WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL

BOROUGH BOUNDARY REVIEW 2013-2016

WARDING PATTERN SUBMISSION

Contact Details

If you have any questions relating to this Submission, please do not hesitate to contact Woking Borough Council as set out below.

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**Introduction**

Woking Borough Council has drawn up a warding pattern which it believes takes into account the objectives of the Borough Boundary Review, achieving a balance between recognition of community links and the need to achieve a balanced electorate across ten wards.

The Borough of Woking has two significant ‘barriers to movement’ – the Basingstoke Canal and the mainline railway line. The Council has used both the Canal and railway line as ward boundaries as far as possible, acknowledging the difficulty of crossing the features in parts of the Borough.

Key to the final proposal by the Council was a Borough-wide consultation on the initial proposal drawn up by the Council. Responses were received from across Woking, in particular from those electors in the east of Borough. Numerous suggested changes to the warding pattern and the names of the wards were received, and significant changes were made as a result.

A revised proposal was published and considered at a meeting of the Council’s Executive in March 2014. Following additional representations from local residents, further changes were made, notably to three of the suggested ward names and the boundary of one of the ten wards. The proposals of the Executive were recommended to full Council for approval before being submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. Council supported the proposals at its meeting on 27 March 2014 for submission.

This document summaries the approach adopted by the Council for the Boundary Review of Woking and sets out the basis on which the Council's final submission has been drawn up. All supporting evidence and documents have been referenced and are included with the submission.
The Council’s Borough Boundary Review Working Group
(Supporting Documents Section A)

Following the announcement of the Review, Woking Borough Council established a Working Group to oversee the process (Appendix B5). The Working Group comprises of seven Councillors, including the Group Leaders and Deputy Group Leaders and has met regularly to draw up proposals for the wider Council to consider. The Working Group has been supported throughout by a core team of Officers, including the Authority’s Chief Executive, Head of Democratic and Legal Services and GIS Officer.

Copies of the minutes of the meetings of the Working Group are set out in Appendices A1 to A8. The minutes record the considerations of the Task Group and give an indication of the extent to which the Council’s submission has evolved over the past year.

The Council’s Electoral Cycle
(Supporting Documents Section B)

The Council reviewed its electoral cycle in light of the Boundary Review and the implications of maintaining its policy of elections-by-thirds. As part of the electoral cycle review, the Council undertook a public consultation to determine whether there was a desire to change to all-out elections (Appendices B1 to B4). A report on the proposals was considered by the Council in May 2013 (Appendices B5 and B6) and the outcome of the electoral cycle review was reported to Council in July 2013 (Appendices B7 and B8).

The results of the Consultation revealed that there was no clear preference to change the existing electoral cycle, with 53% indicating a preference for the existing arrangements. The result was very similar to a review of the Council’s electoral cycle undertaken in 2009. As there was no evidence of strong support for change in the Council’s electoral cycle, the Council noted the outcome of the consultation and choose not to change the current arrangements of elections-by-thirds. In doing so, the Council was aware that retaining elections-by-thirds would limit the available options to a warding pattern of wards of an equal size in terms of electorate, with each ward represented by three Councillors.

Council Size Submission
(Supporting Documents Section C)

The Council size submission was drawn up by the cross-party Borough Boundary Review Working Group before being presented to Council in July 2013 (Appendices C1 and C2). To support the Council’s proposals, a consultation of the Councillors was undertaken to identify any changes in workloads and approaches. The Council has undertaken similar surveys in previous years and is able to compare the findings to identify any trends. The Council also reviewed its governance arrangements, examining the different Committees and their roles and responsibilities (Appendices C3 to C8).

The Council agreed a proposal to seek a reduction in the number of Borough Councillors for Woking from 36 to 30, representing a reduction of some 17%. In reaching this conclusion, the Council took into account a number of factors, including the workload of Councillors, the changing way in which people could access information and the governance arrangements of the Council.
The submission to the Boundary Commission set out the Council's arguments, together with the results of the member consultation exercise (Appendix C9). A meeting to review the submission was held in August 2013 between the Boundary Commission and the Group Leaders of Woking Borough Council. No changes to the submission were necessary and between 24 September and 5 November 2013 the Boundary Commission consulted the public on a change to the Council size based on the Council's submission. The Boundary Commission provided the Council with promotional posters which the Council distributed to local libraries, centres, community organisations etc. (Appendix C10). A copy of the Council's response to the consultation is included at Appendix C11.

With the launch of its consultation on warding patterns in January 2014, the Boundary Commission announced that it had adopted a Council size of 30 Councillors for the purposes of the public consultation exercise.

Electorate Population Size
(Supporting Documents Section D)

The Council was charged with drawing up the anticipated electorate figures for Woking for 2019. The work was again led by the Council's Borough Boundary Review Working Group. The Council used electorate figures as a base together with the identified residential developments up to 2018 (the Council's five year Housing Land Supply position statement covers the period 2013 to 2018). The average number of electors for new developments was based on the average for existing developments (1.5 electors for flats, 2.2 electors for houses, for example). The Council also looked at the data held by the Office of National Statistics and Census data for 2011.

Guidance by the Boundary Commission assisted the Council and the final estimates included a factor to take into account the anticipated population growth calculated by the Office of National Statistics (Appendix D1 and D2). The Council's report was submitted to the Commission in November 2013.

The Council has used the predicted electorate figures in conjunction with GIS mapping to provide accurate population figures for the wards, enabling the Working Group to explore a variety of scenarios based on a ten ward pattern. The Council sought to draw up a warding pattern which achieved ward electorate sizes as close as possible to the average size for a single ward (7,802 electors). The response to the consultation clearly indicated that community links were of a greater priority for residents than ensuring each Councillor represented a similar number of electors. As a result, the changes to the proposals following the consultation have led to wider variances from the median than had initially been envisaged.

The completed proforma for the Boundary Commission, setting out the 2013 electorate and the levels of variance across the Borough, was submitted in 2013 to be used as the base upon which the electorate was calculated (Appendix D3).

At the time of the submission to the Boundary Commission on the 2019 electorate size, the Council was unable to evidence the additional electorate that would arise from significant residential developments in the Town Centre led by the Authority. Planning applications for these developments have now been submitted, to be determined in the coming weeks by the Council's Planning Committee. In view of the impact of these developments on the Borough's electorate, the Council has revised the electorate estimates produced in 2013. A total of 419 units will be constructed by 2019, leading to an estimated 644 additional electors. A report setting out the revised electorate predictions for 2019 has been produced for the Boundary Commission.
Development of the Proposed Warding Pattern
(Supporting Documents Section E)

The Boundary Commission's consultation on the warding pattern, inviting proposals and comments, started on 14 January 2014. The Boundary Commission provided the Council with posters promoting the consultation, which were then sent to local libraries and centres, residents groups and other local bodies (Appendices E1 and E2).

The Borough Boundary Review Working Group resolved at an early stage to consult the public on its draft warding pattern submission to the Boundary Commission. Once the Council received confirmation that the Boundary Commission had adopted a Council size of 30 Councillors for the consultation, it started drafting a proposal. A version was agreed for a public consultation undertaken by the Borough Council between 11 February and 7 March 2014.

The documents produced as part of the public consultation are set out in the supporting appendices. Full details were available at all times on the Council's website, including an electronic feedback form. (Appendices E3 to E20).

A full report on the consultation was submitted to the Council's Executive on 20 March 2014, setting out the responses received and the changes to the draft proposals recommended in light of the responses. The meeting was advertised as part of the consultation programme and could be viewed as a webcast through the Council's website. (Appendices E21 to E24). The Executive was asked to recommend the proposals to Council for formal adoption as the Council's response to the Boundary Commission's consultation.

Following discussion of the proposals, the Executive recommended the proposals to Council, subject to three ward names being changed and two changes to the boundaries of the Horsell ward. A report on the new proposals was drawn up for the meeting of Council on 27 March 2014. The Council supported the proposals and the Authority's formal submission is explained in the next section.
The Proposed Warding Pattern

The Revised Ward Boundary Proposals contained herein set out brief information supporting proposed Wards. To meet the Boundary Commission objectives each Ward needs to have a forecast Electorate within 10% of the average electorate, a 'target' of 7,867 in 2019 based on revised electorate figures (78,670 Electors across 10 Wards as set out in the Electoral Population section of this submission). An A3 Borough Ward Map and ten A3 individual Ward Maps are set out in this submission. A0 Maps are included in the supporting information for clarity.

The table below summarises the proposed new Borough Wards for 2016 and reports on the variance of Electors in each Ward from the average of 7,867 Electors. For each Ward there is a comment about future development. This refers to the Local Plan which envisages some 282 dwellings per annum for the period 2012-2027. Of these numbers it is anticipated that 50% will be in the town centre, with the balance spread across the Borough: Average development is consistent with that Borough wide development distribution.

### Anticipated Electorate Figures 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of councillors:</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall electorate</td>
<td>73,887</td>
<td>77,260</td>
<td>78,670</td>
</tr>
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<td>Average electorate per Cllr:</td>
<td>2,052</td>
<td>2,575</td>
<td>2,622</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average per Ward:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7,726</td>
<td>7,867</td>
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### Proposed Ward

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Ward</th>
<th>Electorate 2013</th>
<th>Growth in Electorate</th>
<th>Electorate 2019*</th>
<th>Variance 2019 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Byfleet &amp; West Byfleet</td>
<td>7,752</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>8,068</td>
<td>2.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goldsworth Park</td>
<td>7,770</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>7,920</td>
<td>0.7</td>
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<td>Heathlands</td>
<td>7,203</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>7,349</td>
<td>-6.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hoe Valley</td>
<td>6,296</td>
<td>1,422</td>
<td>7,794</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horsell</td>
<td>8,158</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>8,298</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knaphill</td>
<td>7,550</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>8,336</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Hermon</td>
<td>7,192</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>7,834</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyrford</td>
<td>8,208</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8,309</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Johns</td>
<td>7,441</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>7,592</td>
<td>-3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woking Central</td>
<td>6,317</td>
<td>784</td>
<td>7,171</td>
<td>-8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>73,887</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,017</strong></td>
<td><strong>78,670</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*With ONS uplift
Byfleet and West Byfleet Ward is based on the historic village of Byfleet where there is a strong identified community. In order to ensure that it has an adequate number of electors, a significant proportion of the centre and neighbouring area of West Byfleet has been included in the new Ward. The community and retail cores of the Ward are in the two village centres with good connections to local schools. Even though the areas within the Ward are separated by the M25 they are well connected whether by foot, bicycle, car or public transport.

It is accepted that existing Borough Ward of West Byfleet has effectively been split between the new Byfleet and West Byfleet Ward and the new Pyrford Ward but care has been taken to do so where connectivity is not significantly adversely affected.

Byfleet and West Byfleet Ward is forecast to have 8,068 Electors in 2019 compared to the target of 7,867 required to meet the Boundary Commission guidance; this is some 2.6% above target but reflects the likelihood that Byfleet will attract Below Average development over the Local Plan period to 2027.
Goldsworth Park Ward is a cohesive modern settlement built around a central retail area with medical and community facilities. A recreational area and lake is connected to the central area providing extensive local amenity. The community is readily identifiable and is connected along its southern edge by Lockfield Drive with extensive footway and local roads throughout its area. There are good connections to local schools. All areas within the Ward are well connected whether by foot, bicycle, car or public transport.

The Goldsworth Park Ward is forecast to have 7,920 Electors in 2019 compared to the target of 7,867 required to meet the Boundary Commission guidance: this in line with target and reflects the likelihood that Goldsworth Park will attract Average development over the Local Plan period to 2027.
Heathlands incorporates a number of small sized identifiable communities set in a predominantly semi-rural area including larger areas such as Brookwood, Hook Heath and Mayford with smaller areas such as Bridley and Sutton Green. These communities are generally dispersed and are of distinct and different character. They do however have a common interest in that they are a collection of Heaths and value their predominantly semi-rural character. There is no community or retail core to the Ward and connections to local schools are more limited, necessitating the use of a car.

To ensure an adequate number of Electors, the areas south of Wych Hill Lane and of Barnsbury have been included in this Ward. Whilst these areas are not of similar character to the main parts of the Ward they are strong identified local communities which will relate well to the wider area of Heathlands.

The Ward is not well connected whether by foot, bicycle, car or public transport but does benefit from strong local characteristics within the wider geographical area.

The Heathlands Ward is forecast to have 7,349 Electors in 2019 compared to the target of 7,867 required to meet the Boundary Commission guidance: this is 6.6% below target but reflects the likelihood that Heathlands will attract Well Above Average development over the Local Plan period to 2027, particularly after 2022.
Hoe Valley Ward incorporates a number of medium sized identifiable communities such as Kingfield, Old Woking and Westfield. These communities are located in the hinterland of the Hoe Stream, hence the proposed name. The communities have a common interest with connectivity along the Hoe Valley. There is no clear community or retail centre in the Ward as facilities are distributed throughout the area, with the majority being located along the main roads running through the Ward. There are good connections to local schools. Most areas within the Ward are well connected whether by foot, bicycle, or car but public transport is more limited and mostly related to connectivity with Woking town centre. The Ward contains two major building sites where over 500 new properties are under construction and will be completed by 2016/17.

The Hoe Valley Ward is forecast to have 7,794 Electors in 2019 compared to the target of 7,867 required to meet the Boundary Commission guidance: this is in line with the target electorate and reflects the likelihood that Hoe Valley will, following the completion of the 500 new properties currently under construction, attract Average development over the remaining Local Plan period to 2027.
Horsell Ward is based on the historic village of Horsell where there is a strong identified community. Part of its area is dominated to the north by Horsell Common with low density or no housing and incorporates the majority of the Special Protection Area in the Borough. The Ward contains one large employment area, McLaren Park, which does not detract from the residential and common land characteristics of the Ward. The community and retail core of the Ward is in the centre of the village with good connections to local schools. All areas within the Ward are well connected by foot, bicycle and car but public transport is more limited and mostly related to connectivity with Woking town centre.

The Woodham area of the Ward, whilst slightly remote from the centre of Horsell, has strong local characteristics that associate it with Horsell and residents can readily access Horsell, Woking town centre or West Byfleet. The residents however have an affinity with Horsell and that is reflected in the warding proposal.

The Horsell Ward is forecast to have 8,298 Electors in 2019 compared to the target of 7,867 required to meet the Boundary Commission guidance: this is 5.5% above target but reflects the likelihood that Horsell will attract Well Below Average development over the Local Plan period to 2027.
Knaphill Ward is based on the historic village of Knaphill where there is a strong identified community. The northern part of the Ward is semi rural and creates a linkage with the neighbouring Ward of Horsell and the village of Chobham. The community and retail core of the Ward is in the centre of the village and at the nearby Sainsbury Superstore. There are good connections to local schools. It contains one large employment area, the Lansbury Estate, which does not detract from the residential characteristics of the Ward. The Ward contains one major building site where 300 new properties are under construction to be completed by 2016/17. All areas within the main urban areas of the Ward are well connected by foot, bicycle, car and public transport.

The Knaphill Ward is forecast to have 8,336 Electors in 2019 compared to the target of 7,867 required to meet the Boundary Commission guidance: this is 6.0% above target but reflects the likelihood that Knaphill will attract Below Average further development over the Local Plan period to 2027.
Mount Hermon Ward

The Mount Hermon Ward incorporates substantially the existing Borough Wards of Mount Hermon East and West with minor changes at the boundaries to reflect and respect adjoining areas. There is a strong sense of identity in both the existing Borough Wards and the new Ward will reinforce that sense of community.

The Mount Hermon Ward is forecast to have 7,834 Electors in 2019 compared to the target of 7,867 required to meet the Boundary Commission guidance: this is in line with the target electorate and reflects the likelihood that Mount Hermon will attract Average development over the Local Plan period to 2027.
The Pyrford Ward incorporates the existing Borough Ward of Pyrford and the balance of West Byfleet not included in the Byfleet and West Byfleet Ward. It is based on the established community of Pyrford and neighbouring areas. There are good connections to local schools and the Ward is well connected whether by foot, bicycle or car.

The Pyrford Ward is forecast to have 8,309 Electors in 2019 compared to the target of 7,867 required to meet the Boundary Commission guidance: this is 5.6% above target but reflects the likelihood that Pyrford will attract Well Below Average development over the Local Plan period to 2027.
St Johns Ward incorporates a number of medium sized identifiable communities such as Hermitage, Inkerman, St Johns and the western edge of Woking town centre. These communities are located along the old A324 corridor, albeit that the through traffic is now diverted from St Johns down Amstel Way, and have a common interest and connectivity along the Basingstoke Canal. The community and retail core of the Ward is in the village of St Johns with good connections to local schools. The majority of the area is within the St Johns postal district hence the name. All areas within the Ward are well connected whether by foot, bicycle, car or public transport.

The St Johns Ward is forecast to have 7,592 Electors in 2019 compared to the target of 7,867 required to meet the Boundary Commission guidance: this is 3.5% below target and reflects the likelihood that St Johns will attract Above Average development over the Local Plan period to 2027, particularly at its boundary with the Woking town centre part of Woking Central.
Woking Central incorporates the core commercial areas of the Borough which are in Woking Town Centre, where there is a strong identified commercial, retail and employment centre, and the Sheerwater Business Parks. The canal and railway boundaries and corridors influence the layout and movement within these areas as they do to the west of the town centre in the new St Johns Ward. These areas, together with the boundaries with St Johns to the west and Mount Hermon to the south, will provide the highest level of development growth in the Local Plan period to 2027. It is proposed that 50% of the development in the Borough will occur in these areas, the majority of which will be in Woking Central.

Woking Central provides the highest employment area in the Borough and at its heart is the main line railway station which serves some 7.5m passenger movements per annum. All areas within the Ward are well connected by foot, bicycle, car and public transport.

Woking Central Ward is forecast to have 7,171 Electors in 2019 compared to the target of 7,867 required to meet the Boundary Commission guidance; this is 8.9% below target but reflects the likelihood that Canalside East will attract Well Above Average development over the Local Plan period to 2027.