

Final recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Surrey Heath Borough Council

Electoral review

August 2017

Translations and other formats

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Tel: 0330 500 1525

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Summary

Who we are and what we do

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament. We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons.

2 Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

Electoral review

3 An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority. A local authority's electoral arrangements decide:

- How many councillors are needed
- How many wards or electoral divisions should there be, where are their boundaries and what should they be called
- How many councillors should represent each ward or division

Why Surrey Heath?

4 We are conducting a review of Surrey Heath as the value of each vote in borough council elections varies depending on where you live in Surrey Heath. Some councillors currently represent many more or fewer voters than others. This is 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where votes are as equal as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

Our proposals for Surrey Heath

- Surrey Heath Borough Council should be represented by 35 councillors, four fewer than there are now.
- Surrey Heath should have 14 wards, two fewer than there are now.
- The boundaries of 14 of the current wards should change, two will stay the same.

5 We have now finalised our recommendations for electoral arrangements in Surrey Heath.

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

6 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament.¹

7 The members of the Commission are:

- Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)
 - Dr Peter Knight CBE, DL
 - Alison Lowton
 - Peter Maddison QPM
 - Sir Tony Redmond
-
- Chief Executive: Jolyon Jackson CBE

¹ Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

1 Introduction

- 8 This electoral review is being carried out to ensure that:
- The wards in Surrey Heath are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
 - The number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the borough.

What is an electoral review?

- 9 Our three main considerations are to:
- Improve electoral equality by equalising the number of electors each councillor represents
 - Reflect community identity
 - Provide for effective and convenient local government

10 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

Consultation

11 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Surrey Heath. We then held two periods of consultation on warding patterns for the borough. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft and final recommendations.

12 This review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
19 July 2016	Number of councillors decided
26 July 2016	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
10 October 2016	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
24 January 2017	Publication of draft recommendations, start of second consultation
20 March 2017	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming recommendations
13 June 2017	Publication of further limited draft recommendations, start of limited consultation
10 July 2017	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
29 August 2017	Publication of final recommendations

How will the recommendations affect you?

13 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.

2 Analysis and final recommendations

14 Legislation² states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors³ there are now, but also on how many there are likely to be in the five years after the publication of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for our wards.

15 In reality, we are unlikely to be able to create wards with exactly the same number of electors in each; we have to be flexible. However, we try to keep the number of electors represented by each councillor as close to the average for the council as possible.

16 We work out the average number of electors per councillor for each individual local authority by dividing the electorate by the number of councillors, as shown on the table below.

	2016	2022
Electorate of Surrey Heath	68,041	70,372
Number of councillors	35	35
Average number of electors per councillor	1,944	2,011

17 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having 'good electoral equality'. All but one of our proposed wards for Surrey Heath will have electoral equality by 2022. The outlier, Bisley & West End, will have 14% more electors than the borough average by 2022. We consider this to be justified by the community identity evidence received.

18 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the borough or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. The recommendations will not have an effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums and we are not able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Submissions received

19 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed at our offices by appointment, or on our website at <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-east/surrey/surrey-heath>

Electorate figures

20 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2022, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2017. These

² Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

³ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 3% by 2022. This increase is due to a number of planned developments.

21 We considered the information provided by the Council and are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our final recommendations.

Number of councillors

22 Surrey Heath Borough Council currently has 40 councillors. We looked at evidence provided by the Council and concluded that decreasing by six would make sure the Council could carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

23 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 34 councillors – for example, 34 one-councillor wards, 17 two-councillor wards, or a mix of one-, two- and three-councillor wards.

24 We received two submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on ward patterns. The submission from Surrey Heath Borough Council detailed changes to governance, service delivery and representational activities identified by the Council that supported their proposal for a reduction in the number of councillors. When formulating our draft recommendations, we found that a council size of 35 would allow for better electoral equality across the borough. We therefore based our draft recommendations on a 35-member council.

25 We received one submission about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on our draft recommendations. This submission suggested the number of councillors was too high, but did not propose an alternative. We have therefore based our final recommendations on a 35-member council.

Ward boundaries consultation

26 We received 28 submissions to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included one detailed borough-wide proposal from the Council proposing a pattern of 15 wards to be represented by 34 elected members.

27 The borough-wide scheme provided for a mixed pattern of two- and three-councillor wards for Surrey Heath. We carefully considered the proposals received and concluded that, although the proposed wards generally used clearly identifiable boundaries, they would not all have good levels of electoral equality. Our draft recommendations were therefore based only in part on the borough-wide proposal that we received. In some areas we considered that the proposals did not provide for the best balance between our statutory criteria and so we identified alternative boundaries.

28 Our draft recommendations were for seven two-councillor and seven three-councillor wards. We considered that our draft recommendations provided for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests.

Draft recommendations and further limited consultation

29 We received 50 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included one borough-wide scheme and a number of partial schemes. The majority of the other submissions focused on specific areas, particularly St Pauls and Old Dean, Heatherside and Parkside, and Windlesham and Chobham.

30 Following consideration of the representations received, we decided to conduct a period of further limited consultation on an alternative warding proposal in the Camberley area.

31 In response to our further limited consultation we received 174 submissions. The majority of these submissions were from residents in the Kings Ride and Diamond Ridge area of Camberley. They objected to the move of electors in this area from Town to Old Dean, citing a variety of reasons.

32 Our final recommendations are therefore based on the draft recommendations in Town, Old Dean and St Pauls. We have also made minor modifications to the boundaries between Heatherside and Parkside and Frimley and Frimley Green wards.

Final recommendations

33 Pages 8–18 detail our final recommendations for each area of Surrey Heath. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁴ criteria of:

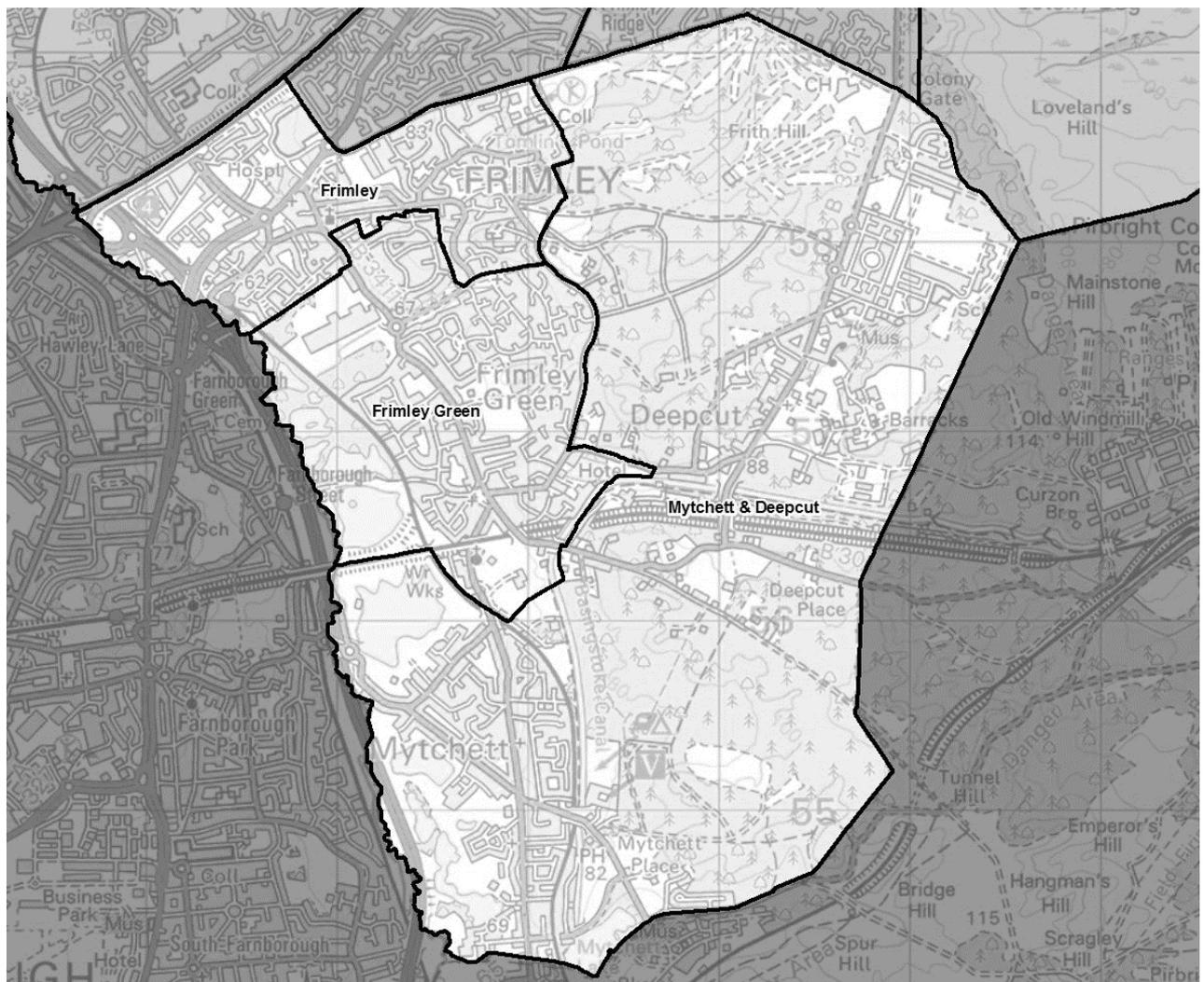
- Equality of representation
- Reflecting community interests and identities
- Providing for effective and convenient local government

34 Our final recommendations are for seven three-councillor wards and seven two-councillor wards. We consider that our final recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during consultation.

35 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table on page 19 and on the large map accompanying this report.

⁴ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Frimley and Mytchett



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2022
Frimley	2	2%
Frimley Green	3	-9%
Mytchett & Deepcut	3	-2%

Frimley and Frimley Green

36 We received two submissions regarding the wards of Frimley and Frimley Green, from the Council and a councillor. They both argued that under our draft recommendations the identifiable centre of Frimley, including the High Street and railway station, would become part of Frimley Green.

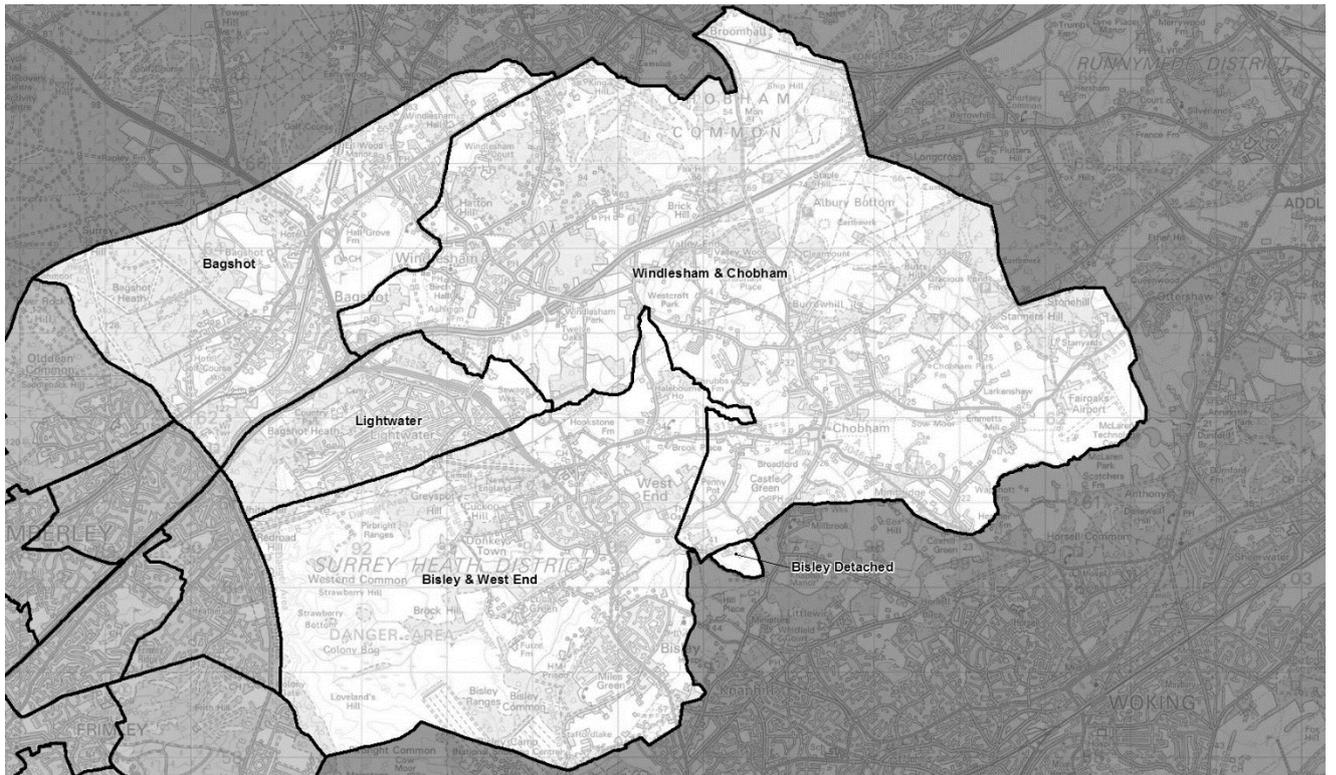
37 We have therefore amended the boundary between Frimley and Frimley Green, allowing for the High Street and railway station to remain in Frimley, while moving the area mostly comprising the Ansell Estate into Frimley Green ward.

38 Frimley will be a two-councillor ward and Frimley Green will be a three-councillor ward. Both will achieve electoral equality by 2022.

Mytchett & Deepcut

39 We received only one submission regarding Mytchett & Deepcut, from the Council. The Council supported our draft recommendations in this area. We therefore confirm our draft ward of Mytchett & Deepcut as final.

North-east Surrey Heath



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2022
Bagshot	3	-3%
Bisley & West End	3	14%
Lightwater	3	-8%
Windlesham & Chobham	3	-5%

Bagshot

40 We received one submission regarding Bagshot ward, from the Council, proposing that the ward should retain its existing boundaries. Retaining the current boundaries of the ward would leave Bagshot with an electoral variance of 21% which we consider will not provide for acceptable electoral equality.

41 We are therefore confirming our draft Bagshot ward as final. Bagshot will achieve good electoral equality by 2022.

Bisley & West End

42 We received six submissions concerning our proposed Bisley & West End ward, including the Council's submission.

43 Two submissions raised concerns about the elector per councillor ratio in Bisley & West End ward, which would be slightly higher than across the rest of the borough. On this basis, both requested the retention of two borough councillors for the ward of Bisley. However, this would lead to poor electoral equality, giving Bisley a significantly higher elector per councillor average than the rest of the borough.

44 Four of the submissions were supportive of our proposal to combine the parishes of Bisley and West End to form one three-councillor ward. These submissions cited good local evidence, such as the strong community links between the villages, including shared voluntary organisations. They agreed that our Bisley & West End ward offered logical boundaries.

45 The Council's submission was largely supportive of our proposals in this area. It requested that we move the electors in Sundew Close and Blackstroud Lane West into Lightwater ward. We also looked at this possibility during the formulation of our draft recommendations. The transfer of these electors into Lightwater ward would require the creation of a parish ward for West End of only 57 electors. We consider any parish ward of fewer than 100 electors to be unviable as it would not provide for effective and convenient local government. We have therefore not adopted this modification. In order to move these electors into Lightwater, in Windlesham parish, the Council would need to undertake a Community Governance Review.

46 We therefore confirm our Bisley & West End ward as final. Bisley & West End will have a slightly higher elector per councillor ratio than the rest of the borough. We consider that this is the best solution for the area when balancing our statutory criteria.

Lightwater

47 We received one submission concerning Lightwater, as part of the Council's proposals. This supported our draft recommendation to retain the current boundaries of the ward. Lightwater will have good electoral equality by 2022.

Windlesham & Chobham

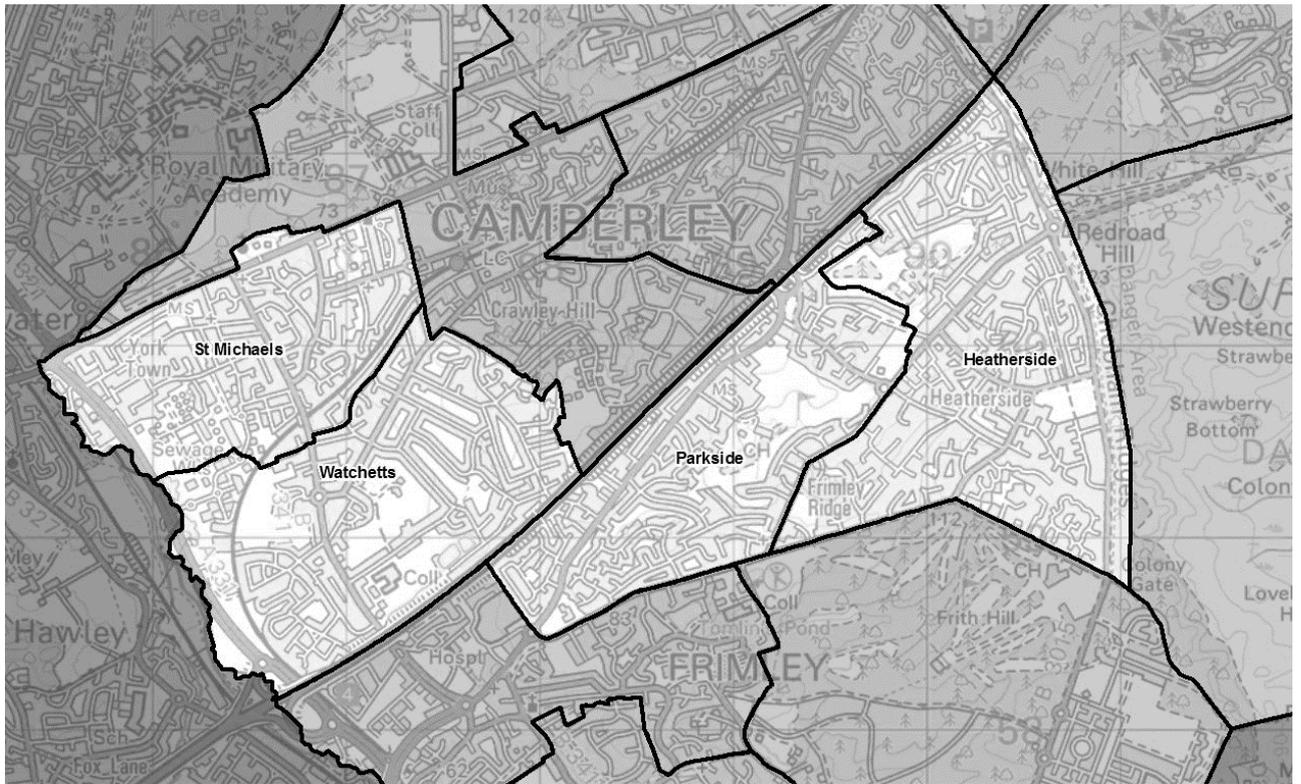
48 We received 13 submissions regarding Windlesham & Chobham, including an alternative proposal from the Council, supported by two councillors and Chobham Parish Council

49 The Council's submission proposed that Windlesham should retain its current boundaries and two borough councillors. Additionally, it proposed that Chobham should retain two borough councillors, with the addition of a number of electors predominantly from West End ward, to achieve good electoral equality. This submission was supported by two borough councillors and Chobham Parish Council. While moving electors from West End would improve the electoral variance in Chobham ward, the electoral variances in both Windlesham and Bagshot would become -14% and 21% respectively. We do not consider adequate evidence was provided to justify this.

50 In addition, we received nine submissions that were strongly opposed to this proposal. The submissions argued that the main settlement area of Chobham was geographically separate from West End. It was also strongly argued that the affected electors share much greater community links with West End than Chobham.

51 Based on the evidence we have received, we do not believe that the Council's proposal in this area provides an effective balance of the statutory criteria. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Windlesham & Chobham ward as final.

South and west Camberley



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2022
Heatherside	3	-1%
Parkside	2	2%
St Michaels	2	4%
Watchetts	2	6%

Heatherside and Parkside

52 We received four submissions regarding the areas of Heatherside and Parkside, including the Council's submission. One of these submissions was not supportive of our proposals in this area, arguing that there was minimal similarity between the wards and therefore the proposal to move some electors from Parkside into Heatherside was flawed.

53 Two of the submissions were mainly supportive of the proposals, with the exception of the inclusion of Youlden Close and Youlden Drive in Heatherside ward. The submissions noted that there is no vehicular access to Heatherside ward for either of these roads. We have therefore modified the boundary in this area to include the roads in Parkside ward.

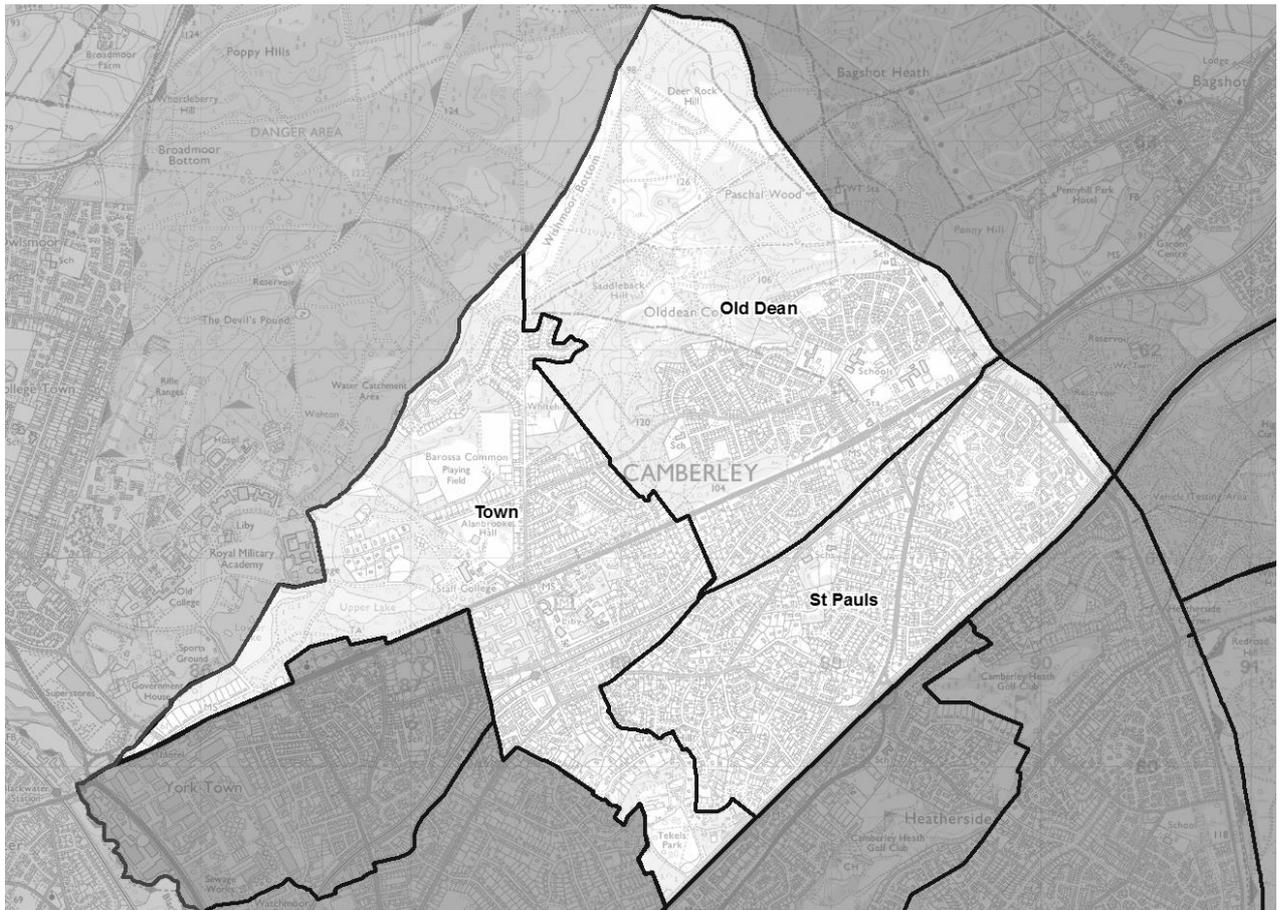
54 We confirm our draft Heatherside and Parkside wards as final, with the exception of the amendment to the boundary to account for the electors within Youlden Close and Youlden Drive.

St Michaels and Watchetts

55 We received one submission at the draft recommendations stage in relation to St Michaels and Watchetts, as part of the Council's borough-wide scheme. This suggested that the boundaries of both wards should remain as they currently are. This, however, would not provide for good electoral equality across the borough. We therefore confirm our draft St Michaels and Watchetts wards as final. Both will have good electoral equality by 2022.

56 We received one submission regarding the boundary between St Michaels and Town during further limited consultation from a Council officer. As we were only consulting on the boundaries of Town, Old Dean and St Pauls we have not altered the boundary in this area.

North Camberley



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2022
Old Dean	2	0%
St Pauls	2	3%
Town	2	3%

Old Dean, St Pauls and Town

57 During the consultation on our draft recommendations we received one submission regarding our proposed Town ward, from the Council. It objected to the northern boundary of the proposed ward on the basis that it would require the creation of a new polling district. However, we consider our draft recommendations provided a stronger boundary.

58 We received 20 submissions regarding our proposed wards for Old Dean and St Pauls, all of which were opposed to our proposal to move the boundary between the two wards from the A30 to the railway line. These included an alternative proposal from the Council.

59 These submissions stated that the A30 is an accepted boundary between the two wards. The submissions also argued that the railway line does not make a more identifiable boundary as it is in a cutting and more easily crossed in a number of places than the A30.

60 We were satisfied that the evidence provided justified re-examining the boundary between the two wards. Using the A30 as a boundary between the wards gives both wards a high electoral variance. We therefore consulted on amending the boundary between Town and Old Dean, moving electors in the College Ride area from Town ward into Old Dean ward. This was partly based on the Council's submission. We also proposed to transfer some electors from St Pauls into Town, to form an amended Town & Crawley Hill ward.

61 We received 174 responses to our further consultation. Of these, 169 were strongly opposed to our proposed new boundary between Town and Old Dean wards. The submissions stated that the protected woodland that separates the Kings Ride area from Old Dean is a strong natural boundary that separates the two areas. Many submissions also referenced the proximity of the town and the sense that Camberley town is the natural centre of the community. Many of the amenities used by electors in this area are within the town, including schools, doctors and local shops. They also referenced a lack of connection with the Old Dean ward, which they felt was difficult to access, particularly for pensioners.

62 As many of the submissions presented strong evidence at both consultation stages, we revisited the area to inform our decision on the best possible new boundaries for these wards. We recognise that both the A30 and the protected woodland between Kings Ride and Old Dean are strong boundaries. While Kings Ride and the Old Dean are connected by College Ride, the road is steep, with no designated crossing points and a pavement on only one side of the road. Although there is a regular bus service, it is clear that residents in the Kings Ride area would look to the town for their amenities.

63 Our draft recommendations proposed moving the boundary between Old Dean and St Pauls to use the railway line as a clear boundary and to achieve electoral equality for the area. Many of the submissions stated that the A30 was a more identifiable boundary than the railway line. While we recognise that the A30 is a strong boundary, using it as the boundary between wards results in poor electoral equality. Our visit to the area persuaded us that the railway line is still a strong

boundary. It has two crossing points within the ward, whereas the A30 has at least four dedicated pedestrian crossing points.

64 Although the arguments are finely balanced and both have weight, we are persuaded, based on the evidence received, that our draft recommendations for Town, Old Dean and St Pauls offer the best balance of our statutory criteria. We have therefore reverted to our draft recommendations and confirm these as final. All wards will have good electoral equality by 2022.

Conclusions

65 The table below shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2017 and 2022 electorate figures.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2017	2022
Number of councillors	35	35
Number of electoral wards	14	14
Average number of electors per councillor	1,944	2,011
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	0	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Final recommendation

Surrey Heath Borough Council should be made up of 35 councillors serving 14 wards representing seven two-councillor wards and seven three-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for Surrey Heath Borough Council. You can also view our draft recommendations for Surrey Heath on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

Parish electoral arrangements

66 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 ward 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.

67 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, Surrey Heath Borough 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.

68 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Windlesham Parish Council.

69 As result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Windlesham parish.

Final recommendation Windlesham Parish Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Windlesham	3
Bagshot	8
Lightwater	7

3 What happens next?

70 We have now completed our review of Surrey Heath Borough Council. The recommendations must now be approved by Parliament. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the local elections in 2019.

Equalities

71 This report has 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.

Appendix A

Final recommendations for Surrey Heath Borough Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (201)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Bagshot	3	5,776	1,925	-1%	5,869	1,956	-3%
2	Bisley & West End	3	6,328	2,109	9%	6,874	2,291	14%
3	Frimley	2	3,869	1,935	0%	4,092	2,046	2%
4	Frimley Green	3	5,464	1,821	-6%	5,464	1,821	-9%
5	Heatherside	3	5,815	1,938	0%	5,985	1,995	-1%
6	Lightwater	3	5,555	1,852	-5%	5,555	1,852	-8%
7	Mytchett & Deepcut	3	5,425	1,808	-7%	5,918	1,973	-2%
8	Old Dean	2	3,991	1,996	3%	4,022	2,011	0%
9	Parkside	2	4,110	2,055	6%	4,110	2,055	2%
10	St Michaels	2	4,155	2,078	7%	4,199	2,100	4%
11	St Pauls	2	4,089	2,045	5%	4,160	2,080	3%
12	Town	2	3,657	1,829	-6%	4,151	2,076	3%

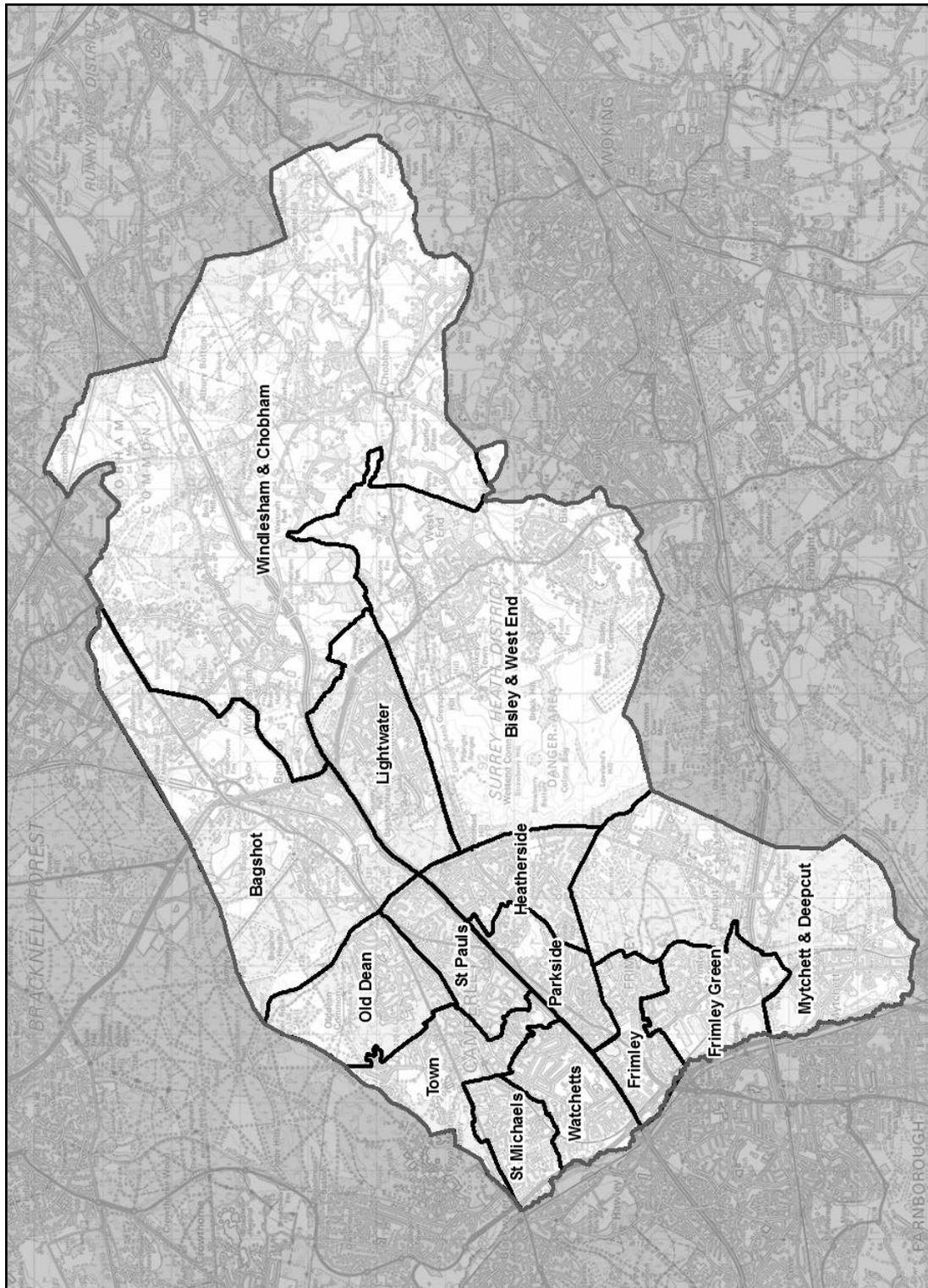
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (201)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13 Watchetts	2	4,200	2,100	8%	4,251	2,126	6%
14 Windlesham & Chobham	3	5,607	1,869	-4%	5,722	1,907	-5%
Totals	35	68,041	-	-	70,372	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,944	-	-	2,011	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Surrey Heath Borough Council.

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

Appendix B

Outline map



A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the large map accompanying this report, or on our website: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-east/surrey/surrey-heath>

Appendix C

Draft recommendations submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-east/surrey/surrey-heath>

Local Authority

- Surrey Heath Borough Council

Councillors

- Councillors P. Tedder & V. Wheeler
- Councillor V. Chapman
- Councillor D. Ratiram
- Councillors J. Lytle, P. Innicki & I. Cullen
- Councillor E. Hawkins
- Councillor J. Hawkins

Local Organisations

- West End Action Group

Parish and Town Council

- Bisley Parish Council
- Chobham Parish Council
- West End Parish Council
- Windlesham Parish Council

Local Residents

- 36 local residents

Further draft recommendations submissions received

Councillors

- Councillor R. Perry
- Councillors R. Brooks & R. Perry

Council Officer

- K Whelan

Local Residents

- 170 local residents

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

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 inequality	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
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
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
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