Review of Electoral Divisions of the Isle of Wight Council 2007

**Isle of Wight Council
Submission**

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Acknowledgements

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Isle of Wight Parish and Town Councils and Management Committees

Isle of Wight NHS Primary Care Trust

Hampshire Constabulary

Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce

Local Structure and Council Governance Department, Department for Communities and Local Government

Isle of Wight Rural Community Council

Isle of Wight Rural Housing Enabler, Rural Community Council

Useful Notes:

For ease of reference throughout this document electoral divisions are referred to as electoral wards.

Executive Summary

1   Introduction

This submission, prepared by the Isle of Wight Council, presents the case for a reduction in the number of electoral wards from 48 to 40 single member wards.

Proposals are made in the light of national and local policy drivers and an analysis of the most effective way of meeting the challenge to deliver ***effective and efficient local administration, better community leadership***, and ***democratically-driven improvement in public service delivery***.

2   Background

In March 2004 the Boundary Committee, which is required to review electoral wards every 5 – 10 years, concluded that significant electoral imbalances existed in the Isle of Wight Council area. In May 2005 a new council was elected. The newly elected Council were committed to significantly reducing the number of ward councillors. A further electoral review, confirmed by the Boundary Committee, began on February 13th 2007 requiring submissions to be made by June 4th 2007. Any revised electoral arrangements are expected to be implemented for the 2009 Isle of Wight Council elections.

3   Content of Submission

The submission discusses the mechanisms that have been put in place by the council which are enabling a more efficient and effective method of governance. In particular, it discusses a commitment to partnership working, the ongoing empowerment of parishes and an ambitious mandate for [1]double devolution. The trend towards devolution and more effective partnership working will significantly diminish the need for the current number of ward councillors necessary to deliver Island wide democratic leadership, policy making, service improvement and the determination of regulatory issues.

The Council recognises, welcomes and supports the developing role of quality parish and town councils and believes that ever more local democratic leadership and service delivery can be delivered by this first tier of local government. There is no doubt that the successful delivery of the council's objectives will see greater community focus and involvement.

Electoral equality, in the sense of each elector having a vote of equal weight, is a fundamental democratic principle; however, unacceptably large variances in electoral representation have existed on the Island since 1995. This submission proposes revised electoral wards that effectively deal with those inequalities.

Detailed community mapping work has been undertaken to determine how wards can be formed which, not only reflect electoral equality, but also, show evidence of community identity and interests to support that grouping. Wherever possible, natural geographical boundaries have also been taken into account.

1   Double devolution: the process of devolving power not just to the Town Hall but beyond, to neighbourhoods and individual citizens.

There has been much support and co-operation from partner agencies and organisations to take an integrated approach to revising ward boundaries. Therefore, a holistic, cross-agency methodology has been taken to ensure that all aspects of community life have been taken into account when redrawing electoral wards.

Summary

It is against this background of a revitalised, more efficient council, a thriving and developing parish community and the commitment of the Island's key stakeholders to work in a more "joined-up" and "community-focused" way; that the proposals contained within this submission are made. The Isle of Wight Council commends the following recommendation to the Boundary Committee.

> ➢ 40 Single Member electoral wards as proposed by this submission and set out in Appendix 3

Part 1 Introduction

1 The Island – A Changing Profile

1.1 The Island is a predominantly rural community covering an area of 147 square miles, with a coastline of 57 miles. The largest towns are Newport, Cowes and East Cowes, Ryde, Sandown and Shanklin. Most of the Island's residents live in these towns. The main settlements in the west of the Island are Totland, Yarmouth and Freshwater with Ventnor being the largest town in the south.

1.2 The Island contains a wide variety of natural, rural and urban landscapes from rural villages to busy seaside resort towns. The Medina Valley, containing the River Medina, runs north from the centre of the Island. A ridge of chalk downs extends east from the Needles to Culver Cliff. Our natural assets include a magnificent coastline and a beautiful natural environment. The quality of the natural environment is reflected in the fact that UK or European designations protect 70% of the Island land mass and 50% of the Island falls within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

1.3 Being an island brings many challenges. With a resident population of approximately 140,000, which doubles in the peak holiday season, the Isle of Wight has the largest population of any offshore island in the UK. Significant population growth is projected, high visitor numbers and a growing retired population mean that we have escalating demands on our care, support and health services.

1.4 However, separation by sea also creates a number of benefits and opportunities. Being an Island inspires a high degree of pride and creates a strong local identity. People are rightly proud of their communities and want to contribute to community life. Key partnerships, which are progressively more community focused, are being established and are providing a more effective approach to the Island's, often unique, challenges and demands.

2   Island Governance - Past and Present

2.1   By the end of the nineteenth century the local government of the Isle of Wight was, in broad terms, brought into line with the rest of the country. After two years of being part of the then new Hampshire County Council, the Isle of Wight was granted its own County Council in 1890. When District Councils were founded under the 1894 act there were two boroughs: Newport and Ryde, and seven other district councils. In the local government reorganisation of 1933 the number of boroughs and districts was reduced to six. The six rural and urban borough councils and the County Council existed until 1974.

2.2   Following the 1974 reorganisation of local government the Isle of Wight was governed by:

- The Isle of Wight County Council
- South Wight Borough Council, covering South and West of the Island
- Medina Borough Council covering a smaller area to the North and East of the Island
- A number of parish and town councils in the area of the Island covered by the former South Wight Borough Council

2.3   This situation remained until 1995 when the amalgamation of the two borough councils and the Isle of Wight County Council saw the creation of the unitary Isle of Wight Council.

2.4   Since 1974 the Island has seen much growth in the number of parish and town councils, especially so in the north of the Island. Currently the Island has a network of 29 town and parish councils returning 257 local councillors. It is likely that parish councils will be established in the remaining unemparished areas of the Island by April 2008. These applications are currently pending approval by the Secretary of State following which the Island will become fully emparished.

2.5   Local elections in May 2005 brought a change in political control favouring continuance of a Leader and Cabinet model of governance, but with a stronger focus on executive powers and delegation. The current council has 36 Conservative, 4 Liberal Democrat, 2 Labour, 4 Independent members and 2 others.

3   Background to the Review

3.1   This submission, prepared by the Isle of Wight Council, presents the case for revised electoral arrangements for the Isle of Wight. The proposals are made in the light of national and local policy drivers and an analysis of the most effective way of meeting the challenge to deliver *effective and efficient local administration, better community leadership and democratically-driven improvement in public service delivery.*

3.2   Wherever possible a cross-agency approach has been adopted in gathering evidence, challenging conclusions and determining revised electoral wards that best reflect and satisfy the criteria set down by the Boundary Committee:

> ➢ The need to secure equality of representation
> ➢ The need to secure effective and convenient local government
> ➢ The need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities

3.3   The Council's governance model (Section 2) has enabled it to operate in a more focused and streamlined manner and, for the most part, this has been welcomed by the electorate. But the role and effectiveness of individual ward councillors and, in particular, back benchers, often appears unclear and there remains a public perception that the Island is now "over-governed".

3.4   Furthermore, the council is acutely aware of impending government guidelines around empowerment of local communities and place shaping; and the challenging financial climate in which local authorities currently work and have set themselves an ambitious mandate for double devolution.

The council's long term vision is to focus resources on delivering measurable outcomes and to build a progressive island built on economic success, high standards and aspirations and a better quality of life for all. The council's former Aim High agenda has been replaced by the One Island programme and this will drive the council's business planning framework and priority setting over the next three years.

3.5   One Island's cross-cutting themes of respect, pride and value will be applied to the council's corporate objectives:

> - **Drive the sustainable regeneration and development of the Island**
> - **Improve the health and well being of Island communities**
> - **Create safer and stronger communities**
> - **Improve outcomes for children and young people**
> - **High performing cost effective council**

3.6   Within the One Island programme are identified a number of projects to be delivered during 2007/8. Listed below are those projects which are inextricably linked in some way to the Boundary Review:

- Boundary Review
  To retain effective administration and good community identity at the same time as reducing the number of members and associated costs

- One Council

To ensure the council is fit for purpose to deliver major improvements

- Town and Parish Council empowerment

To increase the number of services delivered direct by quality town and parish councils

3.7   The council is committed to a collaborative approach to service delivery and continued improvements in efficiency. It will continue to monitor performance in all areas and seek to encourage more resourceful methods of working.

3.8   The council's Corporate Plan 2005 - 2007 includes, as a contributor to the objective to "run a high performing cost effective council"; a goal to rationalise the number of ward councillors – measured by a substantial reduction in members by May 2009.

3.9   In October 2006 the Isle of Wight Council passed a resolution to seek a substantial reduction in the number of ward councillors and request that a review of electoral wards be undertaken.

3.10   A further electoral review was subsequently confirmed, which will be undertaken by the Boundary Committee. The review began on February 13th 2007 with submissions to be made by June 4th 2007. The review will take place during 2008 and is expected to be implemented in April 2009.

1   Partnership, Emparishment and Empowerment

1.1   The Government White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities, recognises that communities want to be more involved in shaping the places where they live, to be given more choice and control over their lives and consulted and involved in the quality and running of services in their neighbourhoods. Its proposals aim to support local government to deliver more responsive services, extend choice and control, give individuals and community groups a real say over services and strengthen the role citizens and communities play in shaping the places they live. It talks of "revitalised local authorities" working with their partners to reshape public services around the citizens and communities that use them and sets out an agenda for change.

1.2   Local surveys support this view and confirm that, progressively, more Island communities want to be involved in the decisions that affect their daily lives. There is no doubt that the mechanism for successful delivery of the Council's objectives will see greater community focus, empowerment and increased partnership working.

1.3   The council has made a good start on developing more "joined-up" and innovative models of partnership working with a wide range of partners from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. They are developing a track record, of breaking down organisational boundaries in the delivery of public services on the basis of partnerships rather than single organisations. The council has well-developed partnership arrangements across the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. Some examples of this joined-up approach are:

- A well-established Island Strategic Partnership (ISP), within which the council plays a major role.

- Developing links with "Place shaping" pilot areas such as Brighton and Hove, to enable the Island to become an early beneficiary of this government initiative

- The signing of a "Memorandum of Understanding" in February 2007. The Isle of Wight Council and the Isle of Wight NHS Primary Healthcare Trust are committed to the integration of health and care services.

- A reformed Safer Communities Partnership and consolidation of council and police staff into a single team to drive forward our community safety agenda.

1.4   Re-established in 2006 after a period of review; the ISP provides a forum for partners across the spectrum of public, business and community interests to come together in the collective interests of the Island. Its main aim is to deliver a Community Strategy for the Island. The ISP has a number of work streams designed to deliver the Community Strategy (adopted in 2006 and due to be reviewed in 2008).

1.5   These include delivery of a Local Area Agreement (LAA), a proposed neighbourhood focus on two wards in Ryde, a collaborative procurement exercise and the development of a joint consultation and engagement strategy.

1.6   The LAA is a new type of contract between Government and local partners and in March 2006 the ISP and the council jointly signed the Island's first Local Area Agreement. This will form the short-term delivery plan for the Community Strategy. Over the 3 years to March 2009 the LAA sets out the local priorities for the Island which all partners will work towards.

1.7   The Island was also one of the first areas in the UK to develop 3-way integration between the Department of Work and Pensions, Housing Benefit and Social Services.

1.8   In December 2006, there were 29 town and parish councils on the Isle of Wight, returning 257 councillors. Petitions, supported by the Isle of Wight Council, seeking the creation of parish and town councils in the remaining unparished areas of the Island have been submitted to the Secretary of State. If approved, by May 2008, the Island will be fully emparished returning approximately 308 councillors.

1.9   Nationally there are approximately 10,000 parish and town councils and around 1% of those are accredited quality councils. Here on the Island we buck the national trend significantly, with a staggering 20% accredited quality councils and a further 30% currently working towards accreditation. The council strongly endorses and supports the Quality Parish Council Scheme and sees this as a mechanism for devolving services to local councils.

1.10   The Isle of Wight Council's commitment to a reduction in ward councillors will be supported and enabled, in part, through the implementation of their parish empowerment programme. The empowerment programme includes financial support aimed at removing barriers to quality; the appointment of a Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customers and Parish Empowerment; and the formation of a Parish and Community Development Team. The Parish and Community Development team are responsible for supporting the portfolio holder and implementing a comprehensive programme of training and development for parish and town councils. The aims of this programme are to:

> Increase the number of parish councils, and accordingly the overall number of local councillors directly representing their communities
> Provide continuing professional development and support opportunities for parish councillors, clerks and councils
> Increase the number of quality parishes through a comprehensive programme of development and training
> Pilot parish initiatives through the parish empowerment programme
> Implement a programme of devolved services to quality parishes

1.11   The Isle of Wight Council is actively seeking to devolve service provision, including ownership and/or management of assets to accredited town and parish councils or those who are committed to achieving quality status.

1.12   The Comprehensive Performance Assessment Action Plan, adopted by the Cabinet on 7 November 2006 and endorsed by the full council on 15 November 2006, commits the council to delivering a programme of High Impact Projects. One of these, a pilot focusing on devolution of services to parishes, will be well advanced by 2009.

1.13   The trend towards devolution, empowerment, place-shaping and more effective partnership working will significantly diminish the number of Isle of Wight councillors necessary to deliver Island wide democratic leadership, policy making, service improvement and the determination of regulatory issues.

2   Effective and Convenient Local Government

2.1   This section of the submission makes the case that a reduction in the number of members of the Isle of Wight Council will enable yet more effective and convenient local government. It does so on the basis of an assessment of national and local policy drivers and an analysis of the best way of meeting the challenge **to deliver better community leadership** and **democratically driven improvement in public services**.

National Policy

2.2   The Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper summarises the changes in the democratic framework which aims to deliver high quality elected leaders and responsive, accountable and improving public services. In addition, the Local Government Act 2000 radically overhauled decision-making and accountability in local government. Central to those reforms was the clear separation between executive councillors and the majority of council members in that executive councillors were given responsibility for taking the majority of decisions that had previously been taken by committee. As a result, decision making was speeded up and it became clearer who was responsible for making which decisions.

2.3   The White Paper proposes further changes in the form of a requirement for authorities to choose between three models of executive arrangements. In each case the intention is to continue the trend to strengthen local leadership and enhance accountability by concentrating authority for decision making into the hands of one individual and a small number of executive members.

2.4   In his interim [2]report Sir Michael Lyons argued for a system of local government that manages increasing pressures on public expenditure, increases satisfaction and builds more prosperous communities, and that greater local choice, *not more central control*, is needed to achieve this. He challenged local government to further raise its game and to tackle the challenges of promoting effective local choice and energetic 'place-shaping'. He stated that this would require stronger leadership, closer engagement with local residents, effective partnership working with other services and the business community, and a consistent commitment to efficiency and cost effectiveness.

2.5   Delivering efficiency targets will be a feature of local government for the foreseeable future brought about by Sir Peter Gershon's review of public sector efficiency, which resulted in local authorities having to make a 2.5% efficiency saving year on year. The Isle of Wight Council's aim to be a high performing, cost-effective council was further evidenced by their 2006 pre-budget statement where an additional annual target of 3% savings was trialled.

2.6   It should be noted that the 2007 review of the Isle of Wight Council electoral divisions will be the *first* review of this kind which will take account of the new and streamlined form of executive governance adopted by the current Isle of Wight Council.

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2   The Lyons Enquiry 2005

Local Policy

2.7   The Isle of Wight Council believes that the statutory framework and the national policy agenda demonstrate the need for clear and defined roles for elected members. Such clarity is necessary to attract and retain high quality elected members, for the effective discharge of the roles by elected members and to ensure transparency and political accountability.

2.8   The Isle of Wight Council is a best value authority and has a duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. It has resolved that a smaller council will both be more cost effective itself (in terms of the costs of democracy) and, through clearer definition of political roles and accountability, be better able to deliver ever more cost-effective public services. At its meeting on 18 October 2006 the Isle of Wight Council determined that, in considering a review of electoral arrangements and a corresponding reduction in the size of the membership of the Isle of Wight Council, it recognised that town and parish councils on the Island are:
  ➢ Growing in number, with every community soon to have the benefit of democratic leadership and representation closest to the people.
  ➢ Improving in quality, and starting to achieve their potential as providers of devolved public services;
  ➢ Becoming empowered to deliver ever more local democratic leadership, and service delivery

Frontline Local Members

2.9   The Constitution of the Isle of Wight Council provides generic responsibilities for all elected members, which include promoting good community relations and ensuring greater public/stakeholder participation. More specifically, under the heading *Constituency Responsibility*:

Members' role:
  • To be an advocate of, and for, the interests of the constituency, individual electors, community groups and other stakeholders
  • To represent the interests of those individuals and groups to the council, and to deal with enquiries and representations from constituents

Members' duties:
  • To effectively represent, individually and with other representatives of other electoral divisions, the interests of the electoral division, individual and groups of constituents in the policy formulation and decision making processes of the council and other local and national bodies
  • To work collectively and individually in the interests of the electoral division and the council
  • To lead and actively encourage community involvement and engagement in consultation in policy formulation and decision making by the council
  • To respond to constituents enquiries fairly and impartially
  • To assist the above, members are likely to have an active involvement (including attending meetings where invited) in the local parish/town council, community forum and other community groups

Additionally, members may hold surgeries to enable their constituents to have greater access to them and issue newsletters to keep their constituents informed.

Efficient Local Administration –

Policy Making

2.10 The 2006 Comprehensive Performance Assessment of the Isle of Wight Council concluded:

"The Council has……well developed policy making capacity. The Commissions are politically proportionate committees, separate from Scrutiny, and publish well-researched 'blue-papers… They are an innovative development and provide the Council with considerable policy-making capacity"

Table 1

Isle of Wight Council Governance Structure (Current)

Full Council

Scrutiny Committee | Policy Commissions | Cabinet | Audit & Performance Committee | Planning Committee / Licensing Committee / General Purpose Committee

Informal Cabinet | Directors Group | Senior Management Team | Cabinet Members | Cabinet Secretary

Service Plans

Customer Feedback

Risk Management

Service Improvement

Staff Engagement

Performance Monitoring

Budget Setting

2.11   Isle of Wight Council policy is developed and adopted in a number of ways. Table 1 shows the current governance structure; the detail and efficiency of which is discussed in the following section.

2.12   Full Council is the supreme policy making body of the Council. Its functions, including the policies and strategies, which it is responsible for adopting and approving, are set out in Article 4 of the Isle of Wight Council's constitution.

2.13   The Isle of Wight Council currently has a 10 member executive, which includes the Leader of the Council, and is known as the Cabinet, which meets once a month, representing a considerable reduction in both meetings and members involved. Formerly; in the first year of executive governance (2001-2002), there were 28 meetings of a 10 member executive compared to 12 scheduled for the whole of 2007. The 2006 Comprehensive Performance Assessment concluded:

[3]*"The council has clear decision making processes……..Cabinet meetings are focussed on strategic decision making and performance management and there is effective delegation to Cabinet Members"*

2.14   The Constitution currently provides for the establishment of an undetermined number of "7 member" policy commissions. There are currently four commissions each chaired by a policy commissioner and undertaking an agreed work programme. The development of four policy commissions represents a significant reduction in the time that non executive members previously devoted to policy development. Prior to May 2005, the council had 6 select committees, varying in size between 9 and 11 members, with a co-ordinating committee to oversee work programmes.

2.15   Although some aspects of the scrutiny function undertaken by the select committees were favourably commented on by external evaluation, the size and number of the committees proved unwieldy. In both the old select committee system, and in the new policy commission regime, the best policy development has been undertaken in small (often 3 member) task and finish groups. This has been evidenced by an increasing and successful focus on policy development by small groups of elected members reporting back to the executive. A method supported and favourably assessed by the Audit Commission in the Comprehensive Performance review in 2006.

2.16   As the benefits of executive decision making have become embedded, Cabinet agendas have become significantly shorter and more strategic in nature. In addition, as greater confidence in executive decision making has developed, greater use of Cabinet Member delegated decisions has been made. The 2006 CPA Report (para 55) described the use of delegations to members as "effective".

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3   CPA Final Report 14 August 2006 para 55

2.17   In order to maintain the separation of powers between policy making and implementation, in areas such as development control, the Cabinet retains some policy making responsibility. The other roles which the cabinet plays in policy development are commissioning of enquiries from the Policy Commissions and recommending both a draft budget and a draft policy to the Full Council. As the effectiveness of executive decision making has increased, the amount of time elected members (both executive and non executive) have spent in routine decision making meetings has reduced significantly – by as much as 50% since 2001.

Accountability & Service Improvement

2.18   Full Council now meets 10 times annually, a reduction of 2 meetings per year, and provides a valuable forum for holding the cabinet and cabinet members to account. Each agenda provides an opportunity for members of the public and for any member of the council to question cabinet members.

2.19   The cabinet plays a central role in performance improvement receiving quarterly reports on financial and non financial performance. Two standing agenda items at each of these meetings enable the public and non executive members to hold executive members to account.

2.20   The current scrutiny committee consists of 12 voting members and two voting co-optees who are not elected members. The Chair cannot be a member of the majority group. In addition there are two non-voting representatives of the Association of Town and Parish Councils and the Island youth (Youth MP). The scrutiny committee have the power to postpone the implementation of executive decisions. This power has been invoked and has led to decisions being reconsidered and improved.

Outside Bodies

2.21   The council is invited (and, in a few cases, required by statute) to nominate members to the governing bodies of other organisations. Although senior officers sometimes take on those governance roles, it is more usual for elected members to be nominated.

2.22   The time commitment for elected members taking on these roles varies from a few hours per year to substantial monthly meetings requiring preparatory work. As part of the work programme of the former Resources Select Committee, Isle of Wight Council reviewed the approach to such appointments. As a result of the review the number of appointments to outside bodies reduced significantly (see Table 2 below). A review of the effectiveness of partnership working on the Island combined with a further assessment of appointments to outside bodies has commenced and it is likely that this will reduce further the number of appointments, and therefore the demands on the time of elected members.

Appointments to outside bodies	
Year	Number of Bodies
2003 (November)	138
2006 (November)	75

Table 2

Local Regulation

Development Control

2.23   Local democratic control of development is one of the single most important functions of UK local authorities. It affects the rights of individuals and the economic, social and environmental well-being of the community. The system, and the role of elected members in it, has changed profoundly over time. There have been two principal drivers – first, a greater focus on planning policy, and second, a national drive towards greater use of delegations to officers. This has freed up elected members to concentrate on developments which, due to their size or social, economic or environmental significance, are strategically important to communities.

Policy Led Planning

2.24   Whilst elected members have roles to play in the development, adoption and renewal of planning policy the new system engages the time of members to a much lesser degree than did the approach adopted by many authorities under the old Unitary Development planning system.

2.25   [4]The Barker Review points the way to yet further reform of the planning system - that further reform, if the Barker recommendations are accepted in whole or in part, will retain the role of democratic leaders in determining policy, but will reduce the timescales for deliberation about policy direction. It will also significantly reduce the volume of development control determinations made by elected members.

2.26   The role of members, in the new world of policy led development control, is to agree (and participate in) the engagement framework and to take accountable policy decisions in the light of the outcome of community engagement. This is a far more effective and time limited role than has been required of elected members, in relation to the development of planning policy than in the past.

Delegation

2.27   The Statement of Community Involvement addresses the need to engage directly with communities in relation to specific applications. Again elected members have a role to play – but it is increasingly in the context of active, early engagement with developers and with communities to shape development applications.   This too is a more time effective manner for elected members to be engaged in development control issues – rather than sitting in a committee context determining minor planning applications.

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4   Barker review, published in December 2006

Volume and Member Determinations

2.28 Table 3 below sets out the numbers of Development Control determinations made by members, and illustrates a decreasing trend in member determinations.

Calendar Year	Determinations by members
1996	626 applications
2002	283 applications
2003	186 applications
2004	151 applications
2005	132 applications
2006	123 applications

Table 3

Better Local Regulation

2.29 The Council Constitution identifies over 50 separate regulatory functions undertaken by the Isle of Wight Council.

2.30 Despite the addition of significant regulatory functions, such as liquor licensing and gambling, introduced since the 2000 Local Government Act, the guidance under that Act remains current, in that most of the licensing, registration and health & safety functions will be delegated to professional officers.

2.31 The Isle of Wight Council has three Regulatory Committees - Planning, Licensing and General Purpose. The regulatory framework must be discharged by the Full Council.

2.32 The Licensing Committee has one subcommittee, permitted under the Licensing Act, which must be made up 3 members (defined by statute), and to which all licensing determinations stand deferred. Other decisions, in respect of policy, are taken by the Licensing Committee. This is under delegation from the full council in its capacity as the licensing authority.

2.33   Apart from a peak in 2005, since the introduction of the Licensing Act, member determinations are reducing. To date in (May) 2007 only 6 member determinations have been made as illustrated in Table 4.
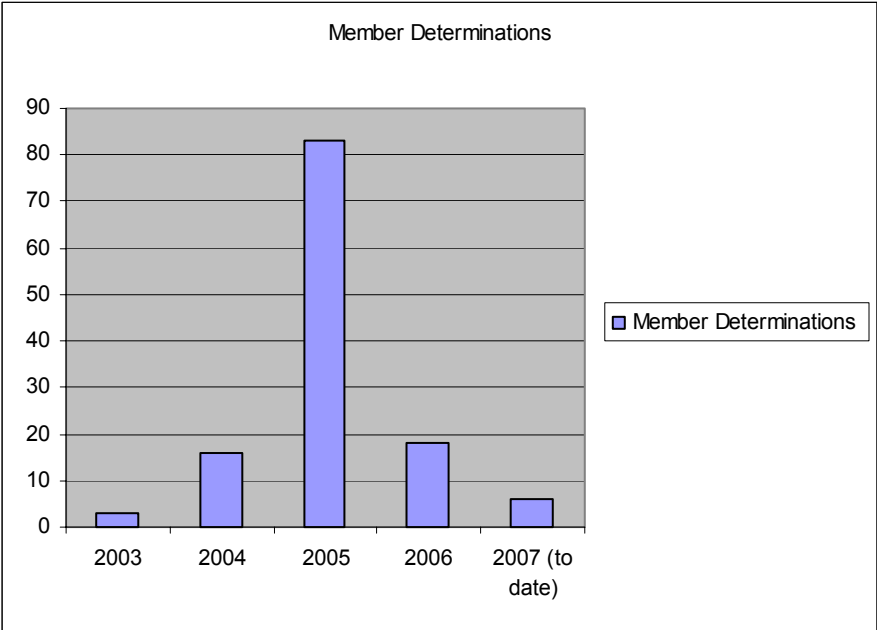
Table 4

An Effective Employer

2.34   The law and the Isle of Wight Council constitution provides that any decisions by elected members, which determine employment rights of individuals, will be undertaken by a politically proportionate committee of members, or under delegation to the Head of Paid Service, a route which is extensively prescribed.

2.35   Functions reserved for determination by elected members are limited to the adoption of policy, which affect or determine the terms and conditions of employees, where agreement with recognised trades unions has not been achieved and in the appointment of staff such as Deputy Chief Officers, Chief Officers, any political assistants and the three statutory offices of Head of Paid Service, Chief Financial Officer and the Monitoring Officer.

2.36   The average number of such appointments in any year is no more than 3 or 4, and the time commitment is therefore modest for the 7 member panels that make the appointments. See Table 5

Member Appointment and Dismissal Panels

Determination of Human Resources Issues
Member meetings to determine HR Issues

Table 5

Appeals to Members

2.37 The average number of appeals, involving members, in any year is no more than 3 or 4, a number expected to reduce further. For example, in 2006, they had only 1 such agenda item.
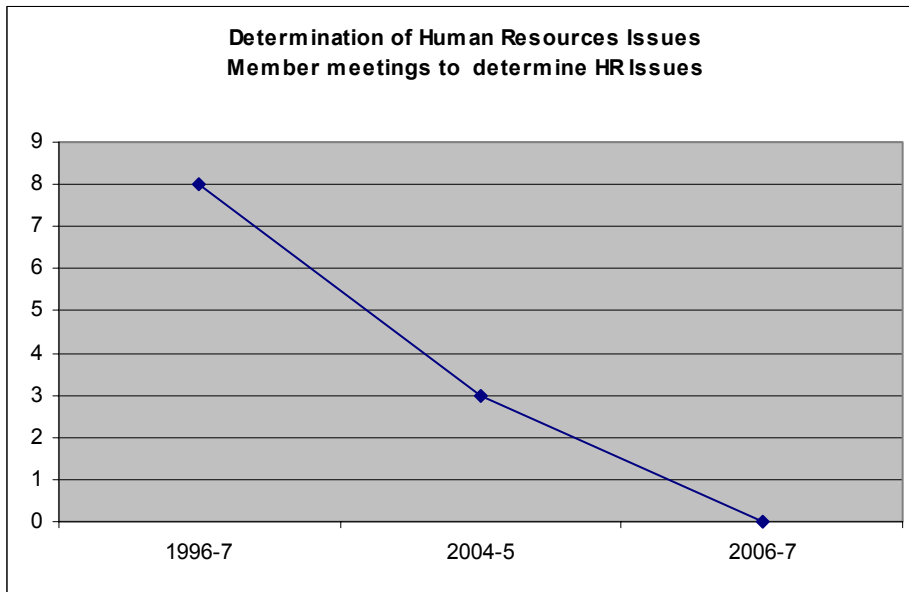
2.38 Following national best practice and changes in the law, the Isle of Wight Council has seen member engagement in human resources issues reduced to focus only on policy and other significant issues. The demand on their time is now very modest, being limited to the most senior of appointments and dismissals, and the adoption of policy when agreement with workforce representatives cannot be reached. There is not currently, nor in the foreseeable future, likely to be significant demand on member time to determine employee and/or human resources issues.

Ethics & Standards

2.39 The ethical framework is a very significant aspect of local democracy and profoundly influences the public lives of elected members. The national framework includes the Standards Board for England. The Board provides guidance and receives complaints which can be referred for local investigation and/or determination to the local Standards Committee, whose membership consists of:

An independent Chair
6 other Independent Members
1 Town/Parish Councillor (a named Deputy is also provided for)
2 members of the Isle of Wight Council (Having served at least one full term as councillor)
3 substitute members of the Isle of Wight Council are also identified to ensure a quorum

2.40   The Isle of Wight Council Standards Committee is empowered to determine complaints against both Isle of Wight Councillors and members of town and parish councils. Fortunately determining complaints remains a rare event, with only 1 referral having been received and determined in each of the years since the national framework came into existence. The effects of changes to the ethical regime are difficult to accurately predict, but it is unlikely that they will require a greater time commitment of elected members.

A Cost-effective Council

2.41   Whilst the Isle of Wight Council recognises that this review is, in part, concerned with the effective and convenient government of the Island, it also realises that such government should also be efficient and economic. A reduction in the number of elected members would produce a modest annual saving in members allowances.

2.42   The Isle of Wight Council currently comprises 48 elected members, each of whom receives a basic allowance of £7,500, supplemented by various additional allowances for areas of responsibility. Assuming that the council is reduced in size to 40 members and, that the number of positions with additional responsibility remains the same, then an annual saving, including on costs, of £68,000 can be realised by this reduction in members.

Proposed Governance Structure

2.43   The proposal to reduce the number of elected members (from 48 to 40) will result in electorate sizes increasing by an average 20% and will, inevitably, increase the amount of time members spend on community engagement from approximately two days to two and a half days per week.

2.44   This perceived increased demand in community engagement roles will be offset, in part, by the effectiveness of executive decision making produced by the model of governance this council has adopted. This will see the amount of time elected members (both executive and non executive) spend in routine decision making reducing significantly.

2.45   The Council's quest for excellence in governance and decision making will be influenced by their aim to ensure that members' priorities are firmly focused on strategy and policy rather than operational decision making; which, in the main and where appropriate, will be delegated to officers. Members' involvement in this area will be maintained at an appropriate level and the constitution of the Council will be revised to reflect this shift in emphasis.

2.46   This section of the submission has shown that a reduction in elected members can and will deliver effective and convenient local government. However, it has also identified that the way in which roles and responsibilities may then be *effectively* allocated to members is incompatible with the council's earlier proposal to rationalise the number of ward councillors from 48 to 32 members. There would simply be insufficient members to fill the roles required in an efficient manner. A proposed allocation of roles distributed over 40 members is shown at Appendix 1. This identifies the optimum number of councillors required to successfully discharge the duties expected and required of the Isle of Wight Council. The remainder of this submission is therefore based upon a reduction in elected members from 48 to 40.

3 Electoral Equality

3.1 [5]"Electoral equality, in the sense of each elector having a vote of equal weight, is a fundamental democratic principle", and only when equality in electorate to representative ratios is established can equity in other demographic infrastructures be pursued.

3.2 The Isle of Wight Council, one of the first unitary authorities to be created in England in 1995, resulted from the amalgamation of the two former borough councils and the Isle of Wight County Council, and with it, a reduction in elected members from over 100 to 48 single seat electoral wards.
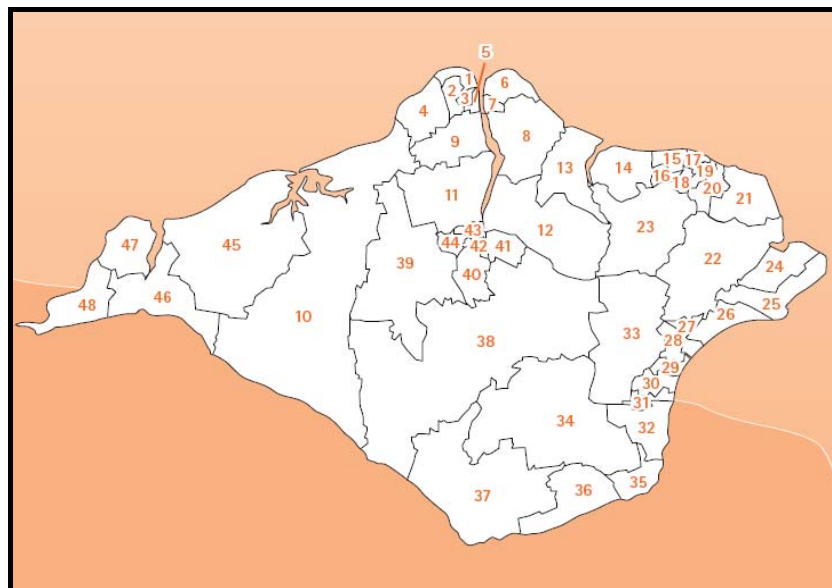
48 Current Electoral Wards

3.3 Following the local government elections in 1995 it became apparent that the 48 electoral wards had been allocated in such a way that unacceptably large variances in electoral representation existed in that 62% of electoral wards varied from the average size by more than 10% and a third by more than 20%.

3.4 As a result of these electoral imbalances the Isle of Wight area was included in the programme of Periodic Electoral Reviews in March 1996. Final recommendations made in 1997 concluded that, with some alterations to electoral boundaries to address the issue of electoral inequality, the Isle of Wight should continue to be served by 48 single-seat elected members, as it is to the present day.

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5   Periodic and further electoral reviews – Guidance and procedural advice: The Electoral Commission, July 2002

3.5   The following table, taken from The Electoral Commission's consultation paper on Periodic Electoral Reviews (published in September 2005) shows that the Isle of Wight Council, at 2281 electors per councillor, is currently approximately 11.0% below the mean ratio of electors to members for unitary authorities (Table 6).

Electors per councillor	Percentage of local authorities (by type)			
	District	**London Borough**	**Metropolitan**	**Unitary**
4000+	0	0	14	**2**
2500 - 3999	3	59	75	**47**
2000 - 2499	13	38	8	**29**
1500 - 1999	52	3	3	**15**
1000 - 1499	29	0	0	**7**
Under 1000	3	0	0	**0**
Councillor to Elector ratios				
Mean	1361	2691	3252	**2553**
Highest	3009	3732	6020	**4168**
Lowest	615	1877	1751	**1003**

© The Electoral Commission - September 2005

Table 6

3.6   When considering future council size and the ratio of electors to members, regard must be had to the projected electorate in five years time (2011), and to the impact on the Island population that longer term major redevelopment/regeneration schemes will have. As the baseline date for this review is 1st December 2006, the projected figures are those for December 2011.

3.7   The projected electorate for each polling district has been calculated using data based upon the number of units of new or converted properties which are expected to have been built and occupied by 1st December 2011(See Appendix 2). Where no development areas have been identified, allowances have been made for the continuation of small in-fill development of single units within existing development envelopes.

3.8   The council recognises that some development areas will, over a longer period, eventually yield more units than are likely to be completed by December 2011, but have limited the projections to those which are realistically likely to be completed, in line with guidance issued by the Boundary Committee.
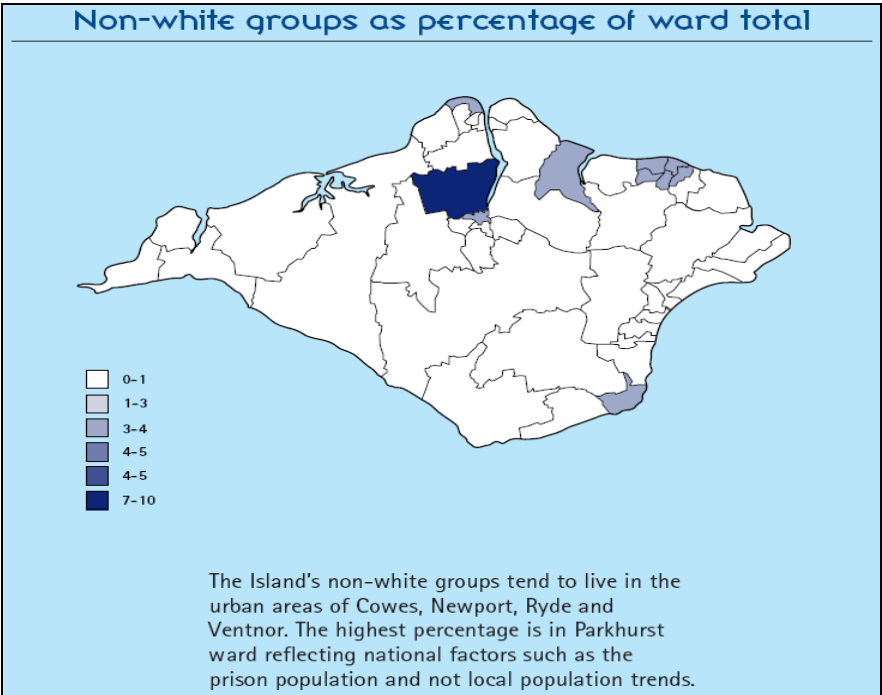
3.9   Population growth on the Island is driven by increases in the number of dwellings, and, over time, the number of people in each household has remained static. The numbers of electors per dwelling must, by definition, also reflect the demographic makeup of the Island, which is not expected to materially change over the next five years. The Isle of Wight Council is confident that the base data used for the 1st December 2006 electorate is accurate, as this information was derived from a full postal and personal canvass of all properties on the Island, conducted in accordance with Section 9 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006.

3.10   A table of existing polling districts, along with projected completed residential property developments which are due to be finished and expected to be inhabited by December 2011 is shown at Appendix 2.

Equalities & Diversity

3.11   The 2001 census showed an increase in the non-white ethnic population of the Isle of Wight to 1,749 persons or 1.3% of the total which is significantly lower than the national average of 8.7% of the total. The figure below illustrates where the non-white ethnic groups of the Island are living. It can be seen that the largest concentrations are in the urban areas. This is especially true of Parkhurst ward which reflects national factors such as a prison population, who do not qualify to vote, and not local population trends.

3.12   Under this review it is proposed that the Newport area will be served by 6 ward councillors - a reduction of 2. However, a town council will be established in Newport by April 2008, returning between 16 and 21 parish councillors, thereby increasing the opportunity for improved public representation. It is therefore considered that the non-white ethnic population will not be in any way disadvantaged by a review of electoral wards.

Non-white groups as percentage of ward total

0-1
1-3
3-4
4-5
4-5
7-10

The Island's non-white groups tend to live in the urban areas of Cowes, Newport, Ryde and Ventnor. The highest percentage is in Parkhurst ward reflecting national factors such as the prison population and not local population trends.

3.13   The proposed reduction in wards from 48 to 40 has provided the opportunity to deal with unacceptably large variances in electoral representation that currently exist in a large number of the Island's electoral wards.

3.14   The target number of 40 electoral wards will give a ratio of 2844 electors per member. This ratio is 11% higher than the mean for unitary authorities, but is still substantially less than the highest ratio, which, in September 2005, was 4168:1. (See table 6, page 21). The Electoral Commission guidance to the Boundary Committee allows a variance of +/- 10% on the size of electoral wards and proposed wards have therefore been based on an electorate of between 2559 – 3128.

4   Community Identity

4.1   The key theme of the Government's White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities, is the idea of reshaping public services around the citizens and communities who use them. It recognises that local authorities pioneered the idea of partnership working and have developed this further to bring together key public service providers to lead and shape a place for the benefit of communities.

4.2   The White Paper is clear about how we can build on this by encouraging working across, not only, service boundaries but also across geographic boundaries, to enable a focus on improving areas rather than individual services.

4.3   The Lyons Enquiry reinforces the benefits of "place shaping" and challenges local government to promote effective local choice and energetic 'place-shaping'. He comments that this will require stronger leadership, closer engagement with local residents, effective partnership working with other services and the business community, and a consistent commitment to efficiency and cost effectiveness.

4.4   This section of the submission discusses the detailed community mapping work which has been undertaken by the Council to determine how electoral wards can be formed which fairly represent a community, or group of communities; and where there is sound evidence of community identity to support that grouping.

4.5   When proposing revised boundaries, due consideration has been given to the natural geographical borders of the Island such as railways, rivers etc. and, wherever possible, these "natural" boundaries have been applied. However, the primary aim of the community mapping work has been to determine where the legitimate and justifiable "community" boundaries should be drawn. These are the boundaries that identify where the established, joined-up and working neighbourhoods exist and wherever possible have sought to trace and encompass parish boundaries.

4.6   Increasingly current and future work programmes/initiatives by key agencies and stakeholders are taking place or being planned around a "parish-led" or a "parish-based" approach and with the reinforcement of Local Area Agreements, proposed through the recent White Paper, the many benefits of adopting a wider, collaborative approach to service delivery are clear.

4.7   Development of strategic plans and co-ordinated delivery of work programmes which involve the community at large, and parishes in particular, have been the subject of much discussion. The parishes' level of involvement in such partnership working arrangements will be crucial to their future success. It has become evident that inter-agency working is far more effective and, throughout the community mapping exercise, there has been much support and co-operation from partner agencies and organisations to take an integrated approach to revising ward boundaries.

4.8   The Island is fortunate in that it has an established and thriving first tier of local government provided by its 29 parish and town councils. Petitions seeking emparishment in the unparished areas of the Island, if approved by the Secretary of State, will see the whole Island emparished by 2008 returning a total of approximately 308 councillors.

4.9   A recent review of the Quality Parish Scheme, undertaken by the University of Aberystwyth, identified that, nationally, the Island has the highest percentage of Quality parish councils.   The Isle of Wight Council is keen to see this number increase setting itself a target of 100% quality parishes by 2010. A challenging target but a full programme of training, support and development has been implemented by the Council to encourage non-quality parishes to become accredited. The council is committed to developing this tier of local government even further through its programme of devolution to quality councils.

4.10   It is against this background of a thriving and developing first tier of local government, fully engaged with the Isle of Wight Council and its partners, that the work around evidencing community identity has taken place. Wherever possible a holistic, cross-agency approach has been taken to ensure that all aspects of community life have been taken into account.

4.11   Mapping has revealed a number of current or planned service/organisational initiatives linked to parishes or parish clusters which are increasingly becoming co-terminus with the proposed ward boundaries. Reinforcing the shared principle that revised electoral wards should be based as closely as possible to these "community" based groupings.

4.12   The most significant of these include:

- Children's Services working out of catchment areas on a multi-agency parish cluster basis in line with the extended schools programme

- Children's centres set up in the most deprived areas and linked to multi-function community hubs in Ryde, West Wight, Ventnor, Sandown and Newport

- Community Services linking into GP practice catchment areas, linking to the aims and objectives of the Supporting People Strategy and the Commissioning Strategy for the Older Peoples Service

- Parish and Town Councils seen as the key drivers for Emergency Planning and Community Resilience programmes

- Regeneration/Parish Plans – Parish clusters working on similar issues such as planning, regeneration such as the Bay Area Action Plan

- Fire and Rescue prevention programme delivered through parishes, clusters and communities in line with the Modernising Agenda. Parish clusters will provide up to date risk profiles enabling more effective targeting of resources

- Local Strategic Partnership focusing delivery of Local Area Agreement projects on a community basis

- Safer Neighbourhood Team beat areas based on electoral wards coterminous with parish boundaries. Newly introduced Police Community Support Officers and Accredited Community Support Officers will work within these areas

- Public Health future direction is devolving services and initiatives through town and parish councils and parish clusters. Public Health projects and training for community resilience and the Neighbourhood First Responder scheme rolled out on a parish/cluster pattern

- Chamber of Commerce branches closely match proposed boundaries and could encourage input from local ward members into local issues

- Consumer Protection - Cold Calling Control Zones being implemented on a Parish basis and designating an area where door knocking is not allowed. Operated in areas where there are elderly and vulnerable residents and in conjunction with the police

- Designated Public Place Orders – Supported by the parishes and introduced to control drinking in public places. Support for orders to be implemented in urban areas

- Isle of Wight Council devolvement of services pilot will be implemented in quality parishes or parish clusters

4.13   The map below sets out proposed 40 single member divisions. A set of detailed 1:10,000 scale maps, together with the criteria applied in defining the revised electoral boundaries, also support this submission and is attached as Appendix 5.

Proposed Wards for the Isle of Wight
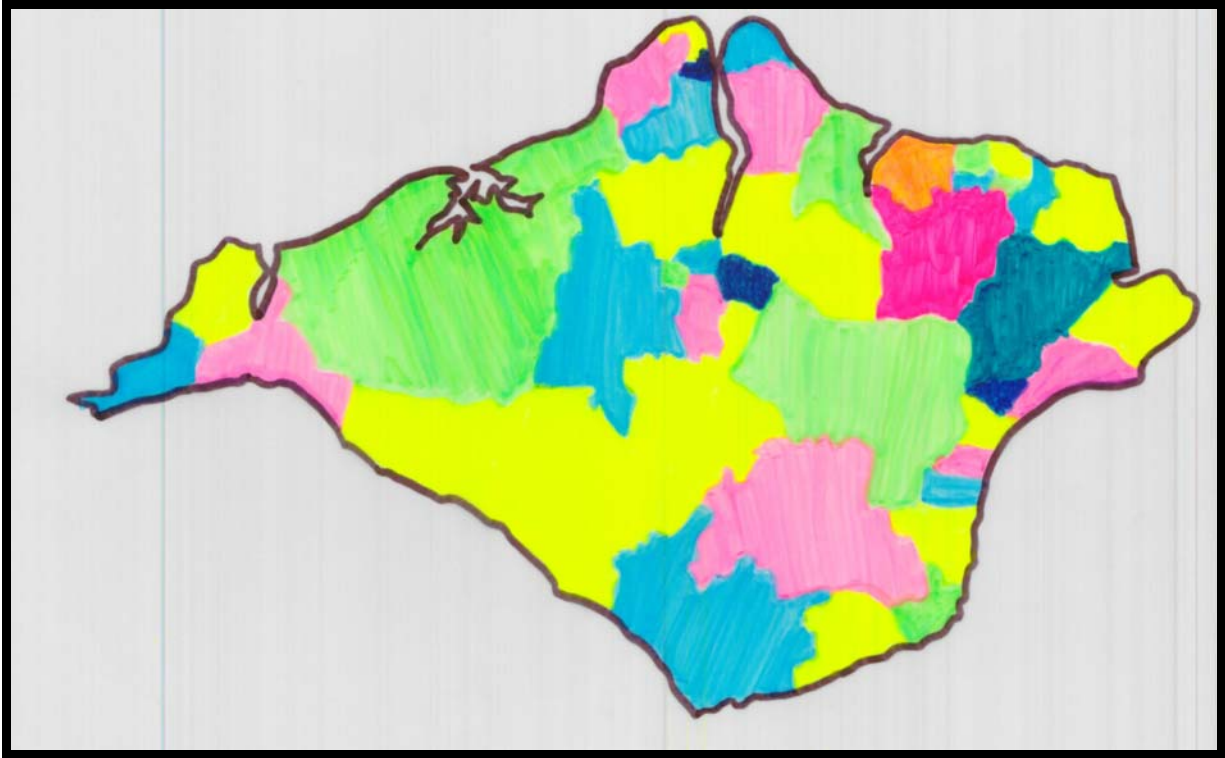
4.14   Details regarding the proposed wards are shown in tabular form at Appendix 3, together with a brief synopsis of the evidence of community identity and interests. As part of the evidence gathering exercise for community mapping process a consultation was undertaken with Island parish and town councils to determine:
- What the "big" issues were facing them,
- Whether these issues are shared with their neighbouring parishes, and
- Whether these might be resolved on a cluster or ward basis.

4.15   Results of the consultation revealed that the *top six* issues facing Island parishes and meeting these criteria are:

> 1. **Traffic, speeding and highways issues**
> 2. **Threat of losing community school, GP surgery or post office**
> 3. **Lack of affordable housing**
> 4. **Policing and crime issues**
> 5. **Adequate and appropriate community / youth facilities in rural areas**
> 6. **Development control and planning issues**

This information has formed a contributory factor in how revised ward boundaries have been drafted

5 Consultation Methodology

5.1 Objectives
1. To consult with and enable those individuals and organisations who may wish to be aware of and influence the IWC submission to do so
2. To generate awareness of and support for the Isle of Wight Council submission

5.2 Consultees
The following individuals, groups and organisations were formally consulted on this draft submission prior to consideration by the Full Council meeting of the Isle of Wight Council.

- Isle of Wight Council
    - All Isle of Wight Council elected Members
    - Political groups
    - Staff/staff representatives

- External organisations and individuals
    - Town/Parish Councils & Management Committees
    - NHS Trust
    - Police Authority
    - Chamber of Commerce
    - Rural Community Council
    - Member of Parliament / Members of the European Parliament
    - Island Strategic Partnership

5.3 Timetable for consultation
Consultation of this draft took place from **16th March until 13th April 2007**.

5.4 Methods of Consultation
1 Copies of the draft submission were sent for observation/comment to those individuals and organisations listed above
2 Hard copies were available to any individual or organisation upon request
3 Large print and other language copies were available upon request
4 A copy of the draft submission and other relevant papers were available at www.iwight.com/boundaryreview .Comments and views were made at this site

5.5 Methods of Feedback
Comments and views, letters of support were made either in writing or through the website www.iwight.com/boundaryreview by **April 13th 2007**.

5.6 A summary of feedback received by the Isle of Wight Council is attached at Appendix 4.

6   Glossary

The following technical terms and phrases are used in the text of this submission and their meaning may not be obvious from the context.

Term/Phrase	Meaning
Local Authority	Isle of Wight Council
Electoral division	Ward
Island Councillors	Members of the Isle of Wight Council
Local Councils	Town & Parish Councils
Local Councillors	Members of Town & Parish Councils
ISP	Island Strategic Partnership
Local Government Elections	Elections for the Isle of Wight Council
Local Government Electorate	The Isle of Wight constituency electorate
Ward	An electoral division

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Isle of Wight Council - Constitution

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Local Leadership Local Choice – New Council Constitutions Guidance Pack – Volume 1 (DTLR 2000)

One Island, One Council – The Case for an Isle of Wight Unitary Authority October 1992

Reputation and the Media Survey, Isle of Wight Council, November 2006. QA Research & Westminster City Council

Resources Select Committee Paper – 7 April 2005: Outside Bodies

Strong and Prosperous Communities, the Local Government White Paper

A Broader Parish – Commission for Rural Economies

Isle of Wight Census Atlas

Member Office (x40)	Full Council 40 Members	Cabinet (x10)	Commission 1 (x7)	Commission 2 (x7)	Commission 3 (x7)	Commission 4 (x7)	Scrutiny Members (x12)	Audit & Perf Members (x7)	Gen. Purpose Committee Members (x10)	Licensing Committee (x10)	Planning Committee (x15)	Investment Panel (x7)	Front Line Roles	Outside Bodies (Ave 2)	T/PL Attendance	Total
Chair	X							X					X	X	X	5
Vice Chair	X			X	X			X					X	X	X	7
Leader	X	X											X	X	X	5
Cabinet Member 1	X	X							X				X	X	X	6
Cabinet Member 2	X	X								X			X	X	X	6
Cabinet Member 3	X	X										X	X	X	X	6
Cabinet Member 4	X	X											X	X	X	5
Cabinet Member 5	X	X											X	X	X	5
Cabinet Member 6	X	X											X	X	X	5
Cabinet Member 7	X	X											X	X	X	5
Cabinet Member 8	X	X										X	X	X	X	6
Cabinet Member 9	X	X									X		X	X	X	6
Scrutiny Chair	X						X				X		X	X	X	6
Audit & Perf Chair	X							X				X	X	X	X	6
Commissioner 1	X		X					X			X		X	X	X	7
Commissioner 2	X			X			X				X		X	X	X	7
Commissioner 3	X				X		X			X			X	X	X	7
Commissioner 4	X					X	X			X			X	X	X	7
Chair General Purpose Committee	X			X			X		X				X	X	X	7
Chair Planning Committee	X				X		X				X		X	X	X	7
Chair Licensing	X					X	X			X			X	X	X	7
Investment Panel Chair	X					X	X				X		X	X	X	7
Member Champion 1	X		X			X		X					X	X	X	7
Member Champion 2	X			X			X				X		X	X	X	7
Member Champion 3	X				X		X				X		X	X	X	7
Member Champion 4	X					X	X					X	X	X	X	7
Member Champion 5	X		X		X		X						X	X	X	7
Cabinet Secretary	X							X					X	X	X	5
Front Line Member	X		X			X		X					X	X	X	7
Front Line Member	X		X						X		X		X	X	X	7
Front Line Member	X		X						X		X		X	X	X	7
Front Line Member	X		X						X	X			X	X	X	7
Front Line Member	X			X		X			X				X	X	X	7
Front Line Member	X								X	X	X		X	X	X	7
Front Line Member	X			X					X	X			X	X	X	7
Front Line Member	X			X					X	X			X	X	X	7
Front Line Member	X								X	X	X		X	X	X	7
Front Line Member	X				X						X	X	X	X	X	7
Front Line Member	X				X						X	X	X	X	X	7
Front Line Member	X									X	X	X	X	X	X	7

Polling District Number/Name	1/12/06 Electors	2011 New Properties	2011 New Electors	Projected Electorate	Polling District Number/Name	1/12/06 Electors	2011 New Properties	2011 New Electors	Projected Electorate
A1 - Havenstreet	559	10	17	576	KK1 - Sandown North - Part 1	2047	65	107	2154
A2 - Haylands	1747	10	17	1764	KK2 - Sandown - Yaverland	392	30	50	442
AA - Northwood	1845	22	36	1881	L - Cowes Castle West	2188	10	17	2205
B - Bembridge North	1659	5	8	1667	LL1 - Sandown South Part 1	1752	40	66	1818
BB1 - Osborne	1177	110	182	1359	LL2 - Sandown South Part 2	1103	85	140	1243
BB2 - Whippingham	724	5	8	732	M - Cowes Central	2048	12	20	2068
C - Bembridge South	1865	5	8	1873	MM1 - Seaview	1104	10	17	1121
CC - Pan	2111	70	116	2227	MM2 - Nettlestone	1735	10	17	1752
D1 - Binstead	2041	12	20	2061	N - Cowes Medina	2016	48	79	2095
D2 - Fishbourne	694	10	17	711	NN1 - Shalfleet - Part 1	191	5	8	199
D3 - Newnham Lane Area	14	0	0	14	NN2 - Shalfleet - Part 2	361	5	8	369
DD1 - Parkhurst - Part 1	1279	82	135	1414	NN3 - Shalfleet - Part 3	866	5	8	874
DD2 - Parkhurst - Part 2	923	60	99	1022	NN4 - Yarmouth	592	10	17	609
E1 - Brading	1686	10	17	1703	NN5 - Thorley	230	2	3	233
E2 - St. Helens	1129	10	17	1146	O - East Cowes North	1657	85	140	1797
EE - Ryde North East	2457	30	50	2507	OO - Shanklin Central	2346	73	120	2466
F1 - Calbourne	314	10	17	331	P - East Cowes South	2514	8	13	2527
F2 - Porchfield	430	6	10	440	PP - Shanklin North	2309	25	41	2350
F3 - Brighstone	1216	10	17	1233	Q1 - Fairlee	2175	10	17	2192
F4 - Brook	180	2	3	183	Q2 - East Fairlee	95	10	17	112
F5 - Mottistone	68	2	3	71	QQ - Shanklin South	2529	60	99	2628
FF - Ryde North West	2444	10	17	2461	R - Freshwater Afton	2494	73	120	2614
G - Carisbrooke East	2431	160	264	2695	RR - Totland	2443	145	239	2682
GG1 - Ryde South East - 1	2021	35	58	2079	S1 - Freshwater Norton Part 1	1625	20	33	1658
GG2 - Ryde South East - 2	436	95	157	593	S2 - Freshwater Norton - Part 2	661	48	79	740
H1 - Carisbrooke	1045	25	41	1086	SS1 - Ventnor East	2202	40	66	2268
H2 - Gunville	1185	16	26	1211	SS2 - Bonchurch	457	10	17	474
HH1 - Ryde South West - Part 1	877	35	58	935	T - Gurnard	1518	5	8	1526
HH2 - Ryde South West - Part 2	1546	95	157	1703	TT1 - Ventnor West	1071	45	74	1145
I1 - Arreton	747	10	17	764	TT2 - Lowtherville	911	15	25	936
I2 - Blackwater Area	119	6	10	129	TT3 - St. Lawrence	657	10	17	674
I3 - Shorwell	574	5	8	582	U - Lake North	2139	15	25	2164
I4 - Gatcombe	340	1	2	342	UU - Wootton Bridge	2902	12	20	2922
I5 - Rookley	508	3	5	513	V - Lake South	2013	15	25	2038
II - St. Johns East	2252	70	116	2368	VV1 - Wroxall	1447	15	25	1472
J1 - Chale	202	5	8	210	VV2 - Godshill	1196	10	17	1213
J2 - Chale Green	334	2	3	337	W - Mount Joy	2026	10	17	2043
J3 - Niton	1221	10	17	1238	X1 - Newchurch	1022	10	17	1039
J4 - Whitwell	647	5	8	655	X2 - Apse Heath	1198	10	17	1215
JJ - St. Johns West	2133	34	56	2189	Y - Newport North	1939	175	289	2228
K - Cowes Castle East	2000	126	208	2208	Z - Newport South	2145	70	116	2261
	47180	**1229**	**2028**	**49208**		**62316**	**1361**	**2246**	**64562**
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