

# **Surrey Heath Borough Council Community Governance Review 2025-26 Terms of Reference**

## **Introduction**

Surrey Heath Borough Council is undertaking a Community Governance Review of the whole of the borough of Surrey Heath.

In undertaking this Community Governance Review, the Borough Council will be guided by:

- Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007,
- the relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972 and
- the “Guidance on Community Governance Reviews” (March 2010) issued in accordance with section 100(4) of the 2007 Act by the Department for Communities and Local Government and The Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

and the following regulations which guide, in particular, consequential matters arising from the Review:

- Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008
- Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008

Section 81 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires the Council to publish its Terms of Reference in a Review.

## **What is a Community Governance Review?**

A Community Governance Review is a review of the whole or part of the borough to consider one or more of the following:

- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes and parish councils;
- The naming of a parish and the style of a new parish;
- The electoral arrangements for parishes (including the ordinary year of election, council size, the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding), and
- Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.

## **Why are we carrying out this Community Governance Review?**

A CGR provides an opportunity for principal authorities to review and make changes to community governance in their area. Such reviews can be undertaken when there have been changes in population or in relation to specific, or local, new issues to ensure that the community governance for the area continues to be effective and convenient and it reflects the identities and interests of the community.

The government has emphasised that recommendations made in Community Governance Review ought to bring about improved community engagement, more cohesive communities, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

Government guidance advises that a review should be undertaken every 10-15 years. In this period there has been one CGR conducted, which involved the review of Windlesham parish.

Current proposals for local government reorganisation (LGR) propose the dissolution of the eleven district and boroughs, along with their respective authorities, and Surrey County Council, in April 2027. These authorities will be replaced with either two or three unitary authorities.

At present, part of the borough of Surrey Heath is parished. If the proposals for LGR progress as expected, in the western part of the borough, which comprises Camberley, Frimley, Heatherside, Parkside, Frimley Green, Mytchett, and Deepcut, there will be no lower tier of local government below that of the new unitary authority. The formation of new parishes may help to address a loss of local representation when the borough and county council are replaced with a single unitary authority.

### **Considerations of a Community Governance Review**

Section 9 of the 2007 Act requires principal councils to ensure that community governance within the area under review will be:

- reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area;
- provide effective and convenient local government; and
- take into account other arrangements for community representation and engagement

In doing so, the Community Governance Review is required to take into account:

- the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion;
- the size, population and boundaries of the local community; and
- the impact on communities, including precepts.

### **Decision Making**

As the principal authority, Surrey Heath Borough Council is responsible for undertaking any Community Governance Review within its electoral area.

Decisions at each stage of the review will be formulated by a Community Governance Working Group, as informed by representations received during the consultation, and referred to the Full Council for agreement.

### **Consultation**

## **How will Surrey Heath Borough Council undertake this Community Governance Review?**

The Council will comply with legislative requirements by:

- (a) consulting local government electors for the area under review;
- (b) consulting any other person or body, including a local authority or elected representative, who appears to the Council to have an interest in the review;
- (c) consulting the existing parish councils in the area;
- (d) informing Surrey County Council of the review and sending it a copy of these Terms of Reference;
- (e) taking into account any representations received in connection with the review.

Comments are welcomed from other people or organisations that wishes to make representations.

The Council will:

- (i) take into account representations received in response to the initial consultation, then publish draft recommendations and consult on those recommendations;
- (ii) take into account representations received in response to the consultation on the draft recommendations, then publish the final recommendations and, if required, make a community governance reorganisation order to give effect to agreed changes.

In forming its recommendations, the Council will need to take into account the views of local people and must take into account the representations it receives. When taking into account these representations, the Council is also bound to have regard to the need to secure that community governance within the area under review is:

- (a) reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area;
- (b) effective and convenient.

In addition, parishes should be viable and should possess a precept that enables them to contribute to the real provision of services in their areas in an economic and efficient manner.

The review will be publicised by the following methods

- the Council's website and social media channels
- press releases
- Council noticeboards
- Targeted stakeholder engagement

The timetable for review is set out at Appendix 1 to these Terms of Reference.

## **Scope of the Review - General**

This review will consider whether

- a. there is a desire and need to create new parish councils for the unparished areas; and
- b. there is a desire and need to change any arrangements of the existing parish councils, which include Bisley, Chobham, West End, and Windlesham Parish Councils.

This may include:

- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes and parish councils;
- The naming of a parish and the style of a new parish;
- The electoral arrangements for parishes (including the ordinary year of election, council size, the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding), and
- Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.

A map of the borough, setting out the unparished and parished areas, is at Appendix 2.

### **Scope of the Review – Unparished area of the Borough**

The unparished areas of the borough include the following wards, with the electorate and properties as at 1 May 2025.

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Electorate</b>	<b>Properties</b>
Frimley	3,896	2,240
Frimley Green	5,328	2,828
Heatherside	5,849	2,981
Mytchett & Deepcut	5,880	3,698
Old Dean	3,902	2,159
Parkside	4,004	2,015
St Michaels	4,384	2,803
St Pauls	3,981	1,898
Town	4,327	2,703
Watchetts	4,077	2,177

If parish councils are not established across this area then electors within it will only be represented by one tier of local government.

As part of the review the Council will consult residents for their views on creating new parishes within the currently unparished area. Residents will be asked to comment on whether they support the creation of new parishes and, if so, their views on the areas covered by each new parish. A selection of options is set out at Appendix 3, but alternative suggestions are welcomed.

The Council is required by law to consider other forms of community governance as alternatives or stages towards establishing parish councils.

### **Scope of the Review – Parished area of the Borough**

The parished area of the borough includes the following parishes, with the electorate and properties per parish as at 1 May 2025:

<b>Parish</b>	<b>Parish ward (where relevant)</b>	<b>Electorate</b>	<b>Properties</b>
Bisley	-	2,878	1,531
Chobham	-	3,183	1,875
West End	-	4,166	2,142
Windlesham	Bagshot	4,380	2,889
	Lightwater	5,337	2,901
	Windlesham (North)	1,020	544
	Windlesham (South)	2,483	1,418

The review will seek representations and views on any changes to the existing parishes within Surrey Heath, which may include consolidation, realignment or disaggregation of these parishes. Included in, but not limited to, this consultation will be proposals to:

- Consider whether the arrangements for the area to the south of Scott's Grove Road, Bisley (known as "Bisley detached"), which falls within Bisley Parish but is geographically adjacent to Chobham Parish, remain appropriate.
- To review the western boundary of West End Parish with the intention that Minorca Avenue sits entirely outside the parish boundary.
- To review the warding arrangements for Windlesham Parish with a view to abolishing the Windlesham (North) and Windlesham (South) wards and replacing them with a single Windlesham ward; consideration will also be given to altering the number of councillors representing each parish ward.

Any changes proposed will have a particular focus on how the parishes function in relation to the changes anticipated by LGR.

### **Electorate Forecasts**

The review will be conducted using electoral data taken from the May 2025 Electoral Register. When conducting the review, the Council will consider electoral forecasts for the next five years. These forecasts will be based upon planned developments within the borough.

### **Electoral Arrangements**

The Review will be to consider the 'Electoral Arrangements' and this will cover how a council is constituted for any parish established by this review, comprising the following:

- The ordinary year in which elections are held;
- The number of Councillors to be elected to the council;
- The division (or not) of the parish into wards for the purpose of electing Councillors;
- The number and boundaries of any such wards;
- The number of Councillors to be elected for any such wards; and
- The name of any such wards.

The Local Government Act 1972 states that ordinary election of Parish Councillors shall take place every fourth year. However, parish elections may be held in other years to coincide with the cycle for the principal Council, so that the costs of elections can be shared. If the Review finds that it will be appropriate to hold an election for Parish Councillors, for a newly formed parish, at an earlier date than the next scheduled ordinary elections, the terms of office of any newly elected Parish Councillors will be so reduced as to enable the electoral cycle to revert to the normal cycle in the area at the next ordinary elections.

The number of Parish Councillors for each parish council must not be less than five. There is no maximum number and there are no rules relating to the allocation of Councillors. There are, however, guidelines produced both by the National Association of Local Councils and by the Aston Business School and the Council will be mindful of these during the review. The Government's guidance is that "each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and the pattern of communities."

### **Consequential Matters**

A Reorganisation Order may cover any consequential matters that appear to the Council to be necessary or proper to give effect to the Order. These may include:

- the transfer and management or custody of property;
- the setting of precepts for new parishes;
- provision with respect to the transfer of any functions, property, rights and liabilities;
- provision for the transfer of staff, compensation for loss of office, pensions and other staffing matters.

In these matters, the Council will be guided by Regulations that have been issued following the 2007 Act.

Regulations regarding the transfer of property, rights and liabilities require that any apportionments shall use the population of the area as estimated by the proper officer of the Council as an appropriate proportion. The Regulations regarding the establishment of a precept for a new parish require this Council to calculate the first anticipated precept for a newly constituted parish council and for the amount of that precept to be included in the Reorganisation Order.

## Let Us Know Your Views

Any representations should be submitted via the Council's website [www.surreyheath.gov.uk](http://www.surreyheath.gov.uk) or in writing addressed to:

Democratic Services  
Surrey Heath Borough Council  
Surrey Heath House  
Knoll Road  
Camberley  
GU15 3HD

Alternatively, representations may be sent to [cgr@surreyheath.gov.uk](mailto:cgr@surreyheath.gov.uk)

Representations on the initial consultation must be received by 11.59 pm on **19 September 2025**.

Please also note that the consultation stages of a Community Governance Review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, the Council will make available for public inspection full copies of all representations it takes into account as part of this review.

Date of Publication of Terms of Reference:  
24 July 2025

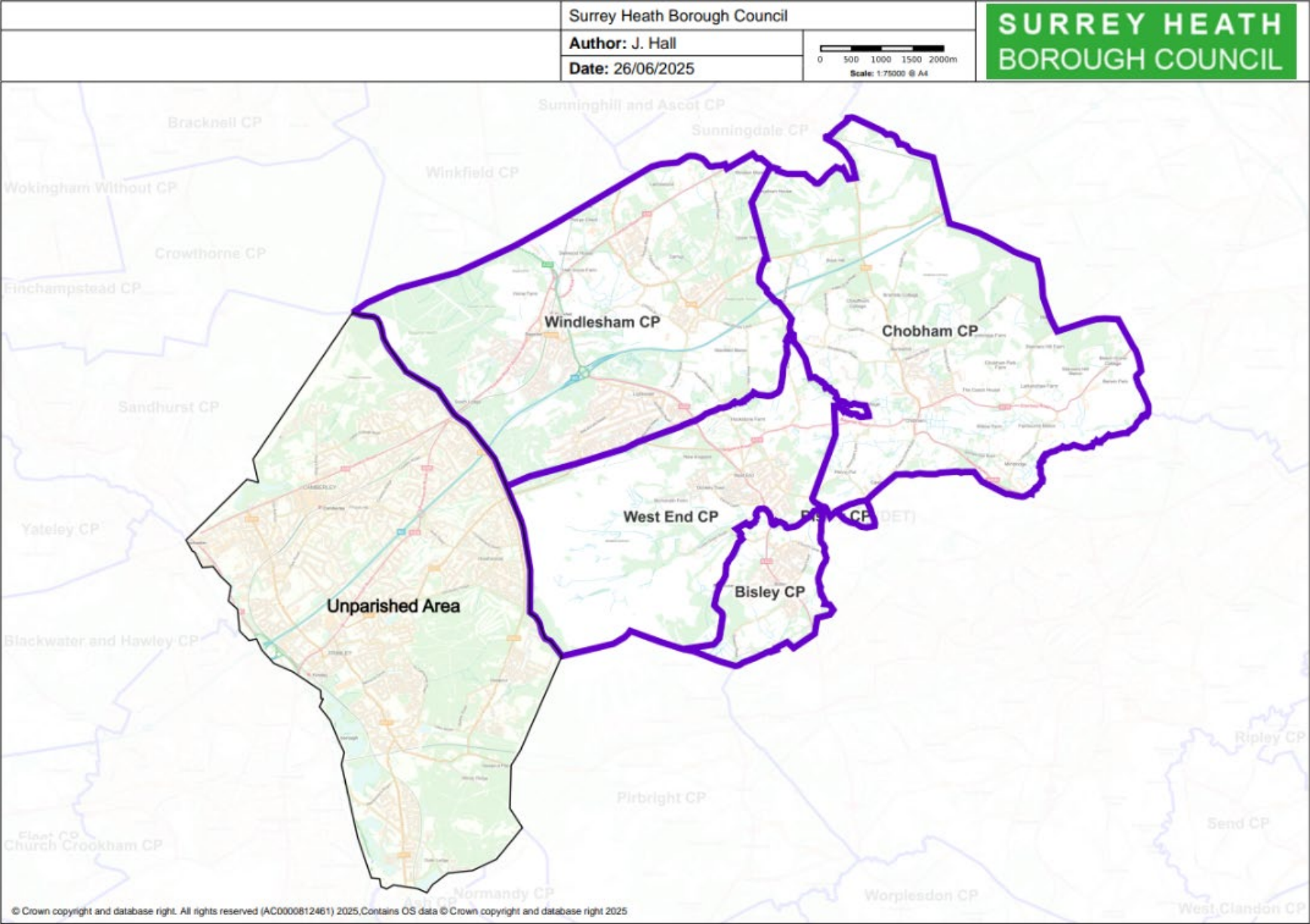
**Community Governance Review 2025-26 – Timetable**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>What happens?</b>
Stage 1	16 July 2025		Full Council to consider conducting a CGR
Stage 2	24 July to 19 September 2025	8 weeks	Terms of Reference are published, and formal initial Community Governance Review consultation commences
Stage 3	22 September to 10 October 2025	3 weeks	Consideration of responses and drafting of recommendations.
Stage 4	22 October 2025		Full Council considers and agrees Draft Recommendations
Stage 5	27 October to 5 December 2025	6 weeks	Further public consultation on Draft Recommendations.
Stage 6	8 December to 6 February 2026	8 weeks	Formulation of final recommendations.
Stage 7	18 February 2026		Final recommendations to be considered by Full Council.
Stage 8		By April 2026	Reorganisation of Community Governance Order made.
Stage 9	May 2027		Parish council elections to be held under any new arrangements that may be decided.

This timeline may be adjusted by the Council after representations have been received in response to the initial consultation. This will allow the Council sufficient flexibility to ensure that the review is conducted efficiently and effectively.

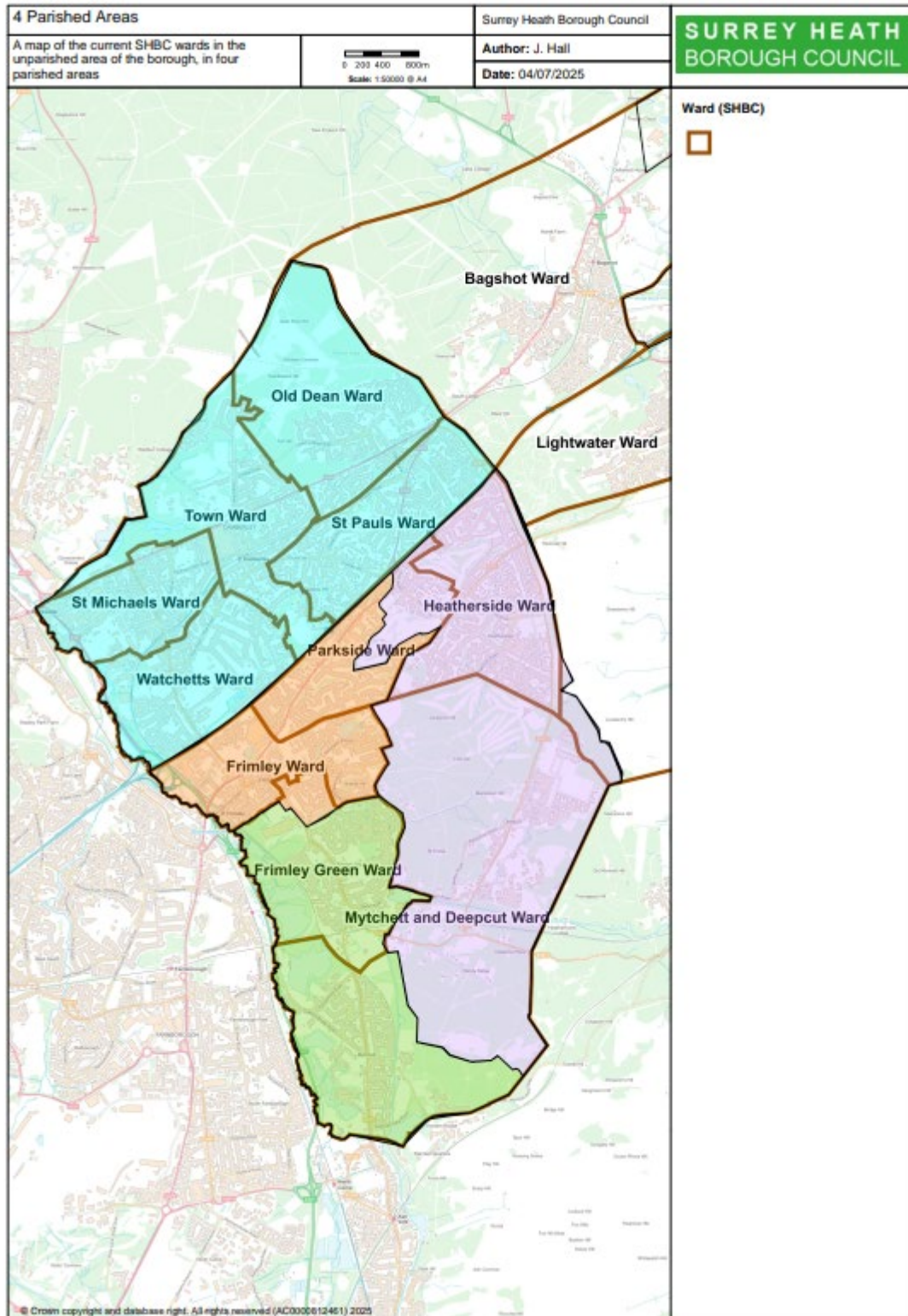
Any changes to the timetable will be agreed by the Full Council and publicised on the Council's website.





## Annex C – Proposed options for unparished areas

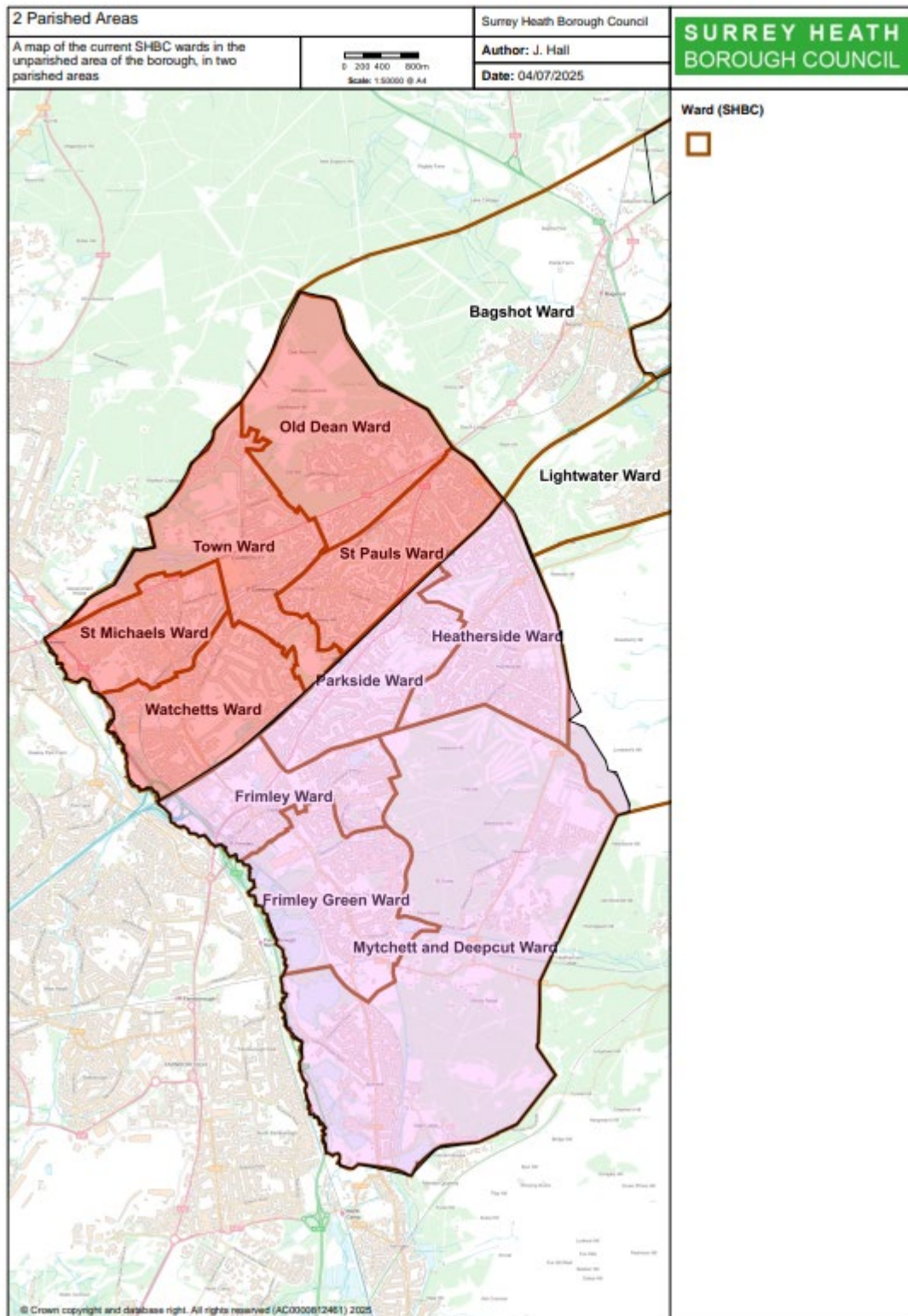
### Option 1: Four Parishes





## Annex C – Proposed options for unparished areas

### Option 2: Two Parishes



## Annex C – Proposed options for unparished areas

### Option 3: One Parish

