

CITY OF BELMONT

# Discussion Paper

## Review of Wards and Representation - 2022

**City of Belmont**

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# I Background

On 3 July 2022, the Minister for Local Government announced the final package of proposed local government reforms, following a review of public submissions. As part of the reforms to strengthen local democracy and increase community engagement new requirements will be introduced to provide for:

- The introduction of optional preferential voting;
- Directly elected Mayors and Presidents for band 1 and 2 local governments;
- Councillor numbers based on population; and
- The removal of wards for band 3 and 4 local governments

On 20 September 2022, the Minister for Local Government requested the City of Belmont, as a band 1 local government, change to a directly elected Mayor and consequently reduce the size of the elected council. Two pathways for making these election transition arrangements were offered:

## **Voluntary pathway**

- Council to resolve by Absolute Majority to change the method of filling the office of Mayor to a direct vote by the electors of the district; and
- Initiate proposals to change arrangements related to the size of structure of the Council through a Ward and Representation Review.

## **Reform election pathway**

Amendment Act – changes through reform elections in 2023.

- All Council Offices declared vacant
- All Wards abolished.

2023 elections held to fill all council offices, with a split between two and four year terms.

Newly elected Council then considers whether to establish wards through a Ward and Representation Review.

The City of Belmont Council resolved at its 25 October 2022 Ordinary Council Meeting to implement the Voluntary Pathway and undertake a Ward and Representation Review to be completed by 14 February 2023.

## **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 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of community identity and belonging, similarities in the characteristics of the residents of a community and similarities in the economic activities</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>
Physical and topographical features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Coastal plain and foothills regions, parks and reserves may be relevant as may other man made features such as railway lines and freeways</li> </ul>
Demographic trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Characteristics of human populations, such as population size, and its distribution by age, sex, occupation and location provide important demographic information</li> <li>• Current and projected population characteristics will be relevant as well as similarities and differences between areas within the local government</li> </ul>
Economic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any factor that reflects the character of economic activities and resources in the area</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>
Ratio of council members to electors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>

The current review also requires that the proposed structure aligns with the requirements of the proposed local government reforms.

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 the changes requested to the ward and representation are approved by the Minister, these changes will come into effect at the next council elections. The next council elections for the City of Belmont are scheduled for October 2023.

## **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 was elected by the Council. The City currently has 26,690 electors (WA Electoral Commission – February 2022 data), with an average ratio of 2,965 electors per Councillor.

The change to a directly elected Mayor impacts this Ward and Representation review due to the requirement to decrease the number of Councillors (maximum of eight Councillors plus Mayor is now required).

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

### **Community interest**

The City is approximately 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 Northwest 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
<b>City of Belmont</b>	<b>41,448</b>	<b>45,332</b>	<b>50,455</b>	<b>55,936</b>	<b>60,862</b>	<b>65,659</b>	<b>+24,211</b>	<b>+1.86</b>
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.

The population for the Belmont local government area stated in the 2021 Census statistics is 42,257.

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.

### **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.

Over 4,000 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.

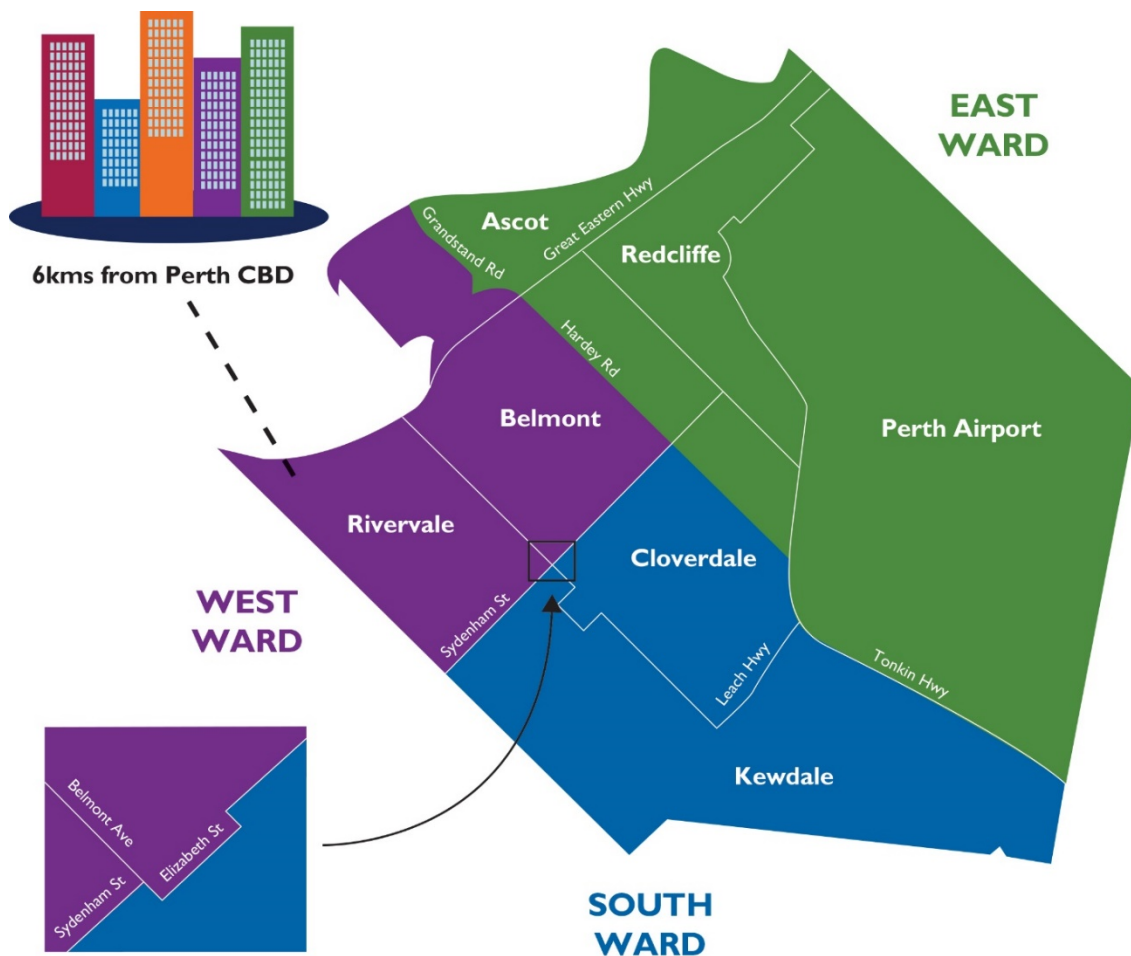
### **Current situation**

The City of Belmont currently has nine (9) Councillors elected from three (3) wards with the Mayor elected by the Council from amongst the Councillors.

The current ward structure is as follows:

Ward	Electors	Council Members	Councillor: Elector Ratio	Percentage deviation from average
East	7,821	3	2,607	12.09%
South	8,782	3	2,927	1.29%
West	10,087	3	3,362	(13.38%)
Totals or average	26,690	9	2,966	

Table 2: City of Belmont Elector to Councillor Ratios – February 2022



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 12.09% for the East Ward indicating over representation, and the percentage deviation from the average is (13.38%) for the West Ward indicating under representation. The ratios for the East and West Wards are outside the limits considered appropriate by the LGAB.

The outcome of the 2020 Ward and Representation Review proposed for the Ward Boundaries and Representation to remain with the existing structure with further review due to the future population increases predicted in the East Ward. The elector numbers used for the review were as at the close of the electoral roll for the 2019 local



government election. The proposal was accepted by the LGAB in early 2021. The ratios at the time were:

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 3: City of Belmont Elector to Councillor Ratios – 2019

### 3 Examples of options for wards and representation change

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

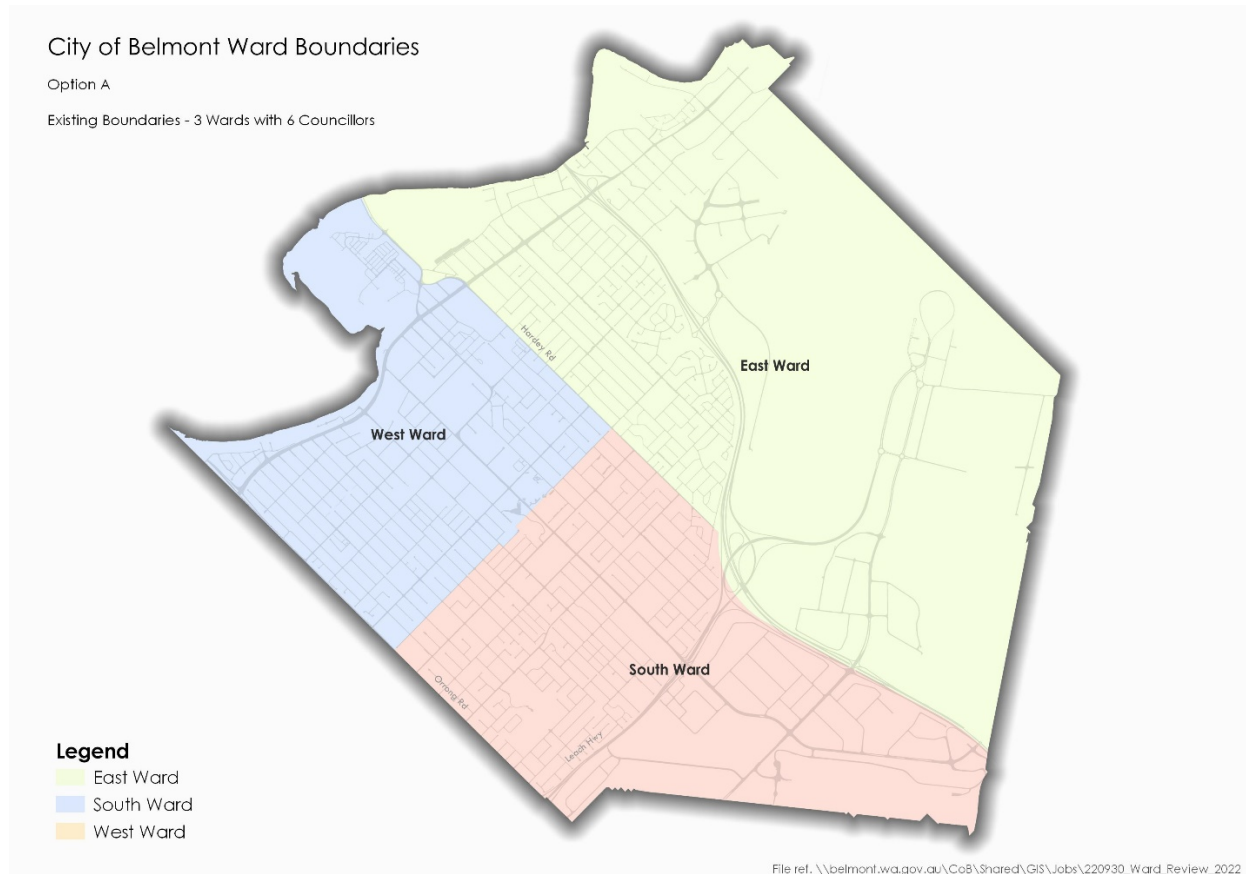
**Please note that these examples are provided for discussion purposes only and are not intended to be all encompassing or to indicate which options would be supported by the City. Members of the community are invited to provide any options for change to the City for consideration as part of the ward and representation review process that would be considered viable and in alignment with the relevant factors described in part 2 of this discussion Paper.**

**Note – Elector numbers used for the purposes of this review were the current numbers listed on the electoral roll as at 15 February 2022. There are 311 electors at that time who wish to have their name or address suppressed. These electors are evenly spread across the Wards for the purpose of the below examples.**

**Where the Ward boundaries shown do not align with suburb boundaries, an estimation of elector numbers has been necessary and will vary slightly from the final numbers on an electoral roll when finalised prior to the 2023 local government elections.**

### 3.1 Example A – Existing Ward Boundaries with reduction to six councillors

Under this example, the ratios of electors to Councillors are 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.



Map 2: Example A: Three Wards, Six Councillors

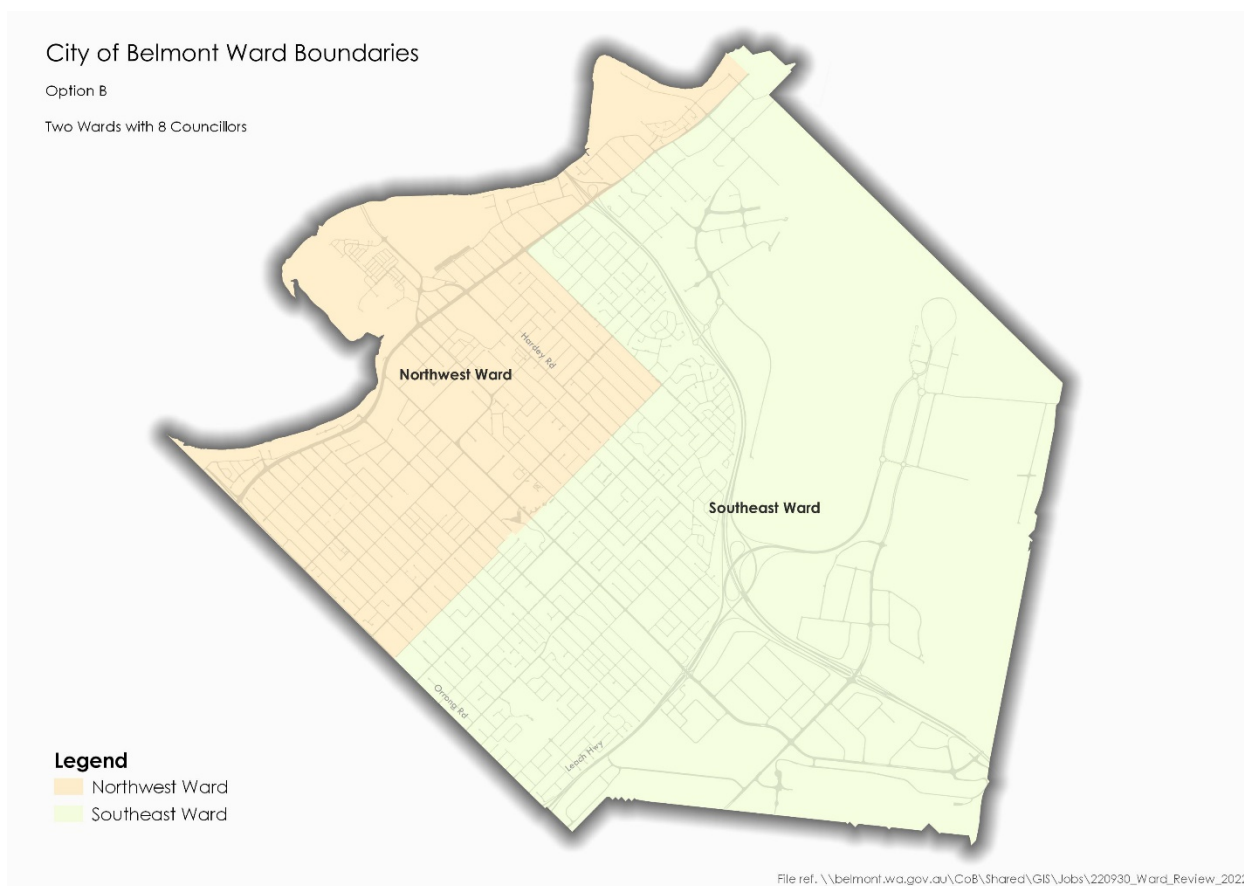
Ward	Electors	Council Members	Councillor: Elector Ratio	Percentage deviation from average
East	7,821	2	3,911	12.09%
South	8,782	2	4,391	1.29%
West	10,087	2	5,044	(13.38%)
<b>Totals or average</b>	<b>26,690</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4,448</b>	

Some possible advantages and disadvantages of this example are:

Advantages	Disadvantages
No change to current boundaries.	Localities (suburbs) are split between wards.
Allows for the possible effect of future growth in eastern parts of City.	The ratio of electors to Councillors for East Ward and West Ward are marginally outside the limits considered appropriate by the LGAB.
Electors remain in the current wards.	Reduced elector representation. Less Councillors per elector.
Reduced administrative requirement. No requirement to amend mapping.	-
Reduced Elected Member expenditure due to reduction in the number of Councillors.	-

### 3.2 Example B – two wards with eight councillors

Under this example, the City reduces the number of wards to two. Ascot, Belmont and Rivervale become the Northwest Ward and Kewdale, Cloverdale and Redcliffe become the Southeast Ward with four Councillors in each Ward.



Map 3: Example B: Two Wards, eight Councillors

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

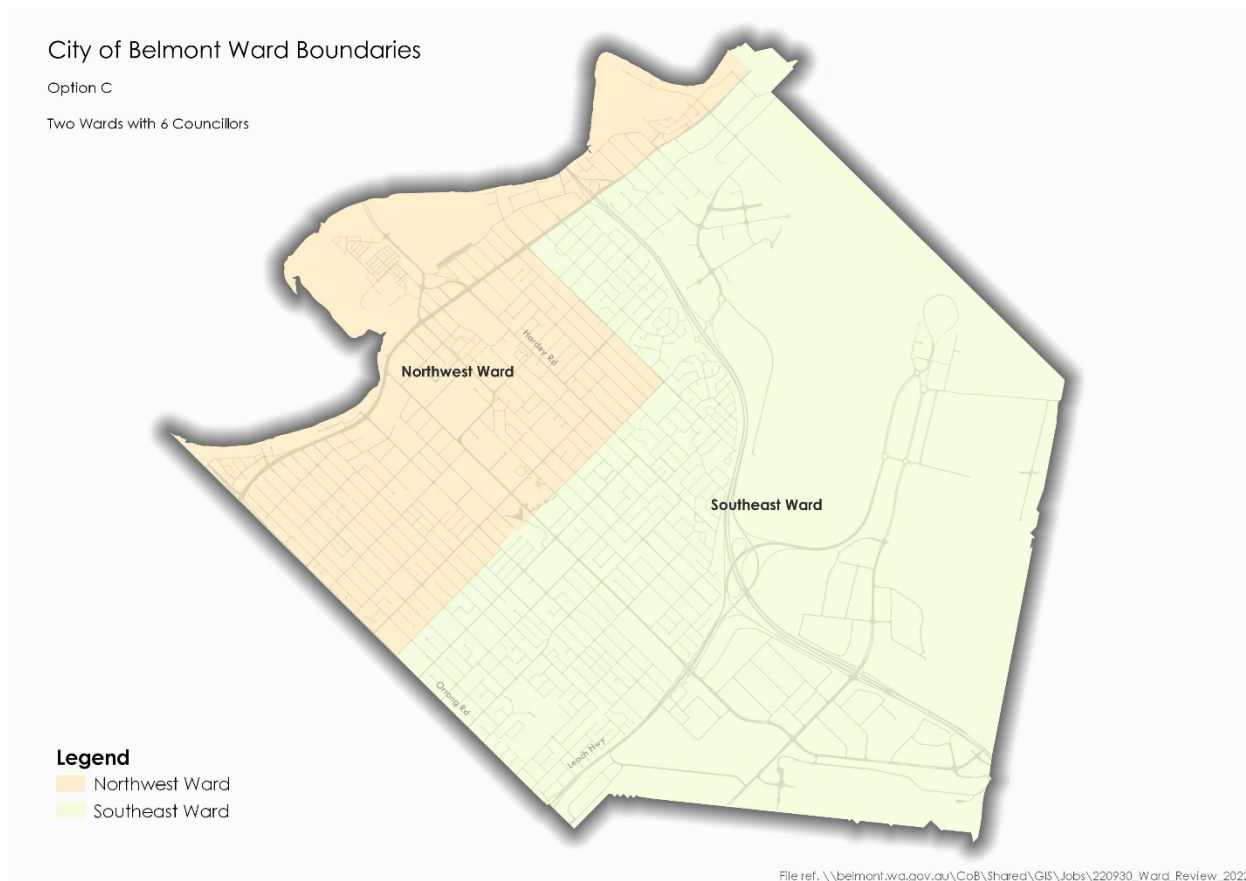
Ward	Electors	Council Members	Councillor: Elector Ratio	Percentage deviation from average
Northwest	13,430	4	3,357	(0.63%)
Southeast	13,261	4	3,315	0.63%
<b>Totals or average</b>	<b>26,690</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3,336</b>	

Some possible advantages and disadvantages of this example are:

Advantages	Disadvantages
The ratios of electors to Councillors are within the limits considered appropriate by the LGAB.	It may be more difficult and costly for candidates to be elected if they need to canvas a larger area.
Suburbs are not split between Wards.	Given the larger ward areas, electors may not know the candidates who they are voting for.

### 3.3 Example C – two wards with six councillors

Under this example, the wards are as in 3.2 above, however, with only six councillors.



Map 4: Example C: Two Wards, Six Councillors

Ward	Electors	Council Members	Councillor: Elector Ratio	Percentage deviation from average
Northwest	13,430	3	4,477	(0.63%)
Southeast	13,261	3	4,420	0.63%
<b>Totals or average</b>	<b>26,690</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4,448</b>	

Some possible advantages and disadvantages of this example are:

Advantages	Disadvantages
The ratios of electors to Councillors are within the limits considered appropriate by the LGAB.	It may be more difficult and costly for candidates to be elected if they need to canvas a larger area.
Suburbs are not split between Wards.	Given the larger ward areas, electors may not know the candidates who they are voting for.
Reduced Elected Member expenditure due to reduction in the number of Councillors.	Reduced elector representation. Less Councillors per elector.

### 3.4 Example D – no wards with eight councillors

Under this example, wards are dispensed with altogether with eight Councillors.

# City of Belmont Ward Boundaries

Option D

No Wards



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Map 5: Example D: No Wards, Eight Councillors

Ward	Electors	Council Members	Councillor: Elector Ratio	Percentage deviation from average
No Wards	26,690	8	3,336	0.00%

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 as opposed to knowing the issues in detail for the whole District.
The election process is much simpler for the community to understand and administer.	Given the large area, electors may not know the candidates who they are voting for.
Each voter has the opportunity to vote for any candidate for the council election, rather than being limited to Ward Councillors.	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.

Based on current elector numbers, the number of Councillors could be reduced with the number of electors per Councillor being:

No. of Councillors	Electors per Councillor
4	6,672
5	5,338
6	4,448
7	3,813
8	3,336

A four Ward option in line with the previous structure from 2010 was considered for inclusion in the Discussion Paper. Following advice from the Department of Local Government the four Ward option was not included in the Discussion Paper as it was not considered a viable concept. The four Ward option did not align with the relevant factors and requirements of the proposed local government reforms. Elector to Councillor ratios were significantly imbalanced and it became problematic to align the Ward boundaries along reasonably significant features or roads.



## 4 Transition Scenarios to reduce the number of Councillors

The current reforms require the City to change the method of election of the Mayor to a directly-elected Mayor which Council has resolved at the 25 October 2022 Ordinary Council Meeting to implement for the 2023 local government elections.

As a consequence of the direct election of the Mayor it is necessary for the City to reduce the number of Councillors. The current population for the Belmont local government area is 42,257 (2021 census data) and in line with the Local Government Panel Report the number of elected members for the City is to be between five and nine Councillors (including the directly elected Mayor).

The following are possible options to transition from nine to eight or six Councillors:

Transitional Options	Number of Elected Members	2023 Local Government Election	2025 Local Government Election	2027 Local Government Election
1	Mayor + 8 Councillors	Mayoral Election (4-year term)	No Mayoral Election	Mayoral Election (4-year term)
		3 Councillor Vacancies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Councillor Positions (4-year terms)</li> </ul>	5 Councillor Vacancies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 Councillor Positions (4-year terms)</li> <li>• 1 Councillor Position (2-year term)</li> </ul>	4 Councillor Vacancies (half of the Council positions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 Councillor Positions (4-year terms)</li> </ul>
2	Mayor + 6 Councillors – All positions	Mayoral Election (4-year term)	No Mayoral Election	Mayoral Election (4-year term)

	declared vacant 2023	6 Councillor Vacancies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All positions declared vacant</li> <li>• 3 Councillor Positions (4-year terms)</li> <li>• 3 Councillor Positions (2-year terms)</li> </ul>	3 Councillor Vacancies (half of the Council positions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Councillor Positions (4-year terms)</li> </ul>	3 Councillor Vacancies (half of the Council positions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Councillor Positions (4-year terms)</li> </ul>
3	Mayor + 6 Councillors	Mayoral Election (4-year term)	No Mayoral Election	Mayoral Election (4-year term)
		1 Councillor Vacancy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Councillor Position (4-year term)</li> </ul>	5 Councillor Vacancies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Councillor Positions (4-year terms)</li> <li>• 2 Councillor Positions (2-year terms)</li> </ul>	3 Councillor Vacancies (half of the Council positions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Councillor Positions (4-year terms)</li> </ul>

Through the ward and representation review, where options include a change to the ward boundaries, the allocation of existing Councillors to the new wards will be included as a consideration. This will be discussed with Council and form part of the transitional arrangements proposed to the LGAB.

## 5 Public Submissions

The City invites suggested options for changes to the current ward system and recommended number of Councillors:

- Of the examples provided, which is the preferred structure (Example A, B, C, or D, or any other suggested option for the Ward structure, or number of Councillors);
- Preferred transitional arrangement for reduction in the number of Councillors (Option 1, 2, 3 or other suggestion);
- Any other advantages or disadvantages for the examples included in the discussion paper that you think Council should consider.

All submissions will be considered as part of the ward and representation review.

The current review requires the City to propose a structure to the Local Government Advisory Board that will align with the relevant factors and requirements of the proposed local government reforms. Any suggestions must be consistent with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1995*, the proposed reforms and will be considered against the required factors.

Please contact Melinda Lymon, Governance and Compliance Adviser on 9477 7203 or [Melinda.lymon@belmont.wa.gov.au](mailto:Melinda.lymon@belmont.wa.gov.au) for more information.

Submissions must be received by **5:00pm – Friday, 16 December 2022**.

For more information or to make a submission please go to:  
[connect.belmont.wa.gov.au/wardreview](https://connect.belmont.wa.gov.au/wardreview)

Submissions can also be made using the attached form and:

Emailed to [Belmont@belmont.wa.gov.au](mailto: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

## 6 Steps in review process

The review process and associated deadlines are as follows:

Date	Review process action
3 November 2022	Public notice provided in the PerthNow Community newspaper, on the City's website and notice boards, and on social media. Submissions are invited for a period of six weeks.
5:00pm 16 December 2022	Submissions close
16 December – late January 2023	Executive and Council review of submissions. A review of the City's wards and representation is carried out.
Early February 2023	Review presented to Council for endorsement at a Special Council Meeting to be convened.
<b>By 14 February 2023</b>	City to notify the Local Government Advisory Board (LGAB) of the outcome of the Ward and Representation Review.
February – October 2023	LGAB to consider City's review process and make a recommendation to Minister in respect to ward or representation changes.
October 2023	Changes to be implemented prior to October 2023 local government elections.

# Public Submission Form – Ward and Representation Review 2022

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: Address will not be published)

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Ward and Representation Structure

**Please tick preferred option:**

- ☐ Example A: 3 Wards – 6 Councillors (Current Ward Boundaries)
- ☐ Example B: 2 Wards – 8 Councillors (Northwest and Southeast Wards)
- ☐ Example C: 2 Wards – 6 Councillors (Northwest and Southeast Wards)
- ☐ Example D: No Wards – 8 Councillors
- ☐ Other suggestion – please provide details:

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Reasons why you support the example selected:

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Are there any advantages or disadvantages not included in the examples contained in the discussion paper that you think Council should consider?

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**Transition Options – Reduction in Number of Councillors**

**Please tick preferred option:**

- ☐ Option 1: Reduce to 8 Councillors – Staggered transition 2023 – 2025 Elections
- ☐ Option 2: Reduce to 6 Councillors – All positions declared vacant 2023 Election
- ☐ Option 3: Reduce to 6 Councillors – Staggered transition 2023 – 2025 Elections
- ☐ Option 4: Other suggestion – please provide details:

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Reasons why you support the option selected:

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What are any advantages or disadvantages to the option you have selected?

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