

**WTC response to the Dorset Council Community Governance Review (CGR)  
13 May 2022.**

**On Councillor Numbers:**

NALC Circular 1126/1988 is frequently quoted as the guide for the number of councillors for a parish council. This guidance was published in 1988 (34 years ago) when parish councils were a very much simpler beast. The 1988 guidance suggests that the practical maximum should be 25. The NALC guidance only gets as far as “above 23,000 electors - 25 councillors”, which is only half of Weymouth.

In the 2010s the “Super Parish” was born out of the creation of Unitaries. These “Super Parishes” are now undertaking some borough-like services and can control multi-million pound budgets. The NALC guidance is simply from a different time, and does not reflect the scale, range of services, or budget of a town like Weymouth.

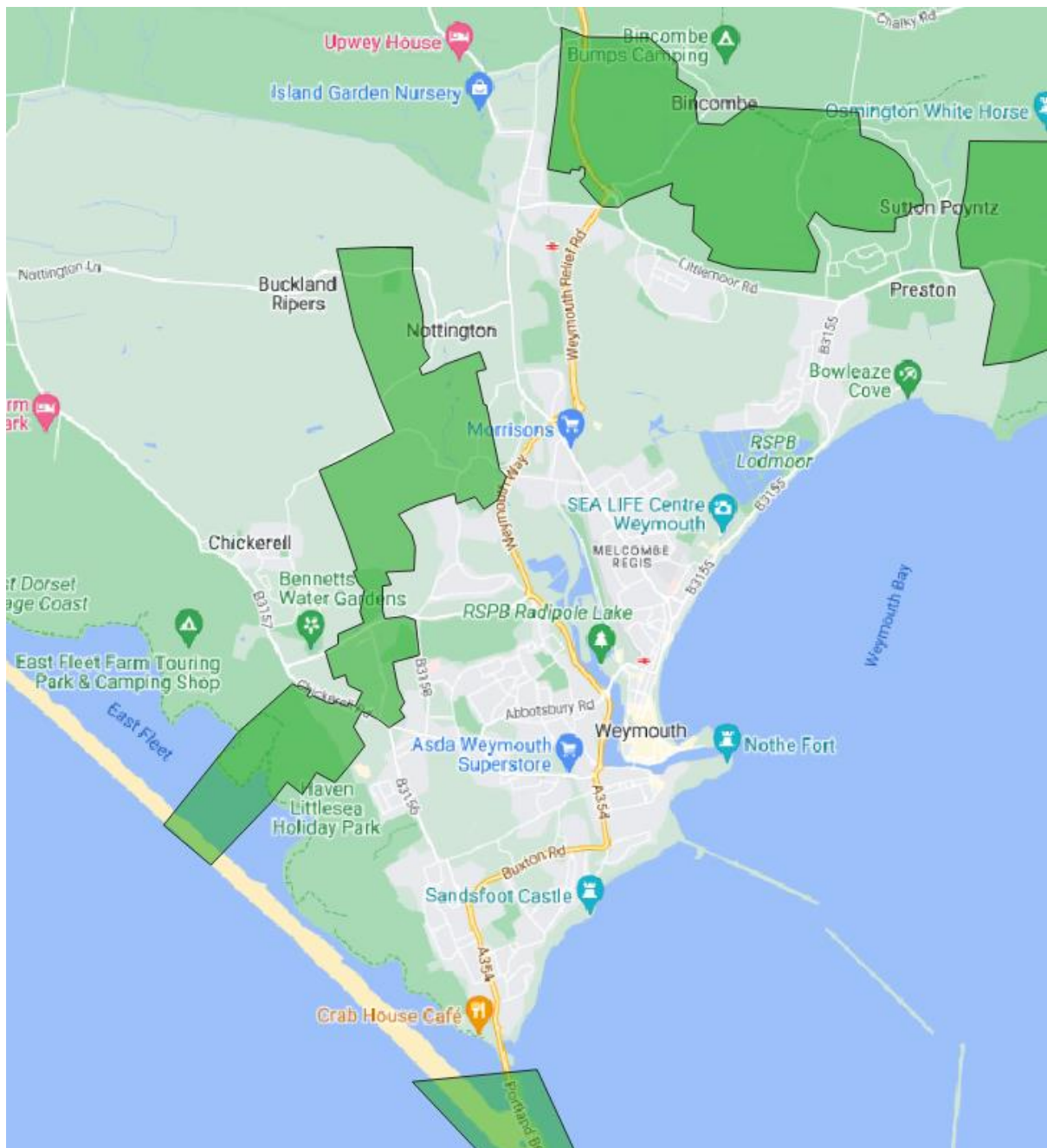
Other Super Parishes have numbers of Councillors similar to Weymouth, which would indicate our total number (29) is about right:

	Councillors	Population	Budget	People/ Councillor	Scrutiny £1000/cllr
Weymouth	29	53,046	£4,120,270	1,829	142
Chippenham	24	45,337	£3,582,522	1,889	149
Weston Super-Mare	31	76,143	£2,986,522	2,456	142
Leighton-Linslade	21	37,469	£2,691,916	1,784	128
Aylesbury	25	58,740	£2,383,147	2,350	95
Keighley	30	56,348	£777,824	1,878	26
Bracknell	27	84,469	£2,501,000	3,128	93

**On Outer Boundaries:**

DC’s recommendation notes that the anomalies on the South/West side of Weymouth need fixing, and that this wasn’t possible in the last 50 years because that strip was in West Dorset. The same is true for the anomalies to the north of Weymouth, which were also formerly in West Dorset, so these should be fixed too.

The guidance for CGRs states that when determining communities, you should have an unpopulated buffer or no-mans-land between communities. The DC recommendation does this for Chickerell (using the Granby Industrial estate) but fails to find (the much more obvious) unpopulated buffer between Weymouth and Bincombe.



Buffer between Weymouth and neighbouring communities. Includes proposed development at Southill, Nottingham and Littlemoor.

DC suggests that the northern border could be considered as part of the next review into DC wards. The LGBCE guidance on Principle Authority Boundary Reviews (PABR) states: 5.23 Under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 Act, local authorities have the power to conduct and implement community governance reviews for the creation, abolition and alteration of parish areas. They may also make changes to parish electoral arrangements. Subject to certain conditions, local people, by raising a petition, can require that their local authority carries out a community governance review. **Local authorities should not be conducting community governance reviews for parishes which may be affected by a PABR at the same time**, especially in the case of a PABR conducted at their request.

So the LGCBE strongly advises against reviewing both sets of boundaries at the same time.

### On Internal Warding:

The LGCBE technical guidance for Proposing New Wards for a review of Principal Council boundaries, (that's DC's wards):

Parishes - In areas where parishes exist, the parish boundaries often represent the extent of a community. In fact, the Commission often uses parishes as the building blocks of wards and electoral divisions.

Cllr Luke Wakeling attended a recent meeting with the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) Commissioner on the Parliamentary Constituencies who confirmed that they use the Unitary Wards as the building-blocks of constituencies. So, the UK boundaries are built from the bottom up, each tier using the tier below as building-blocks. Therefore it is important that WTC wards are based on local communities, tied to the geography and are easily identifiable; which can then be used as building-blocks for the upper boundaries.

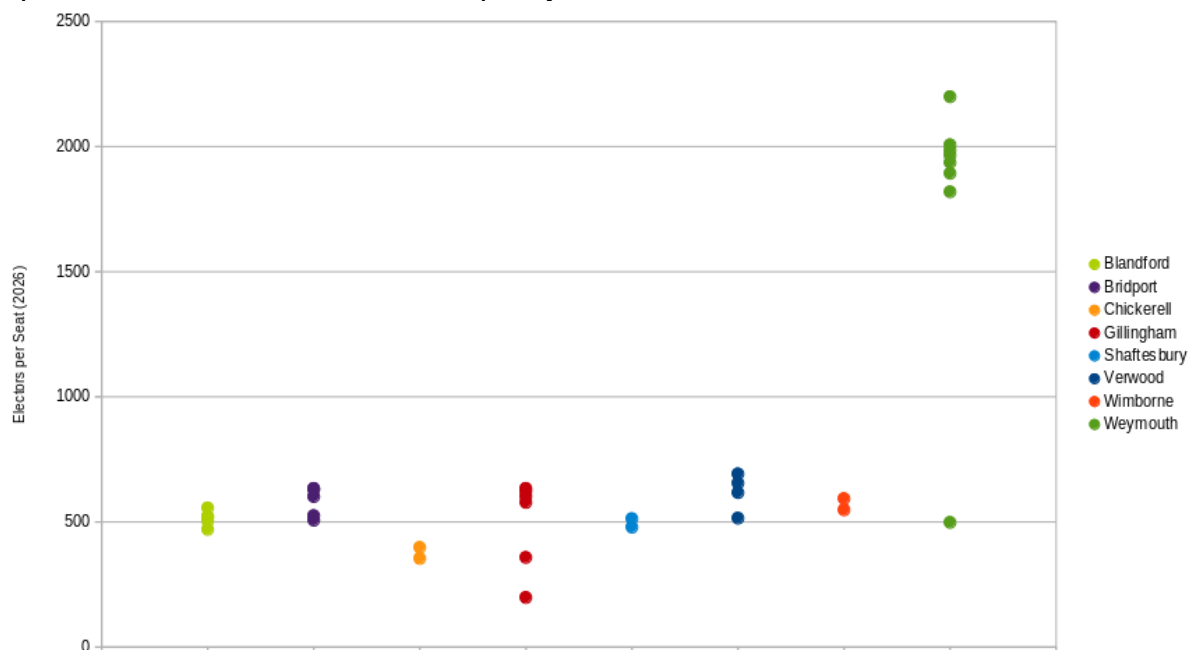
Using the upper boundaries as constraint on the lowest boundaries in the CGR, seems a circular argument. It seems sensible to align the lowest boundaries to clearly identifiable communities and then allow those to form the building-blocks for improved upper boundaries in the future.

There is the question of who is inconvenienced by non-coterminous boundaries?

The vast majority of residents don't know where the ward boundaries are. Dorset Council administrates the area, and elections are administered by computer, which spits out an elector-list on demand. The only people who really probably know the boundaries, and where they don't quite overlap are Councillors!

### On Electoral Equality:

WTC was advised that electoral equality was most important - the notion that each vote in the area counts the same. The proposals by DC show the difference in levels of representation and the electoral equality across different towns:



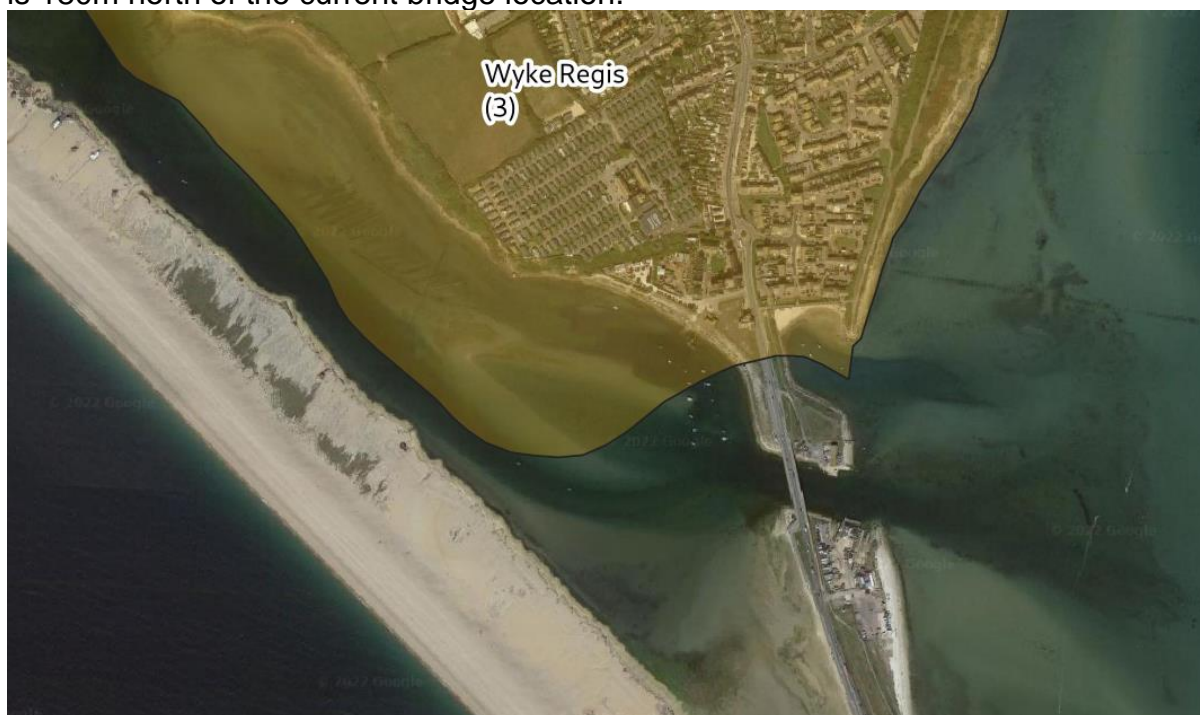
Whilst most of the DC proposals for towns have representation in the 400-600 Electors per seat range, the DC proposal for Weymouth has a core of seats in the 1800-2000 range, with outliers at 500 and 2200.

Not only is the level of representation proposed very low for Weymouth, these two outlying seats (Nottingham 75% below and “Chickerell” 10% over) would result in the residents in those wards having significantly too much/little representation compared to the other wards.

**Anomalies:**

The anomalies on our western border with Chickerell have already been acknowledged, and corrected in Dorset Council’s draft proposal.

The Weymouth-Portland border is at Small Mouth Cove, the bridge across Small Mouth Cove was demolished and replaced with the new bridge 180m south in 1985. Whilst this doesn’t affect a single property, it’s somewhat confusing for people, as the sign that says “Welcome to Portland” is 180m north of the current bridge location.



Existing anomalous Weymouth-Portland border aligned to bridge demolished in 1985.

On our northern border, there are 10 properties at the top of Plaisters Lane in Sutton Poyntz, which are clearly part of Sutton Poyntz, but are anomalously on the other side of the boundary:



There are six properties (out of 51 properties) in the Woodpeckers in Littlemoor that have been historically built over the boundary:



The 500 dwelling expansion at Littlemoor is currently planned to straddle the line. Winterbourne Farrington Parish Council have indicated they do not feel in a position to offer services to this large urban expansion.

Moving the line this year, will allow this to be constructed within the town of Weymouth, avoiding a future anomaly. If it's built as the line currently lies, the new residents will use the services of the town, but are extremely unlikely to have a connection to Bincombe, or the four other villages north of the ridgeway. Despite the finances not being a consideration of the CGR, the new residents may feel aggrieved if some years after they move-in, they are told they are moving to a different parish and will have to pay a different amount - this can be avoided by correcting the line now.



Littlemoor  
(2)

**The problems aligning to Unitary Wards:**

There are several anomalies with the Unitary wards. WTC would prefer to propose improved Town Wards, which would contribute to improved Unitary Wards at the next revision:



Goldcroft Road is separated from Westham by the boundaries. It has little connection to Radipole.





Greenhill and Melcombe Avenue has more in common with Lodmoor and Dorchester Road (in Radipole Ward, north west) than it does with the town centre (Melcombe Regis Ward, south west)



Chickerell Road & Bradford Road are in Rodwell and Wyke, despite having very little connection to these areas, and the biggest hill in Weymouth being between them. Although The Marsh playing fields appears to be a natural break in the town, it's more of a community centre than a break.

**Proposal.**

Taking all of the above into consideration. WTC proposes the following two options.

Proposal WTC 1:

This has been previously submitted by WTC as our first submission. See attachment 1.

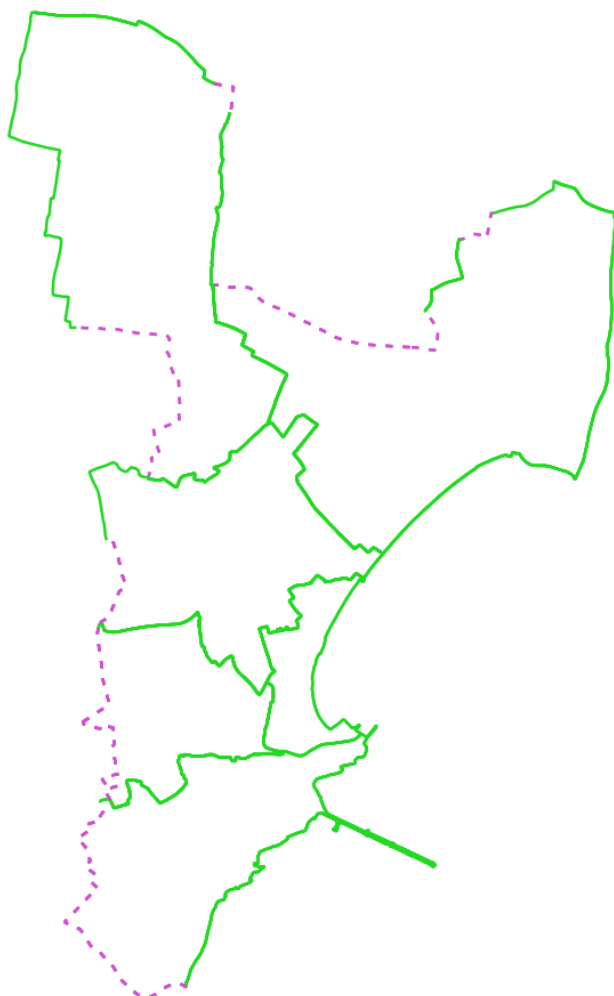
<b>Electors 2026</b>	<b>Seats</b>	<b>E/Seat</b>	<b>Var to avg</b>	<b>Name</b>
3296	2	1648	86	Broadway, Nottingham & Upwey
3173	2	1586	24	Lanehouse & Westham West
4801	3	1600	38	Littlemoor
3310	2	1655	93	Lodmoor
3354	2	1677	115	Melcombe Regis
4395	3	1465	-96	Preston & Sutton Poyntz
3031	2	1515	-46	Pye Hill
3128	2	1565	2	Rodwell
3007	2	1503	-58	Southill & Radipole Village
3061	2	1530	-31	Westham East
3136	2	1565	6	Westham North
3004	2	1502	-59	Wey Valley
3119	2	1559	-2	Wyke Regis East
3027	2	1513	-48	Wyke Regis West

Total Seats: 30

Average electors/seat: 1561

Proposal WTC 2:

This has been refactored to use as many of the DC ward lines as possible. See attachment 2.



To achieve this, we have taken the DC boundaries (above) and we have used the green parts as town ward boundaries, the pink dotted boundaries, we have amended to improve the community cohesion. The ward counts for this are:

Electors 2026	Seats	E/Seat	Var to avg	Name
4682	3	1560	-1	Broadway, Nottingham & Upwey
4813	3	1604	42	Littlemoor
3575	2	1787	255	Melcombe Regis
4388	3	1462	-99	Preston
5423	3	1807	245	Radipole
2605	2	1302	-259	Southill
3722	2	1861	299	Westham East
3379	2	1689	127	Westham North
3042	2	1521	-40	Westham West
2847	2	1423	-138	Weymouth East
3379	3	1126	-435	Weymouth West
4987	3	1662	100	Wyke Regis

Total Seats: 30

Average electors/seat: 1561

Comparing the electoral quality and relative levels of representation of the DC draft proposal, to WTC 1 and WTC2.

