



Windsor Liberal Democrats Submission

**On the Terms of Reference for the RBWM
Community Governance Review.**

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Introduction

The terms of reference of the Community Governance Review (CGR) appears to heavily assume that if a Windsor Town Council (WTC) is created it will be based upon the existing Borough wards and synced with the Borough elections, starting in 2023ⁱ.

The Windsor Liberal Democrats (WLD) believe that while this would be the easiest course of action it would not necessary be the best.

There are 4 issues to raise:

- The timeline
- Elections
- The wards created
- Willows (WCDW 2)

The Timeline

Simply put the WLD believe the timeline stated is too long for the heavily implied use of the existing Borough wards, the simplest course of action.

The WLD believe there is time for an inaugural election for the WTC before 2023.

This would help highlight the separate nature of the WTC from the Royal Borough; the first term of the town council could be lengthened to sync with local elections going forwardⁱⁱ.

The implication that the precepts and assets for the new council must be created/transferred the first April (i.e. 2022) after the reorganisation order is issued would also support an earlier, inaugural election that same yearⁱⁱⁱ.

Elections

Although it is assumed within the CGR terms of reference and the notes on conducting a Community Governance Review that the elections of a WTC would be synced with those of the borough elections, it is our belief that parish councils can have their own separate election time tables, although at their own cost.

The WLD suggest exploring the legality of syncing them, eventually, with the Police and Crime Commissioner elections.

This would allow the WTC elections to be on Windsor specific issues rather than a part of the Royal Borough politics whilst saving costs, and taxpayers money, for all concerned.

Wards

The WLD have received negative feedback about the current Royal Borough wards in Windsor, with residents confused by the similar names and/or unhappy with their boundaries, believing they did not reflect local communities.

Parish and town councils are not constrained by the need to create electoral wards within a certain variance.

The Guidance on conducting Community Governance Reviews, although it does support a general aim of equal representation, does place an emphasis on creating wards based on recognised geographic or community identities^{iv}.

If the stated timetable is used, then the opportunity arises to create such wards.

Equal representation could still be achieved by varying the number of councillors per ward^v.

Willows

The CGR terms of reference particularly state the consultation is for the currently unparished area of Windsor.

However, an anomaly exists with the polling district WCDW 2, known as Willows, widely regarded as part of Windsor, being within the boundaries of Bray Parish Council.

As stated in the notes for guidance, Community Governance Reviews are an ideal time to look at and remove such anomalies^{vi}.

It would also be beneficial to do so in the process of creating the proposed WTC as ward and councillor numbers would be affected.

However, the WLD note:

that a review concerning Bray Parish Council was conducted recently and so another may have to wait.

The original grass roots petition for the creation of a WTC was for the unparished area.

Any change in existing boundaries must be with the consultation and agreement of Bray Parish Council and the residents of the Willows.

Summary

In summary, the WLD believe if the timetable outlined in the terms of reference is followed then the issues of the creating unique wards for the WTC and the boundary anomaly have the time to be considered.

If these issues are ignored, then the inaugural election can be brought forward to 2022 and the possibility of syncing the WTC elections with those of the Police and Crime Commissioner should be investigated.

ⁱ (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, 2020)

ⁱⁱ (Department for Communities and Local Government , 2020) para. 31

ⁱⁱⁱ (Department for Communities and Local Government , 2020) para. 30

^{iv} (Department for Communities and Local Government , 2020) para. 164

^v (Department for Communities and Local Government , 2020) para. 166

^{vi} (Department for Communities and Local Government , 2020) para. 26-27

Sources

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