

From: [reviews](#)
To: [Jones, Alexandra](#)
Subject: FW: Submission on the Electoral review of Bracknell Forest Council
Date: 08 September 2020 09:25:54
Attachments: [DWS LBGCE August 2020.docx](#)

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 01 September 2020 09:59
To: reviews <reviews@lgbce.org.uk>
Subject: Submission on the Electoral review of Bracknell Forest Council

Good Morning Cleardata

I attach a submission on the public consultation on the draft warding arrangements for Bracknell Forest Council, part of the ongoing Electoral review of that Council.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



Local Government Boundary Commission for England c/o Cleardata

Innovation House

Coniston Court

Riverside Business Park

Blyth NE24 4RP

Dear Sirs

1st September 2020

Comment on the Draft LBGCE Proposal on Warding of Bracknell Forest Council.

I live in the Bracknell Parliamentary Constituency and submitted proposals for warding in your previous consultation on the Bracknell Forest Council Electoral Review. I am grateful for your consideration of my previous input to this Electoral Review.

Since that last consultation, the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) has issued its updated spreadsheet under its 'Data and Resources' entitled 'England Parliamentary electorates 2010 – 2020' in which it calls the electoral numbers as at 1st December 2019, the 2020 electorates. The terminology of the 2020 electorates (the electorate as at 1st December 2019) is used in this submission. You will, of course, know that the 2021 electorates from the BCE's Data and Resources will form the definitive data to be used in the Parliamentary Boundary Review 2023.

I note that the BCE lists the 2020 electorate for Bracknell Forest Council as 84,181 which differs significantly from the electorate figure in your Draft Proposals for Warding of 89,882. As these electorate figures both originate from Bracknell Forest Council I find this discrepancy of 5,701 puzzling which, if the lower figure were to be correct, would have a significant effect on the 2025 estimate of electorate that is the basis for your warding proposals.

I understand that Bracknell Forest Council had estimated (very exactly) a 2025 electorate of 101,484 and this was compiled by estimating the electorate growth by ward and then by totalling. But the BCE spreadsheet on page 3 of 8 on Berkshire list the electorates by ward over the 10 years to 2020 and, in the majority of cases there has been no electorate growth over that period and, with development concentrated in the wards of Binfield with Warfield, Crowthorne and Great Hollands North as well as the Bracknell town centre, it is difficult to see from where electorate growth may come from by 2025 in the wards listed below.

Ward	2010 Electorate*	2020 Electorate*	2025 Estimate+
Ascot	3,999	3,983	4,646
Central Sandhurst	3,901	3,799	4,238
College Town	4,580	3,746	4,195
Crown Wood	5,675	5,433	6,414
Great Hollands S	3,761	3,547	4,105
Hanworth	5,992	5,672	6,662
Old Bracknell	3,954	3,970	4,661
Owlsmoor	3,921	3,793	4,229
Priestwood & Garth	5,569	5,416	6,420

Notes:

* Boundary Commission for England data.

+ Bracknell Forest Council Estimates.

I realise that the LGBCE publishes guidelines entitled 'Electorate forecasts – A guide for Practitioners' and I assume that was followed in preparing the election forecast for 2025. Nevertheless the forecasts seem to be unrealistically ambitious. Bracknell Forest has a new housing target of about 550 per year that should add about 1,000 electors per annum. For a reality check, Bracknell Forest added 920 electors in the 12 months to December 2019, so the 1,000 figure is indicative although Covid 19 is likely to slow this electorate growth. For example, in one of the major development sites, the Legal and General Homes site known as Buckler's Park in Crowthorne, construction of new homes has yet to restart in earnest after lockdown.

There are 6 years of electoral growth to come (2000 to 2005 inclusive) so that may give another 6,000 electors. If added to the BCE 2020 electorate that would give a 2025 electorate of about 90,200 and if added to the figure the LGBCE have used would give a 2025 electorate of about 96,000, both some way short of the 101,484 forecast by Bracknell Forest Council and on which the future warding is based.

Having agreed the Bracknell Forest Council proposal for a future Council size of 40 to effectively run the Council, there does not appear to be any justification to increase that figure to 41. This would be the same council size as the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) which has a BCE 2020 electorate of 107,183 compared with a BCE 2020 electorate of only 84,181 for Bracknell Forest.

Additionally it is not obvious why such a low elector/councillor ratio is being proposed compared with other unitary authorities within Berkshire and both the RBWM and West Berkshire Council had Electoral Reviews that concluded in 2018. The comparison is shown below:

Unitary	BCE 2020 Electorate	Council Size	Electors/Cllr
West Berkshire	120,776	43	2,808
RBWM	107,183	41	2,614
Wokingham*	128,118	54	2,372
Bracknell Forest	84,181	42	2,004

Note: * An Electoral Review may be triggered in Wokingham Borough in December 2020.

It is noted that the LGBCE draft recommendations give the following electors/councillor ratio:

2020 42 @ 2,140

2025 41 @ 2,504

This elector/councillor ratio of 2,504 equates to a 2025 electorate of 102,664 but I hope that I have been able to highlight that this electorate figure seems unlikely to be realised – at least by 2025.

Central Bracknell. The LGBCE proposes a single member ward for Central Bracknell even though the current electorate is only 1,330 and is estimated to be 2,441 at the end of 2025. My earlier remarks on these forecasts applies. I suggest that electoral equality will be better achieved by reverting to the current Wildridings and Central ward with that and the Cld Bracknell ward both continuing as 2 member wards but with some adjustment to ensure electoral parity.

Summary.

- There is a puzzling disparity of 5,701 between the BCE 2020 electorate figure of 84,181 for Bracknell Forest and the 89,882 that the LGBCE has used in its draft warding proposals.
- Having agreed a Council size of 40 for this relatively small local authority there seems no justification for adding a 41st councillor. Indeed, in comparison with West Berkshire and the RBWM even a council size of 40 looks unnecessarily high.
- The Bracknell Forest Council's estimates of the 2025 look unrealistically ambitious and do not appear to take account of the absence of electorate growth in 9 of their wards over the last 10 years.
- The LGBCE proposed elector/councillor ratio is low compared with other unitary authorities within Berkshire and are based on what may be an unrealistic 2025 electorate estimate.

- A reversion to a 2 member Wildridings and Central ward (instead of a single member Central Bracknell ward) would minimise electoral inequality during the years to 2025 and perhaps beyond.

I hope that this submission is helpful to you in finalising this Electoral Review of Bracknell Forest Council.

[REDACTED]