

Dorset Community Governance Review – submission from Weymouth Town Council.

Formally agreed at Full Council on 20 October 2021 following significant internal consultation with Councillors.

In preparing the below proposal, Weymouth Town Council has followed the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, “Guidance on Community Governance Reviews” in particular sections 77-85 & 159-169.

This document covers:

- The main Parish boundary
- Internal warding arrangements
 - Numbers of Councillors
 - Ward names

Parish Boundary

Weymouth Town Council has met with our neighbours, and have discussed our external boundaries and historical anomalies. Please see attached document “**WTC Discussion with Neighbours.docx**”

Considerations

- Historical Anomalies

There are several estates which have been built in the last 50 years, which straddle the boundary line between Weymouth and our neighbours. These should be addressed under section 84 of the LGBCE guidance.

Nightingale Drive:



Cobham Drive:



Littlesea Estate:



- Proposed developments which will cause Anomalies in the near future

Littlemoor Urban Expansion:



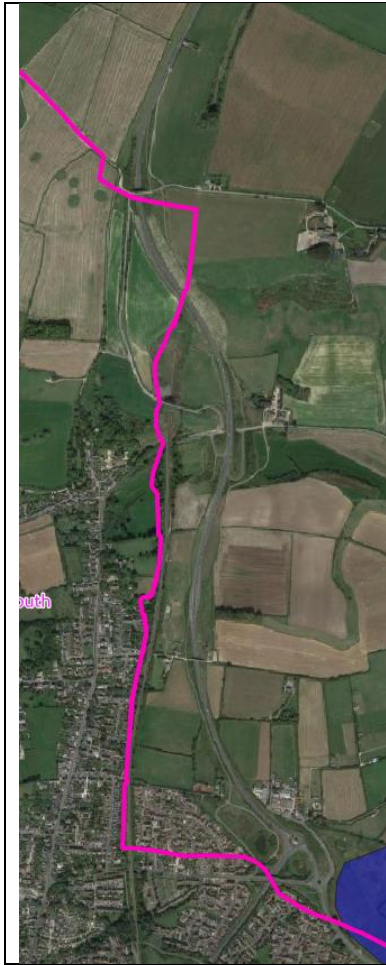
Southhill West & Football Ground:



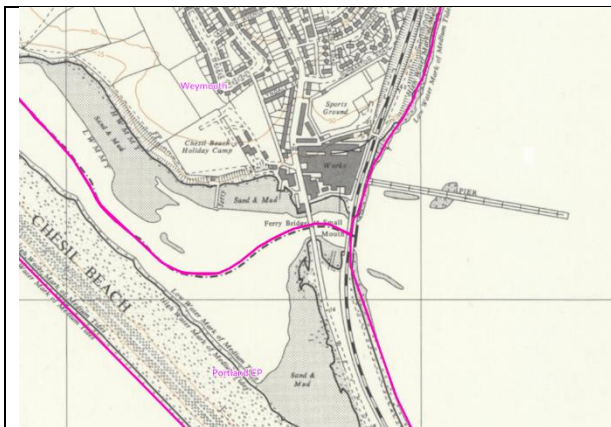
Value House Site:



- Adopting Clear geographical features to form boundaries to address section 83 of the LGBCE guidance.



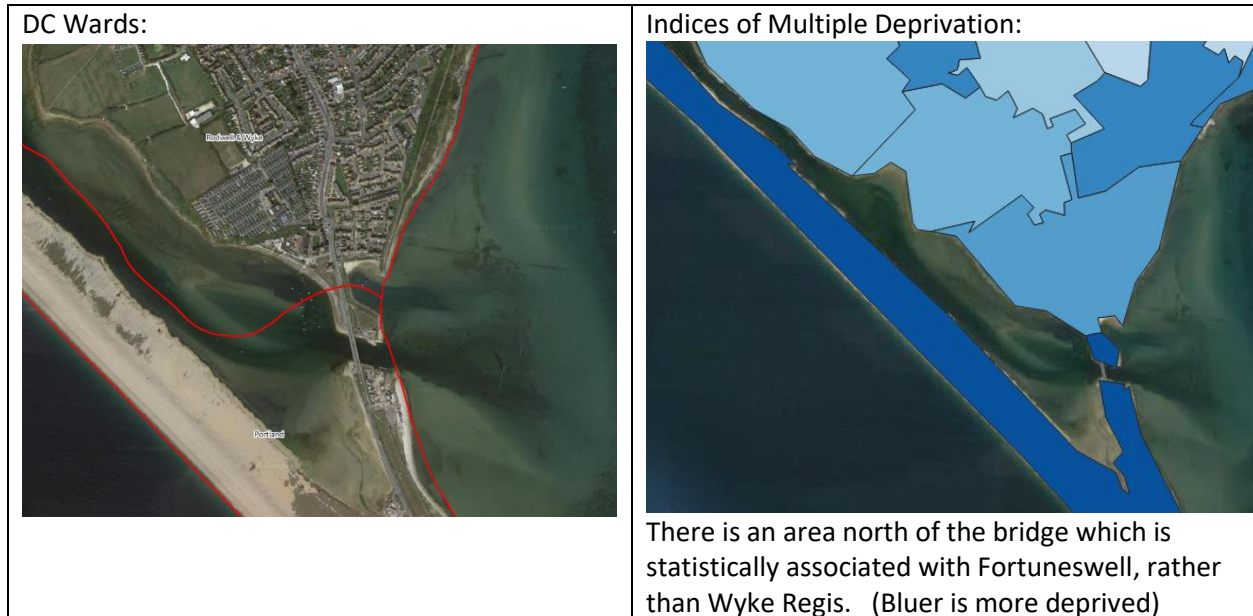
The boundary between Weymouth and Winterborne Farringdon follows the extent of Railway (possible the Western limit of land owned by the railway?) however the 2010 relief road is now a much more obvious boundary line.



1963 OS map



The boundary between Weymouth and Portland is at the centre point of the old road/rail bridges pre-1985. This boundary is now anomalous as the bridge has moved approx. 180m south of the old bridge. Weymouth Town Council proposes that the boundary moves to a horizontal line through the centre point of the new bridge. This boundary, whilst not affecting any residential properties, does cascade up to higher authority boundaries and government statistics:



Correcting abnormalities such as this, will ensure that Weymouth is accurately represented both democratically and statistically.

- Create a sensible "Building Blocks" for upper-level boundaries. This is to address section 85 of the LGBCE guidance.

We want our Unitary and Parliamentary wards to represent Weymouth as accurately as possible, the current Town/Ward boundaries are significantly out of date, and getting strong representation for the continuous urban area, within what is a mostly rural county:



Red – Dorset Council Wards

Green – Parliamentary Constituencies

Blue – Proposed development

The LGCBE guidance is that upper boundaries will be built from lower boundaries, so we want our boundaries as community grounded as possible.

- Creating a buffer/no-mans-land between Weymouth and Chickerell. To address section 83 of the LGCBE guidance.

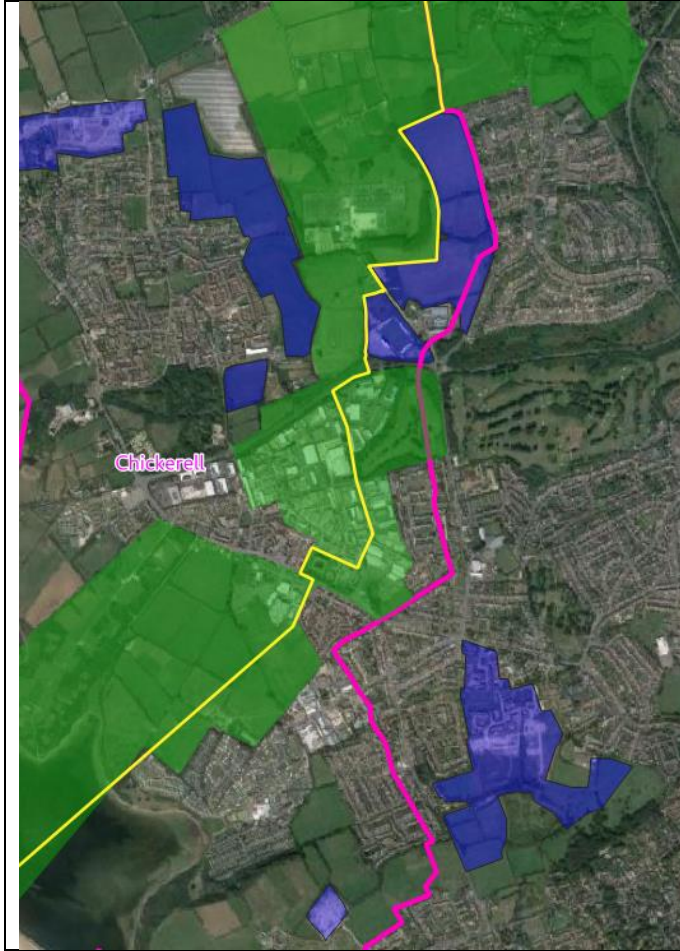


Pink – the current boundary, which is the same as 1963 (and earlier)

In the published 1963 Ordnance Survey Map, the gap between Weymouth and Chickerell is obvious.

In 1963, Weymouth is butting up to the border line in several places (which have not moved in the last 60 years) In the case of the Littlesea Estate, has just starting to expand over the boundary.

The buffer between Weymouth and Chickerell was rural green belt, including the WWII Air Field.



Pink – existing boundary between Weymouth and Chickerell

Blue – developments with planning permission

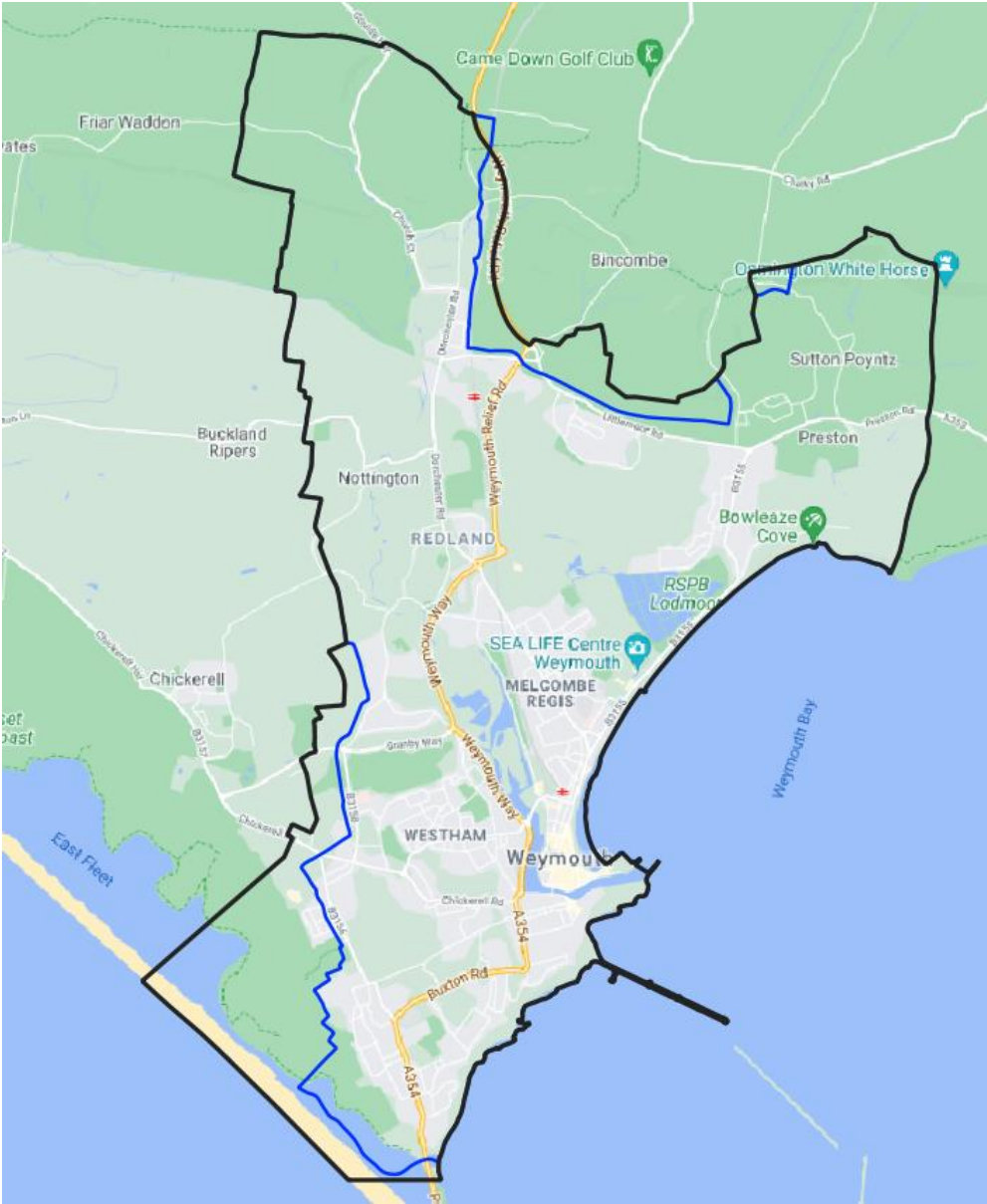
Green – the existing buffer between Weymouth and Chickerell. Whilst this is no longer undeveloped, this area is not residential. From North to South this buffer is formed by;

- National Grid Power Station,
- Wessex Golf Centre,
- Granby Industrial Estate,
- Budmouth College,
- Chickerell Range

This buffer is the only remaining “gap” between the two towns.

Yellow - proposed boundary through buffer between towns.

To achieve all of the above; Weymouth Town Council proposes the below external boundary for the Civic Parish of Weymouth:



Black – proposed town boundary

Blue – existing town boundary

Internal Warding Arrangements

Weymouth Town Council considered the number of Councillors of other towns in Dorset:

Town	Population / Households	Number of wards	Number of Councillors	Population / Councillor Households / Councillor
Dorchester	21,400 8,449	5 wards	1 x 3, 3 x 4, 1 x 5	1,070 422
Portland	13,300 5,175	3 Wards	1 x 4, 2 x 5	950 370
Swanage	9,800 4,504	2 wards	2 x 6	816 375
Bridport	14,700 6,713	2 wards	2 x 9	816 372
Weymouth	53,200 23,360	12 wards	7 x 2 5 x 3	1,830 805

Weymouth Town Council has considered the size of the town, and how many Councillors are needed for efficient administration of the Town Council. It is felt that the current number of Councillors is about appropriate for the following reasons:

- Unlike a Borough or Unitary Council, Parish Councillors get involved with council projects and strategy. Members volunteer on Working Groups and Project Boards. We have a number of work streams where we do not currently have enough Councillors to fill panels.
- Unlike Borough or Unitary Councillors, Parish Councillors do not get administrative support with ward work.
- The closest matching Parish we can find, is Weston-Super-Mare, which has 31 Councilors and provides a similar set of services to Weymouth Town Council. Weston-Super-Mare has approximately 40% more residents that Weymouth has now, but Weymouth is growing, and the service provision is similar, despite the difference in population.

Members of Weymouth Town Council feel strongly that wards of 2 or 3 Councillors provide optimal representation for the following reasons:

- Reflecting the distinct communities within Weymouth. Councillors can focus on a smaller area, and the specific issues in that area.

- Avoid single member wards where a Councillor could be sick, take parental leave, resign or just be lazy an entire term – any of these scenarios would leave the residents of a single-member ward unrepresented.
- 2s or 3s encourages Councillors to work together, rather than being isolated. Provides support for new Councillors, and Councillors that might have jobs or family life.
- Avoid having town wards which are too big (a 6-7 member ward in Weymouth would probably have the same number of electors as the whole of Portland Town or Bridport Town.) This could lead to a situation where smaller communities are forgotten and lazy Councillors could hide behind the others.
- Avoids making the role of Councillor so arduous that either Town Councillors need paid administrative support for ward work, or the roll of Town Councillor is only open to retired people that have the free time to do it.
- By-elections are cheaper.

In addition, Weymouth Town Council has sought to propose warding which achieves:

- Good Electoral Quality (an even number of electors per Councillor across the whole town)
- Local Councillors for each community of Weymouth
- Accommodate currently proposed housing developments in Weymouth, so the warding is good for the rest of the 2020s.

Weymouth Town council considered the other warding schemes which were rejected on the following grounds:

- Neither scheme includes all residents of Weymouth - there are missing parts of the proposed new Weymouth Town area.
- The existing WTC wards have poor electoral quality
- Grouping all the “leftovers” together to form a single new ward, would result in one (or more) non-continuous ward, with no sense of community or single identity.

The following proposal has been prepared using electoral role counts supplied by Dorset Council for the proposed Weymouth Town Council area, with predictions for new electors for significant developments which either already have approved planning permission or are in the Dorset Local Plan. Ward lines have been agreed along natural community lines and reflect the unique and separate feel of each area. Additional information for each ward boundary is available on request.

30 Councillors in 14 Wards

See attached maps. This increase by 1 Councillor allowances (£1,000), would be approximately £0.055 (6p) per year for each tax paying household (based on Band D equivalents)

This proposal leads to each Councillor representing approximately 1575 electors each – a very similar level to now, but still more than any other town in Dorset.

	Number of Seats	Number of Electors (2030 est)	Electors/Seat	Var to average
Central	2	3190	1595	+19
Greenhill	2	3310	1655	+79
Lanehouse & Westham West	2	3014	1507	-68
Littlemoor	3	4962	1654	+78
Melcombe Regis	2	3354	1677	+101
Broadwey, Nottingham & Upwey	2	3452	1726	+131
Preston & Sutton Poyntz	3	4395	1465	-110
Rodwell	2	3118	1559	-16
Southill & Radipole Village	2	3105	1552	-23
Westham North	2	3145	1572	-3
Westham East	2	3053	1526	-49
Wey Valley	2	3004	1502	-73
Wyke Regis East	2	3119	1559	-16
Wyke Regis West	2	3068	1534	-41