

Personal Response to Community Governance Review Consultation : Recommendation 47

By Councillor David Northam, Wey Valley Ward, Weymouth Town Council.

I OPPOSE this recommendation on the following basis.

This proposal ignores the submission previously made by Weymouth Town Council for 14 wards and 30 councillors.

Recommendation 47 does not recognise growth of Weymouth since the Town Boundary was set in 1933. There are a further 4000 homes planned within and adjacent to Weymouth over the next 17 years.

Recommendation 47 reduces the number of councillors from 29 to 24 increasing the number of residents/electors each councillor serves and decreasing the likelihood of smaller communities electing a councillor reflecting their identity. Weymouth already has the highest number of electors per councillor in Dorset by a factor of nearly 3. Thus the number of councillors needs to be increased to reflect this growth otherwise obtaining candidates for councillors will become more difficult as the number of residents to be covered by each councillor increase.

Recommendation 47 reduces the number of wards from 12 to 8. This is rejected on the following bases.

- a) The 7 DC ward boundaries have only been in place since 1998 and are not based around the traditional communities which are distinct and diverse.
- b) The proposed new ward to the SW of Weymouth is not a single community but is the growth of 3 distinct communities. The ward boundaries should be extended to include the additional people with their local community land w of Westham North with Southill and the growth into the Granby and at Littlesea with Westham West).
- c) There are significant number of houses already overflowing the Town Boundary at Broadway east of the railway line and north of Littlemoor Road and there are a further 600 homes planned for land N of Littlemoor. This should be recognised by extending the Upwey & Broadway ward up to the Relief Road and Littlemoor to the north.
- d) Creating a new ward for Nottingham with only 170 electors is not democratically equitable – it would be better for this area to be linked with the adjacent Wey Valley ward.
- e) Weymouth has a tradition of 2 and 3 person wards. Creating 6 person superwards wards increases the number of electors each councillor represents. This will make elections and by-elections more onerous. This will discourage councillors from standing. Wards should preferably be for 2 councillors and if not possible 3 councillors.
- f) Lumping Littlemoor and Preston & Sutton Poyntz into a superward does not reflect the fact that these are very different and distinct communities. Littlemoor is largely ex-council housing with the lowest scores on the Index of Multiple Deprivation while Preston and Sutton Poyntz is almost entirely owner-occupied dwellings with some of the highest in Dorset. Combining these two areas into a superward will disenfranchise the Littlemoor Community who have a lower level of turnout. I would suggest this superward is divided into 3 parts; 1) Littlemoor including the new developments, 2) Preston & Sutton Poynt the area along Coombe Valley Road and the housing north and to south adjacent to the Preston Road from Chalbury Corner to eastern bounds of Weymouth, and 3) Wyke Oliver, Overcombe and Bowleaze which is the land south of 1) and 2).

Continued over for an Alternative Proposal.

Alternative Proposal

I support Weymouth Town Council's Option 1 proposal for 30 councillors across 14 wards, which was re-endorsed on 11th May 2022, with the following personal amendments relating to the northern wards with which I am most familiar including my own ward Wey Valley.

I proposes to modify the boundary of the WTC recommended Option1 wards to provide 2 councillor wards and reflect existing community boundaries and geography see map (note these boundaries are based on the existing Weymouth Town Wards boundaries but modified to reflect settlement growth).

1. Upwey, Broadwey and Nottingham to cover Upwey & Broadwey – ie Cover the current Upwey & Broadwey TC boundary but extend it to include the land and housing east of the Railway line and west of the Relief Road (1a) and the land and housing north of the eastern part of Nottingham Lane (1c) and north of Wey Valley School (1b).
2. Wey Valley – Cover the current Wey Valley TC boundary ie to include Nottingham and if necessary for elector equality the land and housing to the north of Waverley Road and properties on its southside, and also the housing to the north of Monmouth Avenue, and properties on its southside (2a). Noting the loss of 1b and 1c.
3. Littlemoor – keep the current TC boundary but add in the new development to the north of Littlemoor Road (and east of the Relief Road) also extend eastwards to take in the new developments S of Littlemoor Road (ie Gentian Way 3a).

Divide Preston ward into two parts:

4. Preston & Sutton Poyntz the area along Coombe Valley Road and the housing north and of the Preston Road (from Chalbury Corner to eastern bounds of Weymouth) and Church Road, Ferrybridge and Halstock Close, and, the addition of the houses on the northern end of Plaisters Lane (4a)
5. Overcombe and Bowleaze which is the land south of 3) and 4).

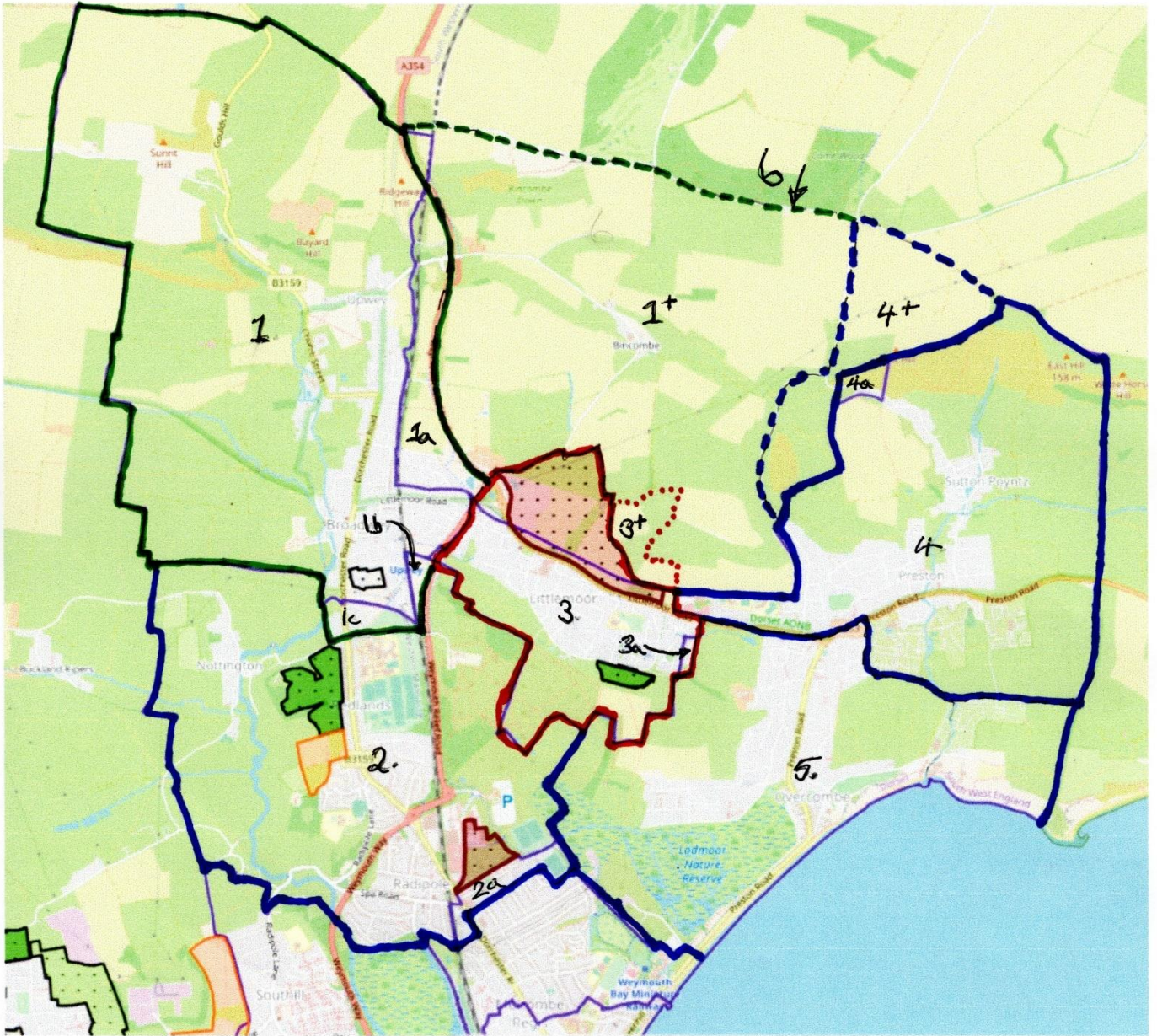
From a geographic basis creating a northern boundary of Weymouth along the South Dorset Ridgeway makes sense and shares farm land and characteristics with Upwey and Sutton Poyntz.

6. This would be bounded by the Came Down road and its continuation west over the bridge to Upwey and East to South Down Barn and East Hill. This would result in Bincombe being part of Weymouth and from a character and identity perspective this would be best incorporated into a new 1+, named Upwey, Broadwey and Bincombe ward, with 4+ being an extension of Preston & Sutton Poyntz ward up to Combe Valley Road and 3+ Littlemoor ward extending to include Bincombe Dairy.

I accept that there may need to be some slight adjustments to ensure equity of elector representation.

1. Upwey & Broadwey
2. Wey Valley
3. Littlemoor
4. Preston & Sutton Poyntz
5. Overcombe & Barseage

Alternative Proposal for Council
Weymouth Town Council
northern wards.



6. Geographic extension of Weymouth's northern boundary
up to South Dorset Ridgeway

Mr David Northam, 15/5/2022