

REPRESENTATION REVIEW
(Section 12 of the *Local Government Act 1999*)

CITY OF PLAYFORD

June 2024

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1. INTRODUCTION

Section 12(3) of the *Local Government Act 1999* (the Act) indicates that Council must undertake a “representation review” to determine whether its community would benefit from an alteration to Council’s composition or ward structure.

Section 12(4) of the Act states: *“A review may relate to a specific aspect of the composition of the council, or of the wards of the council, or may relate to those matters generally – but a council must ensure that all aspects of the composition of the council, and the issue of the division, or potential division, of the area of the council into wards, are comprehensively reviewed under this section at least once in each relevant period that is prescribed by the regulations”.*

The Minister for Local Government has specified that Council is required to undertake and complete a review during the period April 2024 – April 2025.

Council informally commenced its review with a briefing of the elected members on Tuesday, 12th March 2024. This was followed by a second workshop on the 21st May 2024, at which the elected members provided feedback in relation to:

- the “member cap” specified under Section 11A of the Act;
- the continued division of the Council area into wards, as opposed to the abolition of wards;
- the number of elected members required to provide adequate and fair representation;
- the provisions of Sections 26(1)(c) and 33 of the Act, in particular the requirement to avoid over-representation in comparison with councils of a similar size and type; and
- the anticipated population growth over coming years, and the likely impacts thereof upon elector representation across the Council area.

The tasks now before Council are to determine (in principle) the future composition and structure which it believes should come into effect at the next Local Government elections in 2026. More specifically, Council will need to:

- further examine the question of whether the number of elected members required to provide fair and adequate representation to the community should be reduced, with due consideration in respect to the “member cap” now specified in the Act; and
- identify the preferred future ward structure, including the names/titles of the proposed wards and the level of representation in each ward.

This Discussion Paper provides relevant information and ward structure options to assist the elected members with the aforementioned tasks. The discussions held by Council will inform the development of the “Representation Report” which will be presented to the community, for consideration and comment, during the required upcoming public consultation process.

2. BACKGROUND

Council last undertook a review of its elector representation during the period November 2015 – February 2017, at which time it resolved that:

- the principal member of Council continue to be a Mayor elected by the community;
- the elected body of Council continue to comprise the Mayor and fifteen (15) ward councillors;
- the Council area be divided into five wards;
- each of the proposed wards be represented by three (3) ward councillors; and
- the wards be identified as Ward 1 - Ward 5.

The existing wards are described as follows.

Ward 1: Comprising the suburbs of Andrews Farm, Angle Vale, Buckland Park, Eyre, MacDonald Park, Penfield, Penfield Gardens, Riverlea Park, Smithfield Plains, Virginia and Waterloo Corner, and part of the suburb of Edinburgh North.

Ward 2: Comprising the suburbs of Blakeview, Munno Para, Munno Para Downs, Munno Para West and Smithfield; and part of the suburb of Hillier.

Ward 3: Comprising the suburbs of Bibaringa, Evanston Park, Gould Creek, Hillbank, Humbug Scrub, One Tree Hill, Sampson Flat, Uleybury and Yattalunga; and part of the suburb of Craigmore.

Ward 4: Comprising the suburbs of Davoren Park, Elizabeth, Elizabeth North, Elizabeth South, Elizabeth Vale; and part of the suburb of Edinburgh North.

Ward 5: Comprising the suburbs of Elizabeth Downs, Elizabeth Park, Elizabeth East and Elizabeth Grove; and part of the suburb of Craigmore.

The distribution of electors between the existing wards is detailed in Table 1.

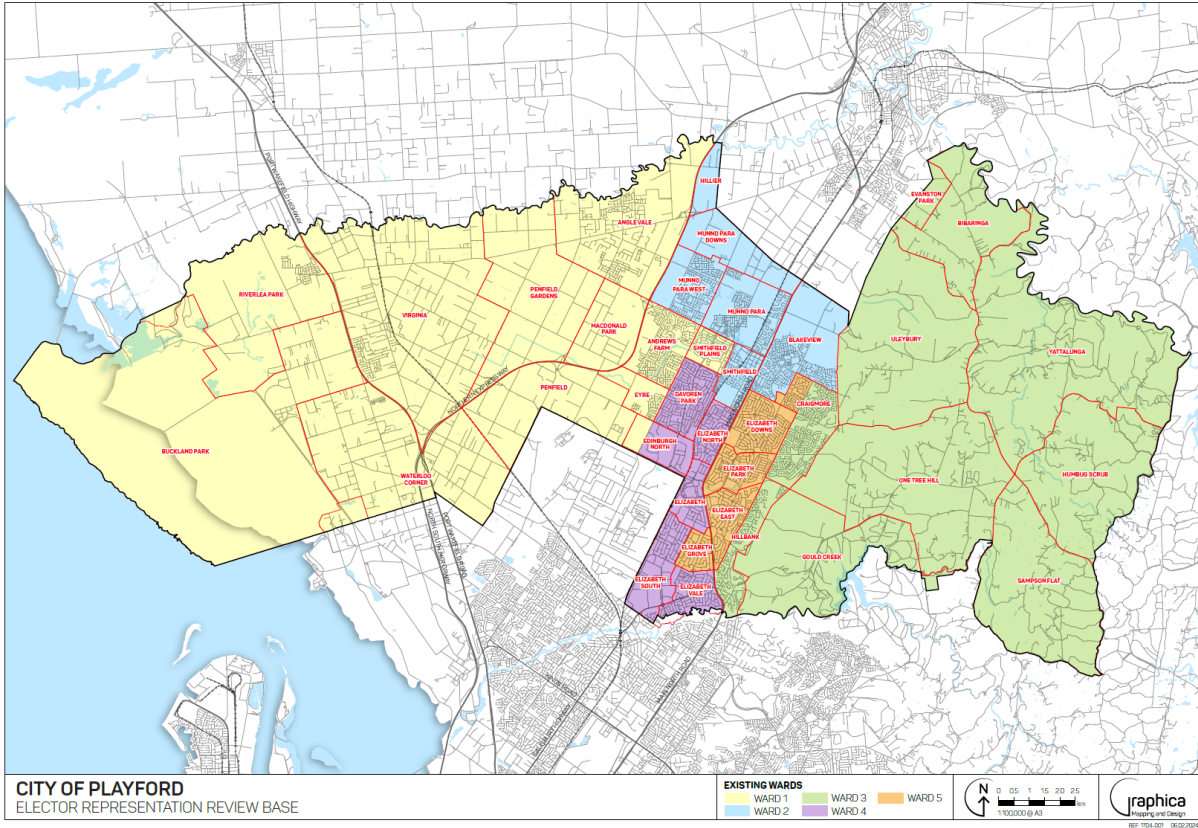
Table 1: Elector distribution between existing wards.

Ward	Crs	HOA Roll	Council Roll	Electors	Ratio	% Variance
Ward 1	3	16,554	12	16,556	1:5,519	+15.87
Ward 2	3	17,285	4	17,289	1:5,763	+21.00
Ward 3	3	12,147	2	12,149	1:4,050	-14.98
Ward 4	3	12,411	11	12,422	1:4,141	-13.06
Ward 5	3	13,013	12	13,342	1:4,342	- 8.65
Total	15	71,400	41	71,441		
Average					1:4,763	

Source: Electoral Commission SA, 24th April 2024

The existing ward structure cannot be retained as the elector ratios applicable to Wards numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 all breach the 10% quota limit specified under Section 33(2) of the Act. In addition, the existing composition of Council is at odds with the “members cap” specified under Section 11A of the Act.

Map 1: Current ward structure.



3. REVIEW PROCESS

Sections 12(5) - 12(12a) of the Act outline the process that Council must adhere to when undertaking its review. A brief summary of this process is as follows.

3.1 Representation Report

The review is formally commenced with the preparation of a "Representation Report" by a person who, in the opinion of Council, is qualified to address the representation and governance issues that may arise during the course of the review.

The "Representation Report" must:

- examine the advantages and disadvantages of the options available in respect to a range of issues relating to the composition and structure of Council;
- examine whether the number of elected members should be reduced; and/or whether the Council area should be divided into wards, or not;
- set out the proposal that Council considers should be carried into effect at the next Local Government election; and
- include an analysis of how the Council proposal relates to the relevant principles under Section 26(1)(c) of the Act and the matters referred to in Section 33 of the Act.

3.2 Public Consultation

Section 12(7) of the Act requires Council undertake public consultation based on the "Representation Report". This process must be in accordance with Council's Public Consultation Policy, or alternatively incorporate the publication of a notice in a newspaper circulating within the Council area, on the Council website and in the Government Gazette.

The notice must invite interested persons to make submissions in relation to the report within a specified period (at least 21 days).

3.3 Final Report

At the completion of the prescribed public consultation stage Council must either:

- finalise its report (including information pertaining to the outcome of the public consultation process) and refer the final report to the Electoral Commissioner; or
- reconsider and/or amend its proposal (perhaps in keeping with public submissions), alter the Representation Report accordingly, and undertake further public consultation.

3.4 Exemption Certificate (If required)

Should Council propose a composition which exceeds the “member cap” specified under Section 11A of the Act, it must seek an “exemption certificate” from the Electoral Commissioner prior to finalising its review.

Should the Electoral Commissioner determine that there are “exceptional circumstances” that justify a refusal to grant an “exemption certificate”, the matter will be referred back to Council with written reasons for the refusal. In response to this action Council will be required to amend its proposal so that it will comprise a number of elected members equal to or less than the “member cap”; amend its report; undertake further public consultation; and ultimately forward an amended final report to the Electoral Commissioner for further consideration.

3.5 Final Gazette Notice

Upon receipt of notification that the representation review has been completed to the satisfaction of the Electoral Commissioner, Council will be required to publish a notice in the Government Gazette, on or before a date to be specified by the Electoral Commissioner. The notice will outline Council’s proposed future composition and structure and will give notice of the day that the proposal will come into effect (i.e. the day of the next Local Government election in November 2026).

4. PRIMARY LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The most relevant provisions of the Act are the following.

Section 11A specifies that a council must not be comprised of more than thirteen (13) members (including the principal member) unless it has been granted an "exemption certificate" by the Electoral Commissioner under Section 12(11b) of the Act.

Section 26(1)(c) requires that, when considering a reform proposal, Council should have regard to a list of principles, the most relevant being the following.

- Proposed changes should, wherever practicable, benefit ratepayers.
- A council should reflect communities of interest of an economic, recreational, social, regional or other kind, and be consistent with community structures, values, expectations and aspirations.
- Residents should receive adequate and fair representation within the local government system, while over-representation in comparison with councils of a similar size and type should be avoided (at least in the longer term).

Section 33 requires that, in the formulation of a proposal that relates to the boundaries of a ward or wards, the review must also take into account, as far as practicable:

- the desirability of reflecting communities of interest of an economic, social, regional or other kind;
- the population of the area, and of each ward affected or envisaged by the proposal;
- the topography of the area, and of each ward affected or envisaged by the proposal;
- the feasibility of communication between electors affected by the proposal and their elected representatives;
- the nature of substantial demographic changes that may occur in the foreseeable future; and
- the need to ensure adequate and fair representation while at the same time avoiding over-representation in comparison to other councils of a similar size and type (at least in the longer term).

Section 33(2) of the Act requires that a proposal which relates to the formation or alteration of wards of a council must observe the principle that the number of electors represented by a councillor must not, as at the relevant date (assuming that the proposal was in operation), vary from the ward quota by more than 10 per cent.

Section 51 specifies that the principal member of council must be appointed (by the Governor under circumstances prescribed under Section 10 of the Act) or elected as a representative of the area as a whole; and is to be called mayor.

5. COMPOSITION OF COUNCIL

5.1 Mayor

The principal member of Council must be appointed (by the Governor under circumstances prescribed under Section 10 of the Act) or elected as a representative of the area as a whole; and is to be called mayor. The Act no longer affords any alternative.

5.2 Councillors

Section 52(1) of the Act specifies that all members of Council, other than the principal member, shall have the title of councillor.

Section 52(2) states that a councillor will (depending on how the council is constituted):

- be elected by the electors for the area, as a representative of the area as a whole (whether or not the area is divided into wards); or
- if the area is divided into wards, be elected by the electors of a particular ward, as a representative of the ward.

Where the Council area is divided into wards, an "area councillor" adopts a similar role to that of the former office of Alderman and focuses on matters pertaining to the Council area as a whole rather than a ward.

Arguments in favour of "area councillors" (in addition to ward councillors) include:

- the area councillor should be free of parochial ward attitudes and responsibilities;
- the area councillor may be an experienced elected member who can share their knowledge and experience with the ward councillors; and
- the area councillor is free to assist the principal member and ward councillors, if required.

The opposing view is that an "area councillor" (in addition to ward councillors) holds no greater status than a ward councillor; has no greater responsibilities than a ward councillor; and need not comply with any extraordinary or additional eligibility requirements. In addition, it should be noted that:

- any contested election for area councillors must be conducted across the whole of the Council area at considerable cost;
- area councillors are considered to be an unnecessary tier of representation and therefore are not a popular option amongst councils (i.e. only the City of Adelaide has "area councillors" in addition to councillors);
- ward councillors do not have to reside in the ward which they represent and, as such, the traditional role and/or basis for the ward councillor has changed to a council-wide perspective;

- ward councillors generally consider themselves to represent not only their ward, but the Council area as a whole (like an area councillor), and it is suggested that their role and actions within the council chamber, and the functions they perform on behalf of council, generally reflect this attitude and circumstance; and
- the task and expense of contesting council-wide elections for an area councillor can be prohibitive and may deter appropriate/quality candidates.

6. ELECTOR REPRESENTATION

Council must provide adequate and fair representation and generally adhere to the democratic principle of "one person, one vote, one value". In addition, there needs to be sufficient elected members to:

- manage and guide the affairs of Council;
- lead and form the core of the Council committees;
- share the demands placed upon them by their constituents;
- provide adequate lines of communication between the community and Council;
- achieve the desired diversity in member's skill sets, experience and backgrounds; and
- ensure a range of viewpoints that spurs innovation and creativity in Council planning and decision-making.

Council has comprised a mayor and fifteen (15) councillors since its proclamation in 1997.

As stated earlier, the intent of the Act is clear, a council must not comprise more than thirteen (13) members, including the mayor. This is a relatively recent provision, having been introduced via the Statutes Amendment (Local Government Review) Bill 2020.

Based on advice received from Electoral Commission SA, it is understood that, when considering a proposal/report from a council, the Electoral Commissioner will give due consideration to how the proposal relates to all of the relevant provisions of the Act. In regard to the issue of the number of elected members, Section 11A of the Act obviously applies, as do Sections 26(1)(c) and 33(1) which express the need to ensure adequate and fair representation while at the same time avoiding over-representation in comparison to other councils of a similar size and type.

Whilst the comparison of representation arrangements of other councils is not necessarily a straightforward exercise, given that no councils are identical in terms of their size (elector numbers and/or area), character, population, topography or communities of interest, it is a matter that must be examined according to the Act.

Table 2 provides (for comparison purposes) the elector data, elector ratios (i.e. the average number of electors represented by a councillor), and the size/area of the metropolitan councils. The data indicates that the City of Playford is the third largest metropolitan council (in area) and has the third highest number of councillors, but only has the sixth highest number of electors and the seventh highest elector ratio.

Table 2: Elector representation – Metropolitan councils

Council	Councillors	Electors	Elector Ratio
Walkerville (1.34 km ²)	8	5,849	1: 731
Prospect (7.81 km ²)	8	15,268	1:1,909
Gawler (41.10km ²)	10	20,200	1:2,020
Norwood Payneham & St Peters (15.1 km ²)	13	26,260	1:2,020
Unley (14.29 km ²)	12	27,989	1:2,332
Holdfast Bay (13.72 km ²)	12	28,595	1:2,383
Adelaide Hills (795.1 km ²)	12	30,954	1:2,580
Burnside (27.53 km ²)	12	32,347	1:2,696
West Torrens (37.07 km ²)	14	43,192	1:3,085
Adelaide* (15.57 km ²)	9	30,437	1:3,382
Campbelltown (24.35 km ²)	10	37,184	1:3,718
Mitcham (75.55 km ²)	12	49,516	1:4,126
Playford (344.9 km²)	15	71,441	1:4,763
Port Adelaide/Enfield (97.0 km ²)	17	90,157	1:5,303
Charles Sturt (52.14 km ²)	16	90,641	1:5,665
Marion (55.5km ²)	12	68,314	1:5,693
Tea Tree Gully (95.2 km ²)	12	74,791	1:6,233
Salisbury (158.1 km ²)	14	98,878	1:7,063
Onkaparinga (518.4 km ²)	12	133,756	1:11,146

Source: Electoral Commission SA (24th April 2024)

* City of Adelaide also comprises two (2) "area councillors".

A reduction in the number of councillors will result in the following elector ratios.

Twelve (12) councillors: 1:5,953

Eleven (11) councillors: 1:6,495

Ten (10) councillors: 1:7,144

There are no inherent disadvantages in having an even or odd number of councillors. An odd number may overcome the requirement for the Mayor to cast a deciding vote but may require the development/implementation of a ward structure that exhibits a varying level of representation between wards. The latter could be perceived as an imbalance.

7. WARD STRUCTURE

Section 12(1)(b) of the Act indicates that Council can "divide, or redivide, the area of the council into wards, alter the division of the area of the council into wards, or abolish the division of the area of a council into wards".

The Council area has been divided into wards since the City of Playford was proclaimed in 1997.

Currently two (2) of the nineteen (19) metropolitan councils (i.e. the Towns of Gawler and Walkerville) have "no wards", as do thirty-five (35) of the forty-nine (49) regional councils.

Whilst Council has informally indicated a preference to retain a ward structure (of some configuration), the following information has been provided in regard to both the ward and no ward alternatives, so as to ensure the elected members are reasonably informed should they decide to reconsider the matter.

7.1 Wards

The advantages of a ward structure may include:

- wards guarantee some form and level of direct representation to all parts of the Council area and/or existing communities of interest;
- ward councillors can focus on local issues as well as council-wide issues;
- ward councillors are more likely to be known to their ward constituents (and vice versa);
- ward councillors can have more of an affiliation with the local community and more understanding of the local issues and/or concerns;
- the task and expense of contesting a ward election may be less daunting to prospective candidates, whereas the task and expense of contesting council-wide elections (under the "no wards" alternative) could be prohibitive, and therefore may deter appropriate/quality candidates;
- Council only has to conduct elections and supplementary elections within contested wards (potential cost saving), whereas under the no ward" alternative Council has to conduct elections and supplementary elections across the whole of the Council area (at a significant expense);
- existing ward councillors already deliberate and make decisions on the basis of achieving the best outcome for the whole of the Council area (as would be the role of an area councillor under the "no ward" alternative); and
- ward based elections have the potential to deliver councillors from various parts of the Council area, potentially resulting in a greater diversity in the skill sets, experience, expertise and opinions amongst the elected members.

The disadvantages of a ward structure may include:

- ward councillors do not have to reside within the ward that they represent and, as such, may have no affiliation with the local community and/or empathy for the local issues and/or concerns;
- electors can only vote for councillors/candidates within their ward;
- candidates can be favoured by the peculiarities of the ward based electoral system (e.g., candidates elected unopposed or having been unsuccessful despite attracting more votes than elected candidates in other wards);
- ward councillors may develop ward-centric attitudes and be less focused on the bigger council-wide issues;
- ward boundaries are lines which are based solely on elector distribution and may serve to divide the community rather than foster civic unity;
- despite comparable ward elector ratios, inequitable levels of representation between wards and/or the physical sizes of wards can create a perception of imbalance in voting power within Council; and
- ward councillors generally consider themselves to represent not only their ward but the Council area as a whole and, as such, the need for wards is questionable.

7.2 No Wards

The advantages of the “no wards” structure may include:

- “no wards” is the optimum democratic structure as it enables the electors to vote for all of the vacant positions on Council;
- the most supported candidates from across the Council area will likely be elected, rather than candidates who may be favoured by the peculiarities of the ward based electoral system (e.g. candidates being elected unopposed or unsuccessful candidates who attracted more votes than successful candidates in other wards);
- the elected members should be free of parochial ward attitudes;
- the lines of communication between Council and the community should be enhanced, given that members of the community should be able to consult with any and/or all members of Council, rather than feel obliged to consult with their specific ward councillors;
- as ward councillors do not have to reside within the ward that they represent, a ward structure does not guarantee that a ward councillor will have empathy for, or an affiliation with, the ward;
- smaller communities within the Council area can still be directly represented on Council, provided they muster sufficient support for a local candidate;
- the structure automatically absorbs fluctuations in elector numbers and there is no requirement for compliance with specified quota tolerance limits;

- ward councillors generally consider themselves to represent not only their ward but the Council area as a whole;
- the introduction of postal voting has facilitated the dissemination of campaign literature throughout the Council area, thereby reducing the difficulty and cost of contesting a council-wide election campaign;
- successful candidates generally have to attract no more votes than what they would have received/required under a ward election;
- candidates for election to Council will require the genuine desire, ability and means to succeed and serve on Council, given the perceived difficulties and expense associated with contesting "at large" elections; and
- a supplementary election does not have to be held to fill a casual vacancy on Council (Section 6(2)(b) of the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*), provided Council has a policy at the time the vacancy occurs that it will not fill such a casual vacancy or vacancies until the next general election.

The disadvantages of a "no wards" structure may include:

- the elected members could come from the more heavily populated parts of the Council area rather than from across the whole of the Council area;
- a single interest group could gain considerable representation on Council;
- concern council-wide elections will not guarantee that elected members will have any empathy for, or affiliation with, all communities across the whole Council area;
- Council may have to conduct elections and supplementary elections across the whole of the Council area (at a significant expense);
- the more popular or known councillors may receive more enquiries from the public (i.e. inequitable workloads); and
- potential candidates for election to Council may be deterred by the perceived difficulties and expense associated with council-wide elections.

7.3 Ward Representation

Wards represented by a single councillor are generally small in area and therefore afford the ward councillor the opportunity to be more accessible to their constituents and able to concentrate on issues of local importance. Due to the smaller size of the wards it is generally difficult to identify suitable ward boundaries; maintain entire communities of interest; sustain significant fluctuations in elector numbers; and comply with the specified quota tolerance limit. The workload of the ward councillor can also be demanding, and absenteeism by the elected member (for whatever purpose and/or period) will leave the ward without direct representation.

Wards represented by two councillors are common throughout the State; allow for the sharing of duties and responsibilities between the ward councillors; lessen the likelihood of ward parochialism; and afford continuous ward representation should one ward councillor be absent.

Multi-councillor wards are generally larger in area and therefore the overall ward structure can be relatively simple. Councillor absenteeism can be easily covered; the work load of the ward councillors can be reduced; there are greater perceived lines of communication between ward councillors and their constituents; and there is more flexibility in regard to ward quota, allowances for fluctuations in elector numbers, and the preservation of communities of interest.

Six (6) metropolitan councils (including the City of Playford) have ward structures which have three (3) or more councillors representing a ward.

There are no inherent disadvantages associated with varying levels of representation between wards, provided the elector ratios within the wards are relatively consistent. However, such structures can be seen to lack balance and/or equity, with the larger wards (in elector and councillor numbers) being perceived as having a greater, more influential voice on Council.

Four (4) metropolitan councils have ward structures which exhibit varying levels of representation between wards.

7.4 Ward Boundaries

A ward structure should have a logical basis and, where possible, exhibit boundaries which are easily identified and readily accepted by the community. Accordingly, every effort should be made to align proposed possible future ward boundaries with existing, long established district boundaries, main roads, or prominent geographical and/or man-made features.

7.5 Ward Identification

The means of ward identification are limited.

The allocation of alphabetical letters, numbers, compass points (e.g., north, south, central etc) and/or names of local heritage/cultural significance are all considered to be acceptable for the identification of wards. On the other hand, the allocation of suburb names (or similar) can be confusing and fails to reflect the existence of all of the other suburbs/communities within the Council area. Whilst this is not a major issue, the review affords the opportunity for the community and Council to consider appropriate alternatives.

8. WARD STRUCTURE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Section 33(1) of the Act requires that the following matters be taken into account, as far as practicable, in the formulation of a proposal that relates to the boundaries of a ward or wards:

- the desirability of reflecting communities of interest of an economic, social, regional or other kind;
- the population of the area, and of each ward affected or envisaged by the proposal;
- the topography of the area, and of each ward affected or envisaged by the proposal;
- the feasibility of communication between electors affected by the proposal and their elected representatives;
- the nature of substantial demographic changes that may occur in the foreseeable future; and
- the need to ensure adequate and fair representation while at the same time avoiding over-representation in comparison to other councils of a similar size and type (at least in the longer term).

Relevant information pertaining to the aforementioned matters is provided hereinafter.

8.1 Communities of Interest

The issue of “communities of interest” can be complex and, as such, local knowledge will be particularly valuable.

Sections 26 and 33 of the Act make reference to “communities of interest” of an economic, social, regional or other kind. However, in the past the Local Government Boundary Reform Board indicated that:

- “communities of interest” for the purpose of structural reform proposals, are defined as aspects of the physical, economic and social systems which are central to the interactions of communities in their living environment; and
- “communities of interest” are identified by considering factors relevant to the physical, economic and social environment, including neighbourhood communities; history and heritage communities; sporting facilities; community support services; recreation and leisure communities; retail and shopping centres; work communities; industrial and economic development clusters; and environmental and geographic interests.

There are numerous communities of interest within the Council area, including but not limited to the established thirty-seven suburbs (or part suburbs). When developing a ward structure, care should be taken to ensure that, where possible, identified “communities of interest” are maintained in their entirety within the bounds of a ward, taking into account the features of the landscape and the distribution of the electors. In order to achieve this, it is recommended that entire suburbs be contained within a ward (where possible).

8.2 Population and Demographic Trends

The City of Playford is expected to continue to experience substantial residential development (and therefore population growth) over the next twenty-five years or so, primarily in the western and northern parts of the Council area. Some estimates suggest an increase in the order of 25,000 additional residents over the next seven (7) years.

The following information provides some insight into the demographic trends that have occurred over recent years, and the extent of the anticipated future population increase.

Since the completion of the last elector representation review in March 2017, elector numbers have increased by 13,594 or 23.5%. Table 3 provides details of the growth in elector numbers in each of the existing wards over the period March 2017 – April 2024.

Table 3: Elector numbers per ward, March 2017 – April 2024

Ward	Electors 2017	Electors 2024	Variation	% Variation
Ward 1	11,469	16,556	5,087	+44.35
Ward 2	12,120	17,289	5,169	+42.65
Ward 3	11,438	12,149	711	+ 6.22
Ward 4	11,020	12,422	1,402	+12.72
Ward 5	11,899	13,025	1,225	+10.38
Total	57,847	71,441	13,594	+23.35

Source: Electoral Commission SA, 24th April 2024

Population projections prepared by the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (2020) indicate that the population of the City of Playford is anticipated to increase by 39,531 (i.e. 90,549 to 130,080) (43.98%) during the period 2016 – 2036.

Population projections prepared by .id (Informed Decisions) in December 2023 suggest that the population of the Council area is expected to increase by 15,571 people or 15.8% (100,635 – 116,196) during the period 2021 – 2026, and a further 17,010 people or 14.6% (116,196 – 133,206) during the period 2026 – 2031.

Data provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (refer 3218.0 Regional Population Growth, Australia) indicates that the estimated population of the City of Playford increased every year during the period 2001 – 2022 (i.e. from 68,692 to 104,161), which equates to a total increase of 35,469 or 51.6%.

Australian Bureau of Statistics "Quick Stats" indicate that the estimated population of the Council area increased by 32,432 people (48.6%) during the period 2001 - 2021 (i.e. 66,758 to 99,190), including 9,818 people (11.0%) during the period 2016 - 2021 (i.e. 89,372 to 99,190).

According to .id community (<http://profile.id.com.au/playford>), residential building approvals relating to properties within the Council area have been increasing significantly over recent years and are now trending towards 2,000 dwelling approvals per annum.

Initial consultation with Council planning staff identified potential significant future residential growth opportunities which may impact upon future population/elector numbers over the next fifteen years. These include (but are not limited to) the following.

- Angle Vale – Expansion of the township (946.6 hectares) with a potential for an additional 4,560 allotments.
- Playford North Extension - Development of 582 hectares of in MacDonald Park, Munno Para Downs and Munno Para West which could realise an additional 7,834 allotments.
- Eyre – Development of 121 hectares which will likely realise an additional 994 allotments.
- Virginia – Development of 305 hectares which could realise an additional 2,125 allotments.
- Blakeview – Development of 431 hectares which could realise an additional 3,615 allotments.
- Buckland Park (Riverlea) – Development of 13,400 hectares which could realise an additional 11,200 allotments.
- Playford Alive – Development of 244.6 hectares which could realise an additional 1,292 allotments.
- Renewal SA (Defence Land) – Development of 36.0 hectares which could realise an additional 429 allotments.
- Elizabeth and Smithfield – On-going urban renewal.

This development/growth should be taken into account when developing any potential future ward structure options.

8.3 Quota (Elector Ratio)

Section 33(2) of the Act requires that any proposal which relates to the formation or alteration of wards of a Council must observe the principle that the number of electors represented by a councillor must not vary from the ward quota by more than 10%.

Ward quota is the number of electors within a ward divided by the number of ward councillors, whereas the “elector ratio” for the Council area is the total number of electors divided by the number of councillors (i.e. the Mayor is excluded).

Given the aforementioned, any potential future ward structure must incorporate wards wherein the distribution of electors is equitable, either in terms of numbers (if the wards have equal representation) or elector ratio. Under the latter circumstance, the elector ratio within each ward must be within 10% of the average elector ratio for the Council area. The Act only allows for the 10% quota tolerance limit to be exceeded in the short term if demographic changes predicted by a Federal or State government agency indicate that the ward quota will not be exceeded at the time of the next periodic Local Government election.

It should also be noted that Section 12(24) of the Act specifies that where a council area is divided into wards and the elector ratio of a ward varies from the quota by more than 20%, the council will have to undertake another review within a period specified by the Electoral Commissioner.

9. WARD STRUCTURE OPTIONS

As indicated earlier, the Act states that:

- a review may relate to a specific aspect of the composition of the council, or of the wards of the council, or may relate to those matters generally – but a council must ensure that all aspects of its composition, and the issue of the division, or potential division, of the area of the council into wards, are comprehensively reviewed; and
- Council can "divide, or redivide, the area of the council into wards, alter the division of the area of the council into wards, or abolish the division of the area of a council into wards".

The existing ward structure cannot be retained because the number of elected members exceeds the specified "member cap"; and the elector ratios in four (4) of the existing wards breach the specified quota tolerance limits.

The anticipated ongoing high level of residential development/population growth is difficult to accommodate in a ward structure, given the specified quota tolerance limits and the uncertainty regarding the rate of future residential development at the various identified growth locations. The latter is hard to predict, given factors such as interest rates, availability of funding, government focus/spending, the availability of trades and/or the general state of the building industry.

A ward structure which exhibits a logical basis for the wards; an equitable distribution of electors between the proposed wards; and a comparable level of representation in the proposed wards, would be an ideal outcome of the review. However, it is also important to achieve an appropriate form and level of elector representation under the circumstances whereby significant future population/elector growth is expected to have an impact on the elector balance within, and the longevity of, the future ward structure.

Overall, the objective of the representation review should be to uphold the democratic principle of "one person, one vote, one value"; introduce a level of representation (and elector ratio) which is comparable to that of other councils of a similar size and type; and not detrimentally affect the quality of representation afforded to, and/or expected by, the local community.

A reduction in the current number of elected members may have some impact upon the workload of the elected members, and the demands and expectations placed thereon by the community. In addition, it will likely be perceived as a reduction in the lines of communication between Council and the community. However, the intent of the Act is clear in regard to the maximum number of elected members and, as such, the future elected members of Council will need to adapt and address the challenge of representing and communicating with a growing local community on an enhanced level.

Eight (8) ward structure options have been provided to demonstrate how the Council area can potentially be divided into wards under various composition scenarios, ranging from ten (10) to twelve (12) ward councillors. This range is in keeping with the "member cap" specified under the Act.

A two-ward option based on twelve (12) councillors has not been presented herein, given previous feedback from the elected members.

It should also be noted that the greater the number of councillors representing a ward, the greater the capability of the ward to sustain/accommodate greater population (elector) growth. This fact is important given the magnitude of the predicted future population growth in the Council area.

Additional ward structure options can be developed to meet the requirements of the elected members.

The presented ward structures have been developed to:

- reflect some logical basis and an equitable distribution of elector numbers;
- exhibit ward elector ratios which lay within the specified quota tolerance limits;
- exhibit a consistent level of representation between the proposed wards (where possible);
- accommodate anticipated future fluctuations in elector numbers, although this is a difficult task given the magnitude of the predicted future population growth;
- maintain existing communities of interest, where possible; and
- incorporate proposed ward boundaries which, where possible, align with suburb or locality boundaries, main roads and/or prominent features.

As Council has previously informally indicated a preference to retain a ward structure, the "no wards" structure has not been presented. However, information pertaining to this alternative has been provided earlier (refer 7.2 No wards, pages 13 and 14).

9.1 Option 1 - Twelve Councillors/Three Wards

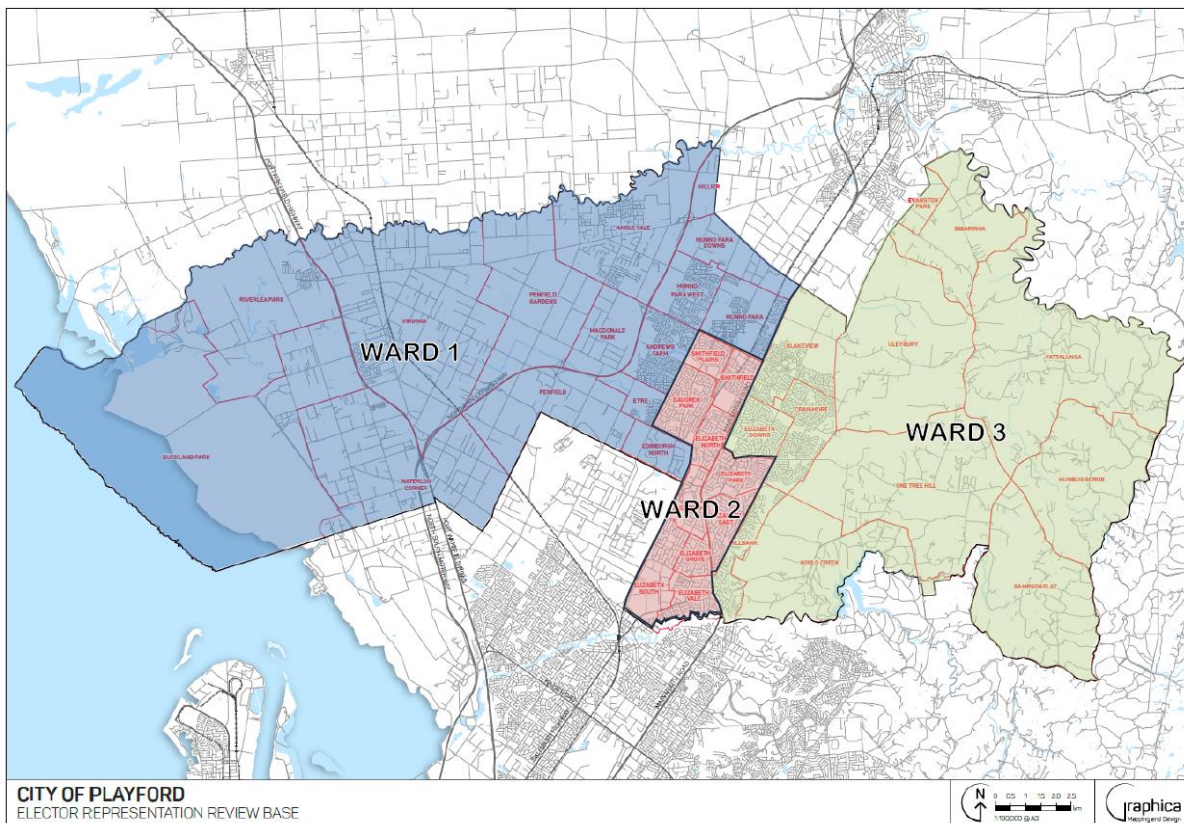
9.1.1 Description

The division of the Council area into three (3) wards, with each of the proposed wards being represented by four (4) councillors.

Ward 1: Comprising the suburbs of; Andrews Farm, Angle Vale, Buckland Park, Eyre, Hillier, MacDonald Park, Munno Para, Munno Para Downs, Munno Para West, Penfield, Penfield Gardens, Riverlea Park, Virginia and Waterloo Corner.

Ward 2: Comprising the suburbs of; Davoren Park, Edinburgh North, Elizabeth, Elizabeth East, Elizabeth Grove, Elizabeth North, Elizabeth Park, Elizabeth South, Elizabeth Vale, Smithfield and Smithfield Plains.

Ward 3: Comprising the suburbs of; Bibaringa, Blakeview, Craigmore, Elizabeth Downs, Evanston Park, Hillbank, Humbug Scrub, Gould Creek, One Tree Hill, Sampson Flat, Uleybury and Yattalunga.



9.1.2 Ward Representation

Ward	Councillors	Electors	Elector Ratio	% Variance
Ward 1	4	23,103	1:5,776	-1.46
Ward 2	4	23,941	1:5,985	+2.12
Ward 3	4	23,290	1:5,623	-0.66
Total	12	70,334		
Average			1:5,861	

Source: Electoral Commission SA, House of Assembly Roll (March 2024)
Council Supplementary Voter's Roll (March 2024)

9.1.3 Advantages

- A relatively simple ward configuration which exhibits an equitable distribution of electors between wards and the same level of ward representation.
- The four councillors in each proposed ward can share the workload and demands.
- The elector ratios in the proposed wards are comparable and lay comfortably within the specified quota tolerance limits.
- The proposed wards contain entire suburbs.
- The proposed wards can accommodate reasonable population growth (i.e. an additional 4,000 or more electors can be accommodated within proposed Ward 1 alone, and this will improve if and when there is population growth occurring in the other proposed wards).
- The suburbs of Eyre (860 electors) and Edinburgh North (5 electors) can be moved from proposed Ward 1 to proposed Ward 2 so as to allow for greater growth in proposed Ward 1. The elector ratios in the wards would be affected in the short-term (i.e. initial quota variances of -5.14% and +5.81% respectively), but as future development and growth occurs (as anticipated) the ward elector ratios and the quota variances will adjust.

9.1.4 Disadvantages

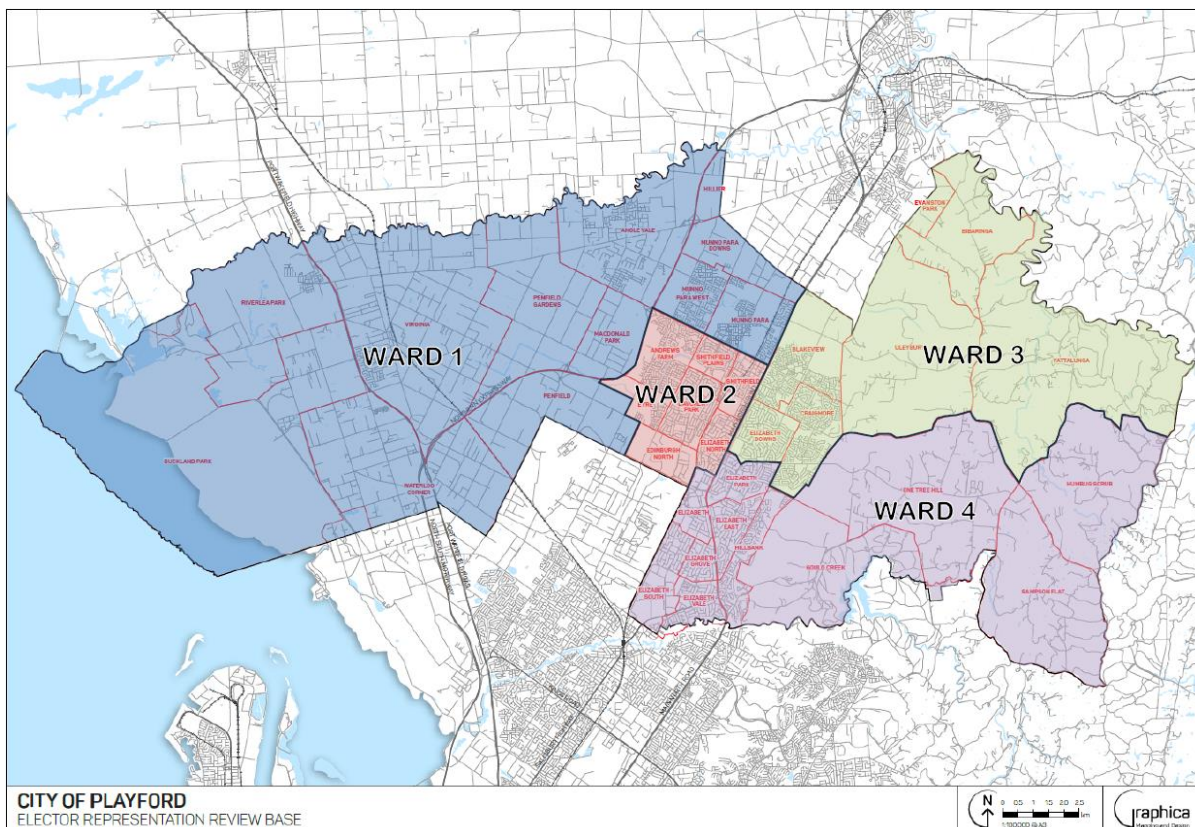
- Proposed Wards 1 and 3 are large in area so as to accommodate maximum future population growth, but are not dissimilar in size compared to the existing Wards 1 and 3 (e.g. proposed Ward 1 is only approximately 15km² (10%) larger in area than the current Ward 1).
- As a large portion of projected population growth is to occur in the western and northern parts of the Council area (i.e. in proposed Ward 1), it is likely that this ward structure will not remain within the specified quota tolerance limits for the entire eight year period until the next scheduled representation review (2032).
- Depending on the rate and extent of future growth in population/electors, and the impacts thereof in regard to the specified quota tolerance limits, there is a likelihood that Council will have to undertake another "representation review" well before 2032.
- There may be little correlation between the urban and rural areas/land uses in proposed Wards 1 and 3.

9.2 Option 2 – Twelve Councillors/Four Wards

9.2.1 Description

The division of the Council area into four (4) wards, with each of the proposed wards being represented by three (3) councillors.

- Ward 1: Comprising the suburbs of Angle Vale, Buckland Park, Hillier, MacDonald Park, Munno Para, Munno Para Downs, Munno Para West, Penfield, Penfield Gardens, Riverlea Park, Virginia and Waterloo Corner.
- Ward 2: Comprising the suburbs of Andrews Farm, Davoren Park, Edinburgh North, Elizabeth North, Eyre, Smithfield and Smithfield Plains.
- Ward 3: Comprising the suburbs of Bibaringa, Blakeview, Craigmore, Elizabeth Downs, Evanston Park, Uleybury and Yattalunga.
- Ward 4: Comprising the suburbs of Elizabeth, Elizabeth East, Elizabeth Grove, Elizabeth Park, Elizabeth South, Elizabeth Vale, Hillbank, Humbug Scrub, Gould Creek, One Tree Hill and Sampson Flat.



9.2.2 Ward Representation

Ward	Councillors	Electors	Elector Ratio	% Variance
Ward 1	3	16,326	1:5,442	-7.15
Ward 2	3	17,791	1:5,930	+1.18
Ward 3	3	18,416	1:6,139	+4.73
Ward 4	3	17,801	1:5,934	+1.24
Total	12	70,334		
Average			1:5,861	

Source: Electoral Commission SA, House of Assembly Roll (March 2024)
Council Supplementary Voter's Roll (March 2024)

9.2.3 Advantages

- The level of representation in the proposed wards is consistent; and is the same as the level of ward representation in the current ward structure.
- The ward elector ratios lay within the specified quota tolerance limits.
- All suburbs are contained (in their entirety) within a proposed ward.
- The elector numbers in proposed Ward 1 have deliberately been kept low to accommodate expected future development/population growth. Proposed Ward 1 should accommodate at least 4,000 additional electors; and this should improve as elector numbers (population) increase in the other proposed wards.

9.2.4 Disadvantages

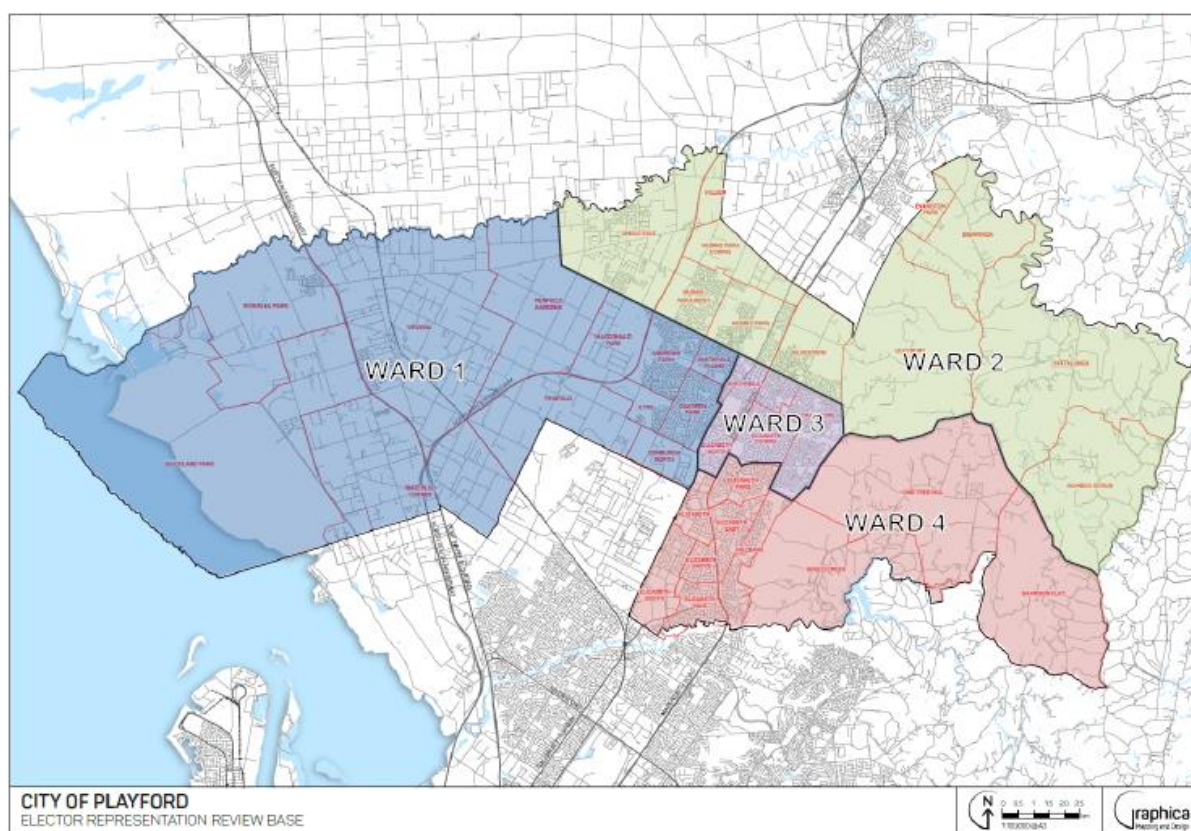
- Most of the identified future growth areas are located in proposed Ward 1
- There is an obvious disparity in the size (area) of the proposed wards.
- Proposed wards 1, 3 and 4 contain urban and rural localities which may be seen to disadvantage the rural communities, given the significant number of electors within the urban parts of the proposed wards.
- It is unlikely that the proposed wards (in particular proposed Ward 1) will sustain the anticipated significant future population growth without breaching the specified quota tolerance limits in a relatively short period of time.
- There may be little correlation between the urban and rural areas/land uses in proposed Wards 1, 3 and 4.

9.3 Option 3 – Twelve Councillors/Four Wards

9.3.1 Description

The division of the Council area into four (4) wards, with each of the proposed wards being represented by three (3) councillors.

- Ward 1: Comprising the suburbs of Andrews Farm, Davoren Park, Edinburgh North, Eyre, Buckland Park, MacDonald Park, Penfield, Penfield Gardens, Riverlea Park, Smithfield Plains, Virginia and Waterloo Corner.
- Ward 2: Comprising the suburbs of Angle Vale, Bibaringa, Evanston Park, Hillier, Humbug Scrub, Munno Para, Munno Para Downs, Munno Para West, Uleybury and Yattalunga; and part of the suburb of Blakeview north of Craigmore Road.
- Ward 3: Comprising the suburbs of Craigmore, Elizabeth Downs, Elizabeth North and Smithfield; and part of the suburb of Blakeview south of Craigmore Road.
- Ward 4: Comprising the suburbs of Elizabeth, Elizabeth East, Elizabeth Grove, Elizabeth Park, Elizabeth South, Elizabeth Vale, Hillbank, Gould Creek, One Tree Hill and Sampson Flat.



9.3.2 Ward Representation

Ward	Councillors	Electors	Elector Ratio	% Variance
Ward 1	3	17,036	1:5,679	-3.11
Ward 2	3	17,699	1:5,900	+0.66
Ward 3	3	17,957	1:5,986	+2.12
Ward 4	3	17,642	1:5,881	+0.33
Total	12	70,334		
Average			1:5,861	

Source: Electoral Commission SA, House of Assembly Roll (March 2024)
Council Supplementary Voter's Roll (March 2024)

9.3.3 Advantages

- This ward structure option separates the identified growth areas in the west (e.g. Riverlea Park and Virginia) from the growth areas in the north and north-west (e.g. Angle Vale, Munno Para Downs and Munno Para West).
- The identified growth areas are to be represented by a total of six (6) councillors.
- The ward elector ratios lay comfortably within the specified quota tolerance limits.
- All suburbs bar Blakeview are maintained, in their entirety, within a proposed ward.
- The elector numbers in proposed Ward 1 have been kept low to accommodate expected future development/population growth.
- Proposed Ward 1 can each accommodate over 3,000 additional electors; and this should improve as elector numbers (population) increase in the other proposed wards.

9.3.4 Disadvantages

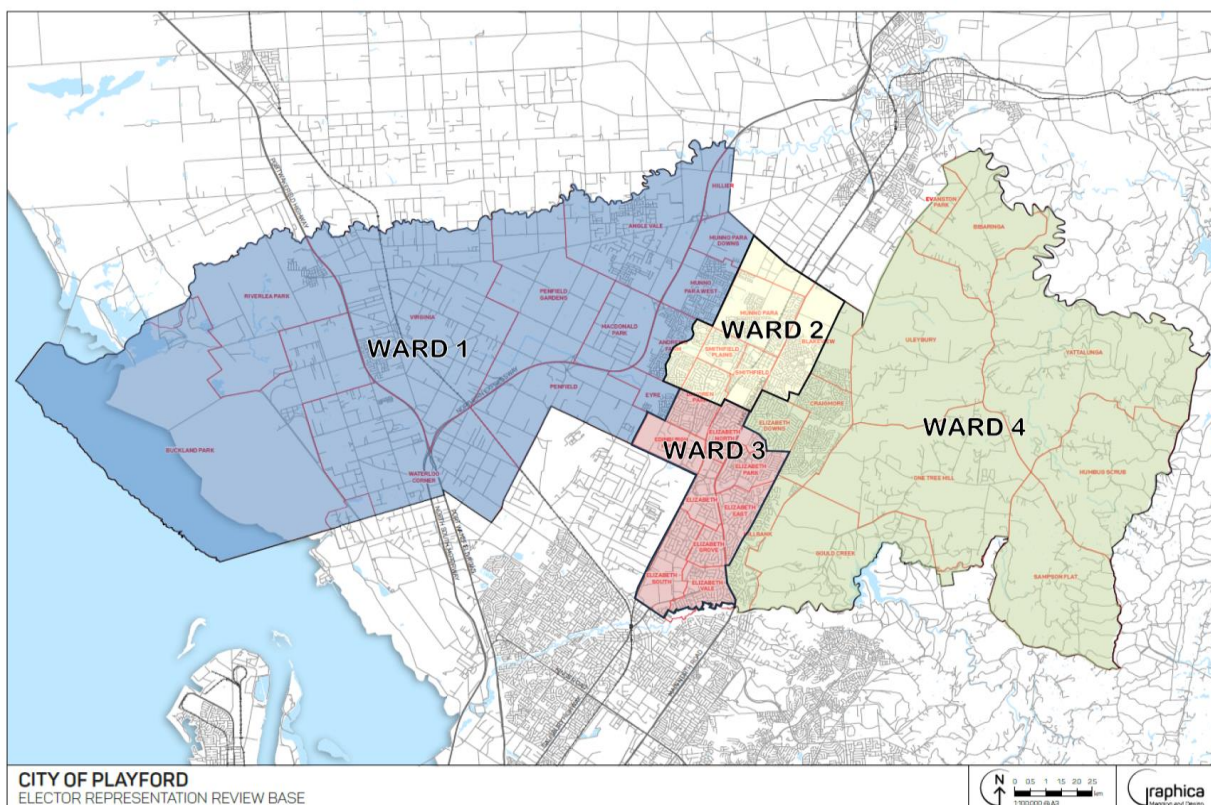
- Proposed Ward 3 is considerably smaller in area than the other proposed wards.
- Proposed Wards 1, 2 and 4 each contain urban and rural localities. This may be seen as a disadvantage to the rural communities, given the significant number of electors within the urban parts of the proposed wards.
- It is unlikely that proposed Wards 1 and 2 will sustain the anticipated significant future population growth without breaching the specified quota tolerance limits prior to the next scheduled representation review in 2032. However, Council can initiate another representation review (as and when deemed necessary) to rectify such a situation.
- There may be little correlation between the urban and rural areas/land uses in proposed Wards 1, 2 and 4.

9.4 Option 4 – Twelve Councillors/Four Wards

9.4.1 Description

The division of the Council area into four (4) wards, with each of the proposed wards being represented by three (3) councillors.

- Ward 1: Comprising the suburbs of Angle Vale, Buckland Park, Eyre, Hillier, MacDonald Park, Munno Para West, Penfield, Penfield Gardens, Riverlea Park, Virginia and Waterloo Corner; part of the suburb of Andrews Farm to the west of President Avenue; and part of the suburb of Munno Para Downs to the west of Stebonheath Road.
- Ward 2: Comprising the suburbs of Munno Para, Smithfield and Smithfield Plains; part of the suburb of Andrews Farm to the east of President Avenue; part of the suburb of Blakeview to the east of Bentley Road; part of the suburb of Davoren Park to the north of Petherton Road and Meadows Lane; and part of the suburb of Munno Para Downs to the east of Stebonheath Road.
- Ward 3: Comprising the suburbs of Edinburgh North, Elizabeth, Elizabeth East, Elizabeth Grove, Elizabeth North, Elizabeth Park, Elizabeth South and Elizabeth Vale; part of the suburb of Davoren Park to the south of Petherton Road and Meadows Lane; and part of the suburb of Elizabeth Downs to the south of Midway Road).
- Ward 4: Comprising the suburbs of Bibaringa, Craigmore, Evanston Park, Gould Creek, Hillbank, Humbug Scrub, One Tree Hill, Sampson Flat, Uleybury and Yattalunga; part of the suburb of Blakeview to the west of Bentley Road; and part of the suburb of Elizabeth Downs to the north of Midway Road).



9.4.2 Ward Representation

Ward	Councillors	Electors	Elector Ratio	% Variance
Ward 1	3	16,928	1:5,643	- 3.73
Ward 2	3	17,907	1:5,969	+1.84
Ward 3	3	17,367	1:5,789	- 1.23
Ward 4	3	18,132	1:6,044	+3.12
Total	12	70,334		
Average			1:5,861	

Source: Electoral Commission SA, House of Assembly Roll (March 2024)
Council Supplementary Voter's Roll (March 2024)

9.4.3 Advantages

- This ward structure exhibits two central wards which incorporate most of the long established urban areas, and large wards to the east and west which include the rural areas and the developing residential areas.
- The proposed wards have consistent levels of representation (i.e. three councillors per ward).
- The ward elector ratios lay comfortably within the specified quota tolerance limits.
- The elector numbers in proposed Ward 1 have been kept low to accommodate expected future development/population growth.
- Proposed Ward 1 can each accommodate at least 3,300 additional electors, whereas proposed Ward 4 can accommodate a minimum of approximately 1,600 additional electors. These circumstances should improve as elector numbers (population) increase in elsewhere across the Council area.

9.4.4 Disadvantages

- Five (5) suburbs are divided between wards and parts of proposed ward boundaries have had to be aligned with suburban roadways so as to achieve an equitable distribution of elector numbers between the proposed wards. The latter may serve to divide existing communities of interest.
- Proposed Wards 1 and 4 each contain urban and rural localities. This may be seen as a disadvantage to the rural communities, given the significant number of electors within the urban parts of the proposed wards.
- It is unlikely that proposed Ward 1 will sustain the anticipated significant future population growth without breaching the specified quota tolerance limits prior to the next scheduled representation review in 2032.
- There may be little correlation between the urban and rural areas/land uses in proposed Wards 1 and 4.

9.5 Option 5 – Eleven Councillors/Three Wards

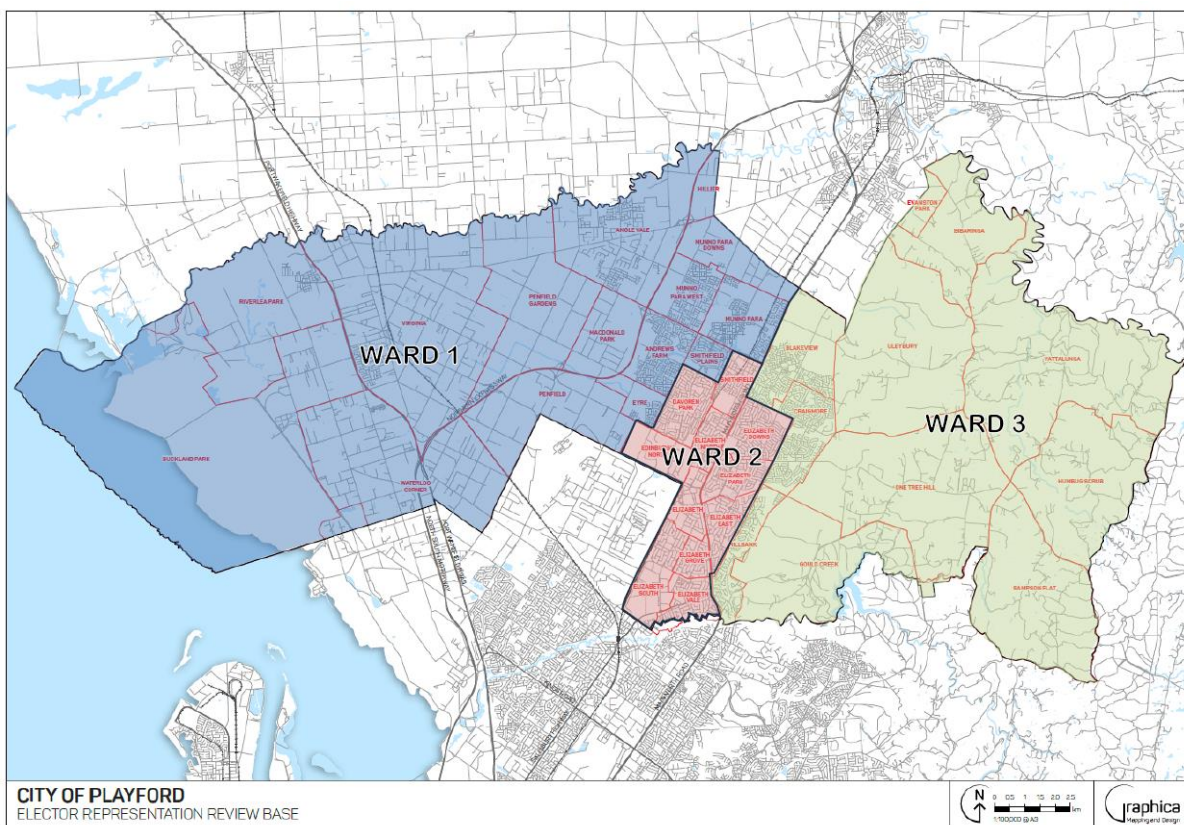
9.5.1 Description

The division of the Council area into three (3) wards, with two (2) of the proposed wards each being represented by four (4) councillors, and the remaining proposed ward being represented by three (3) councillors.

Ward 1: Comprising the suburbs of Andrews Farm, Angle Vale, Buckland Park, Eyre, Hillier, MacDonald Park, Munno Para, Munno Para Downs, Munno Para West, Penfield, Penfield Gardens, Riverlea Park, Smithfield Plains, Virginia and Waterloo Corner.

Ward 2: Comprising the suburbs of Davoren Park, Edinburgh North, Elizabeth, Elizabeth Downs, Elizabeth East, Elizabeth Grove, Elizabeth North, Elizabeth Park, Elizabeth South, Elizabeth Vale and Smithfield.

Ward 3: Comprising the suburbs of Bibaringa, Blakeview, Craigmore, Evanston Park, Hillbank, Humbug Scrub, Gould Creek, One Tree Hill, Sampson Flat, Uleybury and Yattalunga.



9.5.2 Ward Representation

Ward	Councillors	Electors	Elector Ratio	% Variance
Ward 1	4	25,178	1:6,295	-1.56
Ward 2	4	25,531	1:6,383	-0.18
Ward 3	3	19,625	1:6,542	+2.31
Total	11	70,334		
Average			1:6,394	

Source: Electoral Commission SA, House of Assembly Roll (March 2024)
Council Supplementary Voter's Roll (March 2024)

9.5.3 Advantages

- A relatively simple three (3) ward structure which comprises large eastern and western wards which incorporate both urban and rural areas; and a central ward which contains the long-established central urban areas of Elizabeth, Davoren Park and Smithfield.
- The proposed ward boundaries align with suburb boundaries.
- The elector ratios in each of the proposed wards are comparable and lay comfortably within the specified quota tolerance limits.
- Proposed Ward 1 can accommodate reasonable population growth (i.e. 5,000+ additional electors under circumstances where all or most future population growth occurs solely in proposed Ward 1). Again, the ability of the proposed ward to sustain additional growth in population (and therefore elector numbers) will improve under the situation whereby future population growth generally occurs across the Council area (albeit at varying rates).
- The odd number of councillors may serve to reduce the incidence of tied votes within the chamber (thereby avoiding the need for a casting vote from the Mayor).

9.5.4 Disadvantages

- Most of the identified future growth areas are located in proposed Ward 1
- There is an obvious disparity in the size (area) of the proposed wards.
- The varying levels of ward representation could be perceived to favour the wards with the greater representation (even though the elector ratios of the proposed wards are similar).
- It is unlikely that the proposed ward structure can remain within the specified quota tolerance limits for any considerable length of time (and certainly not for the eight year period between reviews), given the extent and locations of the anticipated future residential development and resultant population growth.
- There may be little correlation between the urban and rural areas in proposed Wards 1 and 3.

9.6 Option 6 – Eleven Councillors/Four Wards

9.6.1 Description

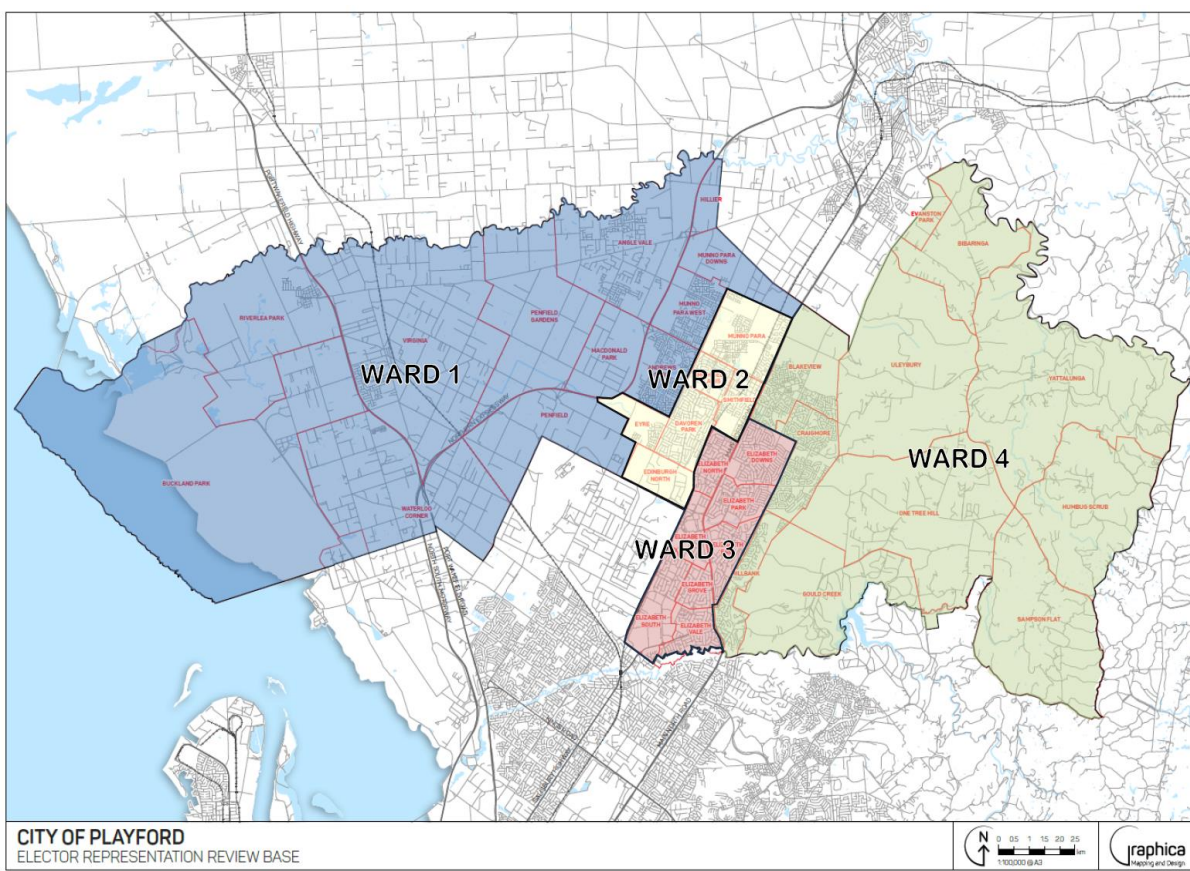
The division of the Council area into four (4) wards, with three (3) of the proposed wards each being represented by three (3) councillors, and the remaining proposed ward being represented by two (2) councillors.

Ward 1: Comprising the suburbs of Andrews Farm, Angle Vale, Buckland Park, Hillier, MacDonald Park, Munno Para Downs, Munno Para West, Penfield, Penfield Gardens, Riverlea Park, Virginia and Waterloo Corner.

Ward 2: Comprising the suburbs of Davoren Park, Edinburgh North, Eyre, Munno Para, Smithfield and Smithfield Plains.

Ward 3: Comprising the suburbs of Elizabeth, Elizabeth Downs, Elizabeth East, Elizabeth Grove, Elizabeth North, Elizabeth Park, Elizabeth South and Elizabeth Vale.

Ward 4: Comprising the suburbs of Bibaringa, Blakeview, Craigmore, Evanston Park, Hillbank, Humbug Scrub, Gould Creek, One Tree Hill, Sampson Flat, Uleybury and Yattalunga.



9.6.2 Ward Representation

Ward	Councillors	Electors	Elector Ratio	% Variance
Ward 1	3	18,543	1:6,181	-3.33
Ward 2	2	13,027	1:6,514	+1.87
Ward 3	3	19,139	1:6,380	- 0.22
Ward 4	3	19,625	1:6,542	+2.31
Total	11	70,334		
Average			1:6,394	

Source: Electoral Commission SA, House of Assembly Roll (March 2024)
Council Supplementary Voter's Roll (March 2024)

9.6.3 Advantages

- The two larger wards contain rural and developing rural area, whilst the remaining two proposed wards contain long established urban areas.
- The proposed ward boundaries align with suburb boundaries.
- The elector ratios in each of the proposed wards are comparable and lay comfortably within the specified quota tolerance limits.
- Proposed Ward 1 can accommodate reasonable population growth (i.e. minimum of 3,650 additional electors under circumstances whereby all future population growth occurs solely in proposed Ward 1). The ability of proposed Ward 1 to sustain additional growth in population (and therefore elector numbers) will improve under the likely situation whereby future population growth will generally occur across the Council area (albeit at varying rates).
- The odd number of councillors may serve to reduce the potential for tied votes within the chamber.

9.6.4 Disadvantages

- Again, most of the identified future growth areas are located in proposed Ward 1.
- Proposed Wards 1 and 4 are considerably larger in area than the two other proposed wards.
- The reduced level of representation in proposed Ward 2 could be perceived to disadvantage the communities therein and favour the communities within the wards which have greater representation.
- It is unlikely that the proposed ward structure can remain within the specified quota tolerance limits for the eight year period between reviews (given the extent of the anticipated future residential development and resultant population growth).
- There may be little correlation between the urban and rural areas in proposed Wards 1 and 4.

9.7 Option 7 – Ten Councillors/Three Wards

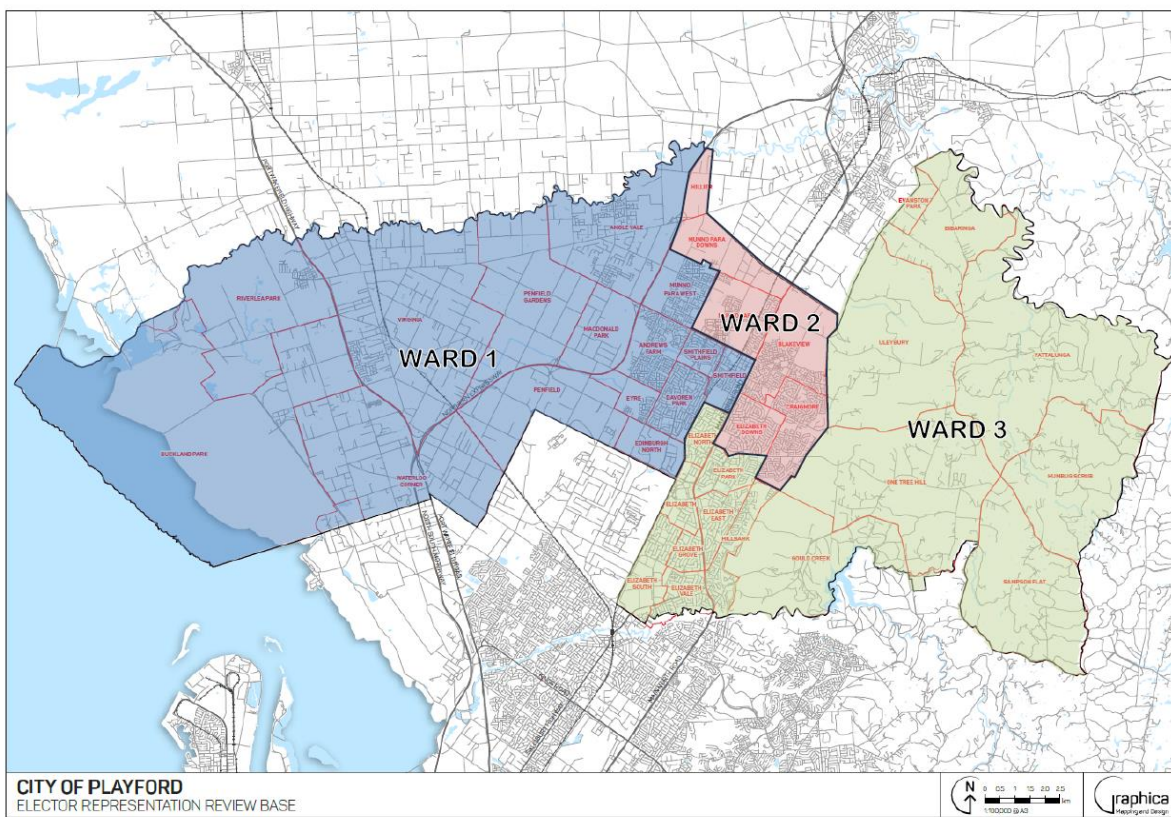
9.7.1 Description

The division of the Council area into three (3) wards, with one of the proposed wards being represented by four (4) councillors, and the remaining two (2) proposed wards each being represented by three (3) councillors.

Ward 1: Comprising the suburbs of Andrews Farm, Angle Vale, Buckland Park, Davoren Park, Edinburgh North, Eyre, MacDonald Park, Munno Para West, Penfield, Penfield Gardens, Riverlea Park, Virginia, Smithfield, Smithfield Plains and Waterloo Corner.

Ward 2: Comprising the suburbs of Blakeview, Craigmore, Elizabeth Downs, Hillier, Munno Para and Munno Para Downs.

Ward 3: Comprising the suburbs of Bibaringa, Elizabeth, Elizabeth East, Elizabeth Grove, Elizabeth North, Elizabeth Park, Elizabeth South, Elizabeth Vale, Evanston Park, Gould Creek, Hillbank, Humbug Scrub, One Tree Hill, Sampson Flat, Uleybury and Yattalunga.



9.7.2 Ward Representation

Ward	Councillors	Electors	Elector Ratio	% Variance
Ward 1	4	27,719	1:6,930	-1.47
Ward 2	3	21,536	1:7,179	+2.07
Ward 3	3	21,079	1:7,026	-0.10
Total	10	70,334		
Average			1:7,033	

Source: Electoral Commission SA, House of Assembly Roll (March 2024)
Council Supplementary Voter's Roll (March 2024)

9.7.3 Advantages

- The elector ratios in each of the proposed wards lay comfortably within the quota tolerance limits.
- The proposed ward boundaries align with suburb boundaries.
- The levels of ward representation are higher so as to maximise the ability of the proposed wards to sustain some of the population growth which is expected to occur over the coming years.
- Proposed Ward 1, wherein most of any anticipated future growth is likely to occur, can accommodate approximately 5,500 additional electors before breaching the +10% quota tolerance limits. The other two proposed wards would still be "in tolerance" at that point. Again, any increase in population/elector numbers in either of the other two proposed wards will enable further electors to be accommodated in proposed Ward 1.

9.7.4 Disadvantages

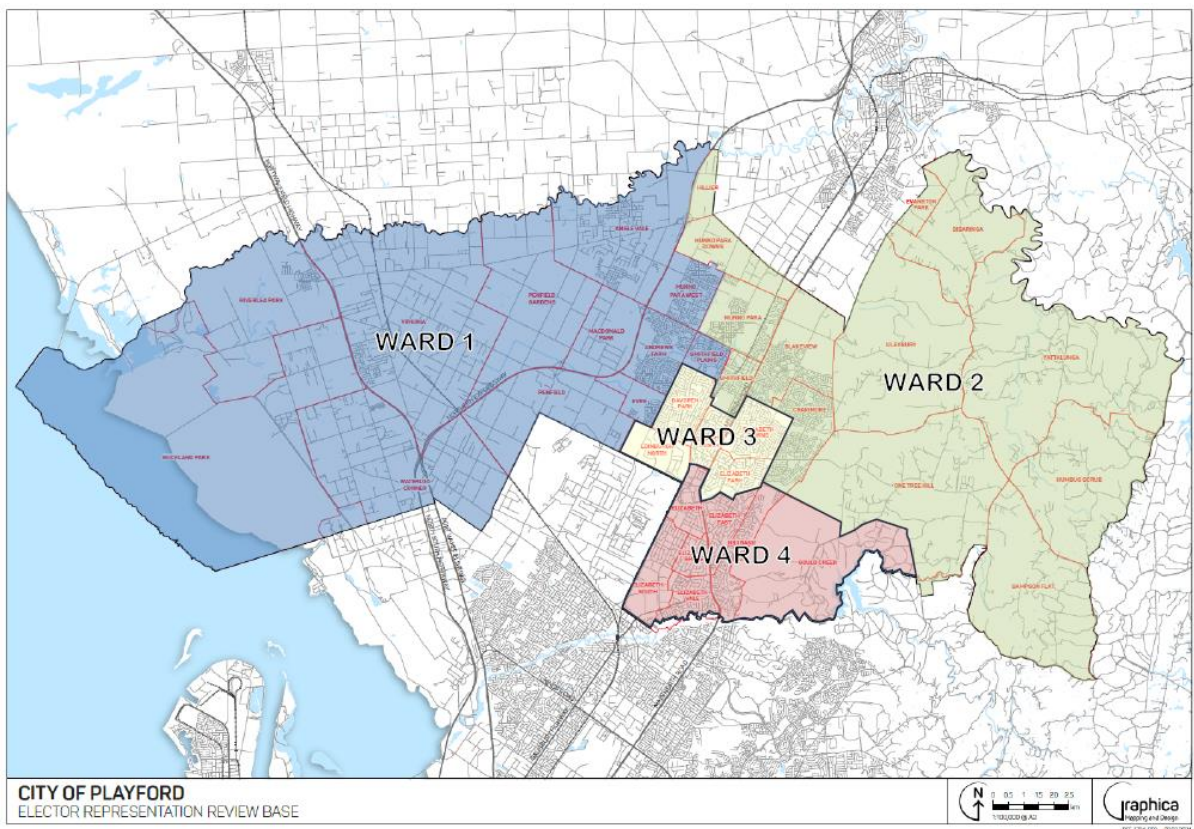
- The community may perceive that a reduction to ten councillors is excessive; may impact on the quality of representation that has been experienced in the past; and will reduce the lines of communication with Council.
- The proposed ward structure is somewhat awkward in configuration, and whilst no suburbs are to be divided between the proposed wards, it is uncertain whether the communities within the proposed wards will have any similarity or common interest.
- Proposed Ward 1 can only sustain a minimum of approximately 5,500 additional electors (under the scenario whereby all elector growth occurs in the ward) before nearing the +10% quota tolerance limit. Applying the same scenario to proposed Wards 2 and 3, the proposed wards can only sustain minimum additional elector numbers of approximately 2,450 and 3,000, respectively.
- Like the other ward structure options, this proposed ward structure will not likely stay within the specified tolerance limits until the next scheduled representation review in 2032.

9.8 Option 8 – Ten Councillors/Four Wards

9.8.1 Description

The division of the Council area into four (4) wards, with two of the proposed wards each being represented by three (3) councillors, and the remaining two (2) proposed wards each being represented by two (2) councillors.

- Ward 1: Comprising the suburbs of Andrews Farm, Angle Vale, Buckland Park, Eyre, MacDonald Park, Munno Para West, Penfield, Penfield Gardens, Riverlea Park, Virginia, Smithfield Plains and Waterloo Corner.
- Ward 2: Comprising the suburbs of Bibaringa, Blakeview, Craigmore, Evanston Park, Hillier, Humbug Scrub, Munno Para, Munno Para Downs, One Tree Hill, Sampson Flat, Smithfield, Uleybury and Yattalunga.
- Ward 3: Comprising the suburbs of Davoren Park, Edinburgh North, Elizabeth Downs, Elizabeth North and Elizabeth Park.
- Ward 4: Comprising the suburbs of Elizabeth, Elizabeth East, Elizabeth Grove, Elizabeth South, Elizabeth Vale, Gould Creek and Hillbank.



9.8.2 Ward Representation

Ward	Councillors	Electors	Elector Ratio	% Variance
Ward 1	3	21,327	1:6,930	- 1.47
Ward 2	3	21,537	1:7,179	+2.07
Ward 3	2	13,615	1:6,808	- 3.21
Ward 4	2	13,855	1:6,928	- 1.51
Total	10	70,334		
Average			1:7,033	

Source: Electoral Commission SA, House of Assembly Roll (March 2024)
Council Supplementary Voter's Roll (March 2024)

9.8.3 Advantages

- The elector ratios in each of the proposed wards lay comfortably within the quota tolerance limits.
- The proposed ward boundaries align with suburb boundaries.
- Proposed Ward 1, wherein a good part of any anticipated future growth is likely to occur, can accommodate a minimum of approximately 2,900 additional electors before breaching the +10% quota tolerance limits. The ability to sustain greater growth within proposed Ward 1 will be improved if (as expected) population growth also occurs elsewhere across the Council area.

9.8.4 Disadvantages

- The community may perceive that a reduction to ten councillors as being too drastic.
- The proposed ward structure is ungainly in configuration, and it is uncertain whether the communities within the proposed wards will have any similarity or common interest.
- Like the other ward structure options, this proposed ward structure will not likely stay within the specified tolerance limits until the next scheduled representation review in 2032.

10. SUMMARY

The representation review being undertaken by the City of Playford must be comprehensive; open to scrutiny by, and input from, the local community; and, where possible, seek to improve elector representation. Further, Council must examine and, where necessary, identify amendments to its present composition and ward structure, with the view to achieving fair and adequate representation of all of the electors across the Council area.

Ultimately, at the end of the review process, any proposed changes to Council's composition and/or the structure should serve to uphold the democratic principle of "one person, one vote, one value".

At this early stage of the review process Council will need to provide feedback in respect to its future composition and division of the Council area into wards (if required). The proposal that Council desires to bring into effect at the next Local Government election (November 2026) will need to be presented to the local community, for consideration and comment, in the prescribed "Representation Report".

The key issues of the review are the future composition and size of Council, and whether the Council area should continue to be divided into wards, or alternatively whether wards should be abolished.

The principal member of Council will be a Mayor elected by the community, as per the requirement of Section 51 of the Act. All other members of Council will be known as Councillors.

Area councillors represent the whole of the Council area and are generally associated with those Councils which have abolished wards. The alternative is a ward councillor who is specifically elected to represent a particular ward area. However, ward structures can also include area councillors (in addition to ward councillors) and this arrangement is unique to one council in South Australia (i.e. the City of Adelaide). It is considered that this office/form of elected member provides an unnecessary second tier of representation; affords few advantages; and comes at a financial cost. Further, ward councillors are generally quick to point out that they represent the Council area as a whole and participate equally in determining matters of council-wide importance that are presented before Council. It should also be noted that any contested elections (and/or supplementary elections) for the position(s) of area councillor have to be conducted across the Council area at a considerable cost to Council.

The functional activities of local government have expanded over time, in particular from providing a range of services to property, to include a range of services to people. Further, the current provisions of the Act now require change to the composition and structure of Council.

When determining an appropriate number of elected members, guidance can be taken from Sections 11A, 26(1)(c) and 33 of the Act. Section 11A establishes the “member cap” at a total of thirteen elected members (including the Mayor); and Sections 26 and 33 specifically require Council to avoid over-representation in comparison to other councils of a similar size and type (at least in the longer term).

Such a comparison reveals that the City of Playford may currently be over-represented, given that it has the third highest number of councillors of the nineteen “metropolitan” councils, but only has the sixth highest number of electors and the seventh highest elector ratio.

A reduction in the number of elected members must be considered given the specified “member cap” specified under the Act. However, Council will still require sufficient elected members to adequately represent the community; meet its obligations in respect to its roles and responsibilities; afford sufficient lines of communication with a growing community; provide for a diverse range of skill sets, expertise, experience and opinions; and manage the workloads of the elected members.

Change to the composition and structure of Council will require the elected members to adapt. The ways and mindsets of the past, in regard to elector representation, will have to change in order to meet the challenges presented by the anticipated on-going population growth across the Council area and the reduction in the level of elector representation required under the Act. Enhanced communication and community engagement will likely have to play a significant role in the future dealings between Council (i.e. the elected members) and the community.

Whilst any future ward structure of Council should have a logical basis and exhibit equitable distribution of electors between the proposed wards and a comparable level of representation in the proposed wards, it is also important for any amended structure of Council to provide some benefit to the community. This may simply be achieved through more direct and responsive communication with the community by each future elected member. Future candidates for election to Council will be aware of the challenges.

Overall, the objectives of the representation review should be to uphold the democratic principle of “one person, one vote, one value”; introduce a level of representation (and elector ratio) which is comparable to that of other councils of a similar size and type; and not detrimentally affect the quality of representation afforded to, and/or expected by, the local community.

The most important issue that needs to be taken into account when considering the composition and/or structure of Council is obviously the anticipated future population growth in the Council area over the next eight years. Population growth on the scale anticipated will likely have significant impacts, including increased demands on the elected members and/or strain on the ward structure to maintain compliance with the specified 10% quota tolerance limits over a prolonged period.

The Council area has always been divided into wards.

Wards are seen to guarantee some level of direct representation of all parts of the Council area; enable ward councillors to focus on local as well as council-wide issues; prevent a single interest group from gaining considerable representation on Council; enable and attract candidates to contest ward elections; reduce the cost and effort required to campaign at an election; and potentially provide cost savings to Council in regards the conduct of elections and supplementary elections.

Whilst the "no wards" structure enables an elector to vote for all of the vacant positions on Council; ensures that the most supported candidates from across the Council area will be elected; and overcomes the possibility of parochial ward attitudes, it appears that the abolition of wards is not favoured by the elected members at this time.

Eight (8) ward structure options have been presented as examples to demonstrate how the Council area can be divided into wards under circumstances whereby Council may comprise between ten and twelve councillors.

Whilst all of these ward structures exhibit ward elector ratios which lay well within the specified quota tolerance limits, they clearly demonstrate the difficulty of dividing the Council area into wards on a logical basis which can accommodate the anticipated substantial population growth over the coming years.

It is unlikely that most, if any, of the presented ward structures will sustain the anticipated future population growth without breaching the specified quota tolerance limits prior to the next scheduled representation review in 2032. Should this occur Council can initiate a further review, or alternatively the Electoral Commissioner can require another review under circumstances whereby the elector ratio of a future ward varies from the quota by more than 20%.

As for the issue of ward identification, further consideration will have to be given to this matter later in the review process once it is known whether Council will be retaining or abolishing wards. The current numbering system is acceptable, but consideration could be given to alternatives, including names of local geographical and/or heritage significance which have a connection to the Council area.

The next step of the review process is the preparation of a "Representation Report" which will present Council's preferred future composition and structure to the local community, for consideration and comment, as part of the prescribed public consultation stage of the review