

Dorset

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Comment text:

See attached document for consultation comments from Chickerell Town Council.

Attached Documents:

- local-government-boundary-commission-review-submission.docx

Local Government Boundary Commission
Dorset Council Ward Review
Proposed Submission Relating to Chickerell Ward

1. Introduction

Chickerell Town Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Electoral Review of Dorset Council. This submission relates specifically to Chickerell Ward, which comprises the parish of Chickerell, including Chickerell Village and the Charlestown & Littlesea area.

The Council submits this response to assist the Commission in balancing its three statutory criteria: the delivery of electoral equality, the reflection of community identities and interests, and the provision of effective and convenient local government.

2. Electoral Equality

Based on the electorate forecasts supplied for the purposes of this review, Chickerell Ward performs satisfactorily against the criterion of electoral equality and improves over time.

- Projected electorate (2026): 6,570
- Projected electorate (2032): 7,522
- Dorset Council representation: 2 councillors

This equates to approximately 3,285 electors per councillor in 2026 and 3,761 electors per councillor in 2032. Although slightly below the Dorset average in 2026, the variance reduces by 2032, demonstrating that representation within Chickerell Ward becomes increasingly well balanced over the life of the review.

The Town Council therefore considers that there is no numerical justification for altering the boundaries of Chickerell Ward in order to achieve electoral equality.

3. Community Identity and Interests

The parish of Chickerell forms a clearly defined and cohesive community, distinct from neighbouring settlements. It includes both Chickerell Village and the Charlestown & Littlesea area.

While these areas differ in character, they function collectively as a single community with shared interests, including local services and facilities, schools, community infrastructure, land management, environmental protection, and the management of growth and development pressures.

The current Chickerell Neighbourhood Plan sets a unified spatial and policy framework for the whole parish, including Chickerell Village and Charlestown & Littlesea, addressing land use, environmental protection, growth, and infrastructure at parish scale. This demonstrates a shared community identity and a consistent approach to planning and place-making across the parish.

The Town Council considers that splitting the parish between Dorset Council wards, or combining it with communities of markedly different character and priorities, would dilute local identity and weaken effective representation.

4. Effective and Convenient Local Government

Retaining Chickerell as a single Dorset Council ward supports effective and convenient local government by maintaining clear representation for residents, enabling Dorset councillors to address parish-wide issues consistently, and supporting productive working relationships between Dorset councillors and Chickerell Town Council.

Chickerell has a distinct employment and service role, serving a wider area than the parish alone. It contains several established employment locations, including Granby Industrial Estate, Link Park, Lynch Lane and Green Lane, which generate daily travel-to-work movements from Weymouth, Portland, and surrounding settlements. These patterns reinforce that Chickerell is not merely a residential extension of Weymouth but a town with its own economic function and infrastructure needs.

The parish also plays a significant role in education and early-years provision. Budmouth Academy, the largest secondary school serving this part of Dorset, is located within Chickerell and serves pupils from the town and surrounding communities. Chickerell also contains a primary school, with recognised scope for further primary provision linked to future development, together with well-established early-years settings including Ducklings, Chickadees, Chuckles and Busy Bees.

Chickerell provides key retail and local services, including a large supermarket and associated food outlets, supporting both its residents and neighbouring communities.

The town benefits from a range of open spaces and community facilities, including a popular children's play area and multi-use games area (MUGA) that are used by residents from Chickerell and nearby areas. Community venues within the parish include Willowbed Hall, the Willow Suite, the Pavilion and Charlestown Victory Hall, many of which are managed by the Town Council and host regular civic, cultural and recreational activities.

Tourism and heritage also contribute to Chickerell's identity and function, including Littlesea Holiday Park, caravan site, water gardens and Chickerell's direct relationship with the Fleet and Chesil coastal environment within the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site. Chickerell's long-established settlement pattern and historic development further distinguish it from Weymouth and reinforce its identity as a separate town within Dorset.

Many of these matters; employment, education, land use, infrastructure, tourism, and environmental protection, affect the parish as a whole and are therefore best served by ward boundaries that align with the parish boundary.

5. Proactive Alternative Proposal

Chickerell Town Council recognises the importance of achieving electoral equality across Dorset and wishes to assist the Commission constructively.

The Council therefore proposes that:

- Chickerell Parish be retained in its entirety as a single, two-member Dorset Council ward, aligned with the parish boundary; and
- where electoral balancing is required in this part of the county, this should be addressed through adjustments to neighbouring wards, rather than through subdivision or amalgamation of Chickerell.

Given that Chickerell Ward's electorate balance improves over time, the Council

considers that altering its boundaries would bring limited numerical benefit while creating unnecessary impacts on community identity and governance.

6. Conclusion

Chickerell Town Council submits that:

- Chickerell Ward meets the requirements of electoral equality, with improving balance over the forecast period;
- the parish, including Charlestown & Littlesea, constitutes a recognisable and cohesive community with shared interests and challenges; and
- retaining the ward intact supports effective and convenient local government.

Accordingly, the Town Council supports the retention of Chickerell Ward as a single, two-member ward and submits this response as a proactive and constructive contribution to the Electoral Review of Dorset Council.