

## SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT TO P&M AGENDA ITEM 9 – BOUNDARY REVIEW

Members will have received their agenda papers for 14 October 2021 and noted agenda item 9 regarding the Local Government Boundary Commission's review and its recommendations for Godalming Town Council ward areas. As stated in the agenda, Officers were asked to review and put forward proposals for consideration by Members that would remove the extremes proposed by the Commission ie. wards ranging from 1 Member to 7 Members, and provide close equity of representation per elected Member.

The proposal put forward by Officers in the agenda is based on maintaining a co-terminus arrangement between WBC and GTC electoral wards, whilst achieving an equity of representation across the Town Council area. Officers believe the proposal within the agenda paper achieves that aim. However, the agenda report also makes it clear that proposals are for the consideration of Members.

Subsequent to the agenda going out, a number of Members have highlighted concerns about the amalgamation of the current Binscombe and Charterhouse wards into a single ward.

When considering the existing Binscombe ward and Charterhouse ward as single entities, the distribution of electorate is in the region of 47% Charterhouse and 53% Binscombe. Which based upon the Commission's 2027 electorate figures of 6,394 gives an approximate breakdown of 3,005 for Charterhouse and 3,389 for Binscombe. When considered against the Commission's representative level of one WBC councillor to 2,042 electorate in the Godalming area, the separation of the proposed 3 councillors for this area does not easily fit a two ward model. By splitting the proposed Binscombe & Charterhouse ward, one ward will be under represented by having just one councillor and the other with two councillors would be over represented. Based on the criteria for the review, Officers are unable to make a case to counter the Commission's proposal for the creation of Godalming Binscombe & Charterhouse as a three Member ward.

However, when considering the amalgamation of the areas in connection with the warding for the Town Council, a different argument could be made.

If the argument for maintaining co-terminus wards was put aside, although the boundaries between the existing wards are slightly untidy around the area of Elizabeth Road, and the lower end of Farncombe Hill, they do delineate areas of differing characteristics. The majority of Charterhouse ward is established upon Farncombe Hill, Charterhouse Hill and Frith Hill and their approaches, whereas Binscombe is predominantly based around the area of the 1930's onwards northern expansion of Farncombe. These two distinctive area's clearly have a differing majority of housing stock and characteristics. For these reasons an argument could be made for maintaining a five ward model for the Town Council elections. This model being based upon the proposed WBC Godalming Ockford & Central, Godalming Holloway and Godalming Farncombe & Catteshall wards with the addition of existing Binscombe ward and Charterhouse ward.

In splitting the Godalming Binscombe & Charterhouse ward for Local Council elections, the same rationale for the ratio of elected representatives to electorate as set out in the agenda paper remains valid. The electorate of the separate wards being 3,005 and 3,389 respectively at a ratio of 1,021 per councillor works out at 2.94 and 3.32 councillors, which is three Town Councillors for each of the separate ward areas.

This maintains the position of reducing the size of Godalming Town Council from 20 to 18 Councillors. By doing so the ratio of approx 1 councillor to 1,021 of the electorate and a ratio of 2:1 Town Councillors to Borough Councillors is retained. To retain 20 councillors, whilst also retaining equity of representation, reduces the ratio from 1:1021 to 1:919, which in turn brings the debate back to the Commission's recommendation of the six ward 7,4,4,2,2,1 model that includes the creation of an entirely new ward call 'Croft' and the splitting of Ockford & Central into two.

The Table below provides the ward comparison for a five ward Town Council model.

Ward	2027 Electorate	18 Councillors @ average of 1,021 Electors/Councillor		
		Councillors Per Ward		Percentage From Average %
		2 Decimal Points	Rounded	
Binscombe	3389	3.32	3 (1,130)	+10.65%
Charterhouse	3005	2.94	3 (1,002)	-1.9%
Farncombe & Catteshall	3932	3.85	4 (983)	-3.7%
Holloway	4028	3.95	4 (1,007)	-1.4%
Central & Ockford	4026	3.94	4 (,1007)	-1.4%

**Recommendation: Members to consider whether they wish the Town Clerk to make the following representations to the Local Government Boundary Commission:**

1. For the boundaries of both Waverley & Godalming Town Council electoral wards to remain co-terminus for Farncombe & Catteshall, Holloway and Central & Oxford with the proposed Godalming Binscombe & Charterhouse Ward remaining as two separate wards based on the pre-existing Town Council ward boundaries.
2. For the number of Godalming Town Councillors to be reduced from 20 to 18 distributed as indicated in the table above.