

# Contents

Summary	1
1 Introduction	3
2 Analysis and draft recommendations	5
Submissions received	6
Electorate figures	6
Council size	6
Electoral fairness	7
General analysis	7
Electoral arrangements	9
Fleet town and its hinterland	9
Hart Rural	12
Conclusions	14
Parish electoral arrangements	15
3 What happens next?	17
4 Mapping	19
Appendices	
A Glossary and abbreviations	21
B Code of practice on written consultation	24
C Table C1: Draft recommendations for Hart District Council	26



# 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 Hart District 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 2010.

This review is being conducted as follows:

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Stage starts</b>	<b>Description</b>
Council Size	12 October 2010	Submission of proposals for council size to the LGBCE
One	11 January 2011	Submission of proposals of warding arrangements to the LGBCE
Two	4 April 2011	LGBCE's analysis and deliberation
Three	19 July 2011	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	10 October 2011	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

## Submissions received

The Commission received five submissions during its initial consultation on council size. During Stage One, we received 12 submissions including district-wide schemes from the Council and the Community Campaign (Hart) Group. All submissions can be viewed on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

## Analysis and draft recommendations

### Electorate figures

Hart District Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2016, a date five years on from the scheduled publication of our recommendations. This is prescribed in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 ('the 2009 Act'). These forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 1% over this period.

We acknowledge the overall increase in the electorate would suggest fairly static growth during the period 2010–2016. However, significant growth is focused in the towns of Fleet and Church Crookham, the latter specifically on the site of the former Queen Elizabeth Barracks which is subject to significant development during this period. Elsewhere in the district, growth in the electorate is indeed fairly static with some areas forecast to experience a modest reduction. The Commission is content that the forecasts are the most accurate available at this time.

## Council size

Hart District Council currently has a council size of 35 councillors. During the council size consultation, two respondents proposed a council size of 42. However, neither respondent provided evidence to support this figure. The Council proposed a council size of 33.

In support of a reduced council size, the Council did not provide evidence relating to its political management structure. Instead, it based its consideration on a presumption of three-member wards, as provided in the 2009 Act, and to secure the desired allocation of members between rural and urban areas of the district. On the principle of seeking minimal change in its council size, the Council stated that it 'appears to function reasonably well at present with 35 members'.

While we acknowledge the limited evidence in support of a council size of 33, we noted this would present a minimal change to the existing council size which the Council considered to work 'reasonably well'. In the absence of a compelling rationale to significantly depart from the existing council size, we have therefore adopted a council size of 33 as part of our draft recommendations.

## General analysis

Having considered the submissions received during Stage One, we have developed proposals in the north of the district that are based broadly on those of the Council and the Community Campaign (Hart) Group. In the south, our proposed warding pattern is broadly based on the Community Campaign (Hart) Group's proposals, subject to several modifications. Our proposals will provide good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and transport links in the district.

## 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 Hart District 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 **10 October 2011**. 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**  
**Hart Review**  
**The Local Government Boundary Commission for England**  
**Layden House**  
**76–86 Turnmill Street**  
**London EC1M 5LG**  
[reviews@lgbce.org.uk](mailto:reviews@lgbce.org.uk)

The full report is available to download at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.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 Hart District 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 Hart District Council as well as 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 Hart District Council in early 2012.

## 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 legislation<sup>1</sup> 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](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

## Why are we conducting a review in Hart?

6 We decided to conduct this review because based on the December 2010 electorate figures, the existing Fleet North ward has 36% more electors per councillor than the district average.

## How will the recommendations affect you?

7 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward and, in some instances, which parish council wards you vote in. Your ward name may also change, as may the names of parish or town council wards in the area. The names or boundaries of parishes will not change as a result of our recommendations.

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<sup>1</sup> Schedule 2 to The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

8 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 10 October 2011. After this point, we will be formulating our final recommendations which we are due to publish in early 2012. 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](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

## What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

9 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Members of the Commission are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)  
Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)  
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL  
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

10 Before finalising our recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Hart District 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.

11 As described earlier, our prime aim when recommending new electoral arrangements for Hart is to achieve a level of electoral fairness – 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,<sup>2</sup> 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 easily identifiable
  - the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties

12 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.

13 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral fairness 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 fairness over a five-year period.

14 These recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of Hart District 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.

15 Under the 2009 Act, where a council elects by thirds or halves (as opposed to the whole council being elected every four years), there is a presumption that the authority should have a uniform pattern of three-member and two-member wards respectively. We will only move away from this presumption where we receive compelling evidence to do so and where it can be demonstrated that an alternative warding pattern will better reflect our statutory criteria. Consequently, our starting point for this review was that Hart district should have a uniform pattern of three-member wards given its electoral cycle at this time.

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<sup>2</sup> Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

## Submissions received

16 Prior to, and during, the initial stage of the review, we visited Hart District Council and met with members, parish council representatives and officers. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 12 submissions during Stage One, all of which 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](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

## Electorate figures

17 As part of this review, Hart District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2016, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 1% over the period from 2010–2016.

18 While the projected increase suggests a fairly static growth in the electorate during the period 2010–2016, significant growth is focused in the towns of Fleet and Church Crookham, the latter the site of the former Queen Elizabeth Barracks. This site is subject to significant development during the five-year period following this review. Elsewhere in the district, growth in the electorate is indeed fairly static with some areas forecast to experience a modest reduction within the five-year period.

19 Having considered the information provided by the Council, we are content to use their figures as the basis of our draft recommendations.

## Council size

20 Hart District Council currently has 35 councillors elected from 18 district wards. During our initial consultation, we received five submissions on council size. Two respondents proposed a council size of 42. However, neither respondent provided evidence to support this figure. Two further respondents made comments in relation to the allocation of members but did not propose a specific council size. Hart District Council proposed a council size of 33, a reduction of two from the existing council size of 35.

21 In support of a reduced council size, the Council did not provide evidence relating to its political management structure. Instead, the Council based its consideration on a presumption of three-member wards and to secure its desired allocation of members between rural and urban areas of the district.

22 The Council stated that it ‘appears to function reasonably well at member level at present with 35 members’ and asserted that a significant reduction to this ‘would make it more difficult to allocate the various member positions’.

23 Consequently, the Council proposed a small reduction of two to 33 from the current council size of 35 members. On the same principle of seeking minimal change, the Council also stated it had considered an increase of one to 36. However, it had concluded that a 33-member council was its preference and would provide a better allocation of members to the rural and urban areas of the district.

24 We acknowledge the absence of evidence relating to the political management structure of the Council. However, a council size of 33 would represent a minimal

change to the existing council size of 35, which the Council considered to work 'reasonably well'. Furthermore, we did not receive any evidence to the contrary.

25 In the absence of a compelling rationale to significantly depart from the existing council size, we were therefore minded to adopt a council size of 33, as proposed by the Council. On balance, we considered this would have no adverse impact on the running of the Council. Accordingly, during Stage One we invited proposals for warding patterns based on a council size of 33.

26 During Stage One, we did not receive any comments on the proposed council size. We are therefore content to confirm a council size of 33 as part of our draft recommendations.

## Electoral fairness

27 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 should provide for electoral fairness whilst ensuring that we reflect communities in the area, and provide for effective and convenient local government.

28 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor. The district average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the district (69,472 in 2010 and 70,111 by December 2016) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 33 under our draft recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our draft recommendations is 2,105 in 2010 and 2,125 by 2016.

29 Under our draft recommendations, there will be no wards in which the number of electors per councillor will vary by more than 8% from the average across the district by 2016. Overall, we are satisfied that we have achieved very good levels of electoral fairness under our draft recommendations for Hart.

## General analysis

30 During Stage One, we received 12 submissions including district-wide proposals from both the Council and the Community Campaign (Hart) Group ('CCH Group'). Both district-wide schemes were based on a council size of 33 members, comprising 11 three-member wards and were supported by limited evidence of community identity.

31 Both the Council's and the CCH Group's schemes would provide good electoral equality with no ward having greater than 10% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2016. Both schemes used parishes as the building blocks of the proposed warding patterns. Furthermore, only the urban towns of Yateley, Fleet and Church Crookham would be split between district wards.

32 Neither the Council nor the CCH Group submitted ward names that would reflect the respective identities or communities comprising their proposed wards. The Council used the letters A–K to name their respective proposed wards while the CCH Group used the letters L–V. For ease, we have therefore used names that reflect the respective settlement(s) comprising the respective wards when referring to both the

Council's and the CCH Group's proposed wards. We have also adopted these names as part of our draft recommendations and are consulting on them.

33 The Council's and the CCH Group's schemes were similar, particularly in the north of the district where they proposed identical warding patterns. However, the two schemes differed in the south of the district, particularly in the Fleet and Church Crookham area.

34 The CCH Group made reference to a Sense of Place survey undertaken by Hart District Council in 2007, the results of which we subsequently obtained. The survey broadly sought to establish the perceived community identities of residents and how this related to their identity as reflected in 'administrative arrangements within the District'. The CCH Group specifically expressed concern at the Council's proposed 'ward E' (Crookham Village) which it argued that would not reflect the community identity in the area, as illustrated by the survey results. The Council's proposed 'ward E' (Crookham Village) would combine the rural parishes of Dogmersfield, Ewshot and Winchfield with the semi-urban parish of Crookham Village and adjacent areas of Fleet and Church Crookham parishes.

35 The CCH Group consequently submitted an alternative warding pattern in the Fleet and Church Crookham area. The CCH Group considered its warding pattern would better reflect the community identity in this area and address the lack of community identity, it argued, in the Council's 'ward E' (Crookham Village).

36 We analysed the results of the survey with regard to the communities in this area and considered these in the context of both the CCH Group's and the Council's proposed warding pattern. Having considered the results of the survey, we were of the view that the CCH Group's warding pattern would indeed provide a better reflection of the survey's results.

37 Given the limited evidence of community identity provided to support both the Council's and the CCH Group's proposed warding patterns, the results of the survey provide the best evidence of community identity available at this time. On the basis of this evidence, we have therefore broadly based our proposals in the south of the district on the CCH Group's scheme, which we consider to reflect the results of the survey. However, this is subject to minor and significant modifications in the Fleet and Church Crookham area to provide for improved levels of electoral equality and more easily identifiable boundaries.

38 In the north of the district, we have broadly adopted the Council's and the CCH Group's identical proposals, subject to a number of modifications.

39 Our proposals would result in 11 three-member wards. We consider our proposals provide for good electoral equality while reflecting our understanding of community identities and interests. A summary of our proposed electoral arrangements is set out in Table C1 (on pages 26–7) and Map 1.

40 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations, particularly in relation to those areas where we have modified the proposals submitted by the Council and the CCH Group. We also particularly welcome comments on the ward names we have proposed as part of the draft recommendations.

## Electoral arrangements

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

- Fleet town and its hinterland (page 9)
- Hart Rural (pages 12)

42 Details of the draft recommendations are set out in Table C1 on pages 26–7 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

### Fleet town and its hinterland

43 Fleet town broadly comprises the urban parishes of Fleet, Church Crookham and the adjacent conurbations of Netherhouse and Zebon Copse. The latter two settlements are both in the otherwise rural parish of Crookham Village. The hinterland of Fleet town is largely rural with scattered villages and hamlets.

44 The existing wards for this area are the two-member wards of Church Crookham East, Church Crookham West, Crondall, Fleet Central, Fleet Courtmoor, Fleet North, Fleet Pondtail and Fleet West. These wards are projected to have 7% fewer, 3% fewer, 2% fewer, 10% more, 7% fewer, 27% more, 7% fewer and 10% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2016, respectively.

45 The Council and the CCH Group submitted different proposals for the towns of Fleet and Church Crookham. Both warding patterns would provide good electoral equality. However, as discussed in paragraph 34, we noted the CCH Group's reference to the Hart District Council Sense of Place survey. The CCH Group expressed concern that the Council's proposed Crookham Village ward did not reflect the results of the survey. The CCH Group added that the proposed ward would not 'recognize (sic) the sense of community in the local area' and would comprise 'some very different communities'.

46 The Council's proposed Crookham Village ward would comprise the distinctly rural parishes of Dogmersfield, Ewshot and Winchfield with Crookham Village, the latter comprising the urban settlements of Zebon Copse and Netherhouse. The ward would also include an adjacent area of Fleet parish and the southern area of Church Crookham parish. The latter is the site of the former Queen Elizabeth Barracks and the Humphrey Park military housing estate, resulting in a distinct character given its purpose. The area is also subject to significant development during the five-year period following this review.

47 As discussed in paragraph 77, we noted that Winchfield Parish Council opposed the Council's proposal to include Winchfield parish within this ward, also on the basis of a lack of shared identity. Furthermore, having toured and considered the geography of this area, we noted the rural/urban mix and varied character within the proposed ward.

48 The CCH Group argued that its proposed warding pattern in this area would reflect the results of the survey, while providing good electoral equality. We therefore considered the results of the survey in the context of the respective warding patterns.

49 The survey identified respondents by polling district. The results suggested residents of Zebon Copse and Netherhouse mainly identified their communities as 'Church Crookham' and 'Crookham Village' respectively. Residents of Ewshot, however, mainly identified their community identity as 'Ewshot', followed by 'Church Crookham'.

50 On balance, we are therefore of the view that the CCH Group's proposed warding pattern in Fleet and Church Crookham does indeed reflect the results of the survey. However, we had some concerns about the transport links between the constituent areas comprising the CCH Group's proposed Church Crookham ward. We also held concerns with regard to the warding pattern within Fleet parish.

51 Consequently, and in the absence of evidence to the contrary to refute the results of the survey, we have broadly based our proposed warding pattern in this area on the CCH's proposals. However, this is subject to a number of significant modifications to better reflect transport routes in this area. Specifically in Fleet, we also propose a number of modifications to improve access and within wards better reflect ground detail.

### **Church Crookham**

52 The CCH Group's proposed Church Crookham ward would comprise the parish of Ewshot, the eastern area of Church Crookham parish and an adjacent area to the south of Fleet parish. This ward would have 2% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2016.

53 While we noted this ward would broadly reflect the results of the survey with regard to residents' perceived community identities, we had concerns about the inclusion of Ewshot parish.

54 Ewshot parish is largely rural with the small settlement of Ewshot village to its south and a largely woodland area to its east. As suggested by the survey, a number of residents in Ewshot parish seemingly look toward Church Crookham. This is also supported by the transport links and geography in this area. However, the CCH Group's proposed Church Crookham ward would link Ewshot parish with the east of Church Crookham parish.

55 Notwithstanding the road access via Beacon Hill Road, the geography of this area – most notably the woodland area to the east of Ewshot parish – does not suggest a commonality between Ewshot parish and the east of Church Crookham. Instead, the transport links in this area suggest Ewshot parish looks toward the west of Church Crookham.

56 We therefore propose transferring Ewshot parish to the CCH Group's proposed Crookham Village ward. The transport links of Ewshot Lane and Aldershot Road provide a clear and direct link to Crookham Village and the western area of Church Crookham town. This proposal also reflects the geography and apparent focus within the area.

57 We also propose a minor modification to transfer the area centred on Parsons Close from the CCH Group's proposed Crookham Village ward to Church Crookham ward. This would observe the parish boundary in this area and avoid creating an unviable parish ward of fewer than 100 electors in Fleet parish.

58 Taken together with our draft recommendations for Fleet town, the proposed Crookham Village and Church Crookham wards would have 3% fewer and 2% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2016, respectively.

### **Fleet town**

59 The CCH Group's proposed warding pattern in Fleet town would provide good electoral equality and reasonably identifiable boundaries in following man-made and natural features where possible.

60 Given the knock-on effect of the above modifications in Church Crookham and its hinterland, we have proposed further modifications to the Church Crookham and Fleet areas to improve electoral equality. We also propose a number of minor modifications to improve access within Fleet town and where possible avoid areas of Fleet town being included in adjacent rural wards.

61 We propose a significant modification to the boundary between the CCH Group's proposed Church Crookham ward and Fleet Central ward. We initially sought to follow the Basingstoke Canal as a strong and clear boundary between these wards. However, the number of electors involved by doing this would result in poor electoral equality. We therefore considered using the Basingstoke Canal in the east of this area before following the backs of properties in the west. This would also better reflect access routes into wards.

62 Further west, we propose the area centred on Wickham Close, and the adjacent area north of the canal, be transferred from the proposed Crookham Village ward to the proposed Fleet Central ward. This modification would provide a clearer ward pattern as it would follow the parish boundary.

63 Elsewhere in Fleet town, we propose minor modifications to improve access routes.

64 We propose two modifications between the CCH Group's proposed Fleet West and Fleet Central wards. Where the boundary between these wards would follow the centre of Tavistock Road it would restrict access for a number of cul-de-sacs in this area. Consequently, we propose the boundary run via the backs of the properties on Tavistock Road, wholly including the road within the proposed Fleet West ward.

65 Further north, we noted the CCH Group's proposed warding pattern would restrict access for properties on Sunnyside. Consequently, we propose the boundary run west of Gough Road, to include Gough Road, Sunnyside and Victoria Hill Road within the proposed Fleet Central ward. North of Gough Road, we also propose transferring Fleet Medical Centre and Fleet Community Hospital to Fleet Central ward. This modification would not affect any electors. However, both modifications would provide a more easily identifiable boundary in this area.

66 We propose two modifications between the proposed Fleet Central and Fleet East wards. Firstly, we propose including the cul-de-sac of Abbots Close wholly within Fleet East ward. Under the CCH Group's proposal, the boundary between these wards straddles the cul-de-sac, thus providing poor access for the properties to the west of Abbots Close.

67 To the south of this area, we propose including the cul-de-sac of Medonte Close wholly within the proposed Fleet Central ward. Under the CCH Group's proposal, the boundary would run along the centre of the close itself. Subsequently, the boundary would follow Aldershot Road before joining the Basingstoke Canal via a pathway between properties.

68 We toured Fleet town and visited the areas subject to the above modifications. Consequently, we are confident that the proposals in Fleet town will provide strong boundaries that provide clear access routes and reflect the geography of the town.

69 Following the above modifications in Fleet town, our proposed Fleet West, Fleet Central and Fleet East wards would have 1% more, 2% fewer and 2% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2016, respectively.

## Hart Rural

70 Hart Rural broadly comprises the area north of the railway and the M3 and the south-west of the district. With the exception of the towns of Blackwater, Hook and Yateley, the area is largely rural. Broadly speaking, the electorate in this area is forecast to remain reasonably static in the five-year period following the end of the review with some areas experiencing modest reductions in the electorate.

71 The existing wards for this area are the two-member wards of Blackwater & Hawley, Frogmore & Darby Green, Hartley Wintney, Hook, Odiham, Yateley East, Yateley North and Yateley West. These wards are projected to have 12% fewer, 2% more, 7% more, 5% more, 7% fewer, 0% more, 7% fewer and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2016, respectively. The single-member wards of Eversley and Long Sutton are projected to have 3% more and 12% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2016.

72 As discussed in paragraph 38, we have developed proposals in the north of the district which are broadly based on the identical district-wide schemes from the Council and the CCH Group. In the south-west of the district, we have broadly adopted the CCH Group's scheme, subject to a modification in the Hartley Wintney and Odiham area.

### **Hartley Wintney and Odiham**

73 The Council's and the CCH Group's proposed Hartley Wintney ward would be a geographically large, rural ward comprising the parishes of Bramshill, Eversley, Hartley Wintney, Heckfield and Mattingley. The proposed ward would have equal to the average number of electors per councillor than the district average by 2016.

74 Reasonably direct transport links exist between Hartley Wintney parish and the parishes in its hinterland, with Hartley Wintney village as the apparent focal point for amenities and services within the area. The ward would combine the existing wards of Hartley Wintney and Eversley.

75 During Stage One, submissions were received from Eversley, Hartley Wintney, Mattingley and Winchfield parish councils. Eversley and Hartley Wintney parish councils both endorsed the proposed Hartley Wintney ward. Mattingley Parish Council opposed the ward and argued it would be a geographically large ward and would be 'dominated' by Hartley Wintney parish.

76 Winchfield Parish Council proposed it be warded with either Odiham parish to its south-west – as proposed by the CCH Group – or Hartley Wintney to its north. However, the Parish Council expressed a preference to be warded with Hartley Wintney parish.

77 Winchfield Parish Council provided evidence of community identity to support its links to Odiham and Hartley Wintney. The Parish Council said it ‘looks to both Odiham and Hartley Wintney for local shopping and health facilities’. However, it added Hartley Wintney was of closer proximity and stated ‘the ecclesiastical parish of Winchfield is served by the vicar based in Hartley Wintney’. The Parish Council argued that it did not share any identity with the urban area of Zebon Copse to its east, as proposed by the Council.

78 We noted that Hartley Wintney Parish Council also supported being warded with Winchfield parish, with which it said it had a ‘natural affinity’. Having toured the area, we are also of the view that a sense of shared community appears to exist between the two areas. Furthermore, clear road links exist between the two areas via Odiham Road.

79 Given the support for a modification and the evidence of community identity, we therefore explored the possibility of transferring Winchfield parish to the proposed Hartley Wintney ward.

80 As discussed in paragraph 37, we are minded to broadly adopt the CCH Group’s scheme in the south of the district. We therefore considered a modification based on the CCH Group’s proposed warding pattern in this area.

81 We propose Winchfield parish be transferred to the proposed Hartley Wintney ward. This would result in our proposed three-member Hartley Wintney and Odiham wards having 8% more and 3% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2016, respectively.

82 We acknowledge the Council’s and the CCH Group’s proposed Hartley Wintney ward would have an improved level of electoral equality than under our proposal. However, we are confident that our warding pattern in this area reflects the evidence of community identity received during Stage One and our observations while touring the area.

83 We also acknowledge the geographic size of the proposed Hartley Wintney ward which we note was a concern voiced by Mattingley Parish Council. However, given the rural geography in this area of the district, a smaller ward would result in poor electoral equality. Furthermore, we are satisfied that despite the geographic size of the ward, reasonable transport links exist in the area, primarily between Hartley Wintney and the settlements in its hinterland.

84 Consequently, we propose adopting the CCH Group’s proposed Odiham ward as part of our draft recommendations, subject to the modification discussed in paragraph 81.

85 To the west of Hart, we propose adopting the Council’s and the CCH Group’s proposed Hook ward without modification. The proposed three-member Hook ward will have 1% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2016.

## **Yateley Town**

86 The Council's and the CCH Group's proposed Yateley West and Yateley East wards would broadly comprise Yateley parish but not the eastern area of Frogmore which would be included in the adjacent proposed Blackwater & Hawley ward. The proposed Yateley West, Yateley East and Blackwater & Hawley wards would have 0% more, 1% fewer and 0% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2016, respectively.

87 We considered the proposed warding pattern in this area to have good electoral equality, and broadly speaking, would provide a clear warding pattern within the town. However, we propose two minor modifications to further reflect access routes.

88 Firstly, we propose Frogmore Grove and the eastern properties on Lowlands Road be transferred from the proposed Blackwater & Hawley ward to the proposed Yateley East ward. These properties look toward the west and have a clear access route via Reading Road within the proposed Yateley East ward.

89 Between the proposed Yateley West and Yateley East wards, we propose a similar modification to again improve access and to provide a ward boundary that is more easily identifiable and better reflects ground detail.

90 North of Yateley Green, we noted the reduced access for properties to the east of Chandlers Lane within the proposed Yateley East ward. We therefore propose a minor modification to transfer Broome Close, Crondall End and the properties in the adjacent section of Chandlers Lane from the proposed Yateley East ward to the proposed Yateley West ward. To effect this modification, we propose our boundary follow Vicarage Lane before following the path that heads north-west to the district boundary. We also consider this to be a clearer boundary than following field lines, as proposed by the Council and the CCH Group.

91 Consequently, our proposed Yateley West, Yateley East and Blackwater & Hawley wards would have 1% more, 0% more and 1% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2016, respectively.

92 Table C1 (on pages 26–7) provides details of the electoral variances for our proposed wards in all of the district. The draft recommendations are shown on Map 1, 2a and Map 2b accompanying this report.

## **Conclusions**

93 Table 1 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2010 and 2016 electorate figures.

**Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements**

	Draft recommendations	
	2010	2016
Number of councillors	33	33
Number of electoral wards	11	11
Average number of electors per councillor	2,105	2,125
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	1	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

**Draft recommendation**

Hart District Council should comprise 33 councillors serving 11 wards, as detailed and named in Table C1 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

## Parish electoral arrangements

94 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

95 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make such changes as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, Hart District Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

96 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parishes of Church Crookham, Fleet and Yateley. We would particularly welcome comments on these proposals from the parish councils concerned and local residents during this consultation stage.

97 As a result of our proposed electoral ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Church Crookham parish.

**Draft recommendations**

Church Crookham Parish Council should return 10 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Church Crookham East (returning six members), Gally Hill (returning three members) and Queen Elizabeth (returning one member). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 2b.

98 As a result of our proposed electoral ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Fleet parish.

**Draft recommendations**

Fleet Town Council should return 19 councillors, as at present, representing five wards: Ancells (returning two members), Calthorpe (returning four members), Central (returning five members), Courtmoor (returning four members) and Pondtail (returning four members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 2b.

99 As a result of our proposed electoral ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Yateley parish.

**Draft recommendations**

Yateley Town Council should return 16 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Frogmore (returning two members), Yateley East (returning seven members) and Yateley West (returning seven members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 2a.

### 3 What happens next?

100 There will now be a consultation period of twelve weeks, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Hart District Council contained in this report. We will take into account fully all submissions received by 10 October 2011. Any received after this date may not be taken into account.

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

102 Express your views by writing directly to:

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

[reviews@lgbce.org.uk](mailto:reviews@lgbce.org.uk)

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

103 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 Stage Three representations will be placed on deposit locally at the offices of Hart District Council and at our offices in Layden House (London) and on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk). A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

104 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.

105 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.

106 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 next elections for Hart District Council in 2012.

## 4 Mapping

### Draft recommendations for Hart

107 The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for Hart District Council:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for Hart.
- **Sheet 2, Map 2a** illustrates the proposed wards in Yateley town.
- **Sheet 2, Map 2b** illustrates the proposed wards in Fleet town and Church Crookham.



# Appendix A

## Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward, expressed in parishes or existing wards, or parts of either
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	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
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral imbalance	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	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

Local Government Boundary Commission for England or LGBCE	The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is responsible for undertaking electoral reviews. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England assumed the functions of the Boundary Commission for England in April 2010
Multi-member ward or division	A ward or division represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	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>
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	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
Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or Town) council electoral arrangements	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

Parish ward	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
PER (or periodic electoral review)	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
Political management arrangements	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
Town council	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>
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	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

## Appendix B

### Code of practice on written consultation

The Cabinet Office's *Code of Practice on Consultation* (2008) (<http://www.bis.gov.uk/files/file47158.pdf>) requires all government departments and agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Public bodies, such as the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, are encouraged to follow the Code.

The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 November 2008, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

**Table B1: The Local Government Boundary Commission for England's compliance with Code criteria**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Compliance/departure</b>
Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage.	We comply with this requirement.
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose.	We comply with this requirement.
A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain.	We comply with this requirement.
Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals.	We comply with this requirement.
Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation.	We consult at the start of the review and on our draft recommendations. Our consultation stages are a minimum total of 16 weeks.

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We consult at the start of the review and on our draft recommendations. Our consultation stages are a minimum total of 16 weeks.

Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken.

We comply with this requirement.

Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.

We comply with this requirement.

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## Appendix C

**Table C1: Draft recommendations for Hart District Council**

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2010)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2016)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
1	Blackwater & Hawley	3	6,406	2,135	1%	6,302	2,101	-1%
2	Church Crookham	3	6,283	2,094	-1%	6,249	2,083	-2%
3	Crookham Village	3	5,325	1,775	-16%	6,190	2,063	-3%
4	Fleet Central	3	6,445	2,148	2%	6,238	2,079	-2%
5	Fleet East	3	6,545	2,182	4%	6,500	2,167	2%
6	Fleet West	3	5,975	1,992	-5%	6,449	2,150	1%
7	Hartley Wintney	3	6,613	2,204	5%	6,883	2,294	8%
8	Hook	3	6,389	2,130	1%	6,284	2,095	-1%
9	Odiham	3	6,459	2,153	2%	6,201	2,067	-3%
10	Yateley East	3	6,448	2,149	2%	6,375	2,125	0%

**Table C1 (cont.): Draft recommendations for Hart District Council**

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2010)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2016)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
11 Yateley West	3	6,584	2,195	4%	6,440	2,147	1%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>69,472</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>70,111</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,105</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,125</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Hart District Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral division 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.