

CROWTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

6 September 2022

Agenda Item: 12

CPC Submission to the Community Governance Review (CGR) in response to the Stage 2 draft recommendations from the BFC Boundary Review Group

1. BACKGROUND

Borough:

In 2021 the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) endorsed CPC's recommendation for the BFC ward boundary change* for Crowthorne with 3 BFC councillors.

**This change removed the "Little Sandhurst and Wellington ward" boundary and returned that area to the single BFC Crowthorne ward.*

Parish:

In May 2022, CPC submitted their Stage 1 response to the Community Governance Review (CGR) for CPC parish warding, which were reviewed at BFC.

This paper deals with CPC Submission to the CGR in response to the Stage 2 draft recommendations from the BFC Boundary Review Group – see Appendix 1

The recommendations tabled here are intended to ensure that the CPC Parish ward boundary portrays Crowthorne as a discrete, sustainable community - reflecting the interests and identities of the whole area, as well as promoting effective and "understandable" local government to all Crowthorne residents/voters.

N.B. Most of the support information contained in this report repeats the CPC recommendations agreed at the CPC Council meeting, 2ndMay 2022, with minor adjustments reflecting the boundary changes outlined in Stage 2.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

CPC recommends:

BOUNDARY:

- That both the Borough and Parish Boundaries should be conterminous and include the Derby Field, 15 homes South of Derby Field and Edgbarrow Cottage.
- The inclusion of "Former Owlsmoor" and Former Winkfield are not "significant" or "essential" to the curtilage of the Parish (or Borough) boundary.

WARDING:

- That Crowthorne Parish strongly endorse its May 2022 decision to reverts to a "single ward.

WARDING IMPACT ON ELECTORAL COSTS:

- That the impact on costs of one 10 Cllr ward is not significant at an “all-out” election.
- That at a Parish By-Election there is an impact but not enough to justify 2 wards – when compared with Bullbrook, Town Centre & Parks and Binfield South.

NUMBER OF PARISH COUNCILLORS:

- That Crowthorne Parish continues to be served by 10 Cllrs – each representing circa 700 electors.

POLLING STATIONS:

- That a Postal District “CB” (not ward) is created for Bucklers Park to allow voting to take place on site (The Hub) when the number of electors reaches a high enough number* to support this. In the meantime, the Parish Hall is used as the polling station for all Crowthorne voters.

** Currently, only circa 500 voters live in Bucklers Park and the current projections indicate that full occupancy is unlikely until 2030. In the figures for Stage 2, the Bucklers Park figure assumed is 1200 electors by 2027.*

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

BOUNDARY:

The Stage 2 proposed inclusion of the Derby Field and Edgbarrow Cottage are compatible with Crowthorne Parish covering any adjacent areas which “logically” form part of the Crowthorne community. CPC endorse this recommendation.

The 15 dwellings south of the Derby Field, along the Wokingham Road are all identified as Crowthorne dwellings with the Crowthorne postal area of RG45 7QA. For this reason, it is thought to make sense to add these properties and would help “tidying up” the boundary line – see Appendix 2

The Stage 2 draft recommendations added to the curtilage of Crowthorne Parish the areas of “Former Owlsmoor” and “Former Winkfield”. Much of these areas are within the Special Protection Area SPA and therefore no additional dwellings. – see Appendix 2. Other than the “tidying up” exercise stated, these areas are deemed not “significant” or “essential” to Crowthorne Parish.

SINGLE WARD:

Crowthorne Parish has effectively operated as a “single ward” for most of its life, both at Parish and Borough level.

The desire to create “one Crowthorne” is strongly reflected within the village. The Crowthorne Eye community magazine promotes “Connecting Crowthorne”. So much so, over many decades there has been a desire to integrate “Wokingham-without” with the “Crowthorne” ward. Sadly, this has not come to pass. Even now, the current Parliamentary Boundary Review still includes the BFC/WBC & CPC/WWPC boundary splits through the village.

The Government basis for creating separate wards stems from general governance concerns which would specifically reflect an area's unique identity. Crowthorne is essentially a residential area centred around two shopping areas, several schools, and various small businesses, i.e. one homogeneous community.

The only reason for the current "Crowthorne South" ward "CS" was because of the previous BFC governance review which created the "Little Sandhurst and Wellington" borough ward. Under the current LGBCE recommendations this borough ward has been removed, making the requirement for "CS" redundant. This "CS" ward should now be subsumed into the "CN" ward.

Essentially, the Crowthorne "one ward" solution has worked well at both and Borough and Parish levels for many decades and **the need to generate multiple wards is seen as redundant.**

WARDING IMPACT ON ELECTORAL COSTS:

Clearly the associated cost of running elections is a consideration, however, not at the expense of good governance and public understanding and engagement.

- At an "all-out" Borough election, the impact of Parish warding has no significant effect on electoral costs.
- At a Borough by-election (one ward of 3 BFC Cllrs), Parish warding is not relevant.
- At a Parish by-election, Parish warding has an effect on costs but viewed not significant enough to promote 2 wards when compared with a by-election in Bullbrook, Town & Prks and Binfield South electoral numbers – see Appendix 3

Crowthorne Parish community has functioned for decades as a single ward and now the confusion of "CS" has been removed, Electors will have a clear view that ALL Parish (and Borough) Cllrs are acting on their behalf regardless of their place of residence.

NUMBER OF PARISH COUNCILLORS:

There are 4 Parish Council authorities in Bracknell Forest. The 2027 projections indicate the number of Electors/Cllr ranges 679 to 733 – *see Appendix 1.*

On this basis, Crowthorne Parish recommend that the number of Parish Cllrs remains at TEN in line with the Stage 2 Draft Recommendations.

POLLING DISTRICT ALLOCATIONS:

Currently Crowthorne has 2 Polling District codes "CN" and "CS". The "one ward" proposal eliminates "CS" which is subsumed into "CN".

However, as the Buckler's Park development is completed and all properties (1,000 homes) sold by circa 2030, there are likely to be over 2,000 electors. Rather than using the Parish Hall, Heath Hill South for all polling, the ability to set up a Buckler's Park Polling Station has merit.

The generation of a "CB" Polling District allocation would facilitate voting in Buckler's Park. This designation is not another ward but another Polling District for administration purposes only. This results in two Polling District codes – "CB" and "CN" – within "a single ward"

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

No Change to current Parish Wards:

This option does not balance the Elector/Cllr ratios. In 2027, "CS" would have circa 500 Electors/Cllrs and "CN" circa 720 Electors/Cllrs. This option does not reflect the CGR aims.

Expansion of the Crowthorne South Ward:

To balance the Electors/Cllrs in "CS" to match those in "CN", roads such as Alcot Close, Lake End Way, Towers Drive and Greystoke Court could be added. This would have the effect of bringing the Electors/Cllr for both "CN" and "CS" to be similar.

However, there is little logic in doing this, since "CS" does not have a distinct character warranting the need to create a separate larger ward when compared with the rest of "CN".

Generation of two 5 Cllrs wards:

This is a further change to the "CS" expansion option above. If the Crowthorne area were split on a north-south divide (marked by the Old Wokingham Rd, High Street and Sandhurst Rd) the Electorate population is roughly 50/50. 5 Cllrs could then be allocated to each of the 2 wards created.

However, for the reasons given above, there is little logic in this approach since there is no compelling reason to create two 5 Cllr wards with very similar governance profiles.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

See Appendices 1, 2 3 - attached

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Administrative guidance from BFC

7 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The impact of the CPC recommendations, if accepted by the Community Governance Review, would ensure that the whole of Crowthorne electorate would be effectively governed and represented within a "single ward" by 10 Parish Councillors as it will be by 3 Borough Cllrs.

The inclusion of Derby Field, 15 homes south of Derby Field and Edgbarrow Cottage would require a small Boundary change for both the Parish and Borough.

8. CONSULTATION

No formal public consultation.

The Electorate have been well served over many decades by a "single ward" Crowthorne both at Parish and Borough levels. In fact, the "CS" designation has caused some confusion with the public at election times.

Bracknell Forest Council

Community Governance Review 2022

Stage 2 – Draft Recommendations for Consultation (4Jul22 – 11Sep22)

CGR Final Recommendations 11Dec22 for May2023 implementation

[Community governance review | Bracknell Forest Council \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](#)

Stage 1 - CROWTHORNE Observations:

Four submissions were submitted and considered.

These were received from Crowthorne Parish Council, Crowthorne Village Action Group, the Labour Party and a member of the public, who asked for their property, Edgbarrow Cottage, to be included in the Crowthorne Parish area as they looked towards Crowthorne for their community identity.

Crowthorne Parish Council submitted a detailed response to the consultation stating their preferred preference for a ten-councillor single ward covering the entirety of parish area. They were keen to incorporate the 'Cricket Ground/ Derby Field' currently in the Sandhurst Town Council area into Crowthorne as it was felt that any future development in that area would look towards Crowthorne Village for their community identity. This suggestion was also submitted by the Crowthorne Village Action Group (CVAG) and the Bracknell Labour Party who also suggested that some properties south of Derby Field should be included around Foresters Way. The Labour Party also submitted a three-ward proposal.

There was no support for the Crowthorne Parish Council submission for a single ward. The working group considered a large single ward to be administratively undesirable and noted that the cost of a by-election would be unnecessarily high.

The Labour Party's three-ward proposal was also considered. The preferred option was to create two parish wards: Crowthorne East and Crowthorne West represented by five councillors each with a reasonably similar councillor/elector ratio in each.

The proposal to move Derby Field from Sandhurst Town Council to Crowthorne was considered well evidenced and logical and would also give effect to the submission regarding Edgbarrow Cottage. This was previously identified as an area change requiring permission from the LG BCE as it would also necessitate a change in the borough boundary and implementation is subject to that approval.

Along with the changes to the southern boundary of Crowthorne Parish proposed around Derby Field and Edgbarrow Cottage, the working group determined that the current boundary separating Crowthorne Parish and Sandhurst Town councils was no longer easily identifiable and followed no obvious point of division. The working group proposes that a new boundary is established following a defined track. Similarly, the eastern boundary between Crowthorne Parish and Winkfield Parish is not currently well defined and the working group proposes that this is now moved to follow the A322 Bracknell Road. The area contained within is primarily the Crown Estate with no electors being impacted.

No representations were made to change the overall councillor number. The working group considered the councillor/elector ratio and decided that it was acceptable. No proposal for change to the numbers is proposed.

APPENDIX 1 continued

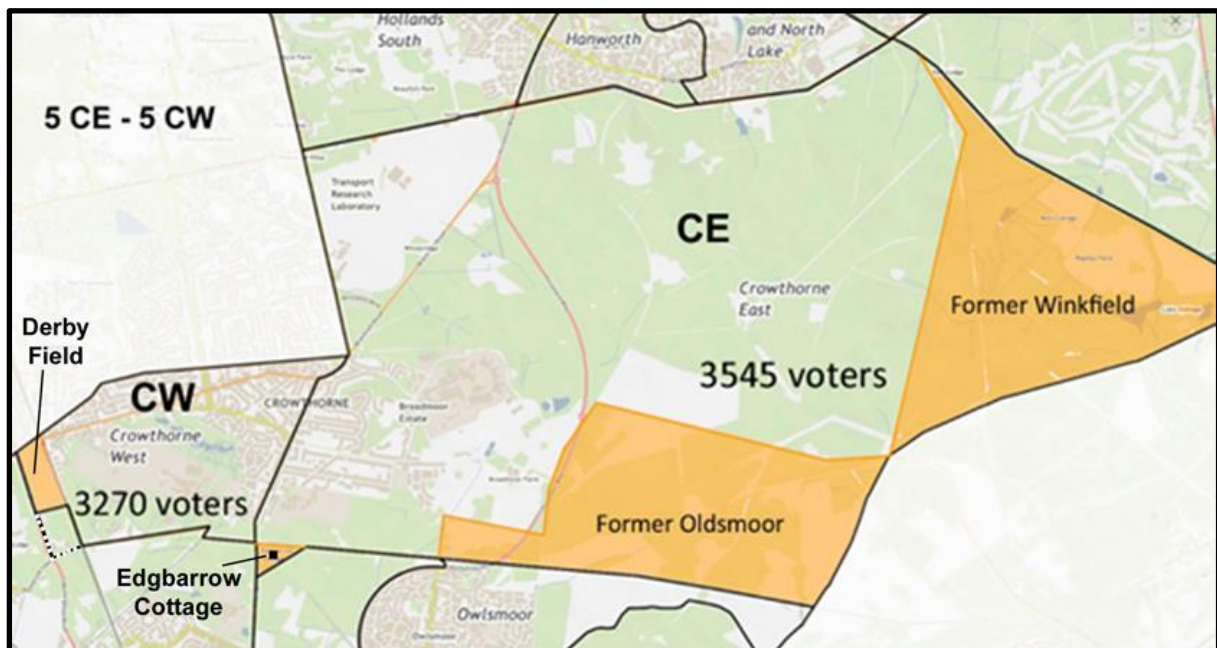
The Stage 2 – Draft CROWTHORNE proposal for consultation:

- a) to create two parish wards represented by five councillors each:
 - the existing Crowthorne South ward to be enlarged to encompass all properties west of Sandhurst Road/Crowthorne High Street and renamed Crowthorne West
 - the rest of Crowthorne Parish to be contained within a newly designated Crowthorne East ward

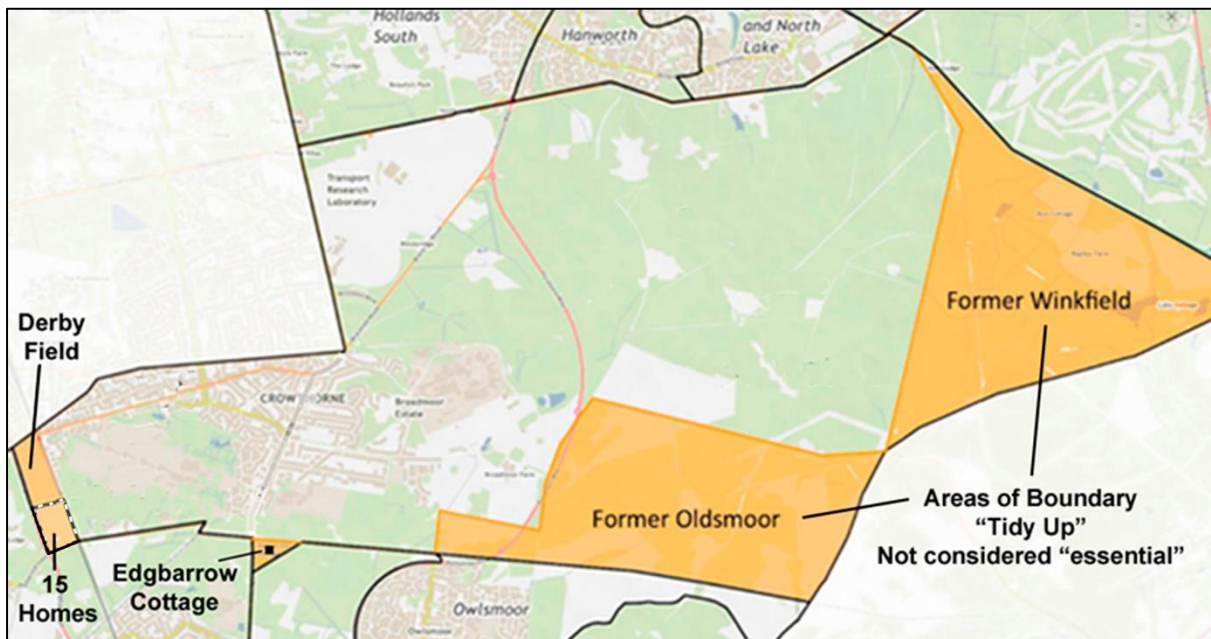
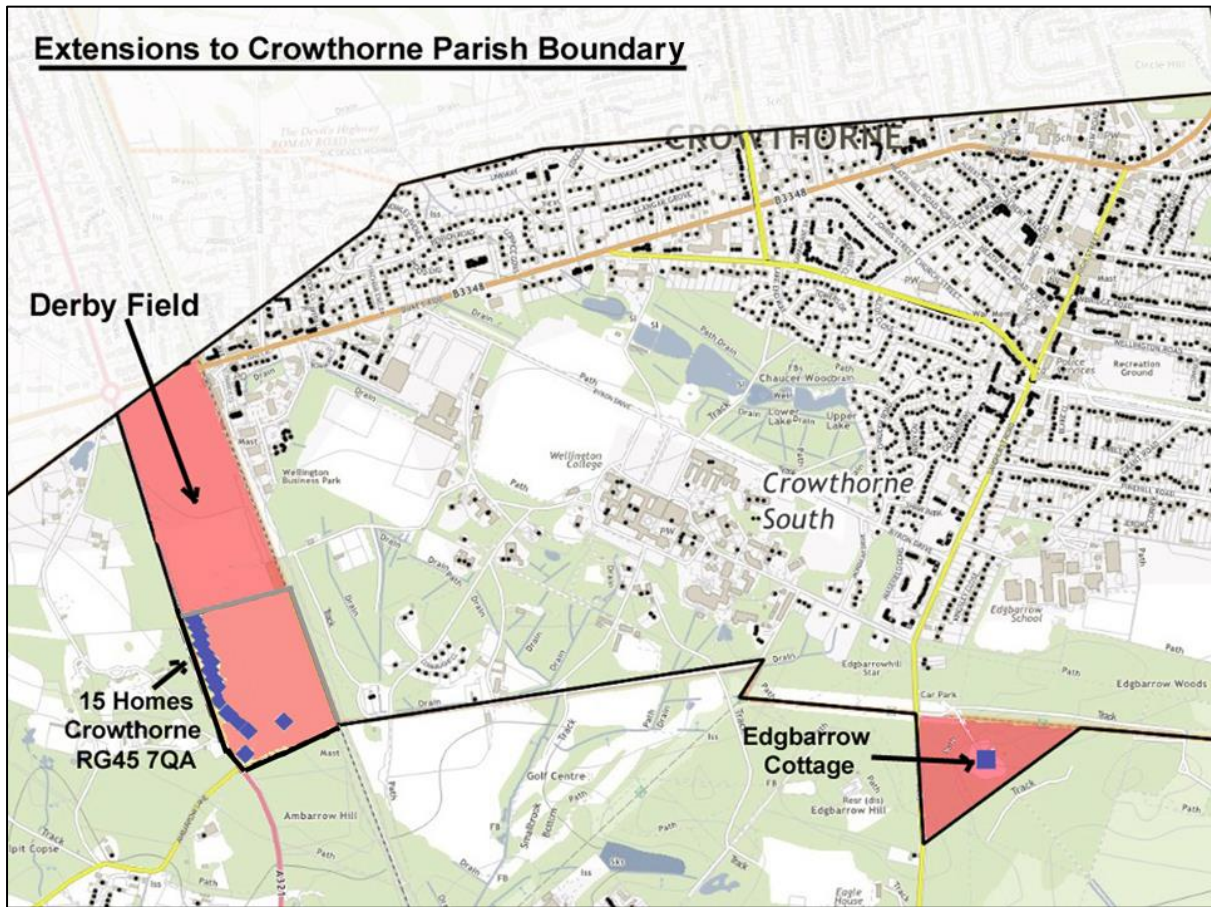
- b) To move the Cricket Ground/Derby Field into Crowthorne Parish Council from Sandhurst Town Council

- c) To move the external boundary to the south and east to incorporate Edgbarrow Cottage into Crowthorne Parish and to make minor external boundary changes where they interact with Sandhurst Town Council and Winkfield Parish Council to better define the separation between the parish areas

Parish ward	Councillor number	Councillor/ elector ratio
Crowthorne East	5	705 (3545 voters)
Crowthorne West	5	652 (3270 voters)



Crowthorne Parish Boundary Considerations:



Parish / Town Warding Projections

APPENDIX 3

2021 Cllr Allocations					2021			2027			Stage 2 BFC Recommendations	
Parish/ Town Area	Parish/ Town Ward	Polling District	Cllrs	Total Cllrs	Electorate Dec 2021	Current Elector/Cllr	Av. Elector/Cllr	Forecast 2027	Future Elector/Cllr	Future Av. Elector/Cllr	Cllrs	Total Cllrs
Binfield Parish	Binfield North	A	4	11	2,679	670	677	3056	764	733	4	11
	Binfield South	B	7		4,763	680		5010	716		7	
Bracknell Town	Birch Hill & North Lake	C	2	27	3,280	1640	1588	3640	1820	1791	2	28
	Bullbrook	D	3		4,176	1392		5054	1685		3	
	Crown Wood	E	2		2,901	1451		3196	1598		2	
	Easthampstead	F	2		3,666	1833		4037	2019		2	
	Garth	G	2		3,301	1651		3534	1767		2	
	Great Hollands North	H	2		2,984	1492		3378	1689		2	
	Great Hollands South	I	2		3,722	1861		4105	2053		2	
	Hanworth	J	2		3,150	1575		3490	1745		2	
	Harmans Water	K	2		3,459	1730		3804	1902		2	
	Jennett's Park	L	2		2,396	1198		2591	1296		2	
Priestwood	M	2	3,037	1519	3105	1553	2					
Town Centre & The Parks	N	2	3,999	2000	5412	2706	3					
Wildridings	O	2	2,809	1405	3019	1510	2					
Crowthorne Parish	Crowthorne North	CN	8	10	4,595	574	550	5797	725	682	5	10
	Crowthorne South	CS	2		907	454		1018	509		5	
Sandhurst Town	Central Sandhurst	P	6	24	3,972	662	616	4329	722	683	6	24
	College Town	Q	6		3,366	561		3781	630		6	
	Little Sandhurst	R	5		3,400	680		3738	748		6	
	Owlsmoor	S	7		4,049	578		4535	648		6	
Warfield Parish	Garth North	T	1	13	140	140	679	126	126	960	0	15
	Quelm	U	2		1,563	782		1709	855		2	
	St Michaels	V	2		1,672	836		4680	2340		5	
	Warfield East	W	1		322	322		353	353		2	
	Warfield Park	X	1		697	697		889	889		0	
Whitegrove	Y	6	4,435	739	4724	787	6					
Winkfield Parish	Ascot Priory	Z	1	18	447	447	637	443	443	699	6	18
	Forest Park	AA	5		2,829	566		3221	644		5	
	Martins Heron & Warren	AB	2		1,389	695		1524	762		2	
	North Ascot	AC	5		3,877	775		4205	841		0	
	Winkfield & Cranbourne	AD	5		2,915	583		3184	637		5	
			Total Cllrs	103							Total Cllrs	106

OBSERVATIONS:

- # 2027 Electors:** Crowthorne Forecast - includes 1200 Bucklers Park (currently ~500) & 300 Broadmoor (currently zero) and none for the Derby Field
In May 2023 the Electoral numbers in CN or CE will be 1000 voters less
- # CPC Cllrs:** To remain at 10 - judging by other Parish/Town Councils (apart from BTC)
- # Ward Creation:** CPC Cllrs are needed represent a Ward reflecting unique local identities and governance
Crowthorne has no significant differences throughout the whole area, therefore not necessarily requiring to be warded.

				2027			
Parish Area	Parish Ward	Postal District	Cllrs	Electorate	Electo/Cllr		
Crowthorne Revert to a Single Ward 10 CN	Crowthorne North	Ward 1	10	1200	682	Crowthorne Parish Council stated position in May 2022	
				5615			
				6815			
Crowthorne 2 Wards 5CE/5CW	Crowthorne East	Ward 1	5	1200	709	STAGE 2 DRAFT Not preferred by Crowthorne Parish Council	
				2345			
	Crowthorne West	Ward 2		3270			654

Impact of Warding:

Parish Area	Ward	Cllrs	Electorate
Bracknell Town	Bullbrook	3	5054
	Town & Parks	3	5412
Binfield Parish	Binfield South	7	5010

- ~ At Parish (and Borough) elections there will be no impact on Elections costs
- ~ At a Borough by-election Parish warding is not relevant to costs
- ~ At a Parish by-election Parish warding has an effect on costs but viewed not significant enough to promote 2 wards when compared with Bullbrook, Town Centre & Parks or Binfield South electoral numbers

Postal District: Postal District Code for Bucklers Park "CB" (not Ward) is suggested to allow for a "local" polling station when numbers increase.
Currently Bucklers Park has circa 500 electors, which makes a BP polling station unviable.
When Bucklers Park is fully developed and sold (circa 2030 estimate) the "CB" Polling Station (The HUB) could be used.