



Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Layden House

76-86 Turnmill Street

London EC1M 5LG

Dear Sirs

11<sup>th</sup> March 202

**Submission on Future Warding of Bracknell Forest Council.**

I live in the Bracknell Parliamentary Constituency and wish to comment on the proposed warding within that area of Bracknell Forest Council.

I note that the LGBCE is minded to accept the Bracknell Forest Council's submission of a council size of 40 and I use the 2025 electorate estimate of 101,484 as listed on the LGBCE website to give a target 'electoral ratio' of 2,537, that is the figure for electors per councillor to be achieved following this electoral review.

In approaching these recommendations on future warding for Bracknell Forest I aim to maximise electoral equality and minimise overall change. To achieve this I have considered the following 'sub-areas' made up from the current wards:

- **The 4 wards in Sandhurst (17,399) plus Crowthorne (5,771) = 23,170.**

I suggest allocating 9 councillors (a reduction of 1) to give an average electoral ratio of 2,574 with an electoral variance of 1.45% from the target of 2,537.

- **The 2 wards of Great Hollands North (5,969) plus Great Hollands South (4,105) = 10,074.**

I suggest an allocation of 4 councillors (as now) to give an electoral ratio of 2,518, with an electoral variance of -0.75% from the target.

- **Harmans Water (7,705), Crown Wood (6,414) and Hanworth & Birch Hill (6,662) = 20,781.**

I suggest an allocation of 8 councillors (a reduction of 1) to give an electoral ratio of 2,598 with an electoral variance of 2.4% from the target.

- **Bullbrook (5,827) plus Priestwood & Garth (6,420) = 12,287.**

I suggest an allocation of 5 councillors (as now) to give an electoral ratio of 2,457 with an electoral variance of -3.2% from the target.

- **Wildridings & Central (5,304) plus Old Bracknell (4,661) = 9,965.**

I suggest an allocation of 4 councillors (as now) to give an electoral ratio of 2,491 with an electoral variance of -1.9% from the target.

- **The 4 'Windsor' wards, Binfield with Warfield (9,574), Warfield Harvest Ride (6,559), Winkfield & Cranbourne (4,428) and Ascot (4,646) = 25,207.**

I suggest an allocation of 10 councillors (as now) to give an electoral ratio of 2,520 with an electoral variance of -0.7% from the target.

**The benefits of this 'sub-area' plan.** I consider that using these 'sub-areas' offers the following advantages, they:

- Minimise the variation of electoral variance to just over 3%.
- Minimise change to existing ward boundaries.
- Maintain the current boundary between the Bracknell and Windsor parliamentary constituencies.
- Minimise change to Borough wards to simplify the task of adjusting parish wards to make them coterminous, as far as is practical, with the Borough wards.
- Identify where the reduction in councillors should be accommodated.
- Minimise changes so as to reflect the interests and identities of local communities.
- Minimise the administrative and resources burden on the local authority.

#### **The Parliamentary boundary between the Bracknell and Windsor constituencies.**

Parliamentary boundaries changes are the responsibility of the Boundary Commission for England with that Boundary Commission (and the other 3 national Commissions) working on historical data of electoral numbers and warding arrangements prior to a boundary review. Boundary Review 2023 (were there to be one) would work using data from 2019, a Boundary Review 2028 would use data from 2024 with changes, if agreed, being unlikely to be implemented until a General Election in 2028 or 2029. It is considered highly desirable to maintain the inter – constituency boundaries of wards that form the existing parliamentary boundary between the Bracknell and Windsor constituencies and extremely undesirable to have wards straddling the current parliamentary boundary as this would lead to complication, confusion, avoidable multiplicity of polling districts with possible unwelcome changes to polling stations.

**The 'Windsor' Wards Sub-Area.** No opinion on future warding arrangements is offered in this area: that is left to residents in the Windsor constituency.

### **Sandhurst and Crowthorne Sub-Area.**

**Crowthorne.** 'Greater' Crowthorne is divided between the parishes of Crowthorne (which lies in Bracknell Forest) and Wokingham Without (which lies in Wokingham Borough). Crowthorne Parish is currently subdivided into the large Crowthorne North ward (5,771) and the smaller Crowthorne South ward (1,200) which forms the Wellington element of the Little Sandhurst and Wellington ward. Hitherto, a fairly large element of Crowthorne (the Crowthorne South ward) has formed part of what is essentially a Sandhurst ward. The significant housing growth in Crowthorne suggests that this situation should be reversed with a small element of Sandhurst forming part of a larger ward in Crowthorne.

There is an aspiration to re-unite the Crowthorne parish within a single ward but the total of 6,971 (5,771 + 1,200) does not quite justify 3 councillors with an additional 600 or so electors required. As these electors would logically come from Sandhurst I suggest that the inclusion of the Longdown Road/Mickle Hill area of Little Sandhurst (some 630 electors) would be the most appropriate and enable Crowthorne to be a 3 member ward. (This would be a similar situation to that in the Wokingham Without ward which has 700 electors from Finchampstead Parish to help ensure electoral equality.)

As further house building is planned in the Crowthorne ward beyond 2025 with a commensurate increase in electorate, it is prudent to leave Crowthorne marginally below the electoral quota figure to allow for population growth.

**Proposed Wildmoor & Owlsmoor Ward.** I note that Bracknell Forest Council's draft submission includes a proposed ward of Wildmoor & Owlsmoor, Wildmoor being that part of Crowthorne lying south of Lower Broadmoor Road. As there is no direct road between the rather disparate elements of this proposed ward, road travel will require travel through an adjoining ward and is not therefore 'internally coherent' as defined in para 4.47 of the Technical Guidance.

**Sandhurst Town.** I accept that there is no ideal warding arrangement for Sandhurst Town. If Crowthorne is to be a 3 councillor ward with an electorate of 7,501 that leaves 6 councillors to represent Sandhurst town with an electorate of 15,669. On balance, I suggest 2 wards with 3 councillors each using the Rackstraw Road/Marshall Road as the basis for an internal ward boundary. The combined electorate of College Town and Owlsmoor is 8,424 exceeds the 7,600 figure and an expanded enclave of about 600 electors (larger than the existing salient) east of Rackstraw Road will be necessary to transfer into the future Sandhurst ward. This should then give a College Town & Owlsmoor ward of 7,824 leaving the remainder to form a Sandhurst ward of 7,845.

### **Great Hollands Sub-Area.**

The housing development known as Jennet's Park has unbalanced these wards with the electorate in the Great Hollands North ward triggering this electoral review. This can be adjusted by the transfer of some 900 electors from the North ward to the South ward. It is suggested that the following roads should transfer from the North ward to the South ward:

Aysgarth, Ashbourne, Avebury, Ardingly and Appledore amounting in total to some 900 electors giving the North ward 5,069 electors and the South ward 5,005.

#### **Hanworth & Birch Hill, Crown Wood and Harmans Water Sub-Area.**

These are currently 3 x 3 councillor wards but electoral equality requires the reduction of 1 councillor and a revision to probably 2 x 3 councillor wards and 1 x 2 councillor wards. It is noted that the Harmans Water ward electorate is almost exactly that for a 3 member ward; therefore it is proposed to leave that ward unchanged.

I recognise that it is not ideal to have a ward spanning the Bagshot Road but consider this to be an acceptable compromise and preferable to having wards straddling a Parliamentary boundary. The question then is what is the least bad of the various boundaries to give one 3 councillor ward with 7,600 electors and a 2 councillor ward with 5,070 electors.

On balance, it is suggested that the area of Birch Hill to the south east of South Hill Park should transfer from the Hanworth ward to the Crown Wood ward. Roads east of Kimberley and Juniper (the roads Kimberley, Juniper, Jevington, Jameston, Inchwood, Frobisher, Haywood, Hilberry and Herondale), comprising some 1,400 electors which, together with the forecast 6,414 electorate of Crown Wood, would form a Birch Hill & Crown Wood ward of 7,814 electors justifying 3 councillors.

Hanworth would then revert to being a 2 councillor ward within its existing boundaries, less the roads transferred, of 5,262 electors.

#### **Bullbrook and Priestwood & Garth Sub- Area.**

An allocation of 5 councillors leads to one x 2 councillor ward and a 3 councillor ward. An inter ward boundary needs to be recommended in line with the electoral quota. The projected figures for 2025 show that Priestwood & Garth, currently a 3 councillor ward, with 6,420 and Bullbrook, currently a 2 councillor ward, with 5,867 electors. On the basis that fewer electors would need to transfer from Bullbrook to Priestwood & Garth to achieve electoral equality, that logically leads to the current councillor numbers continuing for each ward, with a need to transfer some 950 electors from the Bullbrook ward to Priestwood & Garth.

A significant boundary adjustment appears to be necessary with the Priestwood & Grath ward being extended east of Warfield Road to subsume that part of the current Bullbrook ward north of London road and west of Bay Road

#### **Old Bracknell and Wildridings & Central Sub-Area.**

Development in the town centre is forecast to increase the electorate to 5,304 suggesting an adjustment by the transfer of some 300 electors from Wildridings & Central to the Old Bracknell ward. The road Swaledale has some 250 electors and the transfer of that road from Wildridings & Central ward to the old Bracknell ward would leave the former with 5,054 electors and bring Old Bracknell up to 4,911.

## **Summary.**

I believe the suggested warding achieves the aims set out under the above list of 'benefits' and, in particular minimises changes to the existing wards, does not propose any 'internally incoherent' ward and keeps the electoral variance in wards to less than 4% as illustrated by the summary of Bracknell Forest wards in the Bracknell Constituency in the table below.

***David Sleight***

## **Suggested Bracknell Constituency Wards.**

<b>Name.</b>	<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Electorate</b>	<b>Electoral Variance</b>
Birch Hill & Crown Wood	3	7,814	2.6%
Bullbrook	2	4,917	-3.1%
College Town & Owlsmoor	3	7,824	2.8%
Crowthorne	3	7,501	-1.5%
Great Hollands North	2	5,069	-0.1%
Great Hollands South	2	5,005	-2.8%
Hanworth	2	5,262	3.7%
Harmans Water	3	7,705	1.2%
Old Bracknell	2	4,911	-3.2%
Priestwood & Garth	3	7,370	-3.1%
Sandhurst	3	7,845	3.0%
Wildidings & Central	2	5,064	0%