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Summary

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. The broad purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors, and the names, number and boundaries of wards or divisions – for a specific local authority. We are conducting an electoral review of Woking Borough Council to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the authority.

The review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. The Commission commenced the review in April 2013.

This review is being conducted as follows:

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<th>Stage starts</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>24 September 2013</td>
<td>Consultation on council size</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 January 2014</td>
<td>Invitation to submit proposals for warding arrangements to LGBCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 April 2014</td>
<td>LGBCE’s analysis and formulation of draft recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 July 2014</td>
<td>Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 October 2014</td>
<td>Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations</td>
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</table>

Submissions received

The Commission received 26 submissions during its initial consultation on council size. These submissions proposed council sizes of between seven and 36. During Stage One, we received 80 submissions including borough-wide proposals from the Council, Woking Constituency Labour Party and a local resident. All submissions can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk.

Analysis and draft recommendations

Electorate figures

Woking Borough Council (‘the Council’) submitted electorate forecasts for 2019, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2014. These forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 4.6% over this period. We are content that the forecasts are the most accurate available at this time and have used these figures as the basis of our draft recommendations.

Council size

The Council currently has a council size of 36. The Council originally proposed a council size of 30. In support of its proposal, the Council argued that the current governance and management structure, while reasonably effective, leaves a number of backbench members with little involvement in the decision-making process. Furthermore, a recent review indicated that it was not possible to make the Council’s decision-making structure more efficient under the current council size. The Council
also stated that the level of councillor workload, including representative duties, had decreased steadily since 2004, this view being based on on-going surveys of member activity.

During our public consultation on council size, we received 26 submissions. Of these, four were from district and county councillors, one was from Jonathan Lord MP (Woking), one was from a political group, three were from local organisations, and the remaining 16 were from members of the public. We consider that the original submission made by the Council has been corroborated by evidence emerging from consultation. We have therefore adopted a council size of 30 as part of our draft recommendations.

General analysis

Having considered the submissions received during consultation on warding arrangements, we have developed proposals for 10 three-member wards based on a combination of the submissions received. In general, we have based our draft recommendations on the Council’s submission with a number of amendments. Our proposals will provide good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and transport links in the borough.

What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which we encourage comment on the draft recommendations on the proposed electoral arrangements for Woking Borough Council contained in the report. We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals. We will take into account all submissions received by 6 October 2014. Any received after this date may not be taken into account.

We would particularly welcome local views backed up by demonstrable evidence. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations. Express your views by writing directly to us at:

Review Officer
Woking Review
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Layden House
76–86 Turnmill Street
London EC1M 5LG
reviews@lgbce.org.uk

The full report is available to download at www.lgbce.org.uk

You can also view our draft recommendations for Woking Borough Council on our interactive maps at http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk
1 Introduction

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. This electoral review is being conducted following our decision to review Woking Borough Council’s electoral arrangements to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the authority.

2 We wrote to the Council and to other interested parties, inviting the submission of proposals: first on council size and then on warding arrangements for the Council. The submissions received during these stages of the review have informed our draft recommendations.

3 We are now conducting a full public consultation on the draft recommendations. Following this period of consultation, we will consider the evidence received and will publish our final recommendations for the new electoral arrangements for Woking Borough Council early in 2015.

What is an electoral review?

4 The main aim of an electoral review is to try to ensure ‘electoral equality’, which means that all councillors in a single authority represent approximately the same number of electors. Our objective is to make recommendations that will improve electoral equality, while also trying to reflect communities in the area and provide for effective and convenient local government.

5 Our three main considerations – equalising the number of electors each councillor represents; reflecting community identity; and providing for effective and convenient local government – are set out in legislation1 and our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why are we conducting a review in Woking?

6 We decided to conduct this review because a formal request was made by Woking Borough Council for an electoral review and the borough also met our intervention criteria.

7 Based on December 2012 electorate data, 35% of the borough wards currently have a variance of more than 10%. Of these, Maybury & Sheerwater ward has 20% more electors per councillor than the average for the borough.

How will the recommendations affect you?

8 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the council. They will also decide which ward you vote in and which other communities are in that ward. Your ward name may also change.

1 Schedule 2 to The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.
It is therefore important that you let us have your comments and views on the draft recommendations. We encourage comments from everyone in the community, regardless of whether you agree with the draft recommendations or not. The draft recommendations are evidence-based and we would therefore like to stress the importance of providing evidence in any comments on our recommendations, rather than relying on assertion. We will be accepting comments and views until 6 October 2014. After this point, we will be formulating our final recommendations which we are due to publish in winter 2015. Details on how to submit proposals can be found on page 17 and more information can be found on our website, www.lgbce.org.uk

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?


Members of the Commission are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)
Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL
Alison Lowton
Sir Tony Redmond
Dr Colin Sinclair CBE
Professor Paul Wiles CB

Chief Executive: Alan Cogbill
Director of Reviews: Archie Gall
2 Analysis and draft recommendations

11 Before finalising our recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for the Council, we invite views on these draft recommendations. We welcome comments relating to the proposed ward boundaries and ward names. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

12 As described earlier, our prime aim when recommending new electoral arrangements for Woking is to achieve a level of electoral equality – that is, each elector's vote being worth the same as another's. In doing so we must have regard to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act),\(^2\) with the need to:

- secure effective and convenient local government
- provide for equality of representation
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities, in particular
  - the desirability of arriving at boundaries that are easily identifiable
  - the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties

13 Legislation also states that our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on the existing number of electors in an area, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place over a five-year period from the date of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for the wards we put forward at the end of the review.

14 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral equality is unlikely to be attainable and there must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach is to keep variances in the number of electors each councillor represents to a minimum. We therefore recommend strongly that in formulating proposals for us to consider, local authorities and other interested parties should also try to keep variances to a minimum, making adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. As mentioned above, we aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over a five-year period.

15 These recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of Woking Borough Council or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that the recommendations will have an adverse effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. The proposals do not take account of parliamentary constituency boundaries and we are not therefore able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Submissions received

16 Prior to, and during, the initial stages of the review, we visited Woking Borough Council (‘the Council’) and met with members and officers. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 80 submissions during the consultation on warding patterns, including borough-wide schemes from the Council, Woking Constituency Labour Party and a local resident. All of the

submissions may be inspected at both our offices and those of the Council. All representations received can also be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

17 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2019, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2014. This is prescribed in the 2009 Act. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 4.6% to 2019. The forecasts provided by the Council took into account planned developments across the borough, as well as population forecasts made by the Office for National Statistics.

18 We are content that the forecasts provided by the Council are the most accurate available at this time and have used them as the basis of our draft recommendations.

Council size

19 The Council currently has 36 councillors elected from 17 borough wards. During the preliminary stage of the review, we met with Group Leaders and Full Council. The Council subsequently made a proposal for a council size of 30, a reduction of six. In support of its proposal, the Council argued that the current governance and management structure, while reasonably effective, leaves a number of backbench members with little involvement in the decision-making process. Furthermore, a recent review indicated that it was not possible to make the Council’s decision-making structure more efficient under the current council size.

20 The Council stated that the level of councillor workload, including representative duties, had decreased steadily since 2004. This view was based on on-going surveys of member activity.

21 The Council supplied extensive evidence on the workload of councillors, particularly highlighting how the governance workload has decreased since the last electoral review. The recent policy review also suggested that the Council cannot provide additional governance roles to members without sacrificing efficiency and creating work unnecessarily.

22 The Council also detailed how the representative role of councillors is relatively low. It highlighted that only 30% of a decreasing workload related to the representational aspect of the role, and that technology has further decreased the representational demand on members.

23 On the basis of its decision-making structure and the workload of elected members, the Council argued that a council size of 30 was the most appropriate level of representation but noted that a reduction beyond this could endanger the inbuilt resilience in the system.

24 We considered that the Council supplied a well-evidenced case for reducing the council size to 30 and decided to consult publicly on this number. In response, we received 26 submissions. Of these, four were from district and county councillors, one was from Jonathan Lord MP (Woking), one was from a political group, three
were from local organisations, and the remaining 16 were from members of the public.

25 We carefully considered the information provided during the consultation period. We noted that 14 submissions supported a council size of 30, five proposed that a council size of 36 be retained and one proposed a council size of 33. In addition, one proposed a council size of seven and the remaining five respondents did not propose a specific council size.

26 Those supporting a council size of 30 focused on the efficiency gains of reducing the council size. Jonathan Lord MP (Woking) supported the Council’s proposal for 30 elected members stating that a small but significant reduction in councillor numbers was appropriate and would ‘strike the right balance in terms of workload and representative function’. Councillor Branagan (Horsell West) noted the change in workload and decrease in direct contact with residents allowed for a reduction. Councillor Whitehand (Knaphill) cited increased services available through the council website and the introduction of webcasting for Full Council and Executive meetings.

27 Other respondents argued that the increased use of IT, including email and a more comprehensive council website, had reduced the workload of councillors by encouraging residents to pursue alternative channels of communication with the Council.

28 Submissions supporting council sizes of 33 and 36 either disagreed with the Council’s assessment of its working practices, or expressed concern about the possible loss of scrutiny in a council with fewer members.

29 In particular, Councillor Bowes (Woking South East division, Surrey County Council) expressed concern that a reduction to below 33 members would potentially over-burden borough councillors in terms of their workload. She noted the time already required of Woking councillors to effectively monitor and scrutinise the Thamesway Group (a group of companies created by the Council) and was concerned that effective scrutiny of this would be hindered by a reduction to 30 councillors. She also refuted the arguments made by the Council regarding member workload, arguing that her high workload as a county councillor suggested that representative workload for borough councillors was not as light as the Council suggested.

30 We consider that the original submission made by the Council has been corroborated by evidence emerging from consultation. We note that those supporting a council size of 30 both reiterated the Council’s arguments, and came from a wide range of respondents. In particular, very few concerns about the potential loss of representation in the borough were expressed.

31 Conversely, those opposing a council size of 30 often made assertions about member workload without sufficient supporting evidence. We do recognise that Councillor Bowes has made a detailed submission relating to councillor workload. However, we do not consider that a clear correlation between county councillor and district councillor representational workload has been established.

32 We have concluded that a council size of 30 will ensure efficient decision-making on the part of the Council while still maintaining effective scrutiny of council
decisions and the representation of local residents. We have therefore based our draft recommendations on a council size of 30 elected members.

**Electoral fairness**

33 Electoral fairness, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. It is expected that our recommendations will provide for electoral fairness, reflect communities in the area, and provide for effective and convenient local government.

34 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor. The borough average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the borough (74,573 in 2013 and 78,018 by 2019) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 30 under our draft recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our draft recommendations is 2,486 in 2013 and 2,601 by 2019.

35 Under our draft recommendations, none of our proposed wards will have electoral variances of more than 10% from the average for the borough by 2019. We are therefore satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral equality for Woking.

**General analysis**

36 During the consultation on warding patterns, we received 80 submissions, including borough-wide proposals from the Council, Woking Constituency Labour Party and a local resident.

37 We also received comments from Jonathan Lord MP (Woking) who endorsed the Council’s proposals and overall approach to the review, albeit with an alternative ward name in the south of the borough. Councillor Branagan (Horsell West) also supported the Council’s proposals. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the Borough. The clear majority of submissions received related to warding arrangements in the Byfleet and Pyrford areas in the east of the borough.

38 The Council undertook a thorough consultation process of its own as it developed its submission. While we have not listed each individual response to the Council’s consultation, we are grateful for the way in which it has engaged with the process and allowed a wider range of local people to participate in the review process.

39 The Council put forward a borough-wide scheme based on a uniform pattern of 10 three-member wards. All of the Council’s proposed wards would have electoral variances of less than 10% by 2019. We received borough-wide comments from the Woking Constituency Labour Party (the Labour Party) which endorsed the broad thrust of the Council’s proposals but put forward a number of modifications in certain areas.

40 We also received a borough-wide scheme from a local resident, Mr Bond. This provided for a uniform pattern of three-member wards for the borough. We note that
Mr Bond has produced a scheme on the premise in conducting reviews; we seek to provide electoral arrangements which do not meet our criteria for conducting a further electoral review.

41 While we consider conducting a further electoral review where more than 30% of wards have variances of greater than 10% from the average, our intention as part of an electoral review is to ensure that all wards have good electoral equality, as well as reflecting community identities and ensuring effective and convenient local government. We do not set minimum thresholds in the way interpreted by Mr Bond and note that under his warding pattern, three of the proposed 10 wards would have electoral variances in excess of 10%. In particular, the proposed Byfleet ward would have a 25% electoral variance. Furthermore, we note that the proposals require wards that breach the railway line, which we consider provides a strong and identifiable ward boundary, in a number of areas.

42 In light of the high electoral variances that would result, we have concluded that it is not possible to adopt this warding proposal as part of our draft recommendations.

43 The remainder of the submissions provided more localised comments on warding patterns for the borough. In particular, the significant majority of submissions received focused on the Byfleet, West Byfleet and Pyrford areas with opposition to the Council’s proposal to combine the Byfleet and West Byfleet in a single three-member ward.

44 In developing our draft recommendations, we have been mindful of the presumption in legislation that, as the borough holds elections by thirds, it should have a council size divisible by three and a uniform pattern of three-member wards. We are only likely to depart from the presumption if compelling evidence is received to justify a mixed pattern of wards. In light of this, we have based our draft recommendations on the Council’s proposals with a number of modifications to ensure a better reflection of the statutory criteria. In particular, we are persuaded that, in order to reflect the Council’s electoral cycle, a three-member ward should be provided that comprises both the Byfleet and West Byfleet areas.

45 Having visited the area, we have decided to depart from the Council’s proposals for certain wards, particularly to the north of the main railway line in order to better reflect community identities as well as transport and communication links.

46 Our draft recommendations would provide for 10 three-member wards. All of our proposed wards would have electoral variances of less than 10% by 2019. We consider our proposals provide for good levels of electoral equality while reflecting our understanding of community identities and interests in Woking.

47 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations and would encourage interested parties from all parts of the borough to respond. As well as the pattern of warding arrangements proposed, we welcome comments on the ward names we have proposed as part of the draft recommendations.
Electoral arrangements

48 This section of the report details the proposals we have received, our consideration of them, and our draft recommendations for each area of Woking. The following areas of the authority are considered in turn:

- East Woking (pages 10–11)
- North Woking (pages 11–13)
- South Woking (pages 13–14)

49 Details of the draft recommendations are set out in Table A1 on pages 21–22 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

East Woking

50 This area of the borough comprises the Byfleet area, which is located to the east of the M25. It also includes Pyrford and West Byfleet which are located to the west of the motorway. In response to our consultation on warding arrangements, we received 73 submissions relating to this area.

51 The Council proposed the three-member wards of Byfleet & West Byfleet and Pyrford. The Council stated that its proposed Pyrford ward was based on the established community of Pyrford and part of the West Byfleet area. It argued that the communities contained in the proposed ward shared clear transport and communication links, and noted there are good connections to local facilities such as schools.

52 The Council’s proposed Byfleet & West Byfleet ward was based on the established community of Byfleet to the east of the M25. To ensure good electoral equality, the Council stated that the ward needed to include the majority of the West Byfleet area to the west of the motorway. Notwithstanding this, the Council argued that those areas of West Byfleet included in the proposed ward are well connected to adjoining areas to the east of the motorway.

53 The Labour Party supported the Council’s proposed wards in this area. It acknowledged that the need to ensure a uniform pattern of three-member wards with good electoral equality made it difficult to accommodate a ward based on the West Byfleet area alone. However, the Labour Party did not support the Council’s proposal to include the Maybury Estate in the west of the proposed Pyrford ward, which it argued had a distinct and separate identity from the Pyrford community.

54 Jonathan Lord MP (Woking) supported the Council’s proposed warding arrangements for this area of the borough. In particular, he welcomed the Council’s proposals that ensured that the entirety of Pyrford would be contained in a single borough ward. He also endorsed the Council’s proposed ward name of Byfleet & West Byfleet. He noted that an initial proposal from the Council had been to call the proposed ward The Byfleets. This, he said, had aroused significant local opposition as it failed to reflect the distinct communities of the proposed ward.

55 A majority of local residents making submissions supported the Council’s proposals for Pyrford ward as they would unite the whole of Pyrford area in one ward.
While there were some objections to the Council’s proposals, no viable alternative warding pattern was put forward.

56 In respect of the Byfleet & West Byfleet area, a majority of respondents were strongly opposed to the Council’s proposals. In particular, the Byfleet, West Byfleet & Pyrford Residents’ Association stated that the three areas were distinct communities and should not be divided between wards. This view was supported by the West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum. A number of those objecting to the Council’s proposed arrangements considered that the M25 and the canal provided a very strong barrier between the communities of Byfleet and West Byfleet and should be used as a ward boundary.

57 We have carefully considered the representations received and recognise that the proposed warding arrangements in this area have proved contentious. We acknowledge that the communities of Byfleet and West Byfleet are distinct and separated by both the M25 Motorway and the Wey Navigation. However, in considering our draft recommendations, we have to take account of the presumption in law that there should be a uniform pattern of three-member wards for the borough. In order to achieve this, it is necessary that Byfleet be linked with a majority of the West Byfleet area to ensure that residents have a vote of broadly equal weight across the borough.

58 In the circumstances, we consider that the Council’s proposed warding arrangements provide the most logical solution. We note that the proposed ward will contain the majority of the West Byfleet area and agree that their distinct identities should be reflected in the proposed ward name.

59 We have therefore decided to base our draft recommendations on the Council’s proposals, subject to a modification to the northern boundary of Pyrford ward to follow the railway line and the western boundary to ensure that it follows clear ground detail.

60 Under our draft recommendations, the three-member wards of Byfleet & West Byfleet and Pyrford would have 2% more and equal to the number of electors per councillor than the average for the borough by 2019, respectively.

North Woking

61 This area of the borough comprises the largely urban area to the north of the main railway line. In response to our consultation on warding arrangements, the Council proposed the three-member wards of Goldsworth Park, Horsell, Knaphill, St John’s and Woking Central. All of the Council’s proposed wards would provide for good electoral equality. The Council argued that its proposed wards contained readily identifiable communities that shared clear transport and communication links.

62 The Labour Party supported the Council’s proposed Goldsworth Park and Horsell wards. It put forward an amendment to the boundary of the proposed Knaphill ward in order that the residential area to the west of the A322 is transferred to the proposed Heathlands ward to the south. The Labour Party argued that, while of a similar character to adjoining areas in Knaphill, this residential area is separated from Knaphill by a busy A-class road and had a ‘semi-rural identity’.
63 The Labour Party objected to the inclusion of the Maybury Estate in the Council’s proposed Pyrford ward. It argued that combining Maybury in a ward with the Sheerwater area to the north of the railway line would reflect ‘close cultural, community and other links’. The Labour Party noted that these areas have high-density housing and are of a more urban character than adjoining areas. The Labour Party also proposed a further readjustment to the Council’s proposals by including an area of the town centre in the proposed St Johns ward. It put forward the alternative ward names of Goldsworth & St John’s, or ‘a neutral name’ such as Canalside.

64 In addition, we received submissions from nine residents and local organisations. While some supported the Council’s proposals, others expressed some measure of opposition. However, it would appear that a number of those opposing the Council’s proposals referred to a previous scheme which the Council had subsequently modified following responses to its own local consultation. Some of the comments appear to have been taken into account in the Council’s final warding proposals which were submitted to the Commission.

65 We have given careful consideration to the submissions received. We are not persuaded by the Labour Party’s proposed amendment to the boundary between Heathfields and Knaphill wards. We consider that the residential area to the west of the A322 shares clearer community and transportation links with the Knaphill area. We considered it to be a contiguous part of the Knaphill community.

66 In respect of the Labour Party’s proposals for Woking Central and the Maybury Estate, we recognise that the Party has provided some evidence to suggest the estate and areas to the north are of a similar character. However, we consider that the railway line provides a strong ward boundary in this area of the borough. Furthermore, any changes in this area are, to some extent, contingent on the Party’s proposals elsewhere in the borough for which we are not persuaded we have sufficient evidence to adopt. In conclusion we have decided not to adopt the Labour Party’s proposed amendments as part of our draft recommendations.

67 We have decided to broadly base our draft recommendations on the Council’s proposals, subject to a number of amendments to better reflect community identities as well as transport and communication links between communities in this part of the borough.

68 We therefore recommend a three-member Goldsworth Park ward based on the Council’s proposals. However, we propose that the area to the west of Lockfield Drive be included in Knaphill ward. On our visit to the borough we considered that this area appeared to be part of the Knaphill community and shared clear communication links with Knaphill.

69 We also propose that the Kestrel Way area, which includes a trading estate, be included in a three-member Horsell ward as this area appears relatively isolated from the majority of the Goldsworth Park area and shares clearer transport links with areas to its east. Furthermore, we consider that the south-eastern boundary of the proposed ward should follow the canal and therefore propose to include Caradon Close and adjoining roads in Goldsworth Park ward (the Council had proposed that this area be included in St Johns ward to the south). Finally, we propose that a number of residential properties on the south of Littlewick Road be included in Knaphill ward.
70 We consider that the A320 Victoria Way clearly delineates the commercial centre of Woking from surrounding areas. We therefore propose that those areas to the west of the road be included in a three-member St John’s ward rather than in Woking Central as proposed by the Council.

71 To the east, we propose a more substantial amendment to the Council’s proposed Woking Central and Horsell wards. The Council included properties to the south of Woodham Lane and north of the canal in its proposed Horsell ward. We are concerned that this area does not share sufficiently clear transport links with the majority of communities in Horsell and note that it has access via the A245 Sheerwater Road to the Sheerwater area to its south. We have therefore decided to include this area in Woking Central ward. We also propose that the southern boundary with Pyrford ward follows the railway line as this improves the electoral equality in the area. Furthermore, we propose that this ward be named Sheerwater to reflect its largest constituent community.

72 Under our draft recommendations the three-member Goldsworth Park, Horsell, Knaphill, Sheerwater and St John’s wards would have 4% fewer, 6% fewer, 7% more, 2% more and 3% more electors per councillor than the average for the borough by 2019, respectively.

South Woking

73 This part of the borough comprises the area west of Pyrford and broadly to the south of the main railway line. It both includes urban settlements in the south of the borough as well as a semi-rural area focused on the settlements of Brookwood, Hook Heath and Mayford.

74 The Council proposed the three-member wards of Heathlands, Hoe Valley and Mount Hermon. The proposed Heathlands ward comprised the semi-rural area of the borough. The Council noted that while its constituent communities were relatively dispersed and not particularly well-connected in terms of transport routes, they share common interests which are distinct from the rest of the borough. The Council noted that its proposed Hoe Valley ward contained communities that had a ‘common interest and connectivity along the Hoe Valley’. Finally, the Council proposed a Mount Hermon ward based largely on the existing Mount Hermon East and Mount Hermon West wards.

75 Jonathan Lord MP (Woking) supported the Council’s proposals. However, he considered that ‘Heath’ would be a more appropriate ward name for the Council’s proposed Heathlands ward on the basis that it reflects the central location of Hook Heath in the proposed ward.

76 The Labour Party endorsed the Council’s broad approach to warding arrangements in the Heathlands area. However, it expressed concern at the inclusion of the Barnsbury estate in the proposed ward. It argued that this area has a distinct identity from the neighbouring residential areas to its west and should be included in Hoe Valley ward. The Labour Party also proposed that a number of residential properties broadly to the north of Wych Hill Lane by included in Mount Hermon ward rather than in Heathlands ward arguing that this area was of a more ‘suburban character’ and shared better communication links with Mount Hermon.
The Labour Party further proposed that the northern boundary of the proposed Hoe Valley ward be redrawn so that the area north and west of the Hoe Stream is incorporated into the proposed Mount Hermon ward. Taken together with its proposed amendment between Heathfields and Knaphill wards (paragraph 62), the Labour Party stated that its proposed changes would have a minimal effect on electoral variances and better reflect the community identities in this area.

The Westfield Common Residents’ Association objected to the southern boundary of the Council’s proposed Hoe Valley ward arguing that it arbitrarily divided Westfield Common between wards. A local resident objected to any proposal to place the Hook Heath, Mayford and Sutton Green areas in a ward with Mount Hermon.

We have carefully considered the submissions received and note a degree of consensus broadly in favour of the Council’s proposals for this area. In respect of the Labour Party’s proposed modifications to the Council’s warding scheme, we are not persuaded that sufficient evidence has been received to adopt them as part of our draft recommendations. In particular, we note that there are no direct road links between the Barnsbury estate and other communities in the adjoining Hoe Valley ward. We also consider that the Hoe Stream provides a clear ward boundary in this specific area.

Furthermore, the proposals are to an extent, contingent on accepting the Labour Party’s proposals for the north of Heathlands ward. As discussed in the previous section, we are not persuaded to modify the boundary between the proposed Heathlands and Knaphill wards as we do not consider this would reflect community identities and interests.

We have therefore decided to base our draft recommendations for this area on the Council’s proposals with one modification to provide for a more clearly identifiable ward boundary. We propose that the boundary between Mount Hermon and Pyrford wards be slightly modified in order that it adheres to clearer ground detail such as established footpaths. We are also content that the Council’s proposed ward names adequately reflect the constituent communities of its proposed wards.

Under our draft recommendations the proposed three-member Heathlands, Hoe Valley and Mount Hermon wards would have 6% fewer, equal to and 1% more electors per councillor than the average for the borough by 2019, respectively.
Conclusions

Table 1 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2013 and 2019 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Draft recommendations</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2019</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of councillors</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of electoral wards/divisions</td>
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<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of electors per councillor</td>
<td>2,486</td>
<td>2,601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of wards/divisions with a variance more than 10% from the average</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of wards/divisions with a variance more than 20% from the average</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Draft recommendation
Woking Borough Council should comprise 30 councillors serving 10 wards as detailed and named in Table A1 and illustrated on the large map(s) accompanying this report.
3 What happens next?

84 There will now be a consultation period of 12 weeks, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Woking Borough Council contained in this report. We will take into account fully all submissions received by 6 October 2014. Any received after this date may not be taken into account.

85 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Woking and welcome comments from interested parties relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, and ward names. We would welcome alternative proposals backed up by demonstrable evidence during the consultation on our draft recommendations. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

86 Express your views by writing directly to:

Review Officer
Woking Review
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Layden House
76–86 Turnmill Street
London EC1M 5LG

Submissions can also be made by using the consultation section of our website, http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk or by emailing reviews@lgbce.org.uk

87 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all representations received during the consultation on our draft recommendations will be placed on deposit at our offices in Layden House (London) and on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

88 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers, such as postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, no matter who they are from.

89 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with the draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

90 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the elections for Woking in 2015.
These draft recommendations have been screened for impact on equalities, with due regard being given to the general equalities duties as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. As no potential negative impacts were identified, a full equality impact analysis is not required.
4 Mapping

Draft recommendations for Woking

92 The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for Woking Borough Council:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for Woking Borough Council.

You can also view our draft recommendations for Woking Borough Council on our interactive maps at [http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk](http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk)
## Appendix A

### Table A1: Draft recommendations for Woking Borough Council

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward name</th>
<th>Number of councillors</th>
<th>Electorate (2013)</th>
<th>Number of electors per councillor</th>
<th>Variance from average %</th>
<th>Electorate (2019)</th>
<th>Number of electors per councillor</th>
<th>Variance from average %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Byfleet &amp; West Byfleet</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7,777</td>
<td>2,592</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7,973</td>
<td>2,658</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Goldsworth Park</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7,382</td>
<td>2,461</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>7,474</td>
<td>2,491</td>
<td>-4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Heathlands</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7,277</td>
<td>2,426</td>
<td>-2%</td>
<td>7,355</td>
<td>2,452</td>
<td>-6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Hoe Valley</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6,361</td>
<td>2,120</td>
<td>-15%</td>
<td>7,788</td>
<td>2,596</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Horsell</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7,312</td>
<td>2,437</td>
<td>-2%</td>
<td>7,360</td>
<td>2,453</td>
<td>-6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Knaphill</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7,623</td>
<td>2,541</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>8,374</td>
<td>2,791</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Mount Hermon</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7,333</td>
<td>2,444</td>
<td>-2%</td>
<td>7,854</td>
<td>2,618</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Pyrford</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7,674</td>
<td>2,558</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7,801</td>
<td>2,600</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Sheerwater</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7,919</td>
<td>2,640</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7,994</td>
<td>2,665</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 St John’s</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7,915</td>
<td>2,638</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8,045</td>
<td>2,682</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>74,573</strong></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td><strong>78,018</strong></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Averages</strong></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td><strong>2,486</strong></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td><strong>2,601</strong></td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Woking Borough Council

Note: The ‘variance from average’ column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each ward varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.
## Appendix B

### Glossary and abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)</td>
<td>A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation’s interest to safeguard it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constituent areas</td>
<td>The geographical areas that make up any one ward or division, expressed in parishes or existing wards or divisions, or parts of either</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council size</td>
<td>The number of councillors elected to serve on a council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral Change Order (or Order)</td>
<td>A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division</td>
<td>A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral fairness</td>
<td>When one elector’s vote is worth the same as another’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral imbalance</td>
<td>Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electorate</td>
<td>People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multi-member ward or division</strong></td>
<td>A ward or division represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Park</strong></td>
<td>The 13 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and can be found at <a href="http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk">www.nationalparks.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of electors per councillor</strong></td>
<td>The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Over-represented</strong></td>
<td>Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parish</strong></td>
<td>A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parish council</strong></td>
<td>A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parish (or Town) council electoral arrangements</strong></td>
<td>The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish ward</td>
<td>A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PER (or periodic electoral review)</td>
<td>A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Commission for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political management arrangements</td>
<td>The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enabled local authorities in England to modernise their decision making process. Councils could choose from two broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet or a cabinet with a leader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town council</td>
<td>A parish council which has been given ceremonial ‘town’ status. More information on achieving such status can be found at <a href="http://www.nalc.gov.uk">www.nalc.gov.uk</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under-represented</td>
<td>Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance (or electoral variance)</td>
<td>How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>