



BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVIEW

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 102/18

12 NOVEMBER 2018

The purpose of this Report is to ask Members to determine their response to the current consultation on the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's proposals for the Ventnor and Wroxall areas.

No. DETAILS

1) INTRODUCTION

- a) The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament. It is not part of government or any political party. It is accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons.
- b) Its Review of the Island's Electoral Arrangements aims *to create 'electoral equality', where votes are as equal as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.*
- c) Its proposals are out for consultation until midnight on 12 November and those for the Island's South Area are set out in Appendix A to this Report in an extract from its Review.
- d) The Town Council considered the proposals at its meeting of 8 October and asked the Clerk and Councillors Ian Bond, Stephen Cockett and Billy Hill to explore the possibility of dividing the proposed two-Member new Ward of Ventnor & Wroxall into two one-Member Wards while still complying with the LGBCE's equality criteria.
- e) Work by Councillors Ian Bond and Stephen Cockett soon established one achievable division of the combined area that met the criteria and their map identifying that proposal is attached to this Report as Appendix B.
- f) During subsequent discussions it was agreed to ask the Isle of Wight Council if it was proposing to make a submission to the consultation process and, if so, if it could be shared with the Town Council.
- g) The request was responded to positively in both regards and the map of the Council's proposals is attached as Appendix C.

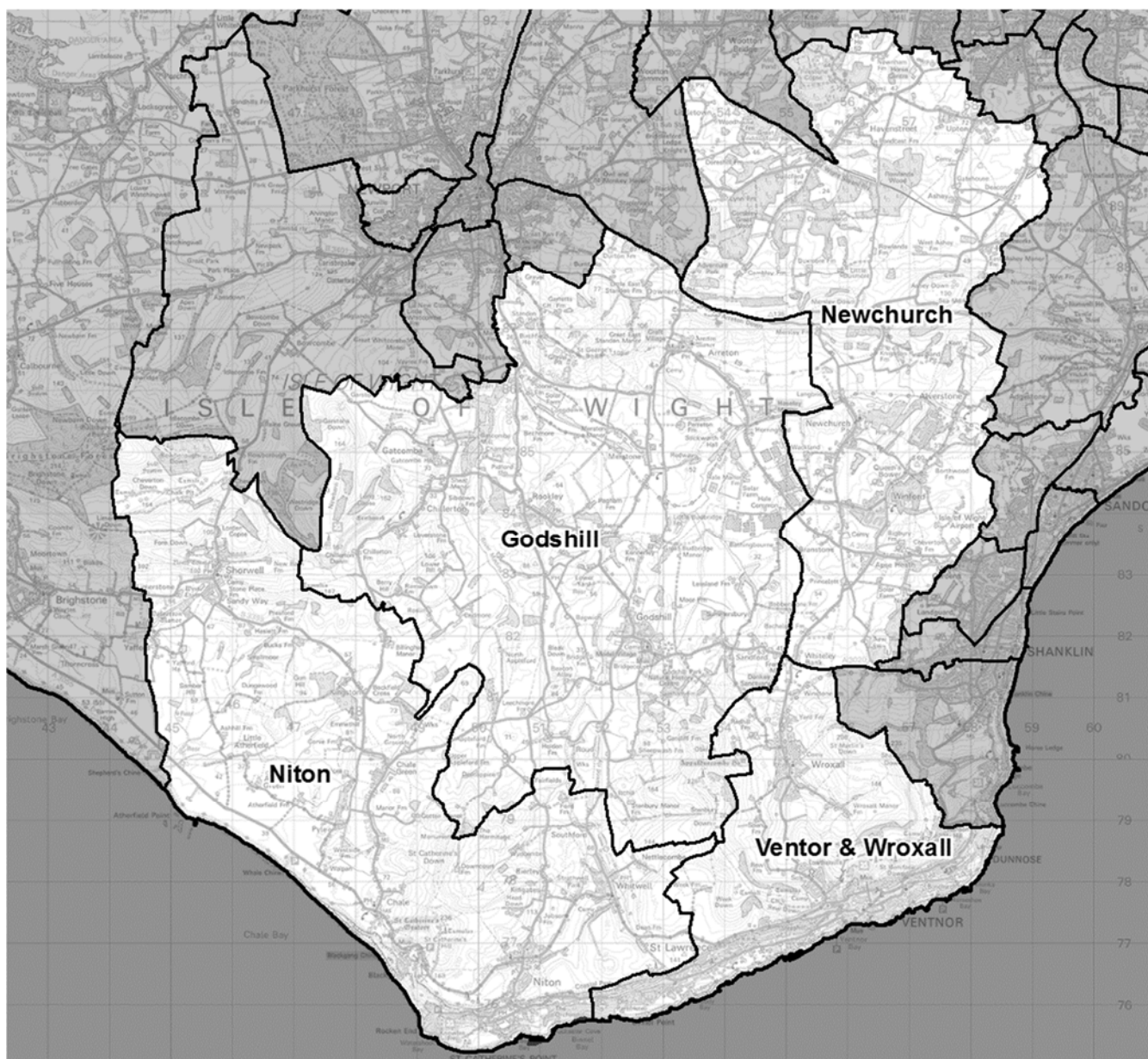
2) RESIDENT RESPONSES

- a) Residents were invited to comment on the choice between a single two-Member Ward for the combined Ventnor/Wroxall area and two one-Member divisions of it through both the Town Council's Residents' Forum and its column in the South Wight Chronicle.
- b) A total of 12 direct responses were received, 10 through the Forum and two from the Chronicle and they are attached, anonymised, as Appendix D.

3) RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to determine whether the Town Council will:

- i) submit a response to the current consultation; and, if so
 - ii) submit the proposal from Councillors Ian Bond and Stephen Cockett; or
 - iii) support the proposal by the Isle of Wight Council.
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Division name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2024
Godshill	1	3%
Newchurch	1	-1%
Niton	1	0%
Ventnor & Wroxall	2	7%

Godshill, Newchurch, Niton and Ventnor & Wroxall

105 We received four submissions for the south of the Isle of the Wight. The Council proposed that all of the existing divisions be retained in this area. The Sandown Independents opposed the Council's proposal on the basis that three of the divisions had poor variances. One respondent requested that the existing Godshill division be retained. One respondent requested to be relocated from the Ventnor West division into the Chale, Niton & Whitwell division.

106 The Council considered that the area south of Newport to be rural in nature. It noted that the existing divisions of Godshill & Wroxall and Arreton & Newchurch are forecast to produce good levels of electoral equality and, therefore, should be adopted as part of our draft recommendations.

107 The Council acknowledged that the existing divisions of Chale, Niton & Whitwell, Ventnor East and Ventnor West were projected to produce poor levels of electoral equality by 2024; however, the Council proposed that these existing divisions should be retained as part of our draft recommendations.

108 The proposed Ventnor East and Ventnor West divisions are both contained within the Ventnor parish boundaries. The Council considered the parish to be isolated by the local topography of the island and the poor transport links in the area. The Council noted that they did not want to create divisions in this area that would split parishes, as they considered that this would negatively impact on the strong links between the local councillor and the Ventnor Town Council.

109 The Council's proposed Chale, Niton & Whitwell division comprises the parishes of Chale and Niton & Whitwell. The Council considered that in the interests of the local residents in this area, they would be better served if they were represented by one councillor.

110 The Sandown Independents opposed the Council's proposals to create the neighbouring divisions of Chale, Niton & Whitwell, Ventnor West and Ventnor East as they were all forecast to produce variances over 10%. In response they proposed an alternative division pattern, which they considered would create divisions producing variances under 10%. However, there was insufficient evidence provided for us to effectively map out their proposal and analyse their proposed divisions.

111 A respondent requested that the existing Godshill & Wroxall division be retained with no alteration as they considered their area to be well represented at present.

112 A respondent noted that a number of dwellings in the south-western tip of the Ventnor parish has lost their direct road access to the remainder of the Ventnor parish as the result of landslide in 2013/14. They considered that it would be logical to include them within the same division as Niton village, given that this is where they have most direct road access. While the Commission agree that it would be logical to include these electors within the same division as Niton village, this would require us to create a parish ward in the area, as the properties are located within the Ventnor parish. However, when creating a parish ward there needs to be a minimum of

around 110 electors in the area to enable effective local governance. In this instance there are only 15 electors and we are not minded to create a parish ward.

113 We have been persuaded by the evidence provided by the Council that the parish of Ventnor reflects the community identity of the area and, on our tour of the area, we considered the town of Ventnor to be self-contained. However, we are not minded to create neighbouring divisions that are both forecast to produce variances of -17%.

114 Therefore, we are proposing to create our own division pattern for this area of Isle of the Wight. Where possible we aim to keep communities whole and we acknowledge the Council's request not to split parishes across divisions in this area. As the three existing divisions in the south are forecast to produce such poor levels of electoral equality, we are minded to combine parishes to create divisions that will produce good levels of electoral equality and reflect community ties.

115 We considered including part of Wroxall parish within each of the existing Ventnor divisions in an attempt to improve the variances of the one-councillor division arrangements; however, this would split the parish of Wroxall. In the interests of not splitting parishes in this area, we are proposing a two-councillor division. If a two-councillor Ventnor division were created with boundaries that are coterminous with the parish, this would produce a variance of -17% and the Commission are not minded to propose a division with such poor variances. Accordingly, we are proposing to combine Wroxall parish with Ventnor parish to create a two-councillor division that will produce a variance of 7% by 2024.

116 We are aware that there is a preference to create one-councillor divisions across the Isle of Wight. However, this is the only division arrangement that we could identify that would avoid splitting parish community identities and would produce a good level of electoral equality by 2024. We invite further evidence to support the possible creation of two one-councillor divisions in this area, that reflects community identity, follows clear and identifiable boundaries and will produce good levels of electoral equality. The total electoral forecast for this division is 6,336, therefore a proposal that splits this division will need to include roughly 3,168 electors in each division to persuade us to move away from our draft recommendations.

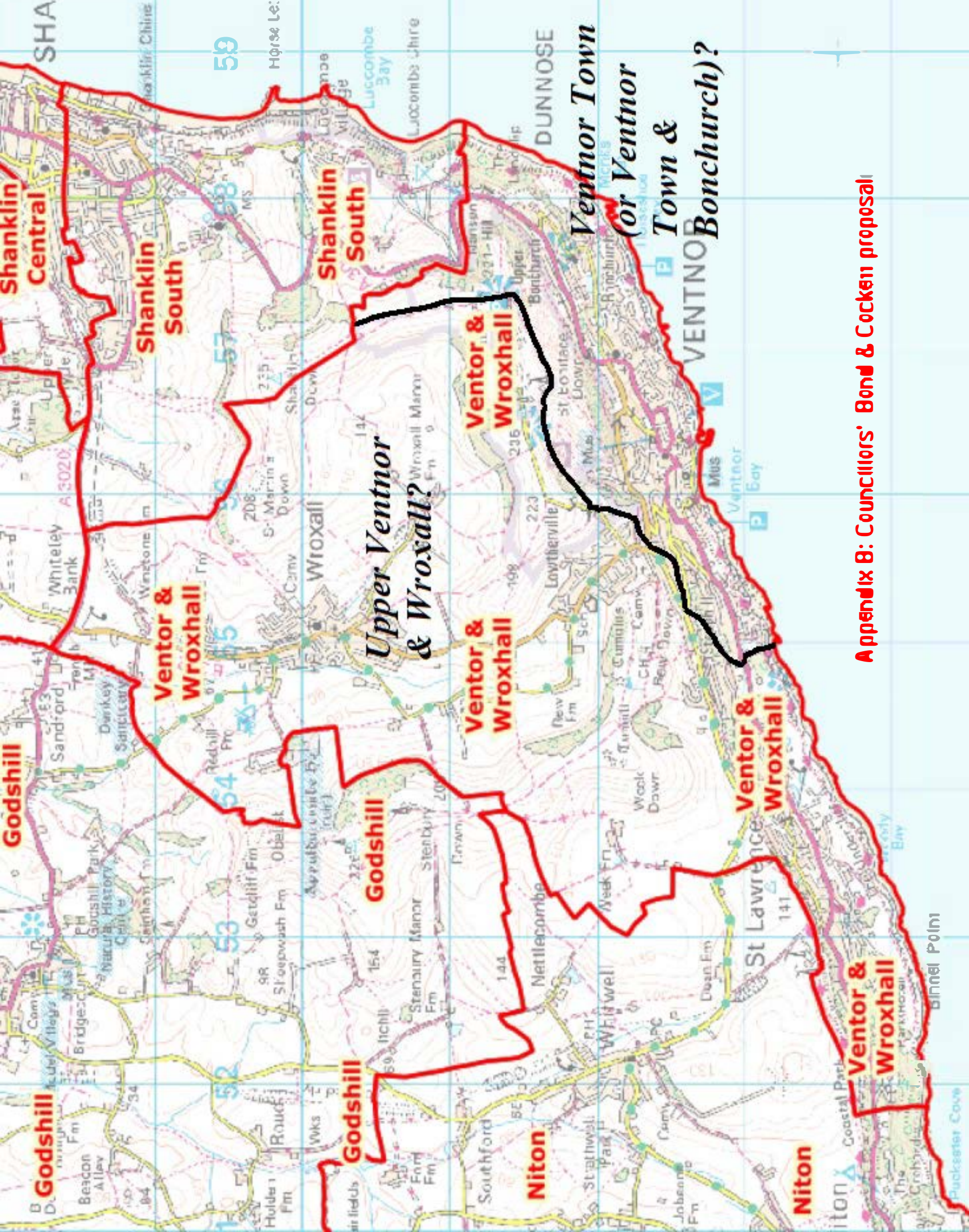
117 The existing Chale, Niton & Whitwell division is forecast to produce a variance of -20% under a council size of 39 by 2024. As mentioned above in the case of the Ventnor divisions, we are not minded to propose divisions that are forecast to produce such poor levels of electoral equality. Therefore, we are proposing to create our own division in this area. As a result of our proposal to include the parish of Wroxall within our Ventnor divisions, the parish of Godshill is no longer included within a division. We considered including Godshill parish with the parishes of Chale, Niton and Whitwell, to improve the number of electors in the divisions. However, if Godshill parish is combined with the parishes of Chale, Niton and Whitwell into a one-councillor division, this would create a one-councillor division that is forecast to produce a variance of 22%. Instead we are proposing to combine Shorwell parish within our one-councillor Niton division. This proposed division will avoid splitting parishes, will have good internal access and is forecast to produce a variance of 0% by 2023.

118 Initially the remainder of this area which comprised the parishes of Newchurch, Arreton, Rookley, Chillerton & Gatcombe and Godshill, had too few electors to be able to create two one-councillor divisions. However, as a result of our recommendation to create a division pattern for the Ryde area, which does not include the parish of Havenstreet & Ashe, the total number of electors now enables us to create two one-councillor divisions that will produce good levels of electoral equality.

119 We are proposing to combine the parishes of Havenstreet & Ashe with Newchurch into one division, and the parishes of Godshill, Chillerton & Gatcombe, Rookley and Arreton into the other division. We consider that these divisions have good internal access, avoid dividing parish communities between divisions and are forecast to produce good electoral variances by 2024.

120 Our draft recommendations are for a two-councillor Ventnor & Wroxall division that is forecast to produce a variance of 7% by 2024. We are also proposing three one-councillor divisions of Niton, Godshill and Newchurch which are forecast to produce variances of 0%, 3% and -1% by 2024, respectively.

121 Our division names are based on the largest settlement area within each division. However, the Commission welcomes evidence in support of alternative divisions names.



Appendix B: Councillors' Bond & Cocker proposal

Appendix C : Isle of Wight Council proposals



VENTNOR & WROXALL

Split into two one-member divisions

First electoral division

- Wroxall Parish Ward (existing)
- Lowtherville Parish Ward (existing)
- Bonchurch Parish Ward (existing)
- Ventnor East Parish Ward (proposed)

Second electoral division

- St Lawrence Parish Ward (existing)
- Ventnor West Parish Ward (proposed)



VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

WARD BOUNDARY CHANGES

APPENDIX D: RESIDENT RESPONSES

The 'one Ward or Two?' choice was put to residents for comment both through the Residents' Forum and the weekly Chronicle Column. The responses are listed, anonymously as promised, below. Numbers 1-10 are from the Forum and the other two from the Chronicle.

- 1) I prefer one ward David
 - 2) I think the options from the Boundary Commission and the VTC both look ok to me.
 - 3) I think you need to speak to current councillors to ask what their opinions are. You might find that their incentive to do the position is to assist a particular area in which they live, so will work harder for their cause.
 - 4) Thanks for the update. My preference is for two Wards with one Member each.
 - 5) Keep them separate
 - 6) Considering the various options I believe the one proposed by the Council to have two Wards with one Member each [i.e.: one Ward made up of Ventnor East, Ventnor West (except Whitwell Road and Upper Gills Cliff Road); and another Ward made up of St Lawrence, Lowtherville, the two exceptions from Ventnor West above and Wroxall is the preferred solution.
 - 7) The Boundary Commission's option sounds the least complicated of the two, so we would opt for that.
 - 8) Having previously lived in St Lawrence, we moved back into Ventnor a year ago, we wanted to live in Ventnor as we enjoy the town and want to be part of it.
 - 9) We now live in Upper Gills Cliff Road and see that the proposal to have two wards would mean that we would no longer be in the Ventnor ward but would be relegated to the St Lawrence, Lowtherville and Wroxall ward. So given the choice I would prefer the option to combine Ventnor and Wroxall into a larger ward with two County Councillors. That way, at least we can still feel part of the town that we love.
 - 10) I feel I need to know more but two wards with Councillors in parity with the rest of the Island seems most appropriate. I don't see having two Councillors for all of Ventnor and Wroxall?
 - 11) But would these changes impact on the number of Councillors we currently have ie would we lose any?
 - 12) My opinion is that Ventnor should not be split and continue as one entity with two councillors
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