

# Agenda



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[www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

## A meeting of the **Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee**

will be held on Tuesday 3 September 2024 at 6.00 pm  
Meeting Room 1, Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JE

To watch this meeting, follow this link to the council's [YouTube channel](#).

### **Members of the Committee:**

Councillors:

Robert Maddison (Chair)  
Ron Batstone  
Sarah James

Max Thompson (Vice-Chair)  
Diana Lugova  
Sally Povolotsky

### **Substitutes:**

Councillors:

Cheryl Briggs  
Eric de la Harpe  
Katherine Foxhall  
Scott Houghton

Patrick O'Leary  
Viral Patel  
Mike Pighills  
Debra Dewhurst

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Vivien Williams,  
Head of Legal and Democratic (Interim)

# Agenda

## Open to the public including the press

### 1. Apologies for absence

To record apologies for absence and the attendance of substitute members.

### 2. Minutes

(Pages 3 - 5)

To adopt and sign as a correct record the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2024.

### 3. Declarations of interest

To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and any conflicts of interest in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

### 4. Urgent business and chair's announcements

To receive notification of any matters which the chair determines should be considered as urgent business and the special circumstances which have made the matters urgent, and to receive any announcements from the chair.

### 5. Public participation

To receive any questions or statements from members of the public that have registered to speak.

### 6. Response to the Local Government Boundary Commission's Warding Proposals for Vale of White Horse

(Pages 6 - 15)

To consider the report of the head of legal and democratic on the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's draft recommendations for new wards in Vale of White Horse.



# Minutes

of a meeting of the

## Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee

held on Monday 18 March 2024 at 6.00 pm in Meeting Room 1, Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JE

**Open to the public, including the press**

### **Present in the meeting room:**

Councillors: Robert Maddison (Chair), Max Thompson (Vice-Chair), Diana Lugova, Eric de la Harpe, Oliver Forder and Sarah James

Officers: Susan Baker (Electoral Services Team Leader), Emily Barry (Democratic Services Officer) and Steven Corrigan (Democratic Services Manager)

### **Remote attendance:**

Officers: Ben Silverthorne (Trainee Democratic and Electoral Services Officer) and Bertie Smith (Broadcasting Officer)

## **14 Chair's announcements**

In the absence of a chair, Councillor Max Thompson Vice-Chair of the committee, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He used his discretion to consider item 7 from the agenda – election of a chair, before any other items on the agenda.

## **15 Election of a chair**

Following Councillor Oliver Forder's appointment as vice-chair of Council, the committee was asked to elect a chair for the remainder of the municipal year 2023/24.

**RESOLVED:** to appoint Councillor Robert Maddison as chair for the remainder of the municipal year 2023/24.

## **16 Apologies for absence**

None.

## **17 Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 19 February 2024 as a correct record and agree that the chair sign them as such.

## 18 Declarations of interest

None.

## 19 Urgent business

None.

## 20 Public participation

None.

## 21 Local Government Boundary Commission for England Review of Vale of White Horse District Council Warding Arrangements

The committee considered the report of the head of legal and democratic on warding arrangements for Vale of White Horse District Council including a representation made by Councillor Mark Coleman in relation to Littleworth Parish which had been received since the publication of the agenda.

The Democratic Services Manager outlined the changes that had been made to the proposals as described in the report and set out in appendix B to the report. He reiterated to the committee that the deadline for submission of the proposal was Friday 22 March 2024 following the agreement from the Boundary Commission to extend the submission deadline for all parties. The Democratic Services Manager went on to remind the committee that following this submission the Boundary Commission would publish its own draft proposal in June and there would be the opportunity for members to comment again at this stage.

The committee noted that the proposal before them had been drawn up with the benefit of consultation responses from members. The chair then invited views on where Littleworth should sit within the proposal in light of the comments submitted by Councillor Coleman. The committee reflected that the concerns of Littleworth centred around greater community cohesion with a rural ward than with the Faringdon ward.

The committee asked what the impact of moving Littleworth into the Kingston Bagpuize ward would have on the percentage variance from average. The Democratic Services Manager advised the committee that the variances for affected wards would be as follows:

Ward Name	% variance from average
Kingston Bagpuize	0%
Stanford	7%
Faringdon	14%

The committee had no comments or concerns on any other matters set out in the proposal.

A motion, moved and seconded to amend the proposal to move Littleworth into the Kingston Bagpuize ward was carried on being put to the vote.

**RESOLVED:** to

1. Agree the final proposals for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England subject to Littleworth being moved into the Kingston Bagpuize ward;
2. authorise the democratic services manager, in consultation with the chair of the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee, to finalise the document for submission.

The meeting closed at 6.31 pm

# Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee



Report of head of legal and democratic

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DATE: 3 September 2024

## Response to the Local Government Boundary Commission's Warding Proposals for Vale of White Horse

**Recommendation:** That the committee

1. considers the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) proposed warding pattern for the district;
2. considers the views from councillors set out in appendix A on the above draft proposals;
3. authorises the democratic services manager, in consultation with the Chair of this committee, to finalise a draft council response for submission to Council for consideration.

Recommendation to Council:

1. To consider the draft submission response agreed by this committee;
2. To authorise the democratic services manager to finalise the document for submission.

### Purpose of Report

1. On 9 July 2024, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) published its proposed warding pattern for the district. This is the latest stage in its electoral review of Vale of White Horse. This report invites the committee to make a recommendation to Council on the proposed response of

the council to the proposals and to recommend that Council authorises the democratic services manager to submit the final response.

## **Strategic Objectives**

2. None of the council's strategic objectives are directly relevant to this report.

## **Background**

3. In January 2024 the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) commenced an electoral review of the warding arrangements for the district based on a council size of 38 members – the same as now. This was lower than the number that Council agreed to propose at its meeting in October 2023 – being 41.
4. At its meeting on the 18 March 2024, this committee, under authorisation from Council, agreed a submission to the LGBCE showing its proposed warding arrangements i.e. the geographical areas that we would wish to see each of the councillors representing. The committee also agreed to recommend that the council should consist of 39 councillors. The LGBCE also received a number of other submissions, mainly from various parish and town councils.
5. In July the LGBCE published its draft warding proposal (go to [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk) to view this). Generally, there was a high correlation with the proposals we put forward, which council will no doubt welcome. The LGBCE noted of the council proposals that 'the proposed patterns of wards resulted in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the authority and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries'. Any amendments put forward by the LGBCE were done so to address areas of greater forecast electoral imbalance. In addition, the LGBCE accepted that a warding scheme based on 39 councillors, as proposed by this council, would provide for an effective distribution of councillors across the district and ensure an effective balance of their statutory criteria. Of the 20 wards proposed by the LGBCE, 16 fully or nearly matched our submission.
6. Most of the changes it proposes are in respect of wards along the western boundary of the district. The draft recommendation document also asks for specific views in relation to certain ward proposals, for example ward names.

## **Proposed Response**

7. On 7 August 2024 all councillors were invited to a briefing on the LGBCE's draft proposals and to provide any initial views. The following day all councillors were invited by email to submit any comments by 15 August. Attached at appendix A are details of the responses received at the briefing or via email. The attached also sets out the specific areas where the LGBCE has requested views. The committee is invited to consider the responses and agree a draft submission for consideration by Council.

## **Financial Implications**

8. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report. However, the increase in the number of councillors by one to 39 will result in an increase in the allowances and expenses costs.

## **Legal Implications**

9. There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

## **Climate and ecological impact implications**

10. There are no climate or ecological impact implications directly arising from this report.

## **Equalities implications**

11. There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

## **Conclusion**

12. Council needs to agree how it wishes to respond to the warding proposals proposed by the LGBCE. The proposals are generally welcomed as, on the whole, they correlate well with what we put forward. However, there are some changes made by the LGBCE that we may wish to contest. The committee is invited to consider a draft response for consideration by Council at its meeting on 18 September 2024.

## **Background Papers**

- All of the background papers are to be found on the LGBCE's website <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/vale-white-horse>. It contains all public documents pertaining to this review to date.



**Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) Review of Vale of White Horse District Council – Member responses to LGBCE proposals and officer recommendations.**

**Abingdon-on-Thames (Abingdon East, Abingdon North and Abingdon South Wards)**

*LGBCE proposal*

Reflects the council's proposal for three three-member wards in Abingdon. The Commission proposes two changes to make adjustments around Matlock Way and Hendred Way affecting the proposed ward boundaries between Abingdon East and Abingdon North.

Whilst, if agreed, the adjustments would result in different county division and ward boundaries, there is logic in the LGBCE's proposals. However, if coterminosity with the Oxfordshire divisions is considered a priority the council should emphasise this in its response.

*Councillor comments*

At the briefing the view was expressed that the LGBCE proposal would reflect where the community around Matlock Way consider themselves part of.

*Recommendation*

To determine whether to support the LGBCE proposal or the council's submitted proposal.

**Kingston Bagpuize**

*LGBCE proposal*

Similar to the council's proposal with the addition of Littleworth parish.

*Councillor comments*

Councillor Coleman sees merits in proposal. Councillor Rayner asked that Kingston Bagpuize is not referred to as a town.

*Recommendation*

Raise no objection to the proposal.

## **Botley & Sunningwell**

*LGBCE proposal*

Match the council's proposal.

*Councillor comments*

None received.

*Recommendation*

Raise no objection to the proposal.

## **Kennington & Radley**

*LGBCE proposal*

Match the council's proposal.

*Councillor comments*

None received.

*Recommendation*

Raise no objection to the proposal.

## **Cumnor**

*LGBCE proposal*

Match the council's proposal.

*Councillor comments*

None received.

*Recommendation*

Raise no objection to the proposal.

## **Marcham & Wootton**

*LGBCE proposal*

Match the council's proposal.

*Councillor comments*

Councillor Clegg supportive.

*Recommendation*

Raise no objection to the proposal.

**Blewbury**

*LGBCE proposal*

Match the council's proposal.

*Councillor comments*

See below.

*Recommendation*

To agree a response and consider views on the proposed name of 'Blewbury & Chilton'

**Harwell & Western Valley**

*LGBCE proposal*

Match the council's proposal.

*Councillor comments*

Councillors Gascoigne and Dewhurst have raised the following points:

1. Harwell Campus is geographically closer to Chilton and therefore any planning matters are most likely to affect Chilton residents. Some Chilton residents (those living in Severn Rd) actually reside within the Harwell Campus boundary. It makes much more sense that Chilton and Harwell Campus be in the same ward.

2. Harwell is a rural village, Western Valley (and eventually Valley Park) are more of a town and have a very different identity and demographic. It seems odd for Harwell village to be isolated from the other rural villages and placed in a ward that will be more of a town, especially when Valley Park is built. It would make more sense for Harwell to be in a ward with other rural villages.

*Analysis*

1. The proposal only covers that part of Harwell Campus within the Harwell Oxford campus ward of Harwell Parish Council transferring from the existing Hendreds ward to the proposed Harwell and Western Valley ward. Any proposal to include the whole of Harwell campus within one parish would need to be considered as part of a community governance review.

2.As set out in the LGBCE draft recommendations document, a single member Western Valley ward would have a forecast electoral variance of 13% in 2029. During the previous electoral review this council argued against linking Blewbury with Harwell.

*Recommendation*

To agree a response.

**Drayton**

*LGBCE proposal*

Match the council's proposal.

*Councillor comments*

None received.

*Recommendation*

Raise no objection to the proposal.

**Hendreds**

*LGBCE proposal*

Match the council's proposal.

*Councillor comments*

At the briefing the view was expressed that Harwell Campus sits better with Chilton parish than Harwell or the Hendreds, is better aligned with Chilton (children on the campus go to school in Chilton) and is not a priority for Harwell Parish Council.

*Analysis*

As covered in the text on the Harwell & Western Valley proposal, this review is not looking at parish boundaries. Such a review would need to be undertaken as part of a community governance review.

*Recommendation*

Raise no objection to the proposal.

**Steventon & East Hanney**

*LGBCE proposal*

Match the council's proposal.

*Councillor comments*

None received.

*Recommendation*

Raise no objection to the proposal.

**Sutton Courtenay**

*LGBCE proposal*

Match the council's proposal.

*Councillor comments*

None received.

*Recommendation*

Raise no objection to the proposal.

**Grove**

*LGBCE proposal*

Match the council's proposal.

*Councillor comments*

Differing views expressed at councillor briefing. Those opposed did not support the splitting of East and West Hanney parishes. Suggestion to include East Challow in a Grove ward are covered and discounted in the LGBCE document on the grounds of electoral equality. Another member spoke in support of the proposal and expressed the view that West Hanney had similar priorities to Grove.

*Recommendation*

Raise no objection to the proposal.

**Wantage** Wantage Charlton and Wantage Segsbury Wards

*LGBCE proposal*

Reflects the council's proposal for two two-member wards.

LGBCE proposal is for the boundary to follow the A338 (Grove Street), Seesen Way, Wallingford Street, the B4057 and B4494

LGBCE invite submissions on the proposed ward names – Wantage Charlton and Wantage Segsbury

*Councillor comments*

View expressed that naming the wards east and west would be easier to understand.

*Recommendation*

Raise no objection to the proposed ward boundary.

To agree a response in respect of the ward names.

**Faringdon & Stanford**

*LGBCE proposal*

Differs to that proposed by council - retention of a two-member Faringdon ward covering the parish of Great Faringdon with the addition of Littleworth parish and the retention of a single member Stanford ward. LGBCE does not consider that the Council proposal is satisfactory in terms of equality of representation.

LGBCE proposal is for a three-member ward covering the parishes of Great Faringdon and Stanford comprising Buscot, Coleshill, Eaton Hastings, Great Coxwell, Great Faringdon, Hatford, Little Coxwell, Shellingford and Stanford in the Vale.

*Councillor comments*

Councillor Coleman sees merits in proposal. View expressed at the briefing that Stanford objects to inclusion within a ward with Faringdon.

*Recommendation*

Raise no objection to the proposal.

**Watchfield & Shrivenham**

*LGBCE proposal*

Differs to that proposed by council.

The Commission proposal is for a two-member ward comprising the parishes of Ashbury, Bourton, Compton Beauchamp, Fernham, Longcot, Shrivenham, Uffington, Watchfield and Woolstone.

*Councillor comments*

No comments received.

*Recommendation*

Raise no objection to the proposal.

**Ridgeway**

*LGBCE proposal*

Match the council's proposal with the addition of Baulking parish. The reasons for this are set out in the LGBCE's draft recommendations document around electoral equality.

*Councillor comments*

Opposition to inclusion of Baulking in the proposed ward. There is a shared community and links with Uffington within same school catchment area and parishes working together.

*Recommendation*

To consider whether to raise an objection to the inclusion of Baulking in the proposed Ridgeway ward and if so agree an alternative arrangement.