. PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE WARDING PATTERN

- 6.1 RBWM is proposing alternative warding patterns for three of the nineteen wards proposed by the LGBCE in its draft recommendations. The changes relate to wards for Old Windsor, Ascot & Sunninghill and Clewer East. RBWM has composed two alternative warding patterns for Windsor in respect of these wards; Option A and Option B. RBWM has made the observation that other local authorities have proposed more than one scheme when drawing ward boundaries as part of the consultation processes in their electoral reviews, and is following suit in order to better influence and persuade the LGBCE of their views as a local authority.
- 6.2 The preferred option is Option A, which RBWM feels best defends and protects communities. It is noted, however, that the electoral variances between the altered wards in this pattern are considerable. In light of this, RBWM is proposing a second alternative option which it hopes the LGBCE will consider if it deems the electoral variances in its Option A too great to consider applying to its final scheme. The second pattern is referred to as Option B, which offers better electoral equality than Option A, but is weaker on the grounds of defending existing communities than Option A.
- 6.3 Both Options A and B return an alternative warding pattern for RBWM of 19 wards; 15 two-member wards and 4 three-member wards which accommodate 42 elected members from 2019. This is the same allocation of seats as proposed by the LGBCE.
- 6.4 The differences between each option are set out below. For both options, the same pattern for Ascot & Sunninghill is proposed. They differ only in respect of the boundaries between Clewer East and Great Park & Old Windsor.

Option A – Preferred Option

Ascot & Sunninghill (-16%)

Clewer East (+25%)

Great Park & Old Windsor (-25%)

Option B

Ascot & Sunninghill (-16%)

Clewer East (+9%)

Great Park & Old Windsor (-13%)

6.5 Table 3 below sets out the options for the borough-wide scheme in more detail.

Table 3: Proposed alternative warding patterns

Ward	Cllrs	Option A			Option B		
		Electors -2023	Electors Per Cllr	Variance from Avg*	Electors -2023	Electors Per Cllr	Variance from Avg*
Ascot & Sunninghill	3	7,105	2,368	-16%	7,105	2,368	-16%
Belmont	2	6,141	3,071	9%	6,141	3,071	9%
Bisham & Cookham	2	5,912	2,956	4%	5,912	2,956	4%
Boyn Hill	2	5,532	2,766	-2%	5,532	2,766	-2%
Bray	2	6,144	3,072	9%	6,144	3,072	9%
Clewer & Dedworth East	2	5,691	2,892	1%	5,691	2,892	1%
Clewer & Dedworth West	2	5,912	2,910	4%	5,912	2,910	4%
Clewer East	2	7,076	3,538	25%	6,191	3,096	9%
Cox Green	2	6,038	3,019	7%	6,038	3,019	7%
Datchet, Horton & Wrybury	3	8,481	2,827	0%	8,481	2,827	0%
Eton & Castle	3	9,038	3,013	6%	9,038	3,013	6%
Furze Platt	2	6,083	3,042	7%	6,083	3,042	7%
Hurley & Walthams	2	5,190	2,595	-8%	5,190	2,595	-8%
Oldfield	2	6,006	3,003	6%	6,006	3,003	6%
Great Park & Old Windsor	2	4,282	2,141	-25%	4,939	2,470	-13%
Pinkneys Green	2	5,931	2,966	5%	5,931	2,966	5%
Riverside	2	5,727	2,864	1%	5,727	2,864	1%

South Ascot & Sunningdale	3	7,345	2,448	-13%	7,345	2,448	-13%
St Mary's	2	5,204	2,602	-8%	5,204	2,602	-8%
Total	42	118,838			118,838		

An overview of the two alternative borough-wide schemes for Windsor can be viewed in Maps 1 and 2.

Maidenhead Constituency Area

Belmont – No changes

- 6.6 RBWM does not feel that the way in which the boundaries for this ward have been drawn by the LGBCE adversely affects the Belmont identity. The drafting of Belmont closely resembles its own warding submission where the North Town area is incorporated into Belmont from Riverside. RBWM accepts the way in which this ward has been drawn in the interests of delivering electoral equality.

Bisham & Cookham – No changes

- 6.7 RBWM fully endorses the LGBCE's proposal for no changes to the existing Bisham & Cookham ward boundary. The way the boundaries are currently drawn ensures that the ward will deliver good electoral equality in 2023.
- 6.8 RBWM supports the continued alignment of the borough and parish boundary lines where both Bisham & Cookham parishes lie fully within the borough ward boundaries. The continuation of this arrangement delivers the most effective local government.

Boyn Hill – No changes

- 6.9 RBWM supports the LGBCE's assertion that Boyn Grove Park which contains Boyne Hill Cricket Club and Boyn Grove Library should be integrated into the new Boyn Hill boundary. These entities clearly deliver services integral to Boyn Hill and should form part of the ward. As there are no electors represented in the park and transferring the area from Pinkneys Green into Boyn Hill does not have a negative impact on electoral equality for either ward, this further supports the case.
- 6.10 The proposal to use the railway line to mark the eastern boundary of the ward and to transfer Grenfell Park and its immediate environs to the new St Mary's ward is not challenged by RBWM as the communities that exist in this area are located in the town centre and it is a reasonable conclusion to reach that this area could be represented by the new St Mary's, a ward for the town centre.

Bray – No changes

- 6.11 RBWM supports the LGBCE's proposal for no changes to the existing Bray ward boundary. It notes that the current ward will have good electoral equality in 2023 without further amending its boundaries.
- 6.12 Bray's ward boundary will remain coterminous with the parish council that shares its name, and it is believed that the continuation of this arrangement provides the

most effective governance at both levels. It is noted however, that the LGBCE proposes to redistribute the fifteen seats on the parish council across five parish wards, and the naming and drawing of these wards will be amended to reflect the outcome of a recent community governance review to bring the Fisheries area into Bray Parish. RBWM does not oppose the consequential changes proposed by the LGBCE as they are relatively minor and only affect the warding arrangements within the parish, the number of seats and the external boundary remains unaffected.

Cox Green – No changes

6.13 RBWM fully endorses the LGBCE's proposal for no changes to the existing Cox Green ward boundary. It notes that the current ward will have good electoral equality in 2023 without further amending its boundaries.

6.14 Cox Green's ward boundaries will remain coterminous with the parish council that shares its name, and it is believed that the continuation of this arrangement provides the most effective governance at both levels.

Furze Platt – No changes

6.15 RBWM supports the LGBCE's proposal for no changes to the existing Furze Platt boundary and accepts the proposal to keep the whole of the North Town area intact and to transfer all of it to the new Belmont ward. The ward already delivers good electoral equality and established communities which affiliate with the Furze Platt identity are retained within the ward.

Hurley & Walthams – No changes

6.16 RBWM fully endorses the LGBCE's proposal for no changes to the existing Hurley & Walthams ward boundary. It notes that the current ward will have good electoral equality in 2023 without further amending its boundaries.

6.17 As a result of no amendments to the ward boundary, the four parish councils that operate within the area (Hurley Parish, Shottesbrooke Parish, Waltham St Lawrence Parish and White Waltham Parish) will continue to operate under the framework of one borough ward. This continued arrangement delivers effective local government to the electors in this particularly rural area.

Oldfield – No changes

6.18 RBWM supports the LGBCE's recommendation for Oldfield ward as the boundary very closely resembles the council's own submission. RBWM accepts the LGBCE's decision to use the railway line as a prominent marker between Oldfield and St Mary's and respects the decision that the Oldacres and Farthingales area should be absorbed into the new St Mary's ward.

Pinkneys Green – No changes

6.19 RBWM supports the LGBCE's draft recommendations for Pinkneys Green and has no objection to Boyn Grove Park being transferred to Boyn Hill. As stated in paragraph 6.6, the area concerned shares a strong affiliation with Boyn Hill and

the transfer of this area has no impact on the delivery of electoral equality for either ward.

Riverside – No changes

- 6.20 RBWM supports the LGBCE's draft recommendations for Riverside ward and is pleased to see the adoption of its own proposal to use Ray Mill Road West as the divider between Riverside and the new Belmont boundary.

St Mary's – No changes

- 6.21 RBWM notes the LGBCE's alterations to the peripheries of the new town centre ward for Maidenhead in light of the LGBCE's perception that the ward contained too many electors. RBWM has no objection to the railway line being used as the boundary line between St Mary's and the Belmont and Boyn Hill wards on its western edge and agrees that the railway line serves as a strong marker between these wards.
- 6.22 Similarly, as stated in paragraph 6.17, RBWM does not object to Oldacres and the Farthingales transferring to the new St Mary's ward as this area is north of the railway line and has shared interests with other communities in the town centre.

**Windsor Constituency Area
Ascot & Sunninghill – (Map 3)**

- 6.23 The proposed boundary of the new Ascot & Sunninghill ward is not supported by RBWM and it is therefore ardently opposed. It is felt that the warding pattern proposed for this ward is fundamentally flawed as it not only brings together communities which have no shared interests but also divides an existing community.
- 6.24 RBWM requests that the LGBCE gives serious consideration to reinstating the natural boundary of Virginia Water Lake to divide Ascot & Sunninghill from Windsor's Great Park to the north. The boundary has historically always been placed in this location and has been used prior to the last electoral review in 2002 to create the Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale area as a separate unit of RBWM. Furthermore, the northern boundary of Sunninghill and Ascot Parish is marked by Virginia Water Lake, which supports the assertion that the area north of the lake shares no affiliation with the Parish.
- 6.25 The Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale neighbourhood planning area is coterminous with the parish boundaries of Sunninghill & Ascot and Sunningdale. The borough ward boundaries should follow suit and respect these established communities. The fact that the Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale neighbourhood plan is now in place and will influence future development in the region, further supports the assertion that the communities within these boundaries share an affinity. It is significant that both the parish boundaries and the neighbourhood planning area do not extend to the Great Park; that is because this area does not share an affinity with the south and instead associates with Windsor.
- 6.26 If the draft boundary that the LGBCE are proposing for Ascot & Sunninghill ward were to take effect, the three councillors who would represent this ward from 2019 would have great difficulty in accessing all of the electors they represent. The

sheer geographical size of the ward would present a problem, which is further exacerbated by the predominately rural landscape of the Great Park. In order to travel from the Sunninghill and Ascot regions of the ward to the Great Park, it is necessary to cross local authority boundaries into Bracknell as Virginia Water Lake does not allow direct access from this direction.

- 6.27 It is in consideration of the comments outlined in paragraphs 6.22 to 6.24, that RBWM presents the same warding pattern for Ascot & Sunninghill as it did during the first consultation. The natural barrier of Virginia Water Lake is used as the northern ward boundary and the ward is separated from South Ascot and Sunningdale using the same, well-recognised boundary that was used to divide the southern area in half prior to the last electoral review in 2002. This arrangement would deliver a ward which is 16% under the average number of electors per councillor for a three-member ward. As the LGBCE have already made a recommendation that the ward will be under-represented at -13% with the inclusion of the Great Park, it is deemed to be of little consequence to slightly extend the tolerance by an additional three percent. This effect is outweighed by the importance of defending existing communities and is the appropriate solution.

Clewer & Dedworth East – No changes

- 6.28 RBWM is proposing no changes to the Clewer & Dedworth East pattern and accepts the changes that are being proposed by the LGBCE. RBWM is convinced that the decision to use Smiths Lane, Wolf Lane and Hemwood Road as the western boundary marker as suggested by a local resident during the first stage of consultation, is an effective way to draw the ward in the interests of community identities.

Clewer & Dedworth West – No changes

- 6.29 RBWM approves of the way in which the western boundary of the ward which separates it from Bray has been drawn as it remains coterminous with the parliamentary boundary. This factor alone supports the case for cohesive local government as there is a clear distinction between the two halves of the borough and ward boundaries should align with parliamentary boundaries as far as possible.
- 6.30 RBWM on the whole supports the draft recommendations for this ward. The LGBCE propose the addition of Washington Drive as a minor alteration to the council's submission, which is acceptable to RBWM.

Clewer East (Option A) – Changes proposed (Map 4)

- 6.31 RBWM is proposing significant changes to the Clewer East pattern proposed by the LGBCE. The significant change proposed to the composition of this ward relates to the transfer of the area known as the Boltons (Bolton Road and its immediate environs) from Old Windsor as proposed by the LGBCE in their draft recommendations, into Clewer East.
- 6.32 RBWM appeals to the LGBCE to bear in mind that the residents of the Boltons associate themselves with Windsor due to the fact that the area is in such close

proximity to the town centre. Residents of the Boltons have no affiliation with the Old Windsor identity that the LGBCE are proposing they embrace. The King Edward VII hospital and the Territorial Army centre located on Wood Close are both integral parts of the Windsor identity and should belong to a Windsor ward. These establishments have no affinity with Old Windsor.

- 6.33 RBWM's alternative pattern for Clewer East would see Trevelyan Middle School incorporated into the ward. This school is used by children of Windsor residents, which further strengthens the argument to include it in a Windsor-centric ward.
- 6.34 RBWM acknowledges that transferring the whole of the Boltons area into Clewer East returns a ward which is significantly over the recommended tolerance levels at +25%. The Working Group has deliberated long and hard on how to best resolve the conflicting issue of delivering both electoral equality and community interests in relation to the Windsor residents who are located in the Boltons. RBWM's preferred option would see the Boltons as a whole retained in the same ward as all of these residents use the services of central Windsor and identify strongly with this community. It is believed that the requirement to defend the Boltons' identity far outweighs the case for electoral equality.

Clewer East (Option B) – Changes proposed (Map 5)

- 6.35 In the interests of delivering better electoral equality than that proposed in Option A, Option B examines the possibility of splitting the Boltons between Clewer East and Old Windsor. Using the Bolton Road as the boundary line as a prominent A-road, electors located in the pocket north of the Bolton Road should be paired with Windsor, as geographically they are in closer proximity to the town centre. Residents to the south of Bolton Road, which includes the streets of Queen Anne's Road, Queen's Acre, Wood Close and Bourne Avenue, should be placed with Great Park & Old Windsor. It should be noted that RBWM does not endorse the splitting of the Bolton, but is proposing a compromise solution in recognition of the fact that Great Park & Old Windsor and Clewer East in Option A may not be supported by the LGBCE due to the scale of electoral variance.

Datchet, Horton & Wraysbury – No changes

- 6.36 Although the LGBCE propose drawing the boundary lines north of the Thames significantly differently to the suggestions of the borough council, RBWM supports the draft recommendations for this ward and proposes no further changes. RBWM respects the LGBCE's decision to base their recommendations on the evidence supplied by Datchet, Eton, Horton and Wraysbury parish councils during the first consultation and believes that the cases for retaining established communities as explained in their own submissions, serves as effective reasoning for how the LGBCE has composed its new wards. RBWM acknowledges, in particular, that the parishes of Horton and Wraysbury share a very close affinity and support their inclusion in the same borough ward alongside Datchet Parish.

Eton & Castle – No changes

- 6.37 RBWM supports the draft recommendations for this ward despite the fact that it bears little resemblance to the council's own representation. RBWM respects the views of Eton Town Council and Datchet Parish Council that they share no common identity and interests and should duly be represented by different

borough wards. RBWM is pleased to see that the LGBCE have consistently taken heed of the evidence base for community identity put forward by the parish councils and have applied this to their draft warding patterns. RBWM fully endorses the views of the parish councils in these areas and therefore supports the drawing of Eton & Castle ward.

Great Park & Old Windsor (Option A) – Changes proposed (Map 6)

- 6.38 In parallel with the comments discussed in paragraphs 6.22 to 6.26 in relation to the formation of Ascot & Sunninghill ward and paragraphs 6.29 to 6.31 for Clewer East, RBWM has serious concerns with the way in which the LGBCE's Old Windsor ward has been composed.
- 6.39 Great Park polling district (TA) which is proposed to join Ascot & Sunninghill ward is part of Old Windsor Parish Council. The proposal to split the parish council which currently has a coterminous boundary with its borough ward of the same name, between two borough wards, is an act in itself which runs contrary to the policy of keeping existing communities intact as far as possible. The half of the parish which is located in the Great Park shares no common ground with that of Ascot and Sunninghill.
- 6.40 The 238 electors who currently reside in the Great Park have a very close affiliation with Old Windsor and should remain in a ward with the community they perceive to be an integral part of. The residents of the Great Park consist mainly of employees of the Crown Estate who reside in Great Park village. When these employees retire and are inevitably required to leave the Crown Estate accommodation in the Great Park, the vast majority relocate to Old Windsor. Furthermore, the Crown Estate has natural and historic ties to Old Windsor. The original Windsor palace was located on the site of Old Windsor town and the Great Park was part of the palace's estate. It is for these reasons that the areas should remain unified.
- 6.41 There are major landmarks such as the Royal Chapel and Old Windsor Cemetery which define the Old Windsor identity and are located within the Great Park. These landmarks should be retained in the new Old Windsor ward and should not be transferred to Ascot & Sunninghill.
- 6.42 The Royal School located in the Great Park is attended mainly by Old Windsor children and is part of the Windsor school education system which is a three tier system. The Ascot school system is two tier and quite different to that of Windsor. It would therefore be undesirable for the Royal School to be located in an Ascot ward. The children of the school are known to take part in civic events held by Old Windsor parish council.
- 6.43 There is a more serious implication of placing the whole of polling district Great Park (TA) in the new Ascot & Sunninghill ward. The LGBCE have used the existing boundary lines of TA on its eastern edge which has resulted in the houses at Bear's Rails Gate falling on the Ascot & Sunninghill side of the border. This would present significant issues in relation to the voting arrangements in place for these electors at the time of an election. Electors in these properties currently vote in an Old Windsor polling station but under the revised arrangements would be

required to vote at an Ascot & Sunninghill polling station. Whilst it would be possible to create a new polling district to include partially or solely the Bear's Rails Gate electors and for a polling place to be designated in Old Windsor for this polling district, this is less than ideal and is not the recommended outcome.

- 6.44 RBWM is proposing an alternative warding pattern for the ward that sees the current boundaries of Old Windsor maintained. It is acknowledged that the current Old Windsor ward is too small to exist as a two-member ward in 2019 and too large to form a single-member ward, and must therefore, take in an additional number of electors to satisfy the new elector and councillor quota on a council size of 42 members. It is with this requirement in mind, that RBWM supports the LGBCE's proposal to extend the ward northwards to include part of the Home Park. The extension of the existing ward boundary, however, does not resolve the electoral equality requirement and the ward is considerably over-represented at -25%. Whilst the Working Group concedes that the LGCBE are unlikely to endorse this pattern in their final recommendations and will propose that more properties and electors form part of the new Old Windsor configuration, the Group hopes that the LGBCE will agree that the evidence base set out for keeping the Great Park with Old Windsor forms a robust case for the preservation of existing communities.

Great Park & Old Windsor (Option B) – Changes proposed – (Map 7)

- 6.45 The second option for the Great Park & Old Windsor ward sees the Great Park and Old Windsor united as in Option A, but proposes that the southern part of the Boltons is absorbed into the current Old Windsor boundary. As set out in paragraphs 6.38 to 6.42, RBWM has presented a comprehensive set of evidence to support its assertion that the Great Park belongs with Old Windsor which is why this proposal is evident in both patterns.
- 6.46 The suggestion to bring the southern half of the Boltons in to Great Park & Old Windsor is in the interests of delivering better equality only and does not satisfy the criteria of keeping existing communities intact. The ward would propose a more acceptable variance of -13%.

South Ascot & Sunningdale – No changes

- 6.47 RBWM fully endorses the drawing of the boundaries for this ward as it mirrors the pattern originally presented by the borough council. As outlined in paragraph 6.26, the boundary used to divide the south into two wards and create the separation between the new Ascot & Sunninghill and South Ascot & Sunningdale was the same boundary in place before the last electoral review in 2002.
- 6.48 A consequence of reinstating this boundary would mean that Ascot and Sunninghill parish would be divided between both Ascot & Sunninghill and South Ascot & Sunningdale wards. This is not perceived to be a considerable deviation from the existing electoral arrangements, as the parish currently straddles two borough wards; Ascot & Cheapside and Sunninghill & South Ascot. With this in mind, the boundary lines proposed by the LGBCE are therefore supported by RBWM.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 RBWM has welcomed the publication of the LGBCE's draft recommendations and is pleased to see that the evidence supplied in the borough council's first submission has been used as the basis for informing the mapping of their draft scheme.
- 7.2 RBWM believes that the draft pattern for the Maidenhead constituency area delivers effective electoral equality and is balanced well with the second requirement to preserve community identities and proposes no further amendments to this scheme.
- 7.3 With regards to Windsor, RBWM supports the compilation of five of the LGBCE's proposed wards but appeals to the LGBCE to give further thought to the formation of the remaining wards as they do not currently reflect shared community identities.
- 7.4 RBWM has proposed two alternative patterns which offer different warding patterns for the three wards in Windsor where it is felt that the LGBCE's draft recommendations for these wards do not currently reflect community interests and identities. Option A is very much RBWM's preferred pattern as it supports the retention of existing communities in the same ward. The fulfilment of this particular criteria should take precedence over the need to deliver strict electoral equality, and it is hoped that the LGBCE will be able to adopt some leniency in delivering electoral equality, as it has been able to do at other electoral reviews.