

**2018 Review
of Parliamentary constituencies &
Runnymede Electoral review**

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2018 Review of Parliamentary constituencies & Runnymede Electoral review

What is a Parliamentary Constituency review

- Undertaken by Boundary Commission for England (BCE) which is an independent and impartial non-departmental public body, which is responsible for reviewing Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England.
- The BCE has the task of periodically reviewing all the Parliamentary constituencies in England. It is currently conducting a review on the basis of rules most recently updated by Parliament in 2011.
- These latest rules involve a significant reduction in the number of constituencies in England and require constituencies to comply with new parameters, so far as the number of electors in each constituency is concerned.

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- The review process is heavily informed by public consultation. The BCE develops and publishes initial proposals for constituencies across England. Representations from the public about these proposals are then taken both in writing and at public hearings in each region of England.
- The BCE is required to make a formal report to the Government during September 2018, recommending any changes that it believes are appropriate to the distribution, size, shape, name or designation of constituencies in England. This review is therefore referred to as ‘the 2018 Review’.
- The Government will turn the recommendations of the BCE into draft legislation, which is then presented to Parliament. If Parliament approves the legislation, the recommended changes will be implemented for the next General Election after the date on which the legislation is passed.

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- For a definitive statement of the law, please refer to the provisions of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (the 1986 Act) (as amended by the Boundary Commissions Act 1992 and the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011).
- The 1986 Act now requires there to be a fixed number of 600 constituencies for the whole of the UK. Having stated that no single constituency may be split between different parts of the UK, the 1986 Act provides a mathematical formula to determine how many constituencies each of the four parts of the UK should be allocated, based on the electorate figures as at the review date.
- The number of constituencies allocated to England for the 2018 Review is 501. Two of these constituencies are expressly reserved for the Isle of Wight, which the 1986 Act specifically states must have two constituencies.

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- The BCE has subsequently distributed the remaining 499 constituencies (i.e. the total English allocation less the two reserved for the Isle of Wight) between the regions used for European Parliament elections. In order to do so, the BCE used the same mathematical formula as that provided in the Act for the initial allocation between the four parts of the UK.
- This gives the following allocation of constituencies between the regions:

➤ Eastern	57
➤ East Midlands	44
➤ London	68
➤ North East	25
➤ North West	68
➤ South East	81*
➤ South West	53
➤ West Midlands	53
➤ Yorkshire and the Humber	50
- * Plus the two constituencies for the Isle of Wight

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- The 1986 Act sets out a number of Rules in Schedule 2 which are relevant to the detailed development of proposals for individual constituencies. Foremost is Rule 2, which provides that every constituency must have an electorate (as at the review date) that is no less than 95% and no more than 105% of the 'UK electoral quota'. The UK electoral quota for the 2018 Review is, to the nearest whole number, 74,769.
- Accordingly, every constituency in England must have an electorate as at the review date that is no smaller than 71,031 and no larger than 78,507.
- Schedule 2 provides for a number of other factors that the BCE may take into account in establishing a new map of constituencies for the 2018 Review, specifically:
 - special geographical considerations, including in particular the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency;
 - local government boundaries as they existed on 7 May 2015;
 - boundaries of existing constituencies; and
 - any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies.

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- The policy of the BCE is to take into account all the factors listed in Schedule 2 of the 1986 Act as far as possible, subject to the primacy of the statutory electorate range under Rule 2.
- The 1986 Act does not require the BCE to seek to achieve constituency electorates that are ‘as close as possible to’ the UK electoral quota. Nor does the BCE consider it appropriate to superimpose on the statutory scheme a policy objective of trying to minimise divergence from the UK electoral quota.
- As far as possible, the BCE seeks to create constituencies:
 - from wards that are adjacent to each other; and
 - that do not contain ‘detached parts’, i.e. where the only physical connection between one part of the constituency and the remainder would require travel through a different constituency.

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Timetable for 2018 Review:

- *September – December 2016*
12-week consultation on BCE's initial proposals.
- *March/April 2017*
Four-week secondary consultation (on responses received to initial consultation).
- *October – December 2017*
Eight-week consultation on BCEs revised proposals.
- *September 2018*
Publication of final report and recommendations to Government.

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Initial BCE Proposal for Runnymede & Weybridge Constituency:

- ‘To increase the electorate of the Spelthorne constituency, we propose to include the ward of Chertsey St. Ann’s from the existing Runnymede and Weybridge constituency. We note that this constituency crosses the River Thames but consider that the Chertsey St. Ann’s ward has clear road links into the Spelthorne constituency. The Runnymede and Weybridge constituency is otherwise largely unchanged. In addition to the change above, this constituency is modified in the south-west, as we propose including the Byfleet ward in this constituency from the existing Woking constituency’.

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Revised BCE Proposal for Runnymede & Weybridge Constituency:

- ‘That Thorpe ward be transferred from the existing Runnymede and Weybridge constituency to Spelthorne in place of Chertsey St. Ann’s ward, and that Hersham South ward should then be moved from the existing Esher and Walton constituency to Runnymede and Weybridge’.
- Consultation on revised proposals closed at midnight on 11 December 2017
- BCE are now considering all the representations received and will decide whether to modify the revised proposals before publishing final recommendations for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in September 2018.

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What is an Electoral Review

- The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) was established by Parliament under the provisions of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). Independent of central and local government, and political parties, it is directly accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons.
- The LGBCE's objectives are:
 - To provide electoral arrangements for English principal local authorities that are fair and deliver electoral equality for voters.
 - To keep the map of English local government in good repair and work with principal local authorities to help them deliver effective and convenient local government to citizens.

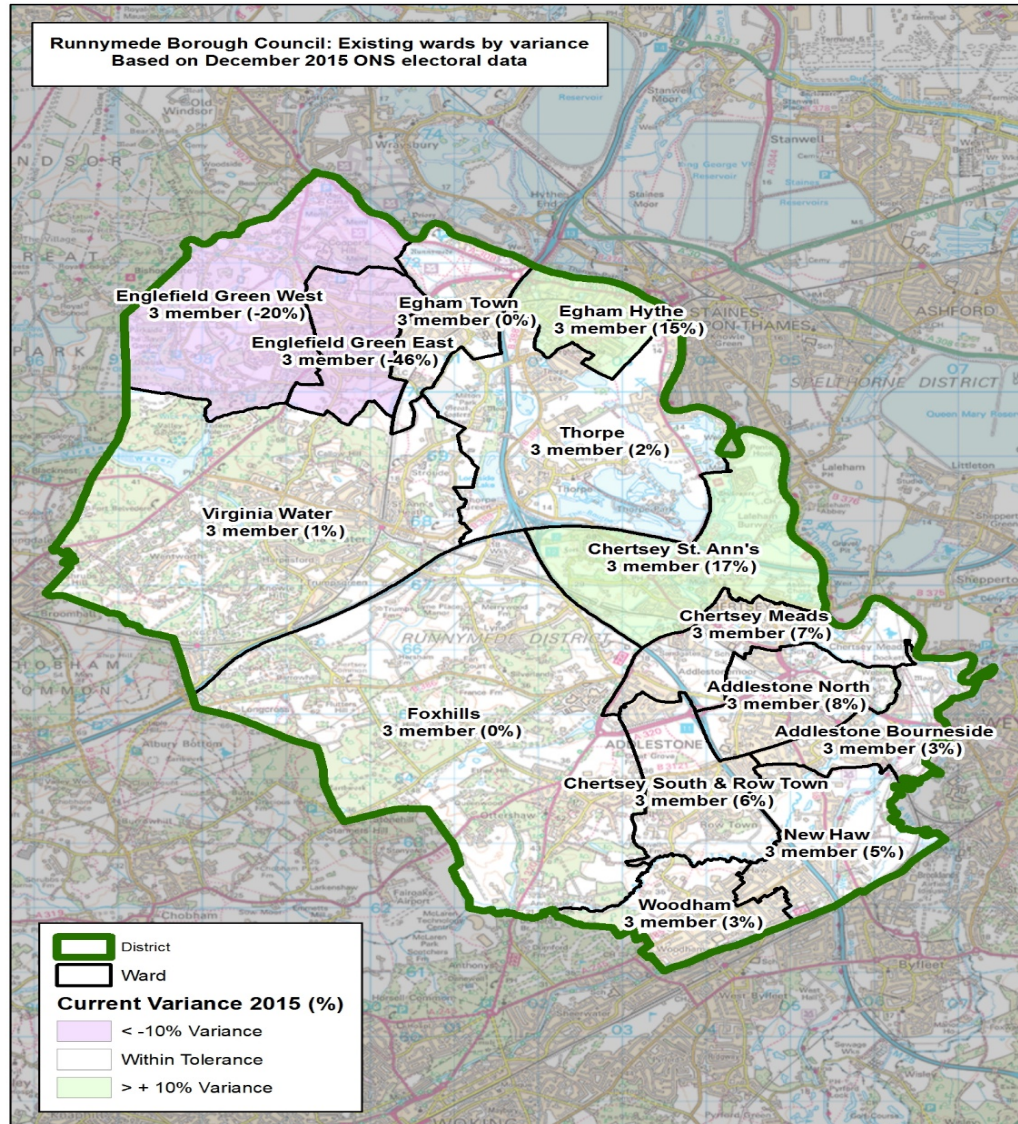
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Electoral Reviews –

- These are reviews of the electoral arrangements of local authorities: the number of councillors, the names, number and boundaries of wards and the number of councillors to be elected to each.
- Electoral Reviews are initiated primarily to improve electoral equality. This means ensuring, so far as is reasonable, that for any principal council the ratio of electors to councillors in each electoral ward is the same.
- The LGBCE is responsible for putting any changes to electoral arrangements into effect and does this by making a Statutory Instrument or order. The local authority then conducts local elections on the basis of the new arrangements set out in the order.

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Why carry out an Electoral Review in Runnymede:

- Four of 14 wards (29%) have a variance outside 10%.
- One ward has a variance outside 30%.
- As the Council elects by thirds, there is a presumption that it will have a uniform pattern of three-member wards.
- An Electoral Review determines the following 5 things:
 - Total number of councillors
 - Total number of wards
 - Boundaries of each ward
 - Number of councillors elected to each ward
 - Names of each ward

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- Council size is the starting point in any Electoral Review since it determines the average number of electors per councillor to be achieved across all wards or divisions of the authority. LGBCE cannot consider the patterns of wards or divisions without knowing the optimum number of electors per councillor, which is derived from dividing the electorate by the number of councillors to be elected to the authority.
- Proposals for council size are most easily, and regularly, argued in terms of effective and convenient local government (in terms of choosing the appropriate number of members to allow the council and individual councillors to conduct the council's business most effectively). Arguments can also be made on the basis of reflecting communities and allowing for fairness of representation.
- Runnymede concluded that it wished to remain a 42 Member Council electing via 14 three Member wards – made submission in October 2017

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- Ward pattern is the second stage of an Electoral Review. Once LGBCE have made a decision on council size, they can work out the optimum number of electors each councillor should represent by dividing the total number of electors by the number of councillors. This produces a figure for the average councillor: elector ratio. Using the average ratio of elector per councillor, LGBCE can measure how far the ratio in each current or proposed ward or division departs from that average.
- When formulating recommendations LGBCE will be seeking to achieve ratios as close to the authority average in every ward or division. The further that electoral equality departs from the average for the authority, the stronger the evidence of the other statutory considerations they take into account will need to be.

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- The LGBCE must abide by certain rules – set out in law - when drawing up proposals for new ward boundaries.
- The main rules are:
 - **Delivering electoral equality for local voters** – this means ensuring that each local councillor represents roughly the same number of people so that the value of your vote is the same regardless of where you live in the local authority area.
 - **Reflecting the interests and identities of local communities** – this means establishing electoral arrangements which, as far as possible, maintain local ties and where boundaries are easily identifiable.
 - **Promoting effective and convenient local government** – this means ensuring that the new wards or electoral divisions can be represented effectively by their elected representative(s) and that the new electoral arrangements as a whole allow the local authority to conduct its business effectively. In addition, we must also ensure that the pattern of wards reflects the electoral cycle of the council.

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- Occasionally, it will not be possible for LGBCE to put forward a boundary proposal that clearly meets all these principles. In fact, the statutory criteria can sometimes contradict each other, for example where a proposed ward might reflect the shape of local communities but delivers poor levels of electoral equality. In these cases, the LGBCE will use its discretion – and the quality of the evidence presented to it - to come to a conclusion.
- Electoral equality is the only criterion which LGBCE can measure with precision. They will therefore be able to take a firm view on the extent to which any proposal meets their ambition to deliver electoral fairness.
- LGBCE will accept a 10% +/- variance from the average figure for any proposed ward based on elector figures.

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- The Council like any other person or organisation is entitled to make a submission on ward boundaries.
- Officers were required to forecast what the electorate would be in 2023.
- Officers divided the borough up into what are termed tiles – specific geographical areas with specific number of voters. The officers came from various departments of the Council who are familiar with the Borough.
- The tiles were then used to create two examples of possible new wards.
- Had two meetings where councillors came along and reviewed the examples and made comments.
- Officers also met with any Councillors who wished to discuss the examples outside of the formal meetings.
- Officers took away the comments and came up with a final proposal which the Full Council meeting on the 8th February 2018 was asked to adopt as the Council's formal submission.

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- The next stage is that the LGBCE will consider the submissions it receives from any parties.
- The LGBCE will then follow their own technical guidance to create a series of recommendations which they will then consult on later this year.
- Following the conclusion of that consultation they will produce final proposals.
- The outcome will be that in May 2019 there will be all out elections for all 42 councillors in the new wards.
- Each ward will elect 3 councillors. The terms of office will vary depending on how many votes each councillor gets. Those with the most votes will serve 4 years, those who come second will serve 3/2 years and those who come third will serve 2/1 years. The reason for the different terms is that we have County Council elections during the period in question.
- Eventually we will get into a cycle where each councillor serves 4 years but one third are elected each year.

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	Date From:	Date To:
Consultation on warding arrangements	28 November 2017	12 February 2018
Consultation on draft recommendations	8 May 2018	16 July 2018
Final recommendations	4 September 2018	

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Useful website addresses:

Boundary Commission for England's website:

<https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/>

Local Government Boundary Commission for England's website:

<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/>