



Governance and Electoral Arrangements Committee

Monday, 29 October 2018 at 6.00 pm

Room 6, Capswood, Oxford Road, Denham

A G E N D A

Item

1. Evacuation Procedure
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of interest
4. Minutes *(Pages 3 - 6)*

To approve the minutes of the Governance and Electoral Arrangements Committee held on 26 June 2018.
5. To consider the first consultation responses on the Community Governance Review *(Pages 7 - 16)*

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference (Pages 17 - 32)

Appendix 2: CGR Notice (Pages 33 - 34)

Appendix 3: Responses to Consultation (Pages 35 - 52)

Appendix 4: South Bucks Parish Electorate Ratios (Pages 53 - 54)

6. Consultation on the detailed proposals for the modernisation of the annual canvass in England, Scotland and Wales. (*Pages 55 - 58*)

Appendix - Draft response to the consultation (Pages 59 - 64)

7. Exclusion of Public

The Chairman to move the following resolution:-

“that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.”

Note: All reports will be updated orally at the meeting if appropriate and may be supplemented by additional reports at the Chairman’s discretion.

Membership: Governance and Electoral Arrangements Committee

Councillors: P Hogan (Chairman)
Dr W Matthews (Vice-Chairman)
D Anthony
J Lowen-Cooper
D Pepler
D Smith

Date of next meeting – Wednesday, 16 January 2019

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GOVERNANCE AND ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

Meeting - 26 June 2018

Present: P Hogan (Chairman)

Dr W Matthews, D Anthony, J Lowen-Cooper, D Pepler and D Smith

25. MINUTES

The minutes of the Governance and Electoral Arrangements Committee meetings held on 7 March and 16 May 2018 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

27. POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACE REVIEW

On 19 July 2017 the Council commenced a voluntary review of polling district and polling places. This was prompted by comments received after the UK Parliamentary General Election on 8 June 2017 relating to some of the buildings currently used as a polling station.

Comments and submissions on all polling districts and polling places in South Bucks District were invited from 19 July 2017 to 13 March 2018. Following consideration of those comments and submissions a report was published on 18 May 2018 proposing a change to one polling place. Comments and submissions were then invited on the proposals.

Members were asked to consider the proposal in the report to re-designate St Andrews United Reformed Church as the polling place for the polling district Iver Richings Park. This was considered a suitable building for use as a polling station and would replace the existing polling place, St Leonards Church Hall, which was used daily by Iver Village Infant School nursery and closed when polling took place. During the discussion it was felt that St Andrews United Reformed Church provided improved accessibility over the current building although positioned in a less central location.

The report also proposed retaining The Orchards Residential Park as the polling place for The Orchards Polling District. This was considered the most suitable venue for the polling district. A comment had been received from polling staff regarding the suitability of the building; however a review of the building had confirmed that

accessibility and access were suitable. There were limited alternative venues in the locality. It was noted that Harvey Memorial Hall had previously been used as an alternative venue; however lack of available public transport made this venue less convenient for some electors. Members supported the proposal to use The Orchards Residential Park as this was considered the most suitable location for electors in that polling district.

RESOLVED:

That St Andrews United Reformed Church be designated the polling place for the polling district (SIR) Iver Richings Park.

28. SBDC PARISH COUNCILS - COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Council received correspondence from Denham, Stoke Poges and Farnham Royal Parish Councils requesting that the electoral arrangements for their respective parish be changed. The requests related to council size (number of councillors) and warding arrangements.

A community governance review was the relevant mechanism for reviewing and proposing any changes to parish electoral arrangements. The purpose of a review was to secure an arrangement which would bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services. South Bucks District Council was the responsible authority for conducting the review.

The Committee were asked to decide whether or not to review the electoral arrangements of the parishes that had made requests.

During the discussion Members noted the statutory provisions and had regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Members considered whether the timing of a review was appropriate in light of the anticipated announcement from the Secretary of State regarding local government reorganisation in Buckinghamshire. There was a suggestion that the review be deferred pending the Secretary of State's decision. Members felt however that the Council should continue to carry out its functions and not delay a decision due to uncertainty surrounding local government reorganisation, particularly as one parish council had requested that the review conclude in time to take effect before the district and parish elections due to take place in May 2019.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the correspondence received from Denham, Stoke Poges and Farnham Royal Parish Councils be noted.**

- 2. That the Council conducts a Community Governance Review on the electoral arrangements for Denham, Stoke Poges and Farnham Royal Parish Councils.**
- 3. That authority to agree the Terms of Reference of the Community Governance Review, referred to in resolution 2, be delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services in consultation with the Chairman of the Governance and Electoral Arrangements Committee.**

The meeting terminated at 6.46 pm

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SUBJECT	<i>To consider the first consultation responses on the Community Governance Review</i>
RELEVANT MEMBER	Governance & Electoral Arrangements Committee Chairman - Councillor Patrick Hogan
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Head of Legal & Democratic Services, Joanna Swift
REPORT AUTHOR	Mat Bloxham, 01494 732143, mat.bloxham@southbucks.gov.uk
WARD/S AFFECTED	<i>Denham; Farnham and Hedgerley; Stoke Poges;</i>

1. Purpose of Report

At the previous meeting held on 26 June, the Committee considered a report setting out requests received from Denham; Farnham Royal; and Stoke Poges Parish Councils to make changes to governance arrangements to their parish. After considering the requests the Committee agreed to conduct a Community Governance Review. The first stage of consultation for the review has now been completed. The Committee are therefore asked to consider the responses received during the consultation, whilst having regard to relevant legislation, guidance, electorate ratios and other information available, in order to make draft recommendations which will be subject to a second round of consultation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. To note the representations received during the first consultation as set out in Appendix 3.**
- 2. To agree that the following draft recommendations, or as amended by the Committee, be subject to a second stage of consultation, having regard to relevant guidance, electorate ratios, and other relevant information:**
 - a) Denham Parish Council – Removal of all Parish Wards**
 - b) Stoke Poges Parish Council – Reduce the size of the Council from 13 to 11 Parish Councillors**
 - c) Farnham Royal Parish Council – Remove 1 Parish Ward (by combining Farnham Royal South with Farnham Royal Central) to create a total of 2 Parish Wards**

2. Reasons for Recommendations

The purpose of a community governance review is to secure an arrangement which will bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and will result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

The draft recommendations contained in this report take into account the identities and interests of the community in the area and those arrangements for community representation and engagement already in place. The draft recommendations also take into account representations received during the consultation with local people and local organisations. The draft recommendations have been made in accordance with legislation and have regard to relevant guidance by ensuring that they:

- Reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area, and
- Are effective and convenient.

Two other important considerations taken into account are:

- Community cohesion, and
- The size, population, and boundaries of the local community or parish

3. Content of Report

The Committee agreed at the previous meeting to conduct a Community Governance Review, and delegated authority to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, to agree the Terms of Reference of the review. The agreed Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix 1.

Consultation

To inform the review the Council conducted a public consultation from 3 September to 12 October 2018 which invited local electors and other interested parties to submit their views and comments on the existing community governance arrangements, and/or propose changes.

As set out in the Terms of Reference, the consultation consisted of the following:

- a. The Notice (Appendix 2) & Terms of Reference (Appendix 1) of the review being published on the Council's website www.southbucks.gov.uk; and copies of documents relating to the review available to inspect at South Bucks District Council offices
- b. Asking the Parish Councils, for the areas under review, to advertise the review on their noticeboards and website

- c. Consulting local government electors, for the areas under review, by inviting responses to the consultation via notices, website, and social media
- d. Consulting other interested stakeholders, including the Parish Council and local Members, for the areas under review
- e. Welcoming comments from any other person or body that wishes to make representations
- f. Notifying Bucks County Council that a review is to be undertaken, and providing them with a copy of the terms of reference and consulting them in the matters under review
- g. Treating any petitions received during this review as a consultation response. However, none were received

Representations

A total of 13 representations were received (Appendix 3):

1 from Bucks County Council requesting Farnham Royal to retain a minimum of two wards to align with County electoral boundaries and endorsing consultation with BCC Ward Members.

3 relating to Denham Parish only:

- Resident - One ward for Denham
- Denham Parish Council - Council size remains the same and one ward for Denham
- Councillor Hollis – endorsing the Parish Council's representation

1 relating to Farnham Royal only requesting a single ward

7 relating to Stoke Poges only:

- Resident - Neutral / no changes proposed relating to this review
- Resident - Neutral / no changes proposed relating to this review
- Resident - Neutral / no changes proposed relating to this review
- Resident - Neutral / no changes proposed relating to this review
- Parish Clerk – Parish Council size reduced from 13 to 9 Councillors
- Resident – Parish Council size reduced from 13 to 10 Councillors
- Resident – Parish Council size reduced from 13 to 11 and unwarded

1 general response not specific to any parish, but proposing that the review take place following a decision on local government reorganisation in Bucks.

The full responses are shown in Appendix 3.

Denham Parish Council

Denham Parish Council’s initial request proposed that all three of the current parish wards be removed so that the parish becomes unwarded. There was no request to change the Council size (number of Councillors). The reasons provided by the Parish Council were as follows:

- Not fair and equal representation as large variance in electors across wards three wards not required due to small area
- Single District ward for Denham (2015)
- Potential for elections in one ward and not others
- Request no reduction in Councillors due to workload

During the consultation 3 representations were made proposing that the wards for Denham Parish Council be removed.

Current arrangements:

Ward	Polling Districts	Councillors	Electorate	Ratio	
Denham South	SJ, SJA, SJHD	7	3042	435	
Denham North	SK	7	2476	353	
Denham South West	SS	1	547	547	Avg Parish Ratio
Total		15	6,065	404	384

	Figures at June 2018	Projected 2023	Comments
Properties	3483	3546	Based on 1.8% increase (63 properties)
Electors	6065	6206	Based on 1.75 electors per property
Councillors	15		

Recommendations on Denham Council size

The current Parish Council size of 15 Councillors is broadly in line with Aston Business School and NALC guidance. No representations received proposed changes to Council size – one endorsed the current size. A slight increase in electorate is forecast over the next 5 years. It is therefore recommended that there be no change to the size of Denham Parish Council.

Recommendations on Denham Council warding arrangements

The Parish Council would like to remove all wards in the parish. Two other representations received supported this proposal. Removing the three parish wards would not affect principal Council boundaries. The key considerations are therefore:

Whether the number, or distribution, of the local government electors for the parish make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient? This is testing the number of electors in the parish, their distribution and convenience of voting.

- If all parish wards were removed, and the election was contested, the ballot paper would show in excess of 15 candidates.
- One representation states that *“The election of Councillors to Denham Parish Council generally occurs in a single election; however given that residents traditionally have no party loyalty they are likely to be nominated in the ward in which they live. This could result in a situation where some wards are over represented triggering a by –election; in addition should the one Councillor representing Denham South West resign then this also would trigger a by- election, both situations causing unnecessary expense and work load on the Parish Council.”*

It is desirable that any area or areas of the parish could be separately represented on the Council? This is more subjective and is asking whether it is one parish but comprising different parts.

Representations received suggest that removing parish wards would be desirable since *“The Parish is small in area and there are no clear physical and social differences to warrant the present warding arrangements.”*

Having regard to guidance, and in light of the representations received, it is recommended that parish wards be removed from Denham Parish Council.

Stoke Poges Council

Stoke Poges Parish Council's initial request proposed that the Council size be reduced from 13 to 9 Councillors as the Parish Council felt that 9 was a more appropriate size, and because there had been 4 vacant seats during the previous 3 years.

During the consultation, responses proposed that the number of councillors be reduced from 13 to 9, 10, or 11. One representation also proposed that parish wards be removed; however there are no parish wards at present.

Current arrangements:

Ward	Polling Districts	Councillors	Electorate	Ratio	Avg Parish Ratio
Stoke Poges	SS	13	3905	300	384

	Figures at June 2018	Projected 2023	Comments
Properties	1988	2035	Based on 2.36% increase (47 properties)
Electors	3905	3968	Based on 1.95 electors per property
Councillors	13		

Recommendations on Stoke Poges Council size

The current Parish Council size of 13 Councillors is higher than NALC guidance suggests. 11 is suggested for an electorate of 3,500, and 12 for an electorate of 4,400. Aston Business School suggest between 9-16 Councillors for this electorate size. However, there is no legislative requirement for council size to be proportional to electorate.

The view of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England is "that each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to geography, and the pattern of communities."

Where it is recommended that the Parish council should not be divided into wards the following factors must be taken into account:

- The number of local government electors
- Any change in that number which is likely to occur over the next 5 years.

A small increase in the electorate is forecast, but not to the extent to suggest that a reduction in Council size should be avoided.

A reduction in Council size to 11 Councillors would bring the elector ratio up from 300 to 355 which is closer to the South Bucks Parish Council average of 384.

It is therefore recommended that the size of Stoke Poges Parish Council be reduced from 13 to 11.

Recommendations on Stoke Poges Council warding arrangements

The Parish Council currently has no parish wards. No representations received suggested that the parish should be warded. Having regard to guidance and in light of the representations received it is recommended that the warding arrangements for Stoke Poges remain unchanged.

Farnham Royal Parish Council

The initial request from the Parish Council was to remove the current three Parish wards so that the parish becomes unwarded. The reason provided was to remove the potential for elections to occur in one ward and not others.

Current arrangements:

Ward	Polling Districts	Councillors	Electorate	Ratio	
Farnham Royal Central	SFC	3	1088	363	
Farnham Royal North	SFN	7	3210	459	
Farnham Royal South	SFS	1	361	361	Avg Parish Ratio
Total		11	4659	424	384

	Figures at June 2018	Projected 2023	Comments
Properties	2536	2573	Based on 1.46% increase (37 properties)
Electors	4659	4889	Based on 1.9 electors per property
Councillors	11		

Recommendations on Farnham Royal Council size

No representations received suggested a change to the number of Councillors. A comparison with the total electorate and NALC/Aston Business School guides suggests that a small increase in the number of Councillors could be considered.

Increasing the number of Councillors from 11 to 12 would move the electorate ratio from 424 to 388 – closer to the average for all Parishes in South Bucks. A slight increase in electorate is forecast over the next 5 years.

On balance, because no representations suggested making any changes to the Council size, and because guidance says each area should be considered on its own merits, no change is recommended.

Recommendations on Farnham Royal Council warding arrangements

The Farnham Common and Burnham Beeches County Electoral Division and Stoke Poges and Wexham Electoral Division split Farnham Royal Parish into two areas. It would not be possible to remove all Parish Wards for this reason. The Parish Ward of Farnham Royal South is within the Stoke Poges and Wexham Electoral Division. The map (shown at the end of Appendix 1) shows the wards within the Parish Boundary.

The representation received requests that all wards be removed. Although this is not possible, for the reason already provided, Members may wish to consider reducing the number of wards from 3 to 2. This can be achieved by combining Farnham Royal South with Farnham Royal Central.

Having regard to guidance and in light of the representation received it is recommended that the parish wards of Farnham Royal South and Farnham Royal Central be combined to reduce the total number of parish wards from 3 to 2.

4. Options

- a) To agree that the draft recommendations, as set out in this report, be subject to consultation, or
- b) To agree alternative draft recommendations, specifying reasons for the changes and having regard to guidance and representations received, to submit to consultation.

6. Corporate Implications

Financial

There are no direct financial implications to the Council arising from the recommendations of this report.

Legal

The Council has the power to carry out a Community Governance Review under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. In reaching its decision, the Council must take account of the views of local people and also have regard to statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Community

The recommendations from this review must take into account the views of local people. The responses received during the first stage of consultation are attached in full at Appendix 3.

8. Links to Council Policy Objectives

This report relates to theme 5 of the Chiltern and South Bucks Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Plan: Cohesive and Strong Communities: strong, confident and active communities

9. Next Steps

The next stage of the review is to submit the Committee's draft recommendations to public consultation. The representations received during this second stage of consultation will be considered by the Committee at the next meeting on 16 January 2019. The Committee will then be asked to agree final recommendations for consideration by Full Council.

The review timetable is shown below:

Timetable

Completed stages:

- Decision to conduct a review – 26 June 2018
- Terms of Reference Finalised – August 2018
- 1st Consultation period (6 weeks) – 3 September to 12 October 2018
- Governance & Electoral Arrangements Committee consider 1st consultation responses & prepare / develop draft recommendations – 29 October 2018

Next stage:

- 2nd Consultation period (6 weeks) – November to December
- Governance & Electoral Arrangements Committee consider 2nd consultation responses & prepare / publish final recommendations – 16 January 2019

Future stage

□ Publish Reorganisation Order – February 2019

□ Implementation – 1 March 2019 (before Notice of Election on 20 March 2019)

Background Papers:	<p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-governance-reviews-guidance - DCLG/LGBCE Guidance</p> <p>https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/28/contents - LG&PIHA 2007</p>
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SOUTH BUCKS
District Council

Community Governance Review - Terms of Reference

Introduction

South Bucks District Council has agreed to undertake a Community Governance Review ("the review") encompassing the following Parish Council areas:

1. Denham
2. Stoke Poges
3. Farnham Royal

The review will be carried out under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972. The review shall comply with the legislative requirements, have regard for the associated statutory guidance (Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government) and will be conducted in accordance with these terms of reference.

These terms of reference set out how the review will be conducted and the matters on which the review is to focus. These will be published on the Council's website www.southbucks.gov.uk/cgr2018, and made available for inspection at the Council's offices at Capswood, Oxford Road, Denham.

What is a Community Governance Review?

A Community Governance Review is the relevant process and mechanism for reviewing and making changes to the governance arrangements for local Councils, including Parish Councils.

Governance arrangements include matters such as creating, merging, altering or abolishing a parish. Electoral matters may also be reviewed. These include matters such as the ordinary year of election, Council size (number of Councillors to be elected to a Council) and warding arrangements.

A review may be carried out for the whole District; however this review will focus on the parish areas for Denham, Stoke Poges and Farnham Royal because the Council received requests to review electoral arrangements for those parish areas specifically.

Why is the Council Undertaking the Review?

South Bucks District Council received requests from Denham, Stoke Poges and Farnham Royal Parish Councils to review the electoral arrangements for those parish areas. The Governance & Electoral Arrangements Committee on 26 June 2018 considered those requests and agreed to carry out a Community Governance Review.

Who carries out the Community Governance Review?

South Bucks District Council, as the principal Council, is responsible for carrying out the review. The Council has delegated its functions relating to community governance to the Governance & Electoral Arrangements Committee ("G&EA Committee"). The G&EA Committee is responsible for making decisions in relation to proposed changes to governance arrangements; however, the final recommendations from a Parish Review must be agreed by Full Council.

The timetable shows the key dates when the Committee will be considering reports and making decisions relating to this review.

If the review concludes that changes should be made, and these are approved by the Governance & Electoral Arrangements Committee, and Full Council, then South Bucks District Council will make and publish a Reorganisation Order to put the changes into effect. The Order may cover any matters that appear to the Council to be necessary to give effect to the Order.

If you would like to speak to someone about the review please contact Mat Bloxham (Democratic & Electoral Services Manager) mbloxham@southbucks.gov.uk 01494 732143.

What will the Review consider?

Its main focus is to review the electoral arrangements for Denham, Stoke Poges and Farnham Royal Parish Councils. This will include the Council size (total number of Councillors to be elected to the Council), and warding arrangements. Comments will be sought from electors and interested parties. Depending on the comments received during the consultation the review may include recommendations on other matters, and not just electoral arrangements.

In accordance with government guidance the Council in conducting this review and in making any recommendations will seek to bring about improved community engagement and better local democracy which will result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

What considerations cover the number of parish councillors?

The legal minimum number of Parish Councillors for each Parish Council is 5. There is no maximum number. There is also no requirement to link electorate size with the number of Councillors; however this is often a consideration. There is no further guidance on the number of Councillors however NALC in 1988 suggested that a practical minimum number of Councillors is 7 and the maximum is 25, along with the following scale to be used as a guide:

Electors	Councillors
3,500	11
4,400	12
5,400	13
6,500	14
7,700	15

The Aston Business School published research in 1992 suggesting the following as a guide to representation:

Electors	Councillors
< 500	5-8
501 – 2,500	6-12
2,501 - 10,000	9-16
10,001 – 20,000	13-27
Greater than 20,000	13-31

Government guidance says that each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and the pattern of communities. The Council will pay particular attention to existing levels of representation, the broad pattern of existing Council sizes, and the take-up of seats at elections in its consideration of this matter.

By law, the principal council must have regard to the following factors when considering the number of councillors to be elected for the parish:

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- the number of local government electors for the parish (See Appendix 2);
- any change in that number which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts (See Appendix 1).

What considerations cover the number of parish wards?

The law requires that in considering whether a parish should be divided into wards for the purposes of elections of the parish council the Council should consider the following:

- whether the number, or distribution, of the local government electors for the parish would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient;
- whether it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the council.

Government's guidance says that the warding of parishes in largely rural areas that are based predominantly on a single centrally-located village may not be justified. Conversely, warding may be appropriate where the parish encompasses a number of villages with separate identities, a village with a large rural hinterland or where, on the edges of towns, there has been some urban overspill into the parish.

With regard to urban parishes, the government has suggested that "there is likely to be a stronger case for the warding of urban parishes ... In urban area community identity tends to focus on a locality, whether this be a housing estate, a shopping centre or community facilities. Each locality is likely to have its own sense of identity."

Warding arrangements should be clearly and readily understood by all and should have relevance for the electorate in a parish; they should reflect clear physical and social differences within a parish: one parish but comprising different parts.

Ward elections should have merit; not only should they meet the two tests laid down in the Act, but they should also be in the interests of effective and convenient local government. They should not be wasteful of a parish's resources.

The Council has noted the desirability of fixing boundaries which are, and will remain, easily identifiable, as well as taking into account any local ties which might be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.

In reaching conclusions on the boundaries between parish wards, the Council will take into account community identity and interests in an area and will consider whether any particular ties or linkages might be broken by the drawing of particular ward boundaries. Equally, the Council, during its consultations in this review is

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mindful that proposals which are intended to reflect community identity and local linkages should be justified in terms of sound and demonstrable evidence of those identities and linkages.

Guidance suggests that a relevant consideration for the Council when undertaking a review is that the District and County Electoral Divisions should not spilt an unwarded parish and that no parish ward should be split by such a boundary. The relevant legal provisions do not apply to reviews of parish electoral arrangements, but the Local Government Boundary Commission has requested the Council to bear this in mind, which the Council will do.

The Council will be mindful of all this guidance, noting further that "each case should be considered on its merits and on the basis of the information and evidence provided during the course of the review.

The number of councillors to be elected for parish wards

The Council is required to have regard to the following when considering the size and boundaries of the wards and the number of councillors to be elected for each ward:

- the number of local government electors for the parish;
- any change in the number, or distribution, of the local government electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts.

The government has advised that "it is an important democratic principle that each person's vote should be of equal weight so far as possible, having regard to other legitimated competing factors, when it comes to the elections of councillors."

While there is no provision in legislation that each parish councillor should represent, as nearly as may be, the same number of electors, the Council considers that it is not in the interests of effective and convenient local government, either for voters or councillors, to have significant differences in levels of representation between different parish wards.

The Council will seek to avoid the risk that, where one or more wards of a parish are over-represented by Councillors, the residents of those wards (and their Councillors) could be perceived as having more influence than others on the Council. During the review process and in its consultations, the Council will show the ratios of electors to Councillors that would result from its proposals.

Consultation

Before making or publicising the recommendations, the Council will take account of the views of local people. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires the Council to consult the local government electors for the area under review and any other person or body who appears to have an interest in the review.

The Council will therefore:

- Advertise that a Community Governance Review is being undertaken by publishing information on the Council's website www.southbucks.gov.uk; and have copies of documents relating to the review available to inspect at South Bucks District Council offices
- Ask the Parish Council, for the area under review, to advertise the review on their noticeboards and website
- Consult local government electors, for the areas under review, by inviting responses to the consultation
- Consult other interested stakeholders, including the Parish Council and local Members, for the areas under review
- Welcome comments from any other person or body that wishes to make representations
- Notify Bucks County Council that a review is to be undertaken, and provide them with a copy of the terms of reference and consult them in the matters under review
- Take into account any representations received in connection with the review
- Any petitions received during this review will be treated as a consultation response and the lead petitioner be recorded as the point of contact

Timetable for the Review

Item	Date	Notes
Decision to conduct a review	26 June 2018	G&EA Committee 26 June 2018
Terms of Reference Published	August 2018	www.southbucks.gov.uk/cgr2018
1st Consultation period (6 weeks)	September to October 2018	<i>Initial consultation responses invited</i>
G&EA Committee consider 1st consultation responses & agrees draft recommendations for consultation	October 2018	<i>Consultation responses considered and draft recommendations prepared</i>
2nd Consultation period (6 weeks)	November to December	<i>Consultation responses to recommendations invited</i>
G&EA Committee consider 2nd consultation responses and agrees to recommend final recommendations to Full Council	January 2019	<i>Submissions on recommendations considered and final recommendations prepared</i>
Full Council considers recommendations from the G&EA Committee	27 February 2018	
Reorganisation Order Published	February 2019	<i>Final recommendations published</i>
Implementation	1 March 2018	<i>before Notice of Election on 20 March 2019</i>

Please Note: the timetable is subject to alteration although the review must be completed within twelve months of the decision to conduct a review.

Electorate Forecasts & Existing Arrangements

The Council will use the published Register of Electors in providing the existing parish council electorate figures.

The Council will utilise information available from public sources such as the Chiltern & South Bucks Joint Local Plan evidence base to inform the assessment of electoral projections forecasted. More information is contained in Appendix 1.

Number of Members to be elected for Parish Wards

The review will have regard to the number of local government electors and any changes to this number which are likely to occur in the next five years. It will also consider the democratic principle that each person's vote should be of equal weight so far as possible.

In conducting the review the number of Councillors for each parish council shall not be less than five. It will give consideration to the levels of representation and make recommendations to each area on its own merits with regards to its electorate, geography and pattern of communities.

Naming of Parish and Town Wards

If required, the Council will endeavour to reflect existing local or historic place-names, and will give strong presumption in favour of names proposed by local interested parties. Notwithstanding this, in the interest of effective and convenient local government and for the avoidance of voter confusion, the Council will look for different ward names to those used for principal Council areas.

Reorganisation of Community Governance Orders

The Review will be completed when the Council adopts the Community Reorganisation Order. Copies of this order, the maps that show the effects of the order in detail, and the documents which set out the reasons for the decision that the Council has taken will be deposited at the Council's offices and published on the Council's website.

How to Submit Your Views

Details of the review are available via www.southbucks.gov.uk/cgr2018

You can send comments on the review to:

- elections@southbucks.gov.uk
- Democratic & Electoral Services Manager
South Bucks District Council
Capswood
Oxford Road
Denham
UB9 4LH

Date of Publication 31 August 2018

Mat Bloxham
Democratic & Electoral Services Manager

Appendix 1 – Electorate Forecasts

In conducting this review the Council must have regard to any change in the number, or distribution, of the local government electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts. The following forecasts have therefore been provided using information from the following sources:

- [Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council, Draft Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment \(HELAA\) Update, Appendix 1 – Summary of all HELAA Sites May 2017](#)
- [Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council, Draft Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment \(HELAA\) Update, Appendix 8 – Stage 4 Supply Sites \(Tables\) May 2017](#)

Denham

	Figures at June 2018	Projected 2023	Comments
Properties	3483	3546	Based on 1.8% increase (63 properties)
Electors	6065	6206	Based on 1.75 electors per property
Councillors	15		

Stoke Poges

	Figures at June 2018	Projected 2023	Comments
Properties	1988	2035	Based on 2.36% increase (47 properties)
Electors	3905	3968	Based on 1.95 electors per property
Councillors	13		

Classification: OFFICIAL

Farnham Royal

	Figures at June 2018	Projected 2023	Comments
Properties	2536	2573	Based on 1.46% increase (37 properties)
Electors	4659	4889	Based on 1.9 electors per property
Councillors	11		

Classification: OFFICIAL

Appendix 2 – The Present Structure of Parishes and their Electoral Arrangements

Denham Parish Council

Ward	Polling Districts	Councillors	Electorate
Denham South	SJ, SJA, SJHD	7	3042
Denham North	SK	7	2476
Denham South West	SKA	1	547
Total		15	6,065

The parish boundary for Denham sits entirely within the District Ward for Denham and the County Electoral Division for Denham.

Appendix 3 shows a map of the current three wards for Denham Parish.

Stoke Poges Parish Council

Ward	Polling Districts	Councillors	Electorate
Stoke Poges	SS	13	3905

The parish boundary for Stoke Poges sits entirely within the District Ward for Stoke Poges and the County Electoral Division for Stoke Poges.

There are no Parish Wards within Stoke Poges Parish boundary.

Appendix 4 shows a map of the current boundary for Stoke Poges Parish.

Farnham Royal Parish Council

Ward	Polling Districts	Councillors	Electorate
Farnham Royal Central	SFC	3	1088
Farnham Royal North	SFN	7	3210
Farnham Royal South	SFS	1	361
Total		11	4659

The Farnham Common and Burnham Beeches County Electoral Division and Stoke Poges and Wexham County Electoral Division split Farnham Royal Parish into two areas. Government guidance suggests that parish ward boundaries should be co-

Classification: OFFICIAL

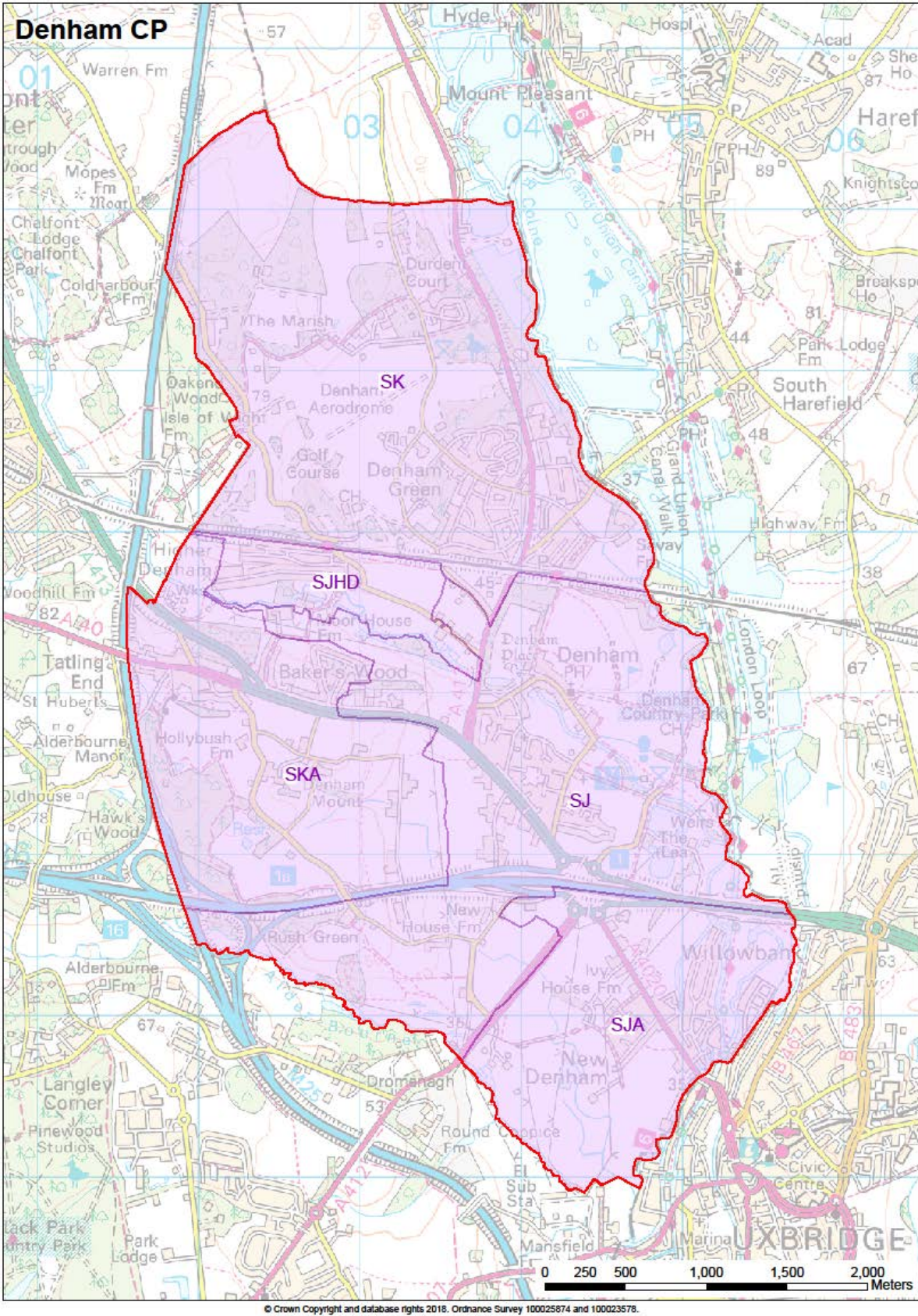
terminus with principal Council boundaries therefore Farnham Royal Parish Council must have a minimum of two Parish wards that continue to align with the County Electoral Boundaries. The Parish Ward of Farnham Royal South is within the Stoke Poges and Wexham Electoral Division.

Farnham Royal Parish area sits entirely within the Farnham & Hedgerley District Ward.

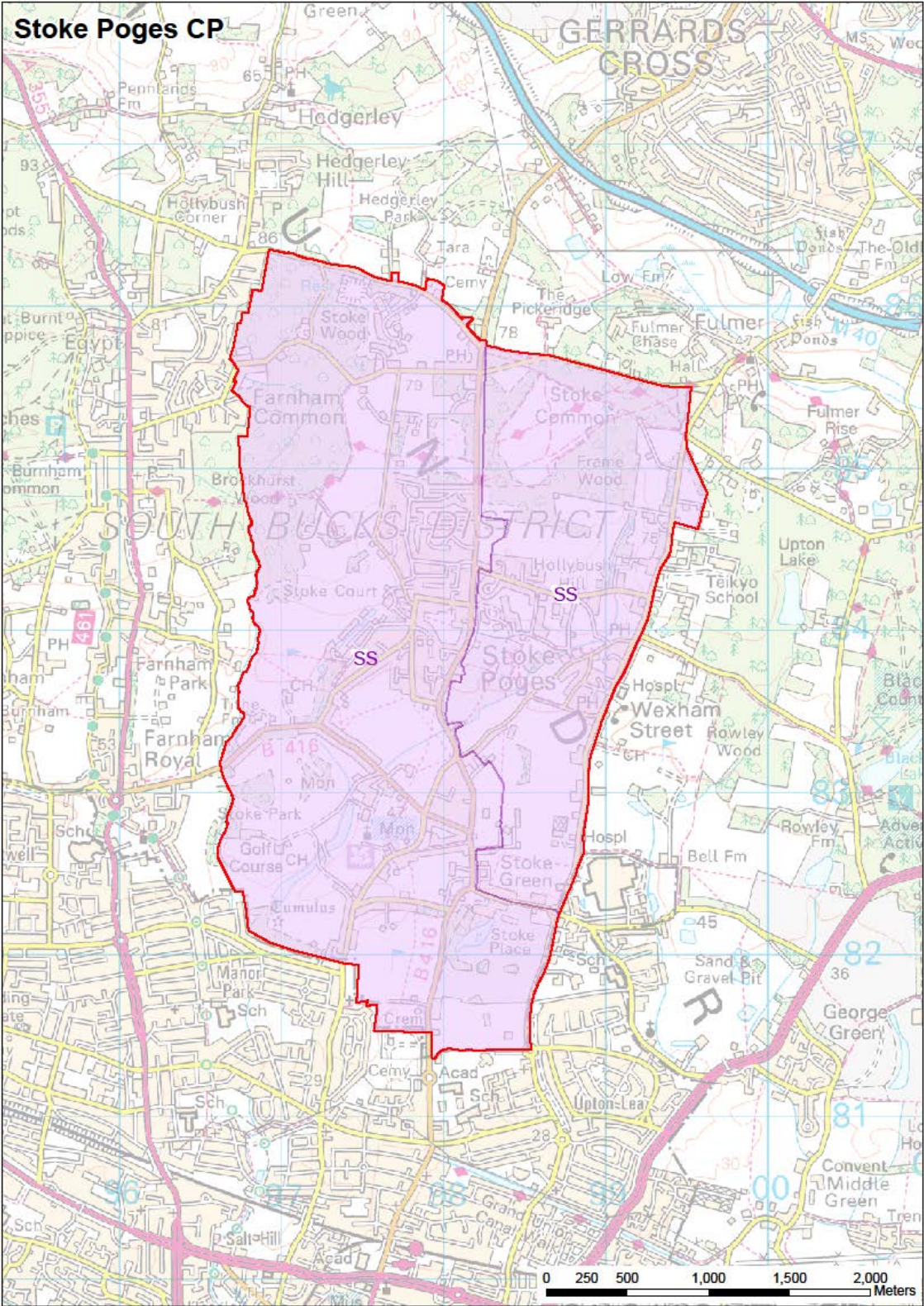
Appendix 5 shows a map of the current wards for Farnham Royal Parish.

Classification: OFFICIAL

Appendix 3

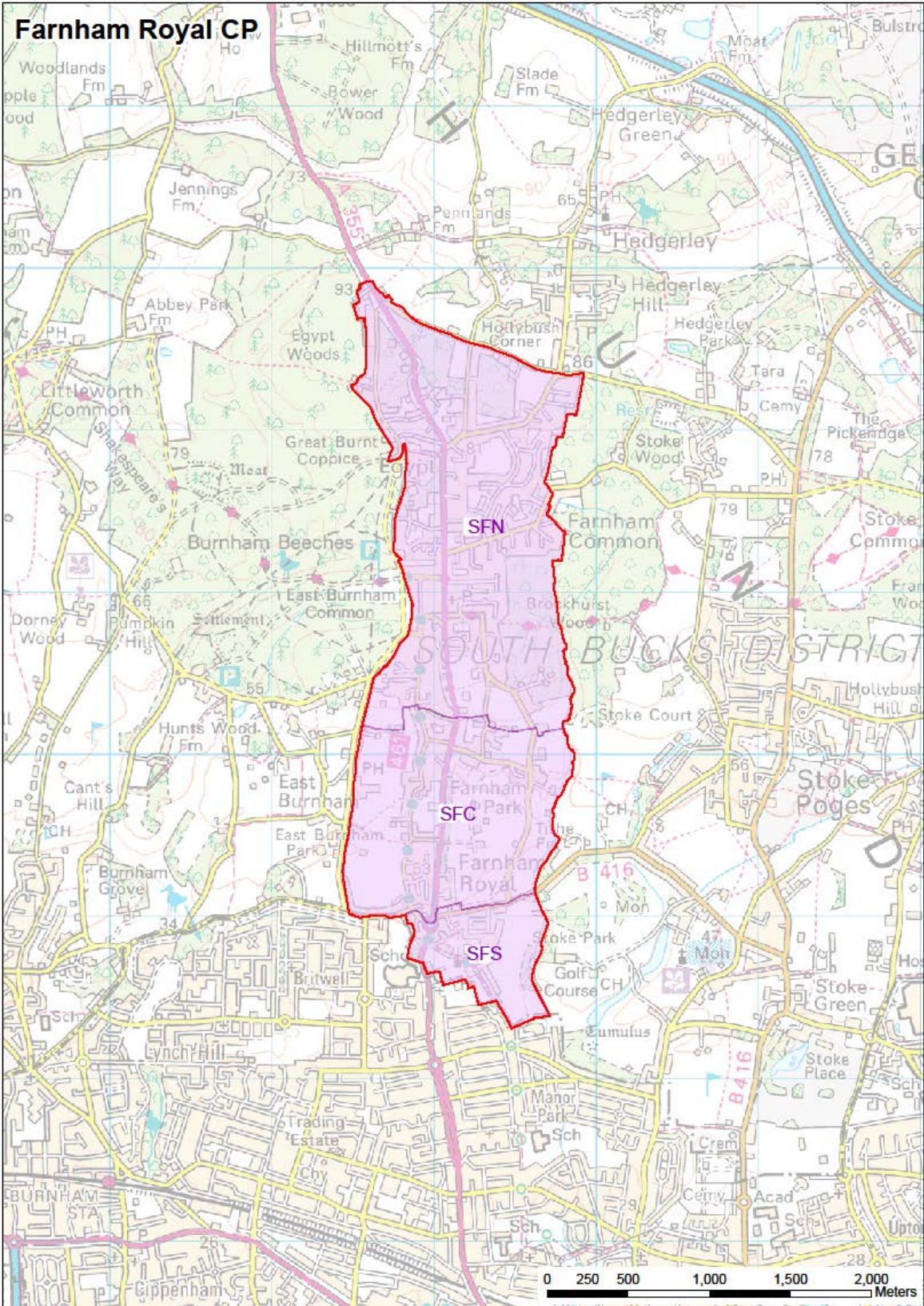


Appendix 4



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Appendix 5



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Notice of a Community Governance Review

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

South Bucks District Council has commenced a Community Governance Review in response to requests from the following Parish Councils to review the governance arrangements in their parish areas:

- Denham
- Farnham Royal
- Stoke Poges

The Council is now conducting the first stage of the review process and is inviting residents and other interested stakeholders to submit their views. The review will be focusing on:

- Council Size – The number of Councillors to be elected to the Council
- Warding Arrangements – The number, size and naming of electoral wards

The Terms of Reference documents for the review have been published and are available to view on the Council's website at www.southbucks.gov.uk/cgr2018. The relevant documents can also be viewed at the Council offices at the address below.

How to contact us

If you would like to submit a written representation regarding this review, please address it to:

Democratic & Electoral Services Manager
South Bucks District Council
Capswood
Oxford Road
Denham
UB9 4LH

Alternatively, you can complete the online form at www.southbucks.gov.uk/cgr2018 or email your submission directly to elections@southbucks.gov.uk

The deadline for submissions is **Friday 12 October 2018**. Please note that all representations received in response to the review will be published on the Council's website.

If you have any queries regarding the review or the consultation, or need help accessing any of the documents, please contact the Democratic & Electoral Services team by email at elections@southbucks.gov.uk or by telephone on 01895 837236.

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Resources

Buckinghamshire County Council

Executive Director: Sarah Ashmead

County Hall, Walton Street
Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP20 1UA

Telephone 0845 3708090
www.buckscc.gov.uk

Mat Bloxham
Democratic & Electoral Services
Manager
South Bucks District Council
Oxford Road
Denham
UB9 4LH

Ref: DS/121018
Date: 11th October 2018

Dear Mat,

South Bucks District Council Community Governance Review

Thank you for bringing this Community Governance Review to the attention of the County Council.

Having read the terms of reference for the review, I would like to make the following comments:

- I am pleased that the two County Councillors, Mr Bagge and Mr Reed, who serve residents in the local areas involved in the review have been contacted directly to enable them to share their views on the proposed changes. Their local knowledge and relationships with residents and the parish councils will be invaluable and I am sure they will be keen to respond to the consultation.
- I note that the parish area of Farnham Royal is split by the County electoral divisions of Farnham Common & Burnham Beeches and Stoke Poges & Wexham, therefore it would be preferable if Farnham Royal could retain a minimum of two wards in order to align with the County electoral boundaries.

Kind regards

Claire Hawkes

**Head of Policy, Partnerships and Democratic Services
Buckinghamshire County Council**

Community Governance Review Submission Form

Community Governance Review Submission Form	
<p>In accordance with Section 79 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Only 3 electoral areas are covered within this review: Denham, Farnham Royal and Stoke Poges. Please be aware that this submission and any other correspondence received will be published. Please submit your comments by Friday 12 October 2018. Representations may also be submitted via post and via email to elections@southbucks.gov.uk</p>	
Your Details	
Organisation (If Applicable)	
First Name	Sharon
Surname	Williams
Address 1	Lowlands
Address 2	Cheapside Lane
Town/City	Denham
County	Bucks
Postcode	Ub9 5ab
Email Address	██
Contact Telephone Number (Optional)	
Your Submission	
Which of the following electoral areas does your submission relate to?	Denham
What is your submission?	
<p>Please enter your submission in the box below. Please note that you will not be able to save your submission and return to this page at a later time. Therefore, it is recommended that you type your submission in a word processing program and copy and paste your submission here.</p>	
Your Submission	I think Denham should be one ward
Data Protection	
<p>Your personal details will be processed in accordance with the Council's privacy policy, which can be viewed via the link below.</p>	



Parish Council Office
Village Hall, Village Road
DENHAM
Buckinghamshire
UB9 5BN

Phone 01895 834709
Email: clerk@denhambucks-pc.gov.uk
Website: www.denhambucks-pc.gov.uk

Further Considerations for a Single

Denham Parish Council submitted a summary proposal in favour of a single ward to South Bucks District Council in March 2018. This proposal was considered at the June meeting of the Governance and Electoral Committee. The Committee agreed to conduct a Community Governance Review and Terms of Reference have been published and the first consultation period is close to completion.

Background information based on the major considerations to be taken into account in the Community Governance Review is provided in this submission.

The demands on Denham Parish Council have moved to an increasingly strategic level over recent years and whereas the division into wards was once appropriate to address local issues, many of the major issues facing the Parish are greater than a ward style approach and demand a parish wide approach from its' Councillors.

The Community Governance Review identifies a number of considerations in the Terms of Reference with the main focus on number of councillors to be elected to council and the warding arrangements. The Review will also take some account of community identity and interests.

The following paragraphs address these main considerations.

Denham Ward

Polling Districts

PD	Denham Settlements	Number	Denham Parish Ward
SJ	Denham Village	1216	Denham South Ward
SJA	New Denham and Willowbank	1241	Denham South Ward
SJHD	Higher Denham	560	Denham South Ward
SK	Denham Green	2459	Denham North Ward
SKA	Tatling End and Bakers Wood	542	Denham South West Ward
	Total Denham Electorate	6018	

Number of

The number of Councillors at 15 is broadly in line with NALC and Aston Business School advice and this is acknowledged in the internal committee paper to the Governance & Electoral Committee. Denham Parish Council has requested that no reduction is made to the number of Councillors due to the strategic issues facing the Parish and the workload involved. The law requires that account is taken of whether a single election of councillors is impractical or inconvenient. The election of Councillors to Denham Parish Council generally occurs in a single election; however given that residents traditionally have no party loyalty they are likely to be nominated in the ward in which they live. This could result in a situation where some wards are over represented triggering a by –election; in addition should the one Councillor representing Denham South West resign then this also would trigger a by-election, both situations causing unnecessary expense and work load on the Parish Council.

Warding

The District review of 2015 resulting in a single District Ward for Denham left the three Parish Wards for Denham unchanged. The Parish Wards cut across the 5 hamlets which make up the Parish and the wide variation in the number of electors across the three areas (shown in the above table) was noted in the internal committee paper to the Governance and Electoral Committee.

The law requires that account is taken of whether it is desirable for any area or areas of the parish to be separately represented. The three wards create an artificial divide and the Ward of Denham South West with one councillor could be extremely divisive. In practice the Council works as a whole across all wards. The Parish is small in area and there are no clear physical and social differences to warrant the present warding arrangements.

Improved Community Engagement and Better Local

Denham is facing major strategic issues which are greater than a ward style approach.

- HS2 is a major threat to both the roads and local environment and issues arising from the construction work are being addressed as one ward.
- Quarrying across the Parish causes continuous issues not confined to wards.
- The Parish is actively developing a Neighbourhood Plan which is encompassing all the hamlets as one ward.
- Delivery of devolved services on a ward by ward basis is not an option; street lighting, grass cutting and footpath maintenance all have to be carried out parish wide and not selectively.

- The Parish has an active programme of refurbishment of play area equipment across all the sites and plans for outside gym equipment in many of these.
- Care and entertainment for the elderly is not restricted to a ward driven approach but a parish wide approach.
- Applications for funding are submitted to enable improvements for the Parish on a one ward approach.

The parish wide approach rather than a divisive ward approach makes for more efficient local democracy and better community spirit and engagement.

Publicit

The Parish is organising a low cost publicity programme through its' website and social media together with banners inviting all residents to an open evening at the Parish Office to explain the reason behind the proposal of a one ward.

In

This further background for the Governance and Electoral Committee along the lines of the major considerations to be taken into account in the Review, supports the move to a single ward, formally recognising the present way of working.

Denham Parish

11th October 2018

From: Guy Hollis [REDACTED]
Sent: 17 October 2018 11:56
To: SBDC Democratic Services
Cc: Marilyn Heath; Denham Parish Council
Subject: re dpc single ward application

Sorry for the late response to this consultation as I have been dealing with a family bereavment but , for what it is worth, please pass on my support for the attached arguments in favour of DPC being made in to one ward.

Yours Sincerely,
Cllr. Guy Hollis

--
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Please do not disclose,copy or distribute information in this email or take any action in reliance on its contents: to do so is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful

Community Governance Review Submission Form

Community Governance Review Submission Form	
<p>In accordance with Section 79 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Only 3 electoral areas are covered within this review: Denham, Farnham Royal and Stoke Poges. Please be aware that this submission and any other correspondence received will be published. Please submit your comments by Friday 12 October 2018. Representations may also be submitted via post and via email to elections@southbucks.gov.uk</p>	
Your Details	
Organisation (If Applicable)	Farnham Royal Parish Council
First Name	Judith
Surname	Hall
Address 1	First Floor, Sherriff House
Address 2	The Broadway
Town/City	Farnham Common
County	Buckinghamshire
Postcode	SL2 3QH
Email Address	clerk@farnham-pc.gov.uk
Contact Telephone Number (Optional)	██████████
Your Submission	
Which of the following electoral areas does your submission relate to?	Farnham Royal
What is your submission?	
<p>Please enter your submission in the box below. Please note that you will not be able to save your submission and return to this page at a later time. Therefore, it is recommended that you type your submission in a word processing program and copy and paste your submission here.</p>	
Your Submission	<p>Until something like 20 or so years ago, Farnham Royal was one Parish with 11 Parish Councillors. At that time, the whole of the Parish came within one division for the County. When the changes to the electoral divisions for the County and District occurred, our Parish was divided up. We now have the situation where we have one ward with one Councillor and two other wards with 3 and 7 members respectively. The point we have made from the outset is the Parish operates far more successfully as one unit with 11 Councillors being elected for the unit itself.</p>

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Your Details	
Organisation (If Applicable)	Good Neighbour Scheme
First Name	Caryl
Surname	Travess
Address 1	Windrush
Address 2	Duffield Lane
Town/City	Stoke Poges
County	Bucks
Postcode	SL2 4AH
Email Address	████████████████████
Contact Telephone Number (Optional)	██████████
Your Submission	
Which of the following electoral areas does your submission relate to?	Stoke Poges
What is your submission?	
<p>Please enter your submission in the box below. Please note that you will not be able to save your submission and return to this page at a later time. Therefore, it is recommended that you type your submission in a word processing program and copy and paste your submission here.</p>	
Your Submission	<p>We have a vibrant parish council in stoke poges, lead by Ralph Bagge with vice chairman Sarah Cara, and a dedicated group of parish councillors. The council is constantly thinking of ways to improve the village and to involve residents in their plans. Having transformed the recreation ground with a new children's playground and a pavilion, with plans afoot for a new running track they then began transforming the village green, encouraging local residents to help landscape and plant bulbs etc., decking the wrought iron fence along the B416 with large containers of flowers and commissioning an amazing statue of a WW2 soldier and his dog, the Sprit of Victory, to</p>

be a focal point near the flagpole. At Christmas, lights in the trees brightened up the village enormously and enhanced the annual excitement of Father Christmas's visit on his sleigh. Community events have been encouraged in the rec, from celebrations of national loyal events to the sensitively arranged comemerations of the end of WW1. Which was shared with the French towns of Etricourt-Manancourt, recently associated with Stoke Poges as a result of historic financial help by Dorothy Allhusen, to reconstruct the town after the ravages of the war in France.

Other popular community events have been the large screen projection of popular films in the rec, and the lighting of the beacon and annual armistice comemeration on the village green. Regular litter picking evenings keep the village clean, and the recent road improvements, encouraged by Ralph Bagge, have added to the sense that this is a village which is well looked after.

The quarterly village magazine speaks volumes about the sense of community with so many societies organising large scale events like the annual horticultural show, quoral evenings, drama productions, etc. And all societies take part in the well attended and very enjoyable fetes and flower show.

Not forgotten are the older residents who need a ramp to access the new shops, and who need various kinds of help as well as transport for hospital appointments, organised by our Good Neighbour Scheme.

Both the ramp and the T.N.S. are organised by the parish council.

An evening is set aside each year by the parish councils to thank everyone who has contributed to the life of the village and to award two cups. It is significant that this year, one of the cups was presented to an invididual who automatically and discretely carried out little tasks on the public highway that needed attention.

What a wonderful village to live in, and what a wonderful parish council to make that possible.

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Your Details	
Organisation (If Applicable)	
First Name	tina
Surname	edwards
Address 1	6 broom hill
Address 2	stoke poges
Town/City	slough
County	bucks
Postcode	sl2 4pu
Email Address	██████████
Contact Telephone Number (Optional)	
Your Submission	
Which of the following electoral areas does your submission relate to?	Stoke Poges
What is your submission?	
<p>Please enter your submission in the box below. Please note that you will not be able to save your submission and return to this page at a later time. Therefore, it is recommended that you type your submission in a word processing program and copy and paste your submission here.</p>	
Your Submission	<p>Our Parish Council have made a huge contribution to our village. Engaging as many as possible in community events like our Spirit of Commemoration in the summer and the recent free outdoor cinema. We have carols on the green at christmas and a group of volunteers have been rallied to keep our village looking clean and "bloom" I love living here and appreciate all those who give there time to making our parish council a success.</p>

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Your Details	
Organisation (If Applicable)	NA
First Name	alan
Surname	gladwin
Address 1	6 Elizabeth Way
Address 2	
Town/City	Stoke Poges
County	Buckinghamshire
Postcode	SL2 4LQ
Email Address	██████████
Contact Telephone Number (Optional)	██████████
Your Submission	
Which of the following electoral areas does your submission relate to?	Stoke Poges
What is your submission?	
<p>Please enter your submission in the box below. Please note that you will not be able to save your submission and return to this page at a later time. Therefore, it is recommended that you type your submission in a word processing program and copy and paste your submission here.</p>	
Your Submission	<p>Disband bucks council, and increase power of parish councils. Parish council do useful community work, where BCC just do surveys and ask opinions as no member wants to make a decision or do anything because being in a safe seat the only way to loose your job is to do something wrong, so better not do anything.</p>

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Your Details	
Organisation (If Applicable)	Stoke Poges Parish Council
First Name	Julie
Surname	Simmonds
Address 1	The Village Centre
Address 2	Rogers Lane
Town/City	Stoke Poges
County	Bucks
Postcode	SL2 4LP
Email Address	theclerk@stokepogesparishcouncil.gov.uk
Contact Telephone Number (Optional)	██████████
Your Submission	
Which of the following electoral areas does your submission relate to?	Stoke Poges
What is your submission?	
<p>Please enter your submission in the box below. Please note that you will not be able to save your submission and return to this page at a later time. Therefore, it is recommended that you type your submission in a word processing program and copy and paste your submission here.</p>	
Your Submission	<p>As Clerk to the Stoke Poges Parish Council it is my belief that 9 or 10 councillors would be sufficient for this size council.</p> <p>We have currently 13 seats but have efficiently run on 9 councillors for several years without the need for four more.</p>

Community Governance Review Submission Form

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Your Details	
Organisation (If Applicable)	
First Name	Saera
Surname	Carter
Address 1	24 Elizabeth Way
Address 2	
Town/City	Stoke Poges
County	Bucks
Postcode	SL2 4LQ
Email Address	
Contact Telephone Number (Optional)	
Your Submission	
Which of the following electoral areas does your submission relate to?	Stoke Poges
What is your submission?	
<p>Please enter your submission in the box below. Please note that you will not be able to save your submission and return to this page at a later time. Therefore, it is recommended that you type your submission in a word processing program and copy and paste your submission here.</p>	
Your Submission	<p>SPPC can have up to 13 councillors. all 13 have not been filled for some years. I believe 10 is sufficient for a parish of this size</p>

Community Governance Review Submission Form

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Your Details	
Organisation (If Applicable)	Stoke Poges Parish Council
First Name	Susan
Surname	Lynch
Address 1	12 Duffield Lane
Address 2	
Town/City	Stoke Poges
County	
Postcode	SL2 4AB
Email Address	██████████
Contact Telephone Number (Optional)	
Your Submission	
Which of the following electoral areas does your submission relate to?	Stoke Poges
What is your submission?	
<p>Please enter your submission in the box below. Please note that you will not be able to save your submission and return to this page at a later time. Therefore, it is recommended that you type your submission in a word processing program and copy and paste your submission here.</p>	
Your Submission	Stoke Poges PC currently has just 9 councillors and should have 13. I think it should have 11, based on the number of electors. I do not think we need any separate wards.

Community Governance Review Submission Form

Community Governance Review Submission Form	
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Your Details	
Organisation (If Applicable)	
First Name	Maurice
Surname	Sell
Address 1	11, Bracken Close
Address 2	Farnham Common
Town/City	Slough
County	Bucks
Postcode	SL23JP
Email Address	██████████
Contact Telephone Number	██████████
Your Submission	
Which of the following electoral areas does your submission relate to?	Farnham Royal
What is your submission?	
<p>Please enter your submission in the box below. Please note that you will not be able to save your submission and return to this page at a later time. Therefore, it is recommended that you type your submission in a word processing program and copy and paste your submission here.</p>	
Your Submission	Assuming Bucks becomes a Unitary Authority I believe more power should be devolved to Parish Councils so that residents can have a more direct influence on local affairs.

Community Governance Review Submission Form

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Your Details	
Organisation (If Applicable)	
First Name	Michael
Surname	Robinson
Address 1	8, Ash Grove
Address 2	
Town/City	Stoke Poges
County	Buckinghamshire
Postcode	SL2 4AG
Email Address	██████████
Contact Telephone Number (Optional)	
Your Submission	
Which of the following electoral areas does your submission relate to?	Denham, Farnham Royal, Stoke Poges
What is your submission?	
<p>Please enter your submission in the box below. Please note that you will not be able to save your submission and return to this page at a later time. Therefore, it is recommended that you type your submission in a word processing program and copy and paste your submission here.</p>	
Your Submission	<p>Currently these electoral areas have 5 levels of government:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Parish Council, (2) District Council, (3) County Council, (4) Whitehall Government & (5) European Parliament. <p>In my view this is two levels too many, and the most sensible rationalisation would have been to incorporate the Parish Council and County Council responsibilities into those of the District Council (with or even without Chiltern and High</p>

Wycombe districts) as a Unitary Authority.

However our expansionist County Council seems to have persuaded the Whitehall Government to remove the District Council and our expansionist national government is pressing ahead with a now unpopular move to remove the European layer. If we are to be left with only the National, County and Parish layers a strong Parish Council is extremely important to stand up to the power-grabbing layers above it. This increased importance should be reflected in the number of councillors and changes the basis of previous guidelines which are no longer relevant.

It would make sense to have even more local representation on the Parish Council. I live in Stoke Poges which is widespread, with a corresponding wide variety of residents. Each locality needs representation. I would therefore favour more wards to make the local representation truly local. Neither of the other planned levels (Whitehall nor Aylesbury) show any interest in considering local views.

Of course it may yet be that we keep the District Council and remove the County Council. In that case the considerations are different. It is really not sensible to consider this issue until the Unitary Authority issue is resolved.

This page is intentionally left blank

Parish	Ward	Polling Districts	Councillors
Beaconsfield	Beaconsfield North	SA	3
	Beaconsfield South East	SB	2
	Beaconsfield Central	SBC	4
	Beaconsfield West	SC	7
	Total		
Burnham	Burnham Beeches	SD	8
	Burnham Church	SDA	4
	Burnham Lent Rise	SEB	7
	Total		
Denham	Denham South	SJ, SJA, SJHD	7
	Denham North	SK	7
	Denham South West	SKA	1
	Total		
Dorney	Dorney	SED	7
Farnham Royal	Farnham Royal Central	SFC	3
	Farnham Royal North	SFN	7
	Farnham Royal South	SFS	1
	Total		
Fulmer	Fulmer	SWF	7
Gerrards Cross	Gerrards Cross East	SGE	2
	Gerrards Cross North	SGN	5
	Gerrards Cross South	SGS	5
	Total		
Hedgerley	Hedgerley	SFH	7
Iver	Iver Village & Richings Park	SIV, SIR	6
	Shredding Green	SIS	1
	Iver Heath	SV	6
	Wood Lane	SVW	1
	Total		
Stoke Poges	Stoke Poges	SS	13
Taplow	Taplow	SET	11
Wexham	The Orchards	SIT	2
	George Green and Middle Green	SWG	5
	Wexham Street	SWS	2
	Total		
Total			141

As of 1 September

Electorate	Ratio
2088	696
864	432
2304	576
4010	573
9266	579
4036	505
1816	454
3705	529
9557	503
3068	438
2496	357
549	549
6113	408
588	84
1099	366
3224	461
362	362
4685	426
448	64
917	459
2572	514
2790	558
6279	523
707	101
4425	738
455	455
3945	658
270	270
9095	650
3938	303
1608	146
299	150
1031	206
521	261
1851	206
54135	384

SUBJECT:	<i>Consultation on the detailed proposals for the modernisation of the annual canvass in England, Scotland and Wales.</i>
RELEVANT MEMBER:	Governance & Electoral Arrangements Committee Chairman - Councillor Patrick Hogan
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	<i>Head of Legal and Democratic Services</i>
REPORT AUTHOR	<i>Mat Bloxham , 01494 732143, Mathew.Bloxham@Southbucks.gov.uk</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED	<i>'Not Ward specific';</i>

1. Purpose of Report

Views are being sought by the Government on the overall structure of the proposed new canvass model. Electoral Registration Officers (ERO) have observed that the current annual canvass of electors is outdated and expensive to administer. It is also clear that the current process leads to confusion for some residents, who are not aware of the two stage process. Pilots of four different models for conducting the annual canvass were run in 2016 and 2017 in England, Scotland and Wales and a hybrid model has been developed, taking the successful elements of each.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That Members comment on the current consultation and note that responses are requested by 5pm on 30 November 2018.**
- 2. That authority be delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services in consultation with the Chairman of the Governance and Electoral Arrangements Committee to submit a response to this consultation.**

2. Reasons for Recommendations

Member comments are sought on the Government's consultation on modernising the annual canvass which aims to streamline the canvass by targeting resources more efficiently and thereby reducing costs and avoiding the current requirement for all households to respond, when a majority of which will remain the same as the previous year.

3. Content of Report

3.1. Currently, all ERO's are required to conduct an annual canvass of all residential properties in the area for which they have a responsibility. In 2014, Individual Electoral Registration was introduced to replace the household registration system, where one person in every household was responsible for registering everyone who lived at that address. As online registration has been overwhelmingly successful, residents are now increasingly opting to register outside the canvass period. The canvass is only one of numerous ways that the ERO is able to update their electoral register.

- 3.2. The annual canvass is still a crucial means to help EROs identify additions and changes to the electoral register. Therefore the Government are not looking at abolishing the annual canvass period as a whole. The Government believes there is merit in enabling the EROs to more effectively target their resources towards the properties where the occupiers have changed and the electoral register needs to be updated.
- 3.3. The proposed new canvass model would incorporate a 'data discernment step' which would inform the ERO which properties have not changed household composition, based on data held on other sources. The ERO would then have the choice to follow one of two routes for each property. Route One – no change and Route Two where there is a change to information the ERO currently holds for that property. With Route One it would be expected that the ERO would contact the household at least once during the canvass, however the crucial difference is that if no response is received then the ERO would have the option to not follow up a response.
- 3.4. At the start of the canvass process, each ERO would be required to upload their electoral register to the Individual Registration Digital Service (IER DS) which is the system used to verify the identity of applicants to register to vote. A data matching exercise would then be undertaken, comparing each electoral register against national data set/s. The data matching process will include name, date of birth etc. and a Unique Property Reference Number.
- 3.5. In addition to the national match, ERO's would also have the discretion to match their electoral register against locally held datasets such as council tax. If the property is 'matched' it is deemed green and if an elector does not appear on the national or local data sets it would be marked red. ERO's would then be required to make up to three contacts with a household, the initial contact being a paper contact. In the event of a non-response, the ERO would then be required to send up to two further reminders with a mandatory personal contact stage (Route Two).
- 3.6. The Government propose that house to house enquiries should continue where an ERO does not receive the information required in Route Two. It is anticipated that only a quarter of households would need to go down the Route Two process.
- 3.7. In terms of empty properties if the ERO had sufficient details it could be marked as a green match or if not a red match and to then follow Route Two. A suggestion has also been made not to include the single occupancy tick box on registration application forms as it has caused confusion in the past.
- 3.8. There would be a Route Three process for multiple occupants at the same address where the ERO can require a single officer responsible for the property to provide a list of eligible residents at the property. The data provided would only inform the ERO who should or should not be on the register and the ERO would then issue Invitations to Register (ITRs) to those not currently registered. Certain property types such as care homes are already defined in legislation, where a single responsible officer could be identified.
- 3.9. If the ERO has the correct information on who lives in the property, whether they are a register or a potential or pending elector, the ERO should be able to focus

their resource on the registration rather than the canvass process and should be included in the data matching.

4. Consultation

The Government consultation is available via the following link:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposals-for-the-reform-of-the-annual-canvass>

The questions in the consultation, and draft responses are attached as an Appendix to this report.

5. Options (if any)

This is a response to a consultation so no alternative options need to be considered. In terms of the pilots, all models had strengths and delivered cost savings.

7. Corporate Implications

The proposals for reform of the annual canvass should be more cost effective. Electoral administrators reported that the piloted models allowed them to re-focus their available resources on targeting citizens who were not currently registered, particularly those from under-registered groups with whom it is more difficult to engage. Whilst the new model would not require every household to respond there are safeguards in place to protect the completeness and accuracy of the electoral register. One of the risks identified was the proposal to use e-communication, as there is no clear connection between a property and an email address. Therefore specific confirmation would be required from the elector that their details are still correct to act as a safeguard. Future developments would allow for notification through a Council account.

8. Links to Council Policy Objectives

The recommendations in this report aim to support the delivery of the Council's Objective 1 (Efficient and effective customer focused services).

Key Objectives available here:

<http://www.southbucks.gov.uk/prioritiesandperformance>

9. Next Steps

A copy of the Council's draft response is attached for Member consideration. Delegated authority is sought to enable the draft responses to be amended following Member comments. It is the Government's intention to amend legislation governing the annual canvass during 2019 and that the changes be implemented from the start of 2020 annual canvass.

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Proposals for reform of the annual canvass

Annex - Collated questions

Question 1

We are proposing that the national data matching process is mandatory to complete, with local data matching being conducted at the ERO's discretion.

Do you agree that this is the right approach? YES/

Please explain your reasoning.

National data matching was introduced in 2014 with the introduction of IER. The accuracy of the national data match process is high, and can be carried out efficiently via the IER DS. Supplementing this with local data matching at the ERO's discretion will ensure that the accuracy of data matching will remain high.

Question 2

We are proposing that any property with a red elector should be converted into a red property. A property will only be green if all of the electors in the property are individually green.

Do you agree this is the right approach? NO

Please explain your reasoning.

This approach will involve further checks are carried out to ensure that the information held on the Electoral Register is accurate; however further local data matching could be used as a secondary check to enable properties with red electors to turn a property green if those details are subsequently matched. Red electors could be caused by a mismatch with their name on records which would not necessarily mean that the rest of the household data on the Electoral Register is not accurate or up-to-date.

Question 3

Do you think a minimum standard for the accuracy of locally held datasets should be mandatory? YES/

Please explain your reasoning.

Local data sets should be of high quality to ensure that the Electoral Register remains accurate and up-to-date.

Question 4

Do you agree that Empty and Void properties should be sent through a data matching process? YES/

*Please explain your reasoning.
We already use local data matching to identify void properties.*

Question 5

Do you agree that recent applications to register should be exempted from the data step and automatically marked as green? YES/

If Yes, what time period do you think should be defined as “recent” (1 month, 2 months, linked to the last monthly update? etc). Please explain. Yes, the last monthly update should be used to avoid requiring electors to resubmit information provided very recently.

If No, please explain your reasoning.

Question 6

Do you agree with no longer including a single occupancy tick box on registration application forms? NO

Please explain your reasoning. We have not experienced much confusion from electors with this question. It helps provide useful information which can help avoid unnecessarily requiring further responses from single elector properties.

Question 7

Do you agree that an email contact should be permitted as the first form of contact for households in Route 1 (where an email address is held), followed by a paper contact if there is no response? YES/

Please explain your reasoning.

Electors increasingly expect to receive electronic correspondence rather than paper letters. We receive feedback to this effect during the annual canvass. Requiring a positive response to email correspondence is appropriate since email addresses can change over time or may have been spelt incorrectly during registration.

Email addresses are sometimes less reliable as paper correspondence. For example, there may be instances where an email address is held, but this could be for someone in the property under the age of 16 year who may not respond because they are not old enough to register to vote. It is not always clear from the email address which elector in the property the email address will be sent to.

We have found that some ITR registration emails are returned with confirmation that the elector no longer lives at the address. Requiring a response from email communications is therefore endorsed because this improves the reliability of the information. Information can also be validated via a single click process which is

quick and convenient to most electors.

Question 8

Do you agree with the proposed process for Route 1? YES/

Please explain why. The majority of households report no changes from one year to the next. Route 1 would help to reduce expensive correspondence chasing. Electors regularly report that the requirement to provide a response to the annual canvass is excessive when information has not changed. Properties for route 1 would continue to receive confirmation of the information held, and could subsequently advise if this the electoral register should be amended. This would mirror the process for discretionary Household Notification Letters ahead of scheduled elections.

Question 9

Do you agree with the proposal to exclude mandatory follow up activity (reminders and household visits, etc.) with households sent through Route 1? YES

Please explain why. Please see response to question 8.

Question 10

Do you agree with the proposed process for Route 2? YES/

Please explain why. It is suggested that the initial response include email, telephone or text correspondence to mirror the approach used with ITRs. Non response could then be followed up with paper letters. This has proven effective in our use of ITR emails since most electors sent electronic communications will respond quickly via that method, or not at all, and in which case a paper letter can be sent.

Question 11

Do you agree that a personal contact (door knock or telephone call) should be a mandatory element of the revised canvass? YES/

Please explain why. There may be accessibility issues at properties preventing correspondence from reaching the occupants. Experience has demonstrated that a personal canvass can help achieve a high response rate in some circumstances.

Question 12

Are there property types in addition to those detailed above that you believe should be directed to Route 3?

Please list and explain your reasoning.

Temporary Accommodation – frequent changes are more easily recorded using a single point of contact which knowledge of the properties and tenants

This approach is endorsed with regard for care homes where there are a large number in our districts.

Question 13

Do you believe this is the correct process to deal with these properties? YES

If No, can you suggest an alternative approach? Some properties, such as care homes, can mean that NI details are hard to acquire. The use of NHS numbers being recorded to help determine identify would be useful where NI details are not available and attestation is not practicable due to the number of electors at a property without an NI number,

Question 14

Do you believe that sending these properties into Route 2, the full canvass, if the ERO is unable to obtain data, is the correct safeguard for these properties? YES/

Please explain your reasoning. Personal canvass enables the identity of individuals to be checked via documentary evidence being supplied on the doorstep or an NI being provided.

Question 15

Do you agree with the proposal that pending/potential electors should be included in the data matching and canvass communication? YES

If No, please explain why.

If Yes, do you think there are any risks in doing so? YES

Consent from the elector should be obtained first. Pending elector details are sometimes added because someone other than the elector has provided the name of an elector living at an address, but they may not be eligible to be registered or there may be other factors that would mean automatic registration was not appropriate without consent.

Please explain what these are.

Question 16

What do you think the issues with the current HEF are?

Confusion caused by a requirement to also complete an ITR

The inability to register to vote on a HEF

The prescribed wording is too prescriptive – greater flexibility on the template would help to improve responses by enabling local factors to be taken into account.

Question 17

Is there information that can be taken out of the HEF?

No

Question 18

Is there any further feedback you would like to provide in relation to the proposed new model for the annual canvass, that has not already been covered in another question? No

Finally, please let us know who you are and how we might contact you:

Name	Mat Bloxham
Job Title	Democratic & Electoral Services Manager
Organisation	Chiltern & South Bucks District Councils
Email	mbloxham@chiltern.gov.uk / mat.bloxham@southbucks.gov.uk

Please return the completed questionnaire by 5pm 30th November to: mrd-engagement@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Many thanks.

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