CITY OF BELMONT

Discussion Paper Review of Wards and Representation - 2020

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Prepared by City of Belmont

The City invites you to consider the appropriateness and effectiveness of its current ward system and suggest options for change. Details of the current ward system, the review process and, to assist with providing feedback, examples of possible options for change, are set out in this paper.
Please contact Melinda Lymon, Principal Governance and Compliance Advisor on 9477 7203 or Melinda.lymon@belmont.wa.gov.au for more information.

Submissions must be received by 5:00pm – Friday, 16 October 2020.

For more information go to: connect.belmont.wa.gov.au/wardreview and make a submission at: connect.belmont.wa.gov.au/wardreview/survey_tools/make-a-submission

Submissions can also be:

Emailed to Belmont@belmont.wa.gov.au (titled 'Ward Review');

Hand Delivered to 215 Wright Street Cloverdale, Western Australia; or

Posted to the City at Locked Bag 379 Cloverdale WA 6985

1 Background

The City of Belmont has resolved to undertake a review of its ward system to comply with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act). The key requirements of a local government's ward and representation as set out in the Act are:

- If the method of filling the office of mayor or president is election by the council, the council is to consist of not less than 6 nor more than 15 councillors (section 2.17); and

- A district (local government area) can be divided into wards (section 2.2).

Clause 6 of Schedule 2.2 to the Act provides that a local government that has a ward system is required to carry out reviews of:

- its ward boundaries; and
- the number of offices of Councillor for each ward,

from time to time so that not more than eight years elapse between successive reviews.

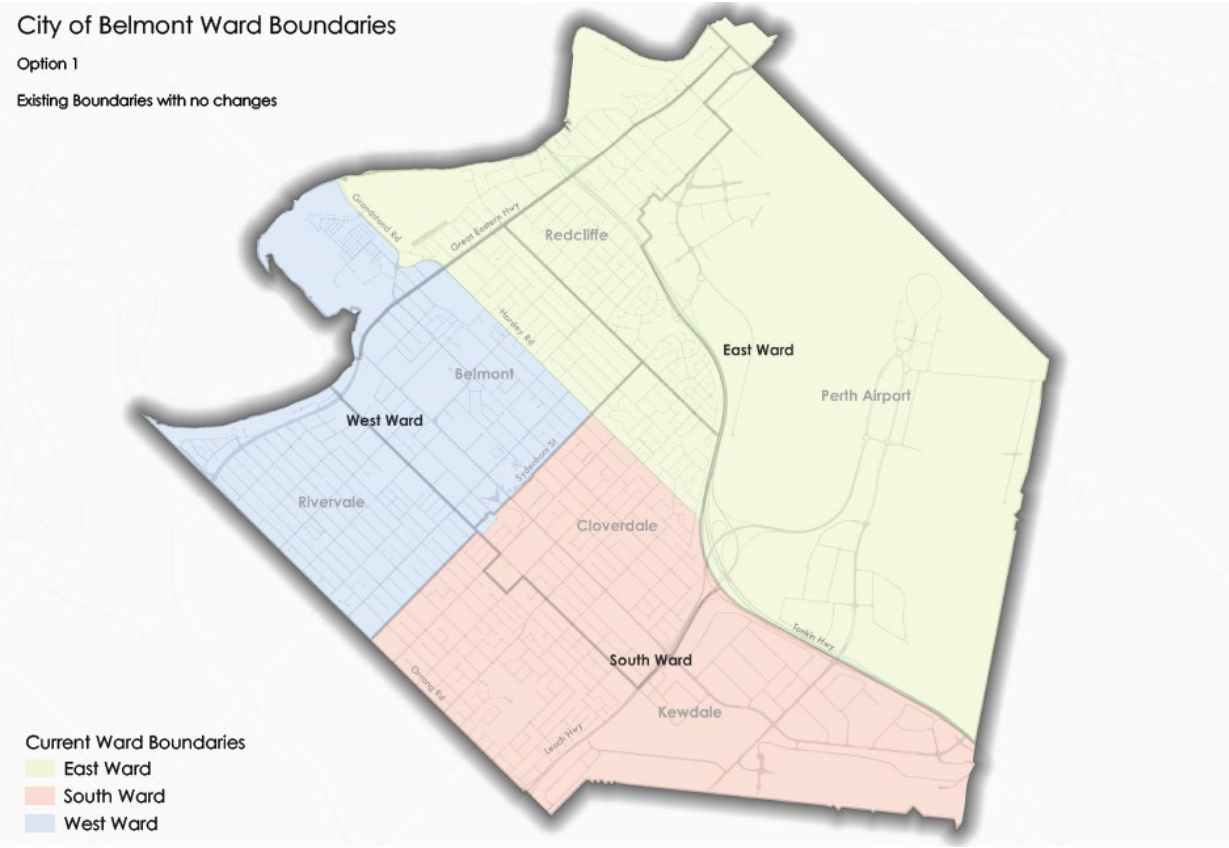
The City of Belmont last reviewed the wards and representation in 2013, and it is now required to carry out another review. To enable any change resulting from the review to take effect for the ordinary local government elections in October 2021 the review is to be submitted to the Local Government Advisory Board prior to the end of January 2021.

1.1 Current situation

The City of Belmont currently has nine (9) Councillors elected from three (3) wards as follows:

Ward	Electors	Council Members	Councillor: Elector Ratio	Percentage deviation from average
East	7,331	3	2,444	11.16%
South	8,156	3	2,719	1.16%
West	9,268	3	3,089	-12.32%
Totals or average	24,755	9	2,751	

Table 1: City of Belmont Elector to Councillor Ratios - September 2019



Map 1: Current Ward Boundaries

The percentage ratio deviation gives a clear indication of the percentage difference between the average Councillor to elector ratio for the whole local government and the Councillor to elector ratio for each ward. A balanced representation is considered to be a percentage ratio deviation within plus or minus 10%. A negative result indicates that the ward is under represented and a positive result indicates that the ward is over represented.

The figures in Table 1 above outline that the South Ward is quite close to the average for the Councillor to elector ratio for the City of Belmont, while the percentage deviation from the average is 11.16% for the East Ward indicating slight over representation, and the percentage deviation from the average is -12.32% for the West Ward indicating slight under representation. The ratios for the East and West Wards are marginally outside the limits considered appropriate by the LGAB.

Across other metropolitan local governments in Western Australia the representation for electors per Councillor varies greatly with the lowest being 161 electors per Councillor (Shire of Peppermint Grove) and the highest being 10,456 electors per Councillor (City of Stirling). The average across the metropolitan area is approximately 4,095 electors per Councillor.

The current City of Belmont Councillor to elector ratio for all wards is below the average across Western Australian metropolitan local governments.

1.2 Review process

Prior to conducting the review, the City must provide at least six weeks local public notice that a review will be carried out. The purpose of the local public notice is to inform the community of the proposed review and invite comments and submissions which will inform the review process. The public is invited to consider the appropriateness and effectiveness of the City's current ward system and suggest options for ward and representation change, and the local government can facilitate this by providing some examples of ward and representation change as suggestions. Examples could include:

- Creating new wards in a district already divided into wards;
- Changing the boundaries of a ward or wards;
- Abolishing any or all of the wards into which a district is divided;
- Changing the name of a district or a ward;
- Changing the number of offices of Councillor on a council; and
- Specifying or changing the number of offices of Councillor for a ward.

The review process involves a number of steps:

- Council resolves to undertake the review;
- Public submission period opens;
- Information is provided to the community for discussion;
- Public submission period closes;
- Council considers all submissions and relevant factors and makes a decision;
- Council submits a report to the Local Government Advisory Board (LGAB) for its consideration; and
- (If a change is proposed) The LGAB submits a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government (the Minister).

1.3 Factors to be considered

The City cannot constrain the public to certain options, and must consider all options put forward by the public. Upon receiving the public comments, the City will conduct a review, taking into account the public comments and with regard to the factors set out below:

Community Interest	• Sense of community identity and belonging, similarities in the characteristics of the residents of a community and similarities in the economic activities • Dependence on the shared facilities in an area as reflected in catchment areas of local schools and sporting teams, or the circulation areas of local newspapers
Physical and topographical features	• These may be natural or man-made features that will vary from area to area. Water features such as rivers and catchment boundaries may be relevant considerations • Coastal plain and foothills regions, parks and reserves may be relevant as may other man made features such as railway lines and freeways
Demographic trends	• Characteristics of human populations, such as population size, and its distribution by age, sex, occupation and location provide important demographic information • Current and projected population characteristics will be relevant as well as similarities and differences between areas within the local government
Economic factors	• Any factor that reflects the character of economic activities and resources in the area • This includes the industries that occur in a local government area (or the release of land for these) and the distribution of community assets and infrastructure such as road networks
Ratio of council members to electors	• The ratio of Councillors to electors is particularly significant - it is expected that each local government will have similar ratios of electors to Councillors across its wards • The Local Government Advisory Board (**LGAB**) will not support deviations of more than plus or minus 10% of the average ratio of Councillors to electors between wards

After completing the review, the City must make a recommendation to the LGAB. The LGAB's role is to determine if all relevant factors were properly considered, and make a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government, who may accept or reject the Board's recommendation.

If changes have been requested to the ward and representation and the Minister approves the request, these changes will come into effect at the next council elections. The next council elections for the City of Belmont are scheduled for October 2021.

2 Analysis of Current Wards and Representation

The City has three wards, East, South and West. Each ward is represented by three Councillors who serve a four year term. The City is also represented by a Mayor who is elected by the Council. At each biennial election half of the City of Belmont Councillors are elected for terms of four years. The City currently has 24,755 electors (WA Electoral Commission 2019 Ordinary Election Results data), with an average ratio of 2,751 electors per Councillor.

The method of election of the Mayor is a separate matter and not dealt with as part of the ward and representation review process.

The City's current wards and representation model has been analysed in reference to the five factors discussed above.

Community of interest

The City is 40 square kilometres in size.

The City of Belmont's suburbs are predominantly within the current ward boundaries, with three suburbs split between wards. The wards are made up of the following suburbs:

East Ward
- Ascot (portion included in West Ward)
- Redcliffe
- Perth Airport

South Ward
- Cloverdale (portion included in East Ward)
- Kewdale

West Ward
- Rivervale
- Belmont (portion included in East Ward)

Physical and topographic features

The City of Belmont is an inner city Council whose western border is 6 kilometres from the Perth CBD. The City of Belmont encompasses a total land area of 40 square kilometres with main arterial roads including Orrong Road, Tonkin Highway and the Great Eastern Highway. Key transport routes in the City include the Graham Farmer Freeway, the Kewdale Freight Train Terminal and both the international and domestic airports. In addition, 11 kilometres of Swan River foreshore forms the City's North West boundary.

Demographic trends

It is anticipated that the population will continue to grow as the City undergoes Urban renewal. The City's population (which tends to also drive changes in elector numbers) to the year 2041 (see https://forecast.id.com.au/belmont/population-summary) is forecast to be 65,659 broken down as follows:

Population Summary

City of Belmont	Forecast Year						Change between 2016 and 2041	
Area	**2016**	**2021**	**2026**	**2031**	**2036**	**2041**	**Total Change**	**Avg annual % change**
City of Belmont	**41,448**	**45,332,**	**50,455**	**55,936**	**60,862**	**65,659**	**+24,211**	**+1.86**
Ascot	2,632	2,924	3,197	3,424	3,852	4,814	+2,182	+2.45
Belmont	7,047	7,656	8,544	9,294	9,700	10,122	+3,075	+1.46
Cloverdale	8,423	9,319	9,904	10,393	10,844	11,286	+2,863	+1.18
Kewdale	7,253	7,852	8,203	8,593	8,965	9,374	+2,121	+1.03
Redcliffe – Perth Airport	5,241	5,453	6,414	8,886	11,484	13,510	+8,269	+3.86
Rivervale	10,852	12,128	14,193	15,346	16,016	16,552	+5,700	+1.70

Table 1: Population and household forecasts, 2016 to 2041, prepared by .id , the population experts, October 2018.*

*Please note that population numbers in forecast.id for the 2016 base year are derived from Estimated Resident Population from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. These differ from (and are usually higher than) Census counts as they factor in population missed by the Census and population overseas on Census night. They are generally considered a more accurate measure of population size than Census counts.

Growth in the City is expected in all areas, though a higher growth rate is forecast for Ascot, and particularly Redcliffe for the period to 2026 and beyond. Following this review of wards and representation, if wards are still applicable, the next review will be due in 2029 and depending on the reliability of the forecasts the representation may have adjusted back between the East and West Wards.

Economic factors

The City of Belmont is part of Perth's Eastern Region and a powerhouse in the regional economy of Greater Perth. The main industry sectors are Transport, Postal & Warehousing, Manufacturing, Mining and Construction Services, Health and Social Assistance and Retail Services.

Almost 3,500 businesses actively operate in the City of Belmont. These are mainly located in the Kewdale industrial area, the Belmont Business Park and along the Great Eastern Highway.

The horse racing and equine industry is also an important part of the City's history and continues to be a major contributor to the economy.

Ratio of Councillors to electors

The current ratio of electors per Councillor is:

Ward	Electors	Council Members	Councillor: Elector Ratio	Percentage deviation from average
East	7,331	3	2,444	11.16%
South	8,156	3	2,719	1.16%
West	9,268	3	3,089	-12.32%
Totals or average	24,755	9	2,751	

This indicates that the South Ward is quite close to the average for the Councillor to elector ratio while the East Ward is slightly over represented and the West Ward is slightly under represented. The ratios for the East and West Wards are marginally outside the 10% limits considered appropriate by the LGAB.

3 Examples of Options for Wards and Representation Change

The City has put forward the following examples for ward and representation change to provoke discussion and encourage submissions and comments.

Please note that these examples are provided for discussion purposes only and are not intended to be all encompassing or to indicate which options would be supported by the City. Members of the community are invited to provide any options for change to the City for consideration as part of the ward and representation review process.

Note – Elector Numbers used for the purposes of this review were the current numbers at the close of the Electoral Roll for the 2019 Local Government Elections. The positioning of these electors to create Example 2 was achieved with BatchGeo, (https://batchgeo.com/), which utilises the Google Maps Geocoding API - known to have some of the highest quality addressing data currently available.

3.1 Example 1 – no change (refer Map 1)

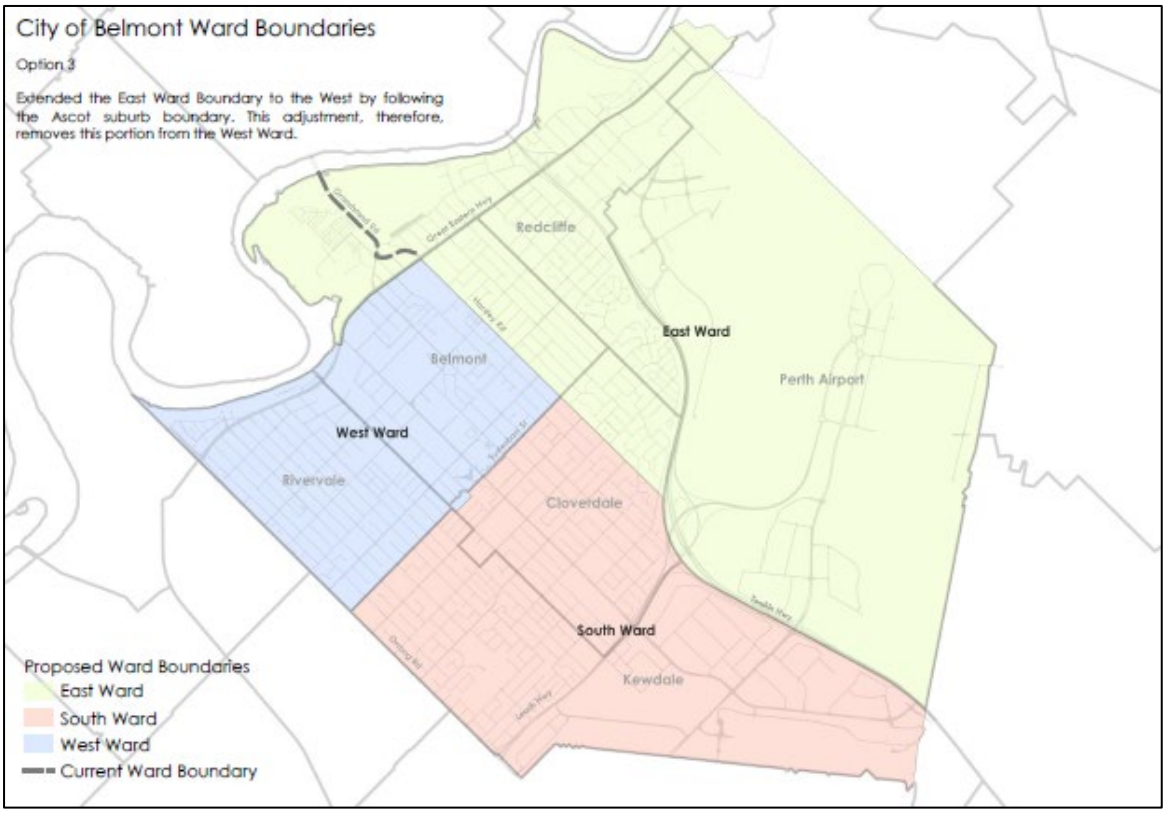
The ratios of electors to Councillors are marginally outside the limits considered appropriate by the LGAB, though population growth as outlined in Table 1 identifies that the population within the City of Belmont is proposed to increase by close to 2% annually with the increase expected to be greater in some suburbs, particularly Ascot and Redcliffe.

Some possible advantages and disadvantages of this example are:

Advantages	Disadvantages
Allows for the possible effect of future growth in eastern parts of City.	Localities (suburbs) are split between wards.
	The ratios of electors to Councillors are marginally outside the limits considered appropriate by the LGAB.

3.2 Example 2 – Move the Section of Ascot west of Grandstand Road Presently in the West Ward to the East Ward

Under this example, the City retains three wards, with three Councillors per ward. The boundary is along Hardey Road as at present and would then continue west along Great Eastern Highway to include the properties within the suburb of Ascot. The area of Ascot west of Grandstand Road is then included in the East Ward:



Map 2: Example 2: Adjusted Ward Boundaries

Example 2 results in the following ratios of Councillors to Electors:

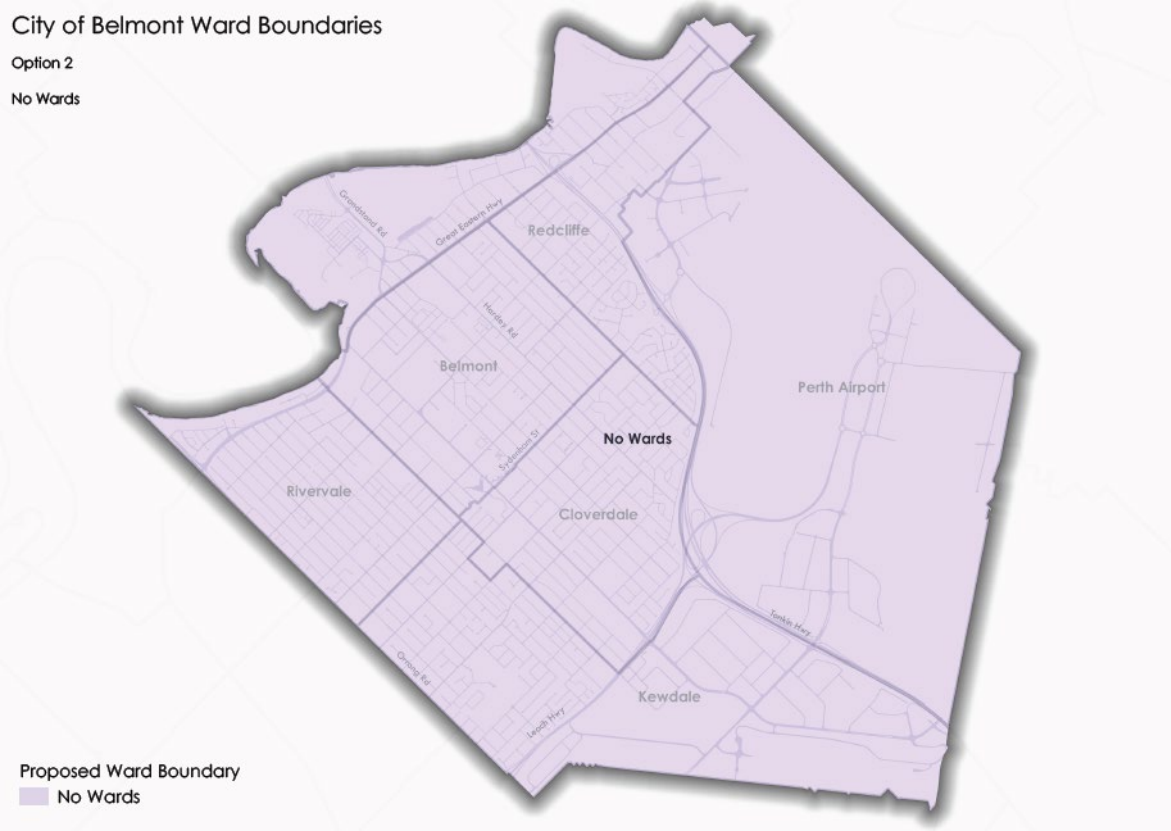
Ward	Electors	Council Members	Councillor: Elector Ratio	Percentage deviation from
East	8,057	3	2,686	2.36%
South	8,156	3	2,719	1.16%
West	8,542	3	2,847	-3.52%
Totals or average	24,755	9	2,751	

Some possible advantages and disadvantages of this example are:

Advantages	Disadvantages
Minimal change to current boundaries.	Belmont locality is still split between two wards.
Brings Elector to Councillor ratio closer.	Cloverdale locality is split between two wards.
Ascot would be wholly within East Ward (at present it is split between wards).	

3.3 Example 3 - no wards – same number of Councillors

Under this example, wards are dispensed with altogether. The only variable with this option is that the number of Councillors could be amended. This is set out in the *Local Government Act 1995* s2.17 (and can range from 6 to 15).



Map 3: Example 4: No Wards

Based on current elector numbers, the possible number of electors per Councillor is:

No. of Councillors	Electors per Councillor
6	4,126
7	3,536
8	3,094
9	2,751
10	2,476
11	2,250
12	2,063
13	1,904
14	1,768
15	1,650

Across Western Australian metropolitan local governments the average number of electors per Councillor is 4,095.

If the no ward option is implemented, there is no requirement for future ward boundary reviews.

The table below summarises the advantages and disadvantages of this example:

Advantages	Disadvantages
Councillors are elected by the whole community not just a section of it.	It may be more difficult and costly for candidates to be elected if they need to canvas the whole local government area.
Knowledge and interest in all areas of the Council's affairs could broaden the views beyond the immediate concerns of those in a ward.	Electors may feel that they are not adequately represented if they don't have an affinity with any of the Councillors.
Social networks and communities of interest are often spread across a local government and Councillors can have an overview of these.	Councillors living in a certain area may have a greater affinity and understanding of the issues specific to that area.
The election process is much simpler for the community to understand and administer.	Electors may not know the candidates who they are voting for.
Each voter has the opportunity to express a preference for every candidate for the council election.	May lead to significant communities of interest and points of view being unrepresented or for others to dominate.
There is no requirement for future ward boundary reviews.	Large numbers of candidates might be confusing for voters.
Clarifies the role of a Councillor is to represent the interest of electors, ratepayers and residents of the district, not just the ward.	May be difficult for voters to assess the performance of individual Councillors.

4 Next steps in review process

The review process and associated deadlines are as follows:

Date	Review process action
3 September 2020	Public notice provided in the Southern Gazette, on the City's website and notice boards, and on social media. Submissions are invited for a period of six weeks.
5:00pm 16 October 2020	Submissions close
16 October – 16 November 2020	Executive and Council reviews submissions and conducts review of the City's wards and representation.
15 December 2020	Review presented to Council for endorsement at Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 15 December 2020.
Late Dec 2020	City to notify LGAB of outcome of review.
January – October 2021	LGAB to consider City's review process and make a recommendation to Minister in respect to ward or representation changes (if any).
October 2021	Minister to implement any changes prior to October 2021 local government elections.

Please contact Melinda Lymon, Principal Governance and Compliance Advisor, on 9477 7203 or **melinda.lymon@belmont.wa.gov.au** for more information.

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