



<b>REPORT OF:</b>	HEAD OF CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	Margaret Quine/Peter Dungate
<b>TELEPHONE:</b>	01737 276023/6440
<b>E-MAIL:</b>	<a href="mailto:Margaret.quine@reigate-banstead.gov.uk">Margaret.quine@reigate-banstead.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Peter.dungate@reigate-banstead.gov.uk">Peter.dungate@reigate-banstead.gov.uk</a>
<b>TO:</b>	COUNCIL
<b>DATE:</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2011

<b>WARD (S) AFFECTED:</b>	ALL
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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>ELECTORAL REVIEW OF SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> That the Council approve the recommended response to the Electoral Review of Surrey County Council as set out in paragraphs 14 - 16 for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).	
<b>SUMMARY:</b> This report outlines the LGBCE proposals to increase the number of County Councillors in Reigate and Banstead from 9 to 10 Councillors and changes to the configuration of electoral Divisions to achieve electoral equality.	

## STATUTORY POWERS

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body that 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. The LGBCE has conducted an electoral review of Surrey County Council to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the authority.
2. The review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. The Commission commenced the review in October 2010.
3. In stage 1 of the review all interested parties including Surrey County Council were invited to put forward proposals on the detailed electoral arrangements. The Commissions guidance indicated that the following areas should be considered, supported by clear evidence:
  - how the proposed electoral division reflects community identity

- the names of the proposed divisions
  - how the recommendations would impact on the community
  - rationale for the proposed divisions
4. In terms of evidence, the Commission uses three main criteria:
- Electoral equality – each Councillor should represent as near as possible the same number of electors
  - Community identity – Division boundaries should recognise and support strong community links
  - Effective and convenient local government
5. No division can cross a district boundary and where possible the Commission seeks to achieve co-terminosity with Ward boundaries but recognises this will not always be possible.
6. The Commission cannot consider:
- Parliamentary Constituency boundaries
  - Local political implications or recommendations
  - School catchment areas
  - Postcodes or addresses
  - Polling districts

## **PROPOSALS**

7. Having considered the submissions received during previous phases of the process (Council size and divisional arrangements), the LGBCE has developed proposals which are broadly based on the County Council's proposed scheme. The LGBCE has also had regard to evidence submitted by political groups, county and district councillors and parish councils. The LGBCE has also sought to reflect communication links, geographic factors and evidence of community identity received.
8. Surrey County Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2016 which projected an increase in electorate of 4.6% over this period. The Commission is content that the forecasts are the most accurate available at this time.
9. Surrey County Council currently has a council size of 80 councillors. During the council size consultation the Commission received proposals for council sizes ranging from 38 to 80 members. The County Council initially proposed 80 members but, during Stage One, following the consideration of councillor allocation, the County Council proposed a scheme for 81 members.

10. Having considered all the evidence received, the LGBCE has decided to propose a **council size of 81 Members** as part of their draft recommendations. The LGBCE consider that this is the most appropriate council size for Surrey based on the available evidence.

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR REIGATE AND BANSTEAD**

11. The full text of the LGBCE proposals in relation to this Borough is set out at **Annex 1**. A copy of the plan indicating the boundary changes is available for inspection in the Members Room.

#### **Number of County Councillors**

The proposals allocate one additional Divisional Councillor to Reigate and Banstead in the centre of the Borough.

#### **Divisional Boundaries**

A schedule indicating the changes to the naming and configuration of electoral divisions is set out at **Annex 2**

12. The following Wards are not wholly contained within the proposed new County Electoral Divisions:

#### Kingswood with Burgh Heath

The majority of the Ward will be contained within the Tadworth Walton and Kingswood Division but the area which currently forms part of the EC polling District will be in the new Merstham and Banstead South Division.

#### Chipstead Hooley and Woodmansterne

This Ward will be split between the Banstead Woodmansterne and Chipstead Division and the Merstham and Banstead South Division.

#### Reigate Central/ Meadvale and St Johns/Earlswood and Whitebushes

The Divisions in the centre of the Borough have been reconfigured to provide an additional electoral division. The effect of this proposal is to divide these Wards between 2 or 3 electoral divisions. (see **Annex 2**)

#### **Impact on Horley Town Council**

13. The proposals include a change to the boundary between the Horley North Central and Horley South Central Wards of the Horley Town Council. The South Central Ward will have one additional Councillor and the North Central Ward will have one less Councillor. The number of Councillors overall is unchanged. (see Annex 3 attached).

### **SUGGESTED RESPONSE**

14. The changes to the configuration of Divisions in some areas is welcomed, for example, in the centre of the Borough, as the new boundaries better reflect the communities of Reigate and Redhill. In other areas there is concern that this is not achieved. The new Electoral Division of Merstham and Banstead South is bisected by the M25 which is a major physical barrier between the two communities and for

this reason it is considered that review objective in relation to community identity is compromised.

15. Whilst appreciating the need to secure electoral equality, the lack of co-terminosity with Borough Wards particularly in relation to Meadvale and St Johns Ward, may cause confusion for some electors and make responding to issues locally more complex for Councillors. In addition, the proposals will result in additional polling stations being required impacting on the costs associated with running elections.
16. For these reasons it is not considered that all the proposals represent convenient and effective local government. However, given the review criteria it is difficult to provide alternative proposals which would achieve better electoral equality. In the circumstances, subject to the reservations referred to above, the Council accepts the proposals.

### **OPTIONS**

17. The Council is invited to comment on the proposals as a basis of the Councils response to the LG BCE proposals for future electoral arrangements for Surrey County Council.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

18. There are no legal implications for this Council arising from this report.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

19. The proposals and the lack of alignment with existing Borough Wards will result in the creation of additional polling districts which will increase the cost of administering elections from 2014/15 by approx. £2,500.

### **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

20. There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

21. The review proposals, if agreed, will be implemented at the next County Council elections in 2013. This will require a further review of polling districts and polling places to enable the polling districts to be reconfigured in those Wards which are not wholly contained within an Electoral Division and in turn separate polling stations (not necessarily polling places) will need to be created. This review will need to be undertaken (and approved by Council) by September 2012 with the resultant amendments coming into effect with the publication of the new Register of Electors on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2012. This will have cost implications for the Council in terms of the potential to increase the number of polling stations with associated staff and other costs for elections after 2013. (The cost of elections in 2013 will be met by Surrey County Council).

## **CONSULTATION**

22. The LGBCE is consulting widely on its recommendations. The consultation closes on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2011 and Officers have placed a holding response with the LGBCE following consultation with the Executive Member for Better for Less pending consideration of this report by Council based on the comments set out in paragraphs 10- 12 above.

## **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

23. The Corporate Plan seeks to increase participation in the democratic process. Given that some of the proposals will cause confusion for electors these changes are unlikely to assist this objective in the short term.

## **NEXT STEPS**

24. In the light of representations received, the LGBCE will review their draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. The LGBCE will then publish their final recommendations. The changes will then need to be approved by Parliament. The Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the next elections for Surrey County Council in 2013.

### **Background Papers:**

Published documents

ANNEX 1

ANNEX 1

## EXTRACT FROM LGBCE PROPOSALS IN RELATION TO REIGATE AND BANSTEAD

### Reigate & Banstead Borough

71. Reigate & Banstead Borough is located in the centre of the county and spans the southern to the northern county boundary. The town of Banstead is located in the north of the borough, along with the villages of Tadworth and Kingswood, separated from the southern part of the borough by the M25 motorway. The adjoining towns of Reigate and Redhill are located south of the motorway and the town of Horley is located in the southern tip of the borough. Reigate & Banstead currently has nine single-member electoral divisions. Under a council size of 81 members the borough is allocated 10 members.
72. As well as the county-wide scheme, we received four submissions, three from residents' associations and one from a county councillor. The three from the residents' associations opposed parts of the County Council's scheme in the northern part of the borough, whilst the submission from County Councillor Hack provided an alternative scheme for the whole of the district.
73. The County Council proposed a scheme of 10 single-member divisions. North of the M25 the County Council proposed four single-member divisions: Nork & Tattenhams; Banstead, Woodmansterne & Chipstead; Tadworth, Walton & Kingswood; and Merstham & Banstead South. The proposed divisions would have 7% more, 5% more, 5% more and 4% fewer electors respectively than the county average by 2016.
74. The submissions from both Nork and Tattenhams Residents' Associations' opposed the County Council's proposal to move 292 electors out of the proposed Nork & Tattenhams division and into Tadworth, Walton & Kingswood division. Whilst they recognised the County Council's proposals as a means of addressing electoral equality, they felt any change would unnecessarily disrupt community identity. The proposal would also affect coterminosity with the borough ward boundaries. We considered the options and decided that as electoral equality would still be reasonable without the County Council's proposed change, the existing boundary should be retained, as it achieves coterminosity with the district ward boundary and does not split the community in Tattenham.
75. The submission from Lower Kingswood Residents' Association opposed the County Council's proposal to include Lower Kingswood in the Merstham & Banstead South division. They suggest that they are linked with Kingswood and should therefore be included in the same division. Under the County Council's proposal Kingswood would be in a separate division. We considered whether Lower Kingswood could be included in the Tadworth, Walton & Kingswood division.

However, there is a large number of electors in Lower Kingswood and it would not be viable to include it in the division and still achieve good electoral equality. Councillor Hack agreed with the Residents' Association that Lower Kingswood

should be in the same division as Kingswood and stated that there are shared community groups which link them. An alternative scheme was provided by Councillor Hack which included Lower Kingswood in the same division as Kingswood.

76. We considered the options and decided that although the scheme by Councillor Hack provided evidence of community identity and incorporated Lower Kingswood with Kingswood, it also included the ward of Preston in a division with Banstead. We saw no evidence of community links or direct roads linking the two places. On balance, we have decided to adopt the County Council's scheme as it provides for good electoral equality and good road links within all the divisions. It also incorporates the other suggestions made by Councillor Hack such as including Park Road, north of Woodmansterne, in the same division as Banstead; including Banstead Wood in a division with Banstead rather than Kingswood; and includes Merstham in a division with the villages further north rather than a division with the more urban areas of Redhill and Reigate.
77. Under our recommendations Nork & Tattenhams would have 10% more electors than the county average by 2016; Banstead, Woodmansterne & Chipstead would have 8% more; Merstham & Banstead South would have 5% fewer; and Tadworth, Walton & Kingswood would have 1% more.
78. In the towns of Redhill and Reigate and immediate surrounding areas, the County Council proposed four single-member electoral divisions: Earlswood & Reigate South, Meadvale & St John's, Redhill, and Reigate. The proposed divisions would have 3% more, 6% fewer, 4% more and 8% fewer electors respectively than the county average by 2016.
79. Councillor Hack provided an alternative scheme for the urban area of Reigate and Redhill. It comprised four single-member divisions: Redhill East, Redhill West & Meadvale, Earlswood & Reigate South, and Reigate. These proposed divisions would have 1% fewer, 3% fewer, 4% fewer and 1% more electors than the county average respectively by 2016.
80. We carefully considered both schemes and decided that the submission from Councillor Hack provided persuasive arguments in terms of community identity for the divisions in the towns of Redhill and Reigate. Most notably, the concept of keeping the communities in Redhill together by splitting the town into an east and west division. In comparison, the scheme from the County Council split Redhill into a north and south division, with the division in the south incorporating areas of Reigate.  
  
The County Council's scheme also divided the community of Earlswood into two different divisions, which under the Councillor's scheme would be wholly located in one division.
81. We have therefore decided to adopt the scheme from Councillor Hack, albeit with an amendment to the Earlswood & Reigate South division. The Councillor recommends using the parish boundary as the southern boundary of the division.

However, having visited the area, we considered that this divided the community of Whitebushes which is a continuous area of housing adjacent to the A23. We therefore recommend using the district ward boundary which is further south.

82. Under our recommendations, Earlswood & Reigate South would have a variance of 0%, Redhill East would have 1% fewer, Redhill West & Meadvale would have 3% fewer and Reigate would have 1% more electors than the county average by 2016.
83. In the town of Horley, in the southern tip of the borough, the County Council proposed two divisions: Horley East, including the eastern side of the town, and Horley West, Salfords & Sidlow, including the western side of the town and the rural areas to the north. The proposed divisions would have a variance of 2% more and 12% fewer electors respectively than the county average by 2016.
84. Councillor Hack agreed with the County Council's proposals in this area and did not provide an alternative scheme.
85. The northern boundary of the County Council's proposed Horley West, Salfords & Sidlow division followed the parish boundary and, as discussed above, we recommend that it follows the district ward boundary. As this change adversely affects electoral equality we recommend altering the proposed boundary between Horley East and Horley West, Salfords & Sidlow in the town. The County Council's proposed boundary at this point follows the railway line and then the A23. We recommend the boundary follows the railway line and then goes around the town centre to rejoin the A23.
86. Under our recommendations, Horley East would have 6% fewer electors than the county average by 2016 and Horley West, Salfords & Sidlow would have 8% fewer.
87. Our draft recommendations would result in 10 single-member divisions with none of the divisions having a variance of more than 10% from the county average by 2016. Our proposals achieve 10% coterminosity with district wards.



ANNEX 2

ANNEX 2

**DRAFT COUNTY COUNCIL DIVISIONS BY  
CURRENT POLLING DISTRICT AND BOROUGH WARD**

POLLING DISTRICT	BOROUGH WARD	EXISTING COUNTY DIVISION	PROPOSED COUNTY DIVISION
AA	BANSTEAD VILLAGE	BANSTEAD EAST	BANSTEAD WOODMANSTERNE AND CHIPSTEAD
AB			
AC			
BA	NORK	BANSTEAD WEST	NORK AND TATTENHAMS
BB			
CA	TATTENHAMS		
CB			
DA	PRESTON	BANSTEAD SOUTH	TADWORTH WALTON AND KINGSWOOD
EA	KINGSWOOD WITH BURGH HEATH	BANSTEAD SOUTH	TADWORTH WALTON AND KINGSWOOD
EB			TADWORTH WALTON AND KINGSWOOD
EC			TADWORTH WALTON AND KINGSWOOD
			MERSTHAM AND BANSTEAD SOUTH
FA	CHIPSTEAD HOOLEY AND WOODMANSTERNE	BANSTEAD EAST	BANSTEAD WOODMANSTERNE AND CHIPSTEAD
FB			
FC			
FD	CHIPSTEAD HOOLEY AND WOODMANSTERNE		MERSTHAM AND BANSTEAD SOUTH
GA	TADWORTH AND WALTON	BANSTEAD SOUTH	TADWORTH WALTON AND KINGSWOOD
GB			
HA	MERSTHAM	MERSTHAM AND REIGATE HILL	MERSTHAM AND BANSTEAD SOUTH
HB			
HC			
HD			
IA	REIGATE HILL	MERSTHAM AND REIGATE HILL	REIGATE
IB			
JA	REDHILL WEST	REDHILL	REDHILL WEST AND MEADVALE
JB			
KA	REDHILL EAST	REDHILL	REDHILL EAST
KB			
KC			

POLLING DISTRICT	BOROUGH WARD	EXISTING COUNTY DIVISION	PROPOSED COUNTY DIVISION
LA	REIGATE CENTRAL	REIGATE CENTRAL	REIGATE
LB			REIGATE AND REDHILL WEST AND MEADVALE
LC			REDHILL WEST AND MEADVALE
MA	MEADVALE AND ST JOHN'S	REIGATE CENTRAL	REIGATE AND REDHILL WEST AND MEADVALE
MB			REDHILL WEST AND MEADVALE
MC			EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH
NA	SOUTH PARK AND WOODHATCH	EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH	EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH
NB			
OA	EARLSWOOD AND WHITEBUSHES	EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH	REDHILL EAST AND EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH
OB			EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH
OC			
OD			
PA	SALFORDS AND SIDLOW	HORLEY WEST	HORLEY WEST AND SALFORDS AND SIDLOW
PB			
QA	HORLEY EAST	HORLEY EAST	HORLEY EAST
QB			
RA	HORLEY CENTRAL	HORLEY EAST	HORLEY WEST AND SALFORDS AND SIDLOW
RB	HORLEY CENTRAL	HORLEY EAST	HORLEY EAST
RC	HORLEY CENTRAL	HORLEY EAST	HORLEY EAST
SA	HORLEY WEST	HORLEY WEST	HORLEY WEST AND SALFORDS AND SIDLOW
SB			

**ANNEX 3**

**ANNEX 3**

**HORLEY TOWN COUNCIL**  
**NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS PER WARD**

<b>WARD</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS 2011</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNCIL UNDER BOUNDARY COMMISSIONS PROPOSALS</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS PLUS OR MINUS 2011 FIGURES</b>
Horley North	4	4	0
Horley North Central	3	2	-1
Horley North East	2	2	0
Horley North West	4	4	0
Horley South Central	3	4	+1
Horley South East	2	2	0
<b>TOTAL:</b>	18	18	0