



Windsor Liberal Democrats submission

to RBWM Community Governance Review Working
Group for a Windsor Town Council

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Windsor Liberal Democrats

Submission to RBWM Community Governance Review

Working Group for a Windsor Town Council

Introduction

The Liberal Democrats as a party, nationally and locally in Windsor, have long advocated devolving power closer to the people.

A town council for Windsor has been a manifesto commitment of the party for at least two Borough elections, and more generally supported before that.

In many ways creating such a town council will merely make Windsor equal to the rest of the Royal Borough (with the obvious exception of Maidenhead); however, it also gives the residents of Windsor many possibilities to direct the future of their own town by creating a strong, cohesive community and voluntary sector.

The Windsor Liberal Democrats (WLD) therefore believe:

- there should be a single Windsor Town Council (WTC) for all the currently unparished area
- that it should be warded to represent as far as possible the recognised geographic communities within that area
- it should have 20-25 town councillors depending on the precise number and boundaries of the wards created

We have several issues with the Community Governance Review (CGR) terms of reference which will be explored in a separate submission.

The answers and recommendations set out below are within the current terms of reference.

Obviously if the terms of reference are altered, our recommendations will need to be altered as well.

Q1: What is the appetite for creating a new town council for Windsor?

Is a parish council needed or desired?

The lack of a town council for Windsor (and Maidenhead) appears to be somewhat of an historical oversight as both towns were/are surrounded by parish councils.

Indeed, despite lacking a parish or town council the residents of Windsor still pay a precept in all but name.

Bodies like the town forums are a recognition of the democratic and governance deficit that exists but are a poor compromise and are disliked by many residents.

The existence of a grass roots campaign in Windsor, with a popular petition to create a town council, is proof of a desire for a local democratic bodyⁱ.

Creating a WTC would do more than correcting an historical anomaly which left democratic deficit; it would enable the residents of Windsor to have a greater democratic say in the running of their town. This would create numerous possibilities to grow and strengthen their home to be a strong, cohesive community and voluntary sector.

Q2: Is there a sense of community identity in the review area and should this community be represented by its own parish council?

The WLD believe there is a sense of community, that it extends across the unparished area, and it should be represented in a single town council.

If asked to define themselves by a sense of place, a place with a 'positive' feeling for people and local distinctiveness, in a geographic or community-based sense, most residents within Windsor would call themselves Windsorians, particularly when delineating themselves from the residents of Maidenhead, and other surrounding towns.

There is also precedent in many of the political and business organisations that serve Windsor encompass the whole area.

The grass roots petition calling for a Windsor Town Council, which was the impetus for the setting up of the Community Governance Review, was for all the unparished area and is indicative of a sense of civic values, responsibility and pride in the whole of Windsor.

There are geographical communities within the overlaying community of Windsor such as Clewer and Dedworth and some sub-Windsor organisations, such as the West Windsor Residents Association.

However, such geographical communities and organisations, whilst important, are not effective and convenient sizes for separate councils compared to a WTC which can be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in the Windsor area as a whole, whilst avoiding unnecessary duplication of government structures (see answer to question 4 and other submission) ⁱⁱ.

Q3: How could a new parish council take shape?

The WTC, as all local councils, must have an Annual Parish Meeting, an Annual General Meeting, and standing orders for the election of a Chair/Vice Chair and vote to accept its standing committees once a year.

The exact nature of the standing orders and committee structures must be tailored to the needs of the WTC and Windsor but can be easily based on existing local councils or with guidance from NALCⁱⁱⁱ.

Due to historical precedent and to further community cohesion and civic pride an honorary position of Windsor Town Mayor should be considered.

A code of conduct and terms of reference including a method for holding Windsor Town Councillors to public account should be drawn up. This will need to include use of Social Media and data etc in the digital age.

As per the Parish Charter, mechanisms and procedures for cooperation with the Royal Borough will need to be established, as well as the independent nature of the WTC^{iv}.

A method(s) of reporting to and from the Borough Councillors elected for wards within the WTC boundaries and the WTC will need to be devised, such as written reports for full councils and /or Q&A sessions.

An important consideration will be the assets and responsibilities transferred from the Royal Borough to the WTC by the Government Reorganisation order.

They must be in proportion, and the WLD favour substantial transfer to create the necessary conditions for the positive opportunities the residents of Windsor desire^v.

If, as implied, the precept and nominated land/property is transferred/created the first April after the reorganisation order is issued then the relevant funds and assets must be ring fenced and administered by an interim body until the inaugural election of the WTC^{vi}.

Apart from the minimum number of Councillors (five), there appears to be little to guide the number a town council should have.

Too few risks the creation of a clique and loss of public engagement, too many risks it becoming unwieldy or having unfilled seats.

The recommendations cited would appear to indicate that a council between 13 and 25 councillors would be in order for a town the size of Windsor^{vii}. Both of the models we have considered would end up with a number of 23.

The exact number would depend upon the number of wards created (See answer 4) but the low to mid-twenties seems sensible.

Q4: Should a new parish council be warded to reflect the communities that exist in the review area? If so, how should these boundaries be drawn?

As stated, the WLD believe a council of 20 to 25 councillors would be desirable within the recommended guidance. Such a size of council would strongly suggest that it would have to be warded^{viii}.

One option is to create large wards from the Borough wards, or their polling districts, within the unparished area. This would create four wards with say 5/6 town councillors each and one, with the Old Windsor polling districts, with 2.

PD	PD Name	Electors PD	Electors Ward	Parish Councillors	Electors per Councillor
WCDE 1	Dedworth Manor	2128	5074	5	1015
WCDE 2	Clewer Hill	2164			
WCDE 3	St Leonard's	782			
WCDW 1	Dedworth Riverside	2510	4574	5	915
WCDW 3	Dedworth Green	2064			
WCE 1	Clewer New Town	1906	5178	5	1036
WCE 2	Spital	2264			
WCE 3	Clewer Village	1008			
WEC 1	Castle South	3587	5855	6	976
WEC 2	Castle North	2268			
WOW 3	Home Park*	98	1731	2	866
WOW 4	Boltons	1633			
(Electors as at 13.10.2020)		22412	22412	23	974

*It's anticipated that WOW 3 Home Park would form part of a Town Council Ward with a neighbouring Polling District (PD)

However, this suggestion has drawbacks; in that the current Borough Council Wards are not seen as representing natural communities or areas within Windsor.

An alternative which uses the current electoral infrastructure, would be to use the existing 12 RBWM polling districts as the basis of the wards for the proposed WTC. This is our suggested model.

Each having between 1 and 4 Town Councillors, depending upon the number of residents registered in the district/ward, would create the desired number of 20 to 25 councillors while being closer to the residents and existing communities.

PD	PD Name	Electors PD	Electors Ward	Parish Councillors	Electors per Councillor
WCDE 1	Dedworth Manor	2128	2128	2	1064
WCDE 2	Clewer Hill	2164	2164	2	1082
WCDE 3	St Leonard's	782	782	1	782
WCDW 1	Dedworth Riverside	2510	2510	3	836
WCDW 3	Dedworth Green	2064	2064	2	1032
WCE 1	Clewer New Town	1906	1906	2	953
WCE 2	Spital	2264	2264	2	1132
WCE 3	Clewer Village	1008	1008	1	1008
WEC 1	Castle South	3587	3587	4	897
WEC 2	Castle North	2268	2268	2	1134
WOW 3	Home Park*	98	1731	2	866
WOW 4	Boltons	1633			
(Electors as at 13.10.2020)		22412	22412	23	974

*It's anticipated that WOW 3 Home Park would form part of a Town Council Ward with a neighbouring Polling District (PD)

The low population number in WOW3 could mean its joining with another polling district to create a larger ward^x. The choice of which polling district could be subject to consultation with the residents of the Home Park.

However, joining two distinct areas such as these undermines the emphasis placed on recognising existing communities within the larger Windsor identity, and may well lead to a clash of conflicting local interests^x.

The names are those of the districts as currently used by Electoral Services and found in a table provided by the Royal Borough; the names of the new wards should be a matter of consultation with the residents of Windsor^{xi}.

Summary

The lack of a town council for Windsor not only places the town behind other areas of the Royal Borough but has also denied its residents a democratic say in deciding the towns future and direction.

Despite this, there is a strong sense of community within Windsor and the residents of Windsor believe it should be represented by a single town council; dividing Windsor between more than one town council would be at best inefficient due to duplication, at worst actively undermine community cohesion.

To do justice to the Windsorian desire to improve their town and community and create a civic sense of responsibility and pride it must be provided with the necessary resources to do so.

To ensure all residents and neighbourhoods are adequately represented the council will require a number of wards and between 20 to 25 councillors.

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- i (Proposed Windsor Town Council Campaign Committee, 2020)
 - ii (Department for Communities and Local Government , 2020) para. 48.
 - iii (National Association of Local Councils, 2020)
 - iv (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, 2020)
 - v (Department for Communities and Local Government , 2020) para. 103
 - vi (Department for Communities and Local Government , 2020) para. 30
 - vii (Department for Communities and Local Government , 2020) para. 154-155
 - viii (Department for Communities and Local Government , 2020) para. 159
 - ix (Department for Communities and Local Government , 2020) para. 166
 - x (Department for Communities and Local Government , 2020) para. 162
 - xi PDF from RBWM – FOI request. See Appendix.

Sources

Department for Communities and Local Government , 2020. *Community Governance Reviews: Guidance*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-governance-reviews-guidance>

National Association of Local Councils, 2020. *Create a Council*. [Online]

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[Accessed 23 10 2020].

Appendix 1

Relevant table from PDF sent from RBWM for Freedom of Information Request.

Property/Elector Statistics by Area/PD as of 13/10/2020

Printed: 13 October 2020

Street Details	Houses			Electors					
	As First Published	Added to Register	Deleted	Current	As First Published	Added to Register	Deleted	Applicants Pending	Current
including other electors									
WAS1 - ASCOT	1,942	11	6	1,947	3,205	200	0	856	3,405
WAS2 - SOUTH ASCOT	1,523	8	1	1,530	2,578	210	0	763	2,788
WAS3 - SUNNINGHILL	1,226	4	2	1,228	2,016	121	0	510	2,137
WCDE1 - DEDWORTH MANOR	1,293	20	3	1,310	2,010	118	0	584	2,128
WCDE2 - CLEWER HILL	1,272	22	2	1,292	2,061	83	0	487	2,164
WCDE3 - ST LEONARDS	384	2	0	386	767	15	0	176	782
WCDW1 - DEDWORTH RIVERSIDE	1,278	27	12	1,293	2,453	57	0	382	2,510
WCDW2 - WILLOWS	654	9	2	661	828	86	0	356	914
WCDW3 - DEDWORTH GREEN	1,155	26	0	1,181	2,022	42	0	373	2,064
WCE1 - CLEWER NEW TOWN	1,167	13	-1	1,181	1,781	125	0	546	1,906
WCE2 - SPITAL	1,228	0	0	1,228	2,129	135	0	578	2,264
WCE3 - CLEWER VILLAGE	535	68	3	600	906	102	0	337	1,008
WDHW1 - DATCHET WEST	932	25	-1	958	1,854	109	0	395	1,943
WDHW2 - DATCHET EAST	1,188	4	1	1,191	1,882	69	0	445	1,951
WDHW3 - HORTON	380	0	0	380	712	66	0	238	778
WDHW4 - WRAYS BURY	1,651	5	1	1,655	3,118	118	0	620	3,236
WEC1 - CASTLE SOUTH	2,241	17	3	2,255	2,937	650	0	1,664	3,567
WEC2 - CASTLE NORTH	1,676	13	4	1,685	2,071	197	0	875	2,268
WEC3 - ETON	748	14	0	762	1,066	281	0	640	1,347
WEC4 - ETON WICK	972	2	0	974	1,697	63	0	324	1,760
WOW1 - GREAT PARK	138	0	1	137	226	23	0	60	249
WOW2 - OLD WINDSOR	1,841	18	1	1,858	3,220	167	0	738	3,387
WOW3 - HOME PARK	64	1	5	60	96	2	0	17	98
WOW4 - BOLTONS	990	2	1	991	1,507	126	0	517	1,633
WSC1 - CHEAPSIDE	394	29	1	422	542	57	0	204	599
WSC2 - SUNNINGDALE NORTH	1,506	23	4	1,525	2,266	244	0	705	2,510
WSC3 - SUNNINGDALE SOUTH	1,052	1	0	1,053	1,551	138	0	520	1,689
SOUTH EAST REGION	61,468	1,328	130	62,666	102,374	6,670	0	28,251	109,044
	61,468	1,328	130	62,666	102,374	6,670	0	28,251	109,044