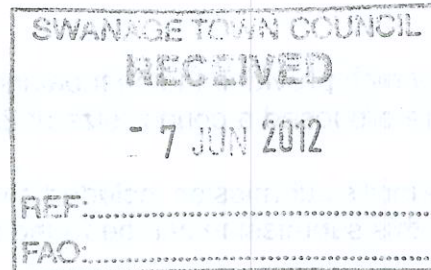


The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

Dr Martin Ayres
Town Clerk
Swanage Town Council
Town Hall
Swanage
Dorset, BH19 2NZ



29 May 2012

Dear Dr Ayres,

ELECTORAL REVIEW OF PURBECK: DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

I am pleased to announce the publication of the Commission's report setting out its draft recommendations for electoral arrangements for Purbeck District Council. The electoral arrangements for your town council will change as a result of our recommendations. The draft recommendations can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk and we will shortly forward a copy of the report to you. A summary and a poster publicising the draft recommendations are enclosed.

Purbeck is being reviewed in order to improve the levels of electoral representation in the district, which have become imbalanced since the last review. Currently, the number of electors represented by the councillors in 43% of wards varies by more than 10% from the average for the district.

Consultation on council size and warding arrangements

During the council size consultation stage of the review, the Commission received a submission from Purbeck District Council. The Council proposed a council size of 27, three more than the existing council size. Subsequently, the Council resolved to change its electoral cycle to whole council elections. The change in electoral cycle removed the necessity of having a council size divisible by three and the presumption in favour of three-member wards. As a result, the Council submitted an alternative warding pattern based on a council size of 25 members. A copy of the submission can be found on our website <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-west/dorset/purbeck-fer>

The Council argued that while an increase in council size was necessary, given the change in electoral cycle, it did not require a council size of 27. The Council's case for an increase was based on an additional councillor to increase the Audit and Governance Committee to seven members. The Commission considered a council size of 25 provides for suitable governance arrangements for the Council and a warding

pattern which provides the best balance between the statutory criteria. The Commission therefore proposed a council size of 25 members for Purbeck District Council.

The Council's submission included a warding pattern proposal for Purbeck district. A copy of this submission can be found on our website.

In formulating its draft recommendations for a warding pattern in Purbeck, the Commission considered the representations received. Consequently, the Commission has broadly based its draft recommendations on the Council's proposals, subject to a number of modifications throughout the district. The Commission felt the Council's proposals would provide the basis for the best possible warding pattern based on the evidence and information received.

I should stress that the Commission has not finalised its conclusions and, in light of further evidence may put forward final recommendations which differ from those set out in the draft recommendations. We therefore encourage all those who have a view to write to us regardless of whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations. It is very important that those who oppose our draft recommendations should suggest alternatives which are supported by evidence. All representations received during the consultation period will be taken into account and the Commission will then consider whether or not to amend its draft recommendations.

The Commission would welcome comments on its report by **9 July 2012**. Representations should be made in writing to reviews@lgbce.org.uk or:

Review Officer (Purbeck)
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London
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We will make all representations available for inspection on our website and at the offices of the Commission. Any respondents who submit comments during this period of the review, and do not want all or any part of the response or name made public, must state this clearly in the response. Any such request should explain why confidentiality is necessary, but all information in responses may be subject to publication or disclosure as required by law (in particular under the Freedom of Information Act 2000).

Your Council's views on any aspect of the review would be very welcome. There are

two particular issues for parish and town councils in an electoral review:

First, we may make recommendations for parish electoral arrangements; i.e. the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of parish councillors for each parish ward. We can only do this as a consequence of our electoral arrangements for Purbeck District Council.

Second, your parish may wish to comment on the electoral arrangements for Purbeck. It is open to the Commission to put forward recommendations, for example in the interests of electoral equality, that parishes or parish wards be located in a specific electoral ward.

It would be helpful to us if your Council could publicise the Commission's draft recommendations by displaying the enclosed poster.

If you have any queries, please contact me.

Yours sincerely



Alex Skerten
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Enc.

the Wool ward is projected to have, under our revised figures, 16% more electors than the district average by 2017.

57 We were also concerned that the Council's proposed ward appeared to split the Wool community, particularly as the Council had proposed that Bovington Middle School, part of the Cologne Road area, would be included in the West Purbeck ward. We considered that this school is part of the wider Wool community.

58 In light of these concerns we considered alternative warding arrangements for this area. We propose a three-member Wool ward which includes the parishes of Wool, Moreton, Affpuddle & Turnerspuddle and East Stoke. This ward is projected to have 11% more electors than the district average by 2017, would provide for good internal communication links, and does not split the Wool community. While this electoral variance is larger than we would normally be minded to recommend, we consider that this proposal provides the best balance between the statutory criteria.

59 We considered whether the parish of East Holme should also be included in the proposed Wool ward. However, this would worsen the electoral equality, with Wool being projected to have 12% more electors than the district average by 2017. We therefore recommend that East Holme is included in the Creech Barrow ward, detailed in paragraph 65.

60 To the south-west, we propose a single-member Lulworth & Winfrith ward. This ward would comprise the parishes of Chaldon Herring, Winfrith Newburgh, West Lulworth, East Lulworth and Coombe Keynes. This ward is projected to have 4% fewer electors than the district average by 2017. We consider that this ward would have good internal communication links. In addition, a submission received from East Lulworth Parish Council objected to being in a potential three-member ward and supported proposals for a single-member ward.

61 Overall, our draft recommendations for west Purbeck would create a three-member Wool ward and a single-member Lulworth & Winfrith ward. These wards are projected to have 11% more and 4% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2017, respectively.

East Purbeck

62 East Purbeck is characterised by a mixture of rural villages, MOD sites, coastland, nature reserves and the tourist towns of Swanage and Corfe Castle.

63 For this part of the district, the Council proposed single-member Creech Barrow, Castle, and Langton wards and three-member Swanage North and Swanage South wards. These wards are projected to have 1% more, 5% more, 6% fewer, equal to the number of electors and 12% fewer electors than the district average by 2017, respectively.

64 The Council's proposed single-member wards of Creech Barrow, Castle, and Langton were based on the current warding arrangements. The Council provided some evidence for each individual ward and we note that each ward has good electoral equality. We have adopted these warding proposals as part of our draft recommendations, subject to a minor modification to the proposed Creech Barrow ward.

65 We propose that East Holme parish be included in a single-member Creech Barrow ward which would be projected to have 3% more electors than the district average by 2017. We consider that this proposal provides the best balance between the statutory criteria for our proposed Wool and Creech Barrow wards. A submission received from Arne Parish Council advocated being in a rural ward because of the parish's tourist and environmental characteristics. Under our draft recommendations we propose including Arne parish in a Creech Barrow ward.

66 Creech Barrow ward would also include Tyneham parish, which does not contain any registered electors, nor has done so since 1943. The parish itself is used by the MOD as a training facility. We are mindful that the parish arrangements of Tyneham parish do not appear to adhere to the Local Government Act 1972 s9, which states that every parish must have a parish meeting, with a quorum of at least two (Local Government Act 1972 s13). Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972, paragraph 14 specifically states 'the parish meeting of a parish shall assemble annually on some day between 1st March and 1st June, both inclusive, in every year.' It is not clear whether Tyneham parish has held a meeting and adheres to the Act. We do not consider the current situation can be ignored and therefore suggest that Purbeck District Council undertake a Community Governance Review for this area.

67 In the south-east the Council proposed to divide Swanage parish between three-member Swanage North and Swanage South wards. Under the current electoral arrangements Swanage North is a two-member ward. The Council proposed that the boundary between the two wards run along the backs of the properties on the south side of the High Street to improve electoral equality and act as an identifiable boundary. This results in the Swanage North and Swanage South wards being projected to have an equal number of electors and 12% fewer electors than the district average by 2017, respectively.

68 We explored the possibility of improving the variance in the proposed Swanage South ward. We considered running the boundary behind the backs of properties to the north side of the High Street, but this did not provide for good electoral equality. We also considered the option of running the boundary along the centre of the High Street, which would result in the Swanage North and Swanage South wards being projected to have 10% fewer and 2% fewer electors than the district average by 2017, respectively. During a tour of the area we explored these options on the ground, and considered that running the boundary along the centre of the High Street provided for the most logical and identifiable boundary.

69 We received no further representations suggesting a suitable divide of Swanage. Swanage Town Council recommended modifying the boundary to improve electoral equality between the wards, but did not identify what the boundary should be.

70 We therefore recommend three-member Swanage North and Swanage South wards, divided by a boundary along the middle of the High Street as part of our draft recommendations. We recognise that high streets can unite communities and therefore using them as a boundary can potentially divide shared community interests. However, in this instance we consider that our draft recommendations provides the best balance between the statutory criteria.

71 Overall, we have adopted the Council's proposals for the east Purbeck area, subject to the modifications above, as our draft recommendations. Our draft

recommendations for east Purbeck would create single-member Creech Barrow, Castle, and Langton wards, and three-member Swanage North and Swanage South wards. These wards are projected to have 3% more, 5% more, 6% fewer, 10% fewer and 2% fewer electors than the district average by 2017, respectively.

Conclusions

72 Table 1 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2011 and 2017 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2011	2017
Number of councillors	25	25
Number of electoral wards	13	13
Average number of electors per councillor	1,462	1,482
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	1	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Draft recommendation

Purbeck District Council should comprise 25 councillors serving 13 wards, as detailed and named in Table B1 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

73 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

74 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, Purbeck District Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

75 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parishes of Lytchett Minster and Upton, and Swanage.

76 As a result of our proposed electoral ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Lytchett Minster and Upton parish.

Draft recommendation

Lytchett Minster & Upton Town Council should return 15 parish councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Lytchett Minster & Upton East (returning seven members), Lytchett Minster & Upton West (returning seven members) and Organford (returning one member). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 2A.

77 As a result of our proposed electoral ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Swanage parish.

Draft recommendation

Swanage Town Council should return 12 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Swanage North (returning six members) and Swanage South (returning six members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 2B.