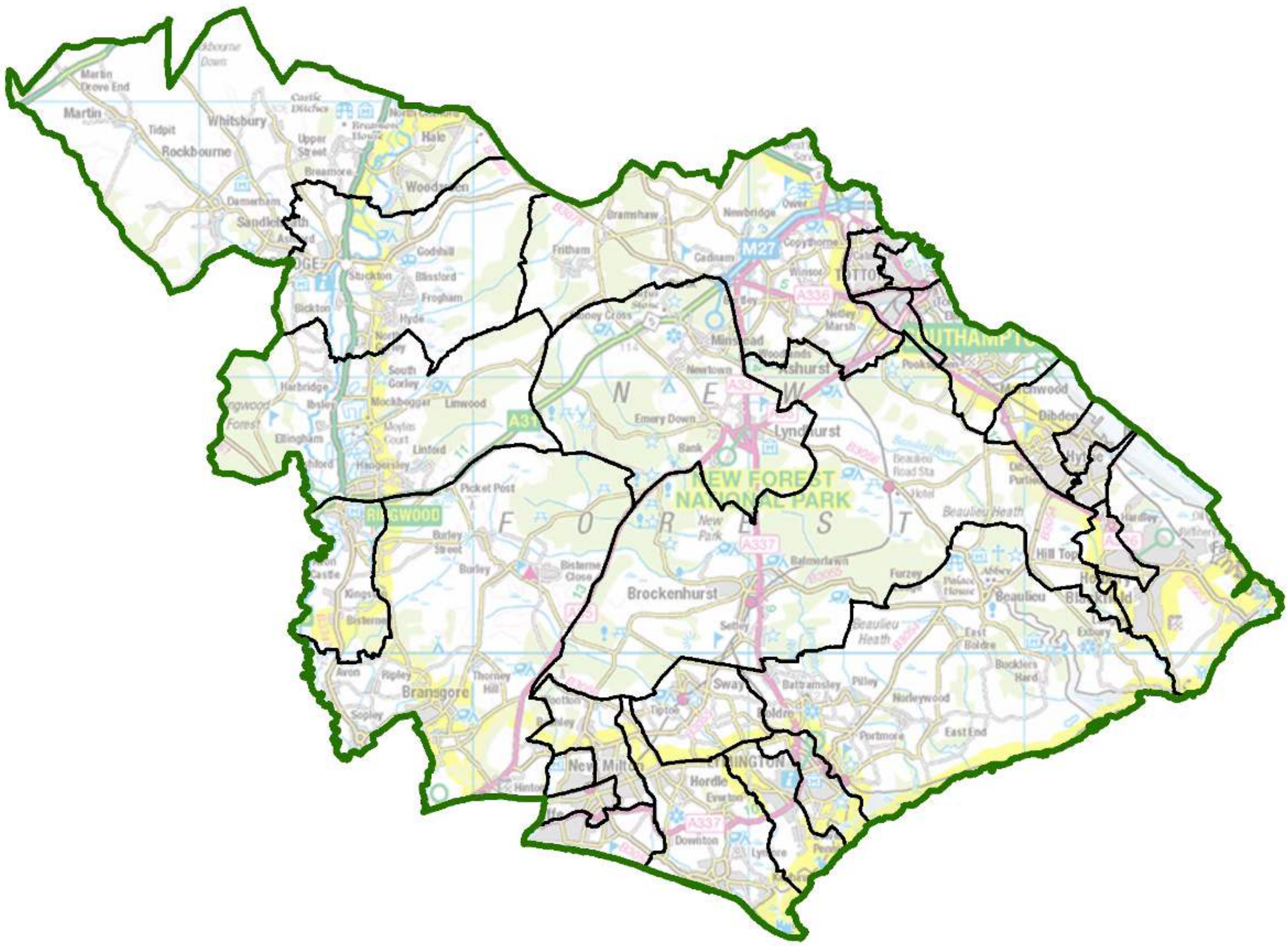
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England



New electoral arrangements for New Forest District Council

Final Recommendations

January 2021

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A note on our mapping:

The maps shown in this report are for illustrative purposes only. Whilst best efforts have been made by our staff to ensure that the maps included in this report are representative of the boundaries described by the text, there may be slight variations between these maps and the large PDF map that accompanies this report, or the digital mapping supplied on our consultation portal. This is due to the way in which the final mapped products are produced. The reader should therefore refer to either the large PDF supplied with this report or the digital mapping for the true likeness of the boundaries intended. The boundaries as shown on either the large PDF map or the digital mapping should always appear identical.

Contents

Introduction 1
- Who we are and what we do 1
- What is an electoral review? 1
- Why New Forest? 2
- Our proposals for New Forest 2
- How will the recommendations affect you? 2
- Review timetable 2

Analysis and final recommendations 5
- Submissions received 5
- Electorate figures 5
- Number of councillors 6
- Ward boundaries consultation 7
- Draft recommendations consultation 7
- Final recommendations 8
  - Central 9
  - West 13
  - South West 17
  - North East 20
  - South East 22

Conclusions 25
- Summary of electoral arrangements 25
- Parish electoral arrangements 25

What happens next? 29

Equalities 31

Appendices 33
- Appendix A 33
  - Final recommendations for New Forest District Council 33
- Appendix B 36
  - Outline map 36
- Appendix C 38
  - Submissions received 38
- Appendix D 39
  - Glossary and abbreviations 39

Introduction

Who we are and what we do

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament.[1] We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

2 The members of the Commission are:

- Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)
- Andrew Scallan CBE (Deputy Chair)
- Susan Johnson OBE
- Peter Maddison QPM
- Amanda Nobbs OBE
- Steve Robinson
- Jolyon Jackson CBE (Chief Executive)

What is an electoral review?

3 An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority. A local authority's electoral arrangements decide:

- How many councillors are needed.
- How many wards or electoral divisions there should be, where their boundaries are and what they should be called.
- How many councillors should represent each ward or division.

4 When carrying out an electoral review the Commission has three main considerations:

- Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents.
- Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity.
- Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.

5 Our task is to strike the best balance between these three considerations when making our recommendations.

[1] Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

6 More detail regarding the powers that we have, as well as the further guidance and information about electoral reviews and review process in general, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why New Forest?

7 We are conducting a review of New Forest District Council ('the Council') following a request from the Council. Also, some councillors currently represent many more or fewer voters than others. This is 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where votes are as equal as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

8 This electoral review is being carried out to ensure that:

- The wards in New Forest are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- The number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the district.

Our proposals for New Forest

9 New Forest should be represented by 48 councillors, 12 fewer than there are now.

10 New Forest should have 26 wards, eight fewer than there are now.

11 The boundaries of all wards should change; none will stay the same.

12 We have now finalised our recommendations for electoral arrangements for New Forest.

How will the recommendations affect you?

13 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in and which other communities are in that ward. Your ward name may also change.

14 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the district or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. The recommendations will not have an effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums and we are not able to consider any representations which are based on these issues.

Review timetable

15 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for New Forest. We then held three periods of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the district. The submissions received during consultation have informed our final recommendations.

16 The review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
19 November 2019	Number of councillors decided
17 December 2019	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
2 March 2020	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
30 June 2020	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
7 September 2020	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
11 January 2021	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and final recommendations

17 Legislation[2] states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors[3] there are now, but also on how many there are likely to be in the five years after the publication of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for our wards.

18 In reality, we are unlikely to be able to create wards with exactly the same number of electors in each; we have to be flexible. However, we try to keep the number of electors represented by each councillor as close to the average for the council as possible.

19 We work out the average number of electors per councillor for each individual local authority by dividing the electorate by the number of councillors, as shown on the table below.

	2019	2026
Electorate of New Forest	142,717	147,591
Number of councillors	60	48
Average number of electors per councillor	2,379	3,075

20 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having 'good electoral equality'. All of our proposed wards for New Forest will have good electoral equality by 2026.

Submissions received

21 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed at our offices by appointment, or on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

22 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2025, a period five years on from the initial scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2020. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 3% by 2025.

23 In response to the warding pattern consultation, a number of respondents put forward questions about development, including between Totton and Marchwood. However, we note that these developments are likely to occur beyond the five-year forecast period and cannot be considered as part of this review.

[2] Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.
[3] Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

24 In response to the draft recommendations a resident questioned whether development in Fordingbridge had been missed out. The Commission has checked with the Council and is satisfied that all appropriate development was included in the forecast figures when they were put together. We are aware that planning applications may have been approved since then, but we cannot continually revisit the figures during the review process.

25 Due to delays caused by Covid-19, the review will now conclude in January 2021. We have agreed with the Council that these figures can be regarded as a realistic forecast of local electors by 2026. We are content that the projected figures are the best available at the present time and have used these figures to produce our final recommendations.

Number of councillors

26 New Forest District Council currently has 60 councillors. We looked at evidence provided by the Council and concluded that reducing the council size by 12 would ensure that the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively. We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 48 councillors.

27 In response to our warding pattern consultation we received a number of general comments supporting or objecting to the change in council size. The Council put forward a scheme based on a 49-member council, arguing that this would enable a better warding pattern across the district. New Forest East Conservative Association argued for no reduction below 48 but supported 49 members.

28 We examined the Council's proposal based on 49 councillors and noted that it generally facilitated strong boundaries and secured good levels of electoral equality. However, Boldre Parish Council raised concerns about the Council's proposals to transfer part of Boldre parish to a Lymington & Pennington town ward, arguing that this did not reflect community identity. The Parish Council put forward alternative proposals for this area, which reduced the council size to 48. We were persuaded to adopt Boldre Parish Council's proposals, including a council size of 48. We therefore based our draft recommendations on a 48-councillor council.

29 We received no significant comments on the number of councillors in response to our draft recommendations and have therefore based our final recommendations on a 48-member council.

Ward boundaries consultation

30 We received 51 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included a district-wide proposal from New Forest District Council. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the district.

31 The Council's district-wide scheme provided a mixed pattern of one-, two- and three-councillor wards for New Forest. We carefully considered the proposals received and were of the view that the proposed patterns of wards resulted in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the authority and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries. However, as stated in the 'Number of councillors' section (above), we adopted a council size of 48 as part of our draft recommendations to address Boldre Parish Council's concerns about the inclusion of part of the parish in a ward with Lymington & Pennington. We also proposed several further amendments across the district based on the evidence received, or to improve electoral equality or strengthen boundaries.

32 In response to the warding patterns and draft recommendations we received a number or proposals that recommended changes to the external boundaries of the district or parishes. However, these fall outside the scope of an electoral review and so cannot be considered and are not discussed further.

33 As a result of the unprecedented circumstances related to the outbreak of Covid-19, we were unable to conduct a visit to the area to look at the various different proposals on the ground. However, we were able to conduct a detailed, virtual tour of New Forest. This helped us to decide between the different boundaries proposed.

Draft recommendations consultation

34 We received 182 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included a mixture of support and objections. There were significant objections to our proposals on how Lymington & Pennington parish should be divided into two two-councillor wards. There were also objections to our proposals to divide Hythe & Dibden into two three-councillor wards, with strong support for three two-councillor wards. We also received submissions in the Fordingbridge and Marchwood areas that put forward broadly similar comments to those received in response to the warding pattern consultation. We received suggestions for amendments between Ringwood Town Central and Bransgore, Burley & Sopley wards. Finally, we received a range of proposed ward name changes.

35 We are basing the final recommendations on the draft recommendations, subject to changes in Lymington & Pennington and Hythe & Dibden to reflect persuasive evidence we have received. We also propose a change between

Ringwood Town Central and Bransgore, Burley & Sopley wards. We are also making a number of ward name changes.

Final recommendations

36 Our final recommendations are for six single-councillor wards, 18 two-councillor wards and two three-councillor wards. We consider that our final recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

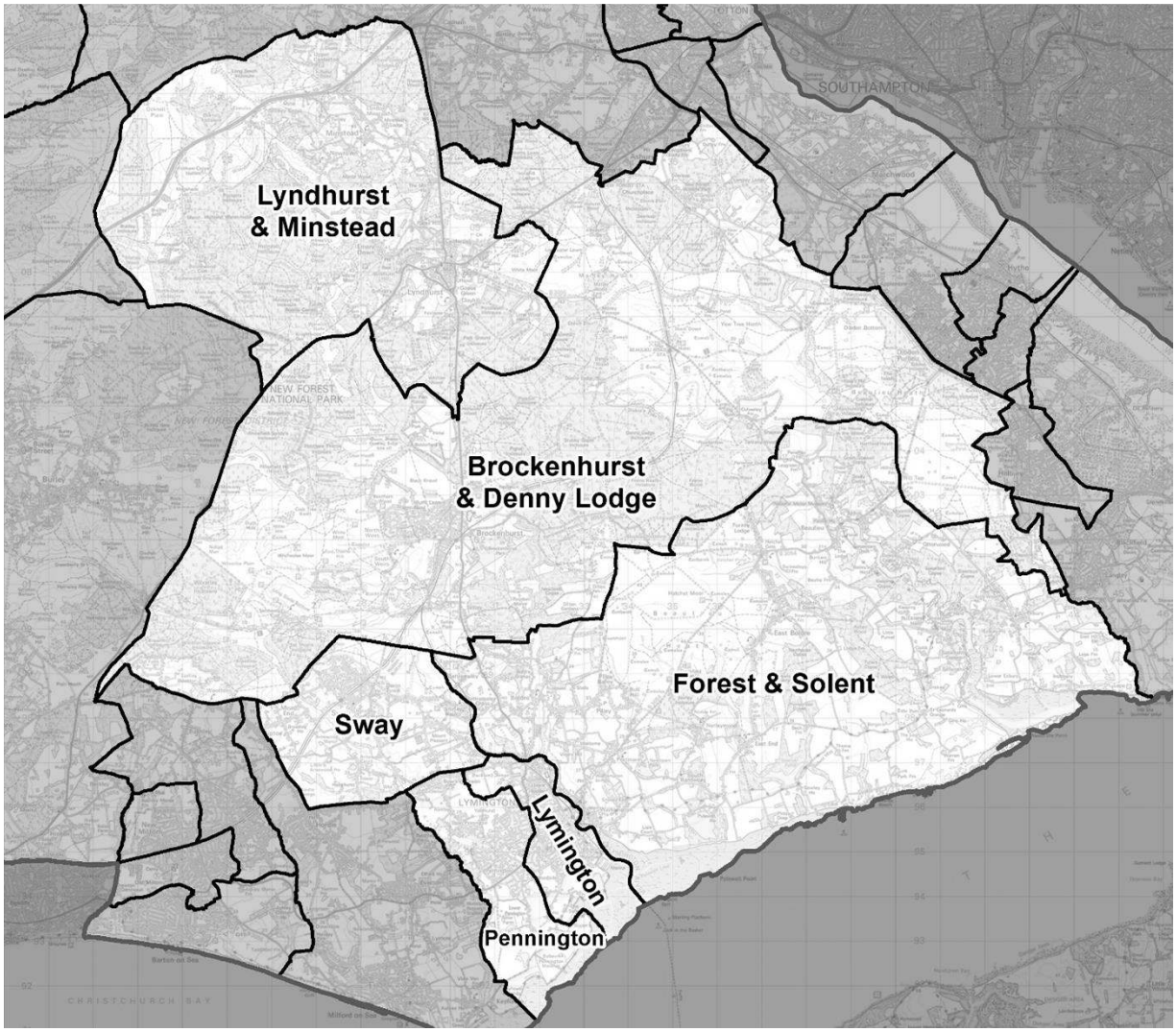
37 The tables and maps on pages 9–23 detail our final recommendations for each area of New Forest. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory[4] criteria of:

- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

38 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 33 and on the large map accompanying this report.

[4] Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Central



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2026
Brockenhurst & Denny Lodge	1	5%
Forest & Solent	1	3%
Lymington	2	8%
Lyndhurst & Minstead	1	4%
Pennington	2	6%
Sway	1	-1%

Lymington and Pennington

39 There was general support for our draft recommendations in this area, which had not included part of Boldre parish in a ward with part of Lymington & Pennington parish. However, there were significant objections to our draft recommendations for two-councillor Lymington Town and Pennington wards. New Forest Liberal Democrats and around 90 local residents objected to the inclusion of an area to the west of Southampton Road in the Pennington ward. There was not total agreement

on the extent of the area, but some respondents suggested it was the area to the east of the existing ward boundary, which runs along a stream. Respondents argued that this area should be in Lymington Town ward, putting forward strong links to the town, including the use of a wide range of facilities. They also argued that the area had limited or no links to Pennington. It was further argued that if consideration was given to the community needs of Boldre parish by not splitting it as part of the draft recommendations, then similar weight should be given to the concerns of residents in this area.

40 Around 10 residents objected to the inclusion of the area to the west of Belmore Lane in Pennington ward, arguing that they are closer to Lymington and should be included in that ward. Parish Councillor Penson also argued that this area should be included in Lymington ward and stated that the wards should be named Lymington & Pennington East and Lymington & Pennington West so that the parish name is included in each ward.

41 The Council put forward modifications to the draft recommendations, running the boundary along Milford Road, Stanford Hill and Southampton Road. It argued that this provides a clear boundary, keeping Lymington as a town ward, incorporating Buckland, while Pennington is a mix of rural and semi-urban. It also stated that the proposal addressed some of the local concerns over our draft recommendations. The Council proposed naming its two two-councillor wards Lymington and Pennington, respectively. Councillor Davies rejected these names, arguing that they need names that better reflect the areas in them. He proposed Pennington & Lymington West and Lymington Town & Buckland.

42 A local resident expressed support for the inclusion of Buckland in Lymington Town ward.

43 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note the significant objections to the proposal to place the area to the west of Southampton Road in Pennington ward. The evidence for retaining this area in Lymington Town ward is persuasive. We also note that it was not totally clear which roads should be in that area, despite some suggesting the existing ward boundary that runs along the stream.

44 However, despite the good community identity evidence, we note that moving the area to the east of the existing boundary back into Lymington Town ward would worsen electoral equality there to 16% more electors than the district average by 2026. Retaining the area to the west of Belmore Lane in Lymington Town ward would also worsen electoral equality in Lymington Town to 15% more electors. Adding both areas to Lymington Town would worsen electoral equality to 26%. We are not persuaded to adopt wards with these poor levels of electoral equality and in our view, the only way to address this would be to substantially rework our proposals for the surrounding areas, for which we have received support.

45 To reflect the balance of evidence across the entire area, we are therefore adopting the Council's proposals for Lymington and Pennington as part of our final recommendations. While we note that the Council's proposal does not include the area to the west of Southampton Road in Lymington Town, it does include the area to the west of Belmore Lane and uses clearly identifiable boundaries.

46 We note that there were a range of options for the names of these wards, but consider that naming them Lymington and Pennington reflects the two parts of the parish that make up the ward. We are therefore adopting the Council's proposed two-councillor Lymington and Pennington wards as part of our final recommendations. These would have 8% more and 6% more electors than the borough average by 2026, respectively.

Brockenhurst & Denny Lodge and Forest & Solent

47 There was generally support for our draft recommendations for these wards, with respondents supporting the proposal not to divide Boldre parish and include part of it in a Lymington ward. The Council, Boldre and Exbury & Lepe parish councils and Councillors Harris and Parish Councillors Bolton and Moore all expressed support for Beaulieu, Boldre, East Boldre & Exbury & Lepe ward. However, the Council and Boldre Parish Council suggested it should be renamed Forest & Solent ward to reflect the coastal and rural nature of the ward. Councillor Harris and Exbury & Lepe Parish Council suggested it should be called Beaulieu, Boldre, East Boldre 'and' Exbury & Lepe ward, arguing that the word 'and' should be used, rather than '&', to differentiate the parishes.

48 Another resident stated that the Bashley area of New Milton parish should be in the Brockenhurst & Denny Lodge ward, arguing that this area is part of the National Park and should be with other areas of the National Park. The resident also argued that while parts of Denny Lodge parish sit well in the proposed ward, other areas would be better served in neighbouring wards.

49 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note the suggestion that the Bashley area of New Milton parish should be included in the Brockenhurst & Denny Lodge ward. However, we considered this as part of the draft recommendations and while we view there to be logic to the argument, it would worsen electoral equality in Brockenhurst & Denny Lodge to 32% more electors than the district average by 2026. We are not persuaded to adopt a ward with this poor level of electoral equality. We also note the comments about transferring areas of Denny Lodge to surrounding wards, but no detailed suggestions were made. In light of the support for our draft recommendations for the Brockenhurst & Denny Lodge ward, we are therefore confirming this as final. This ward is forecast to have 5% more electors than the district average by 2026.

50 Finally, we note the support for Beaulieu, Boldre, East Boldre & Exbury & Lepe ward, but that there was disagreement over the proposed name. We note the comments over the use of ‘and’ and ‘&’, but in fact, these terms have no legal bearing on the name of the ward. Despite this, on balance, we are persuaded by the Council’s argument that Forest & Solent reflects the nature of the ward. We are therefore confirming Beaulieu, Boldre, East Boldre & Exbury & Lepe ward as final, subject to renaming it Forest & Solent. This ward is forecast to have 3% more electors than the district average by 2026.

Lyndhurst & Minstead

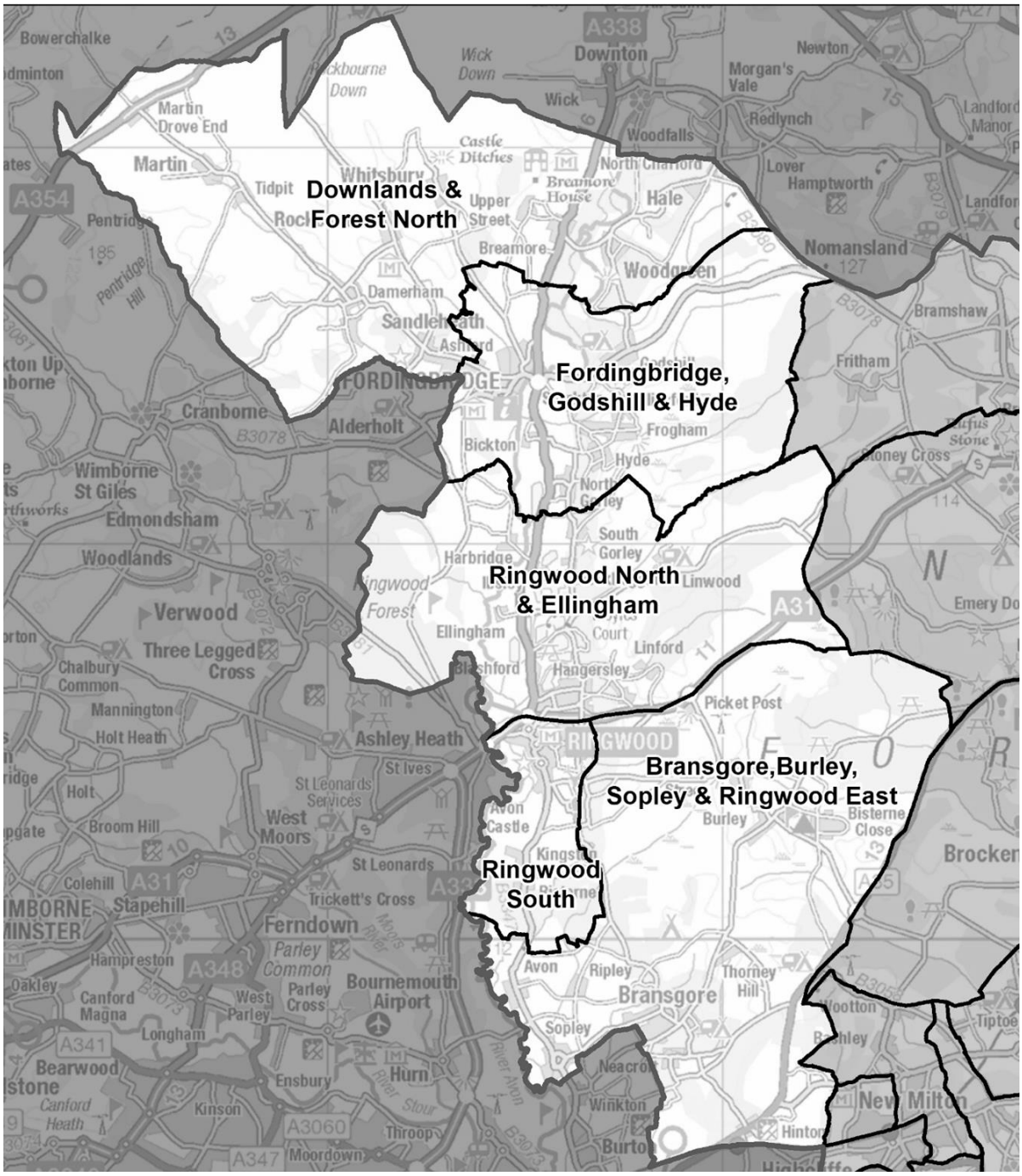
51 The Council expressed support for this ward. However, a resident objected to the inclusion of Minstead parish in the Lyndhurst & Minstead ward, arguing that Minstead is rural and Lyndhurst is urban.

52 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note the objection to the inclusion of Minstead parish in Lyndhurst & Minstead ward. However, the resident only provided very limited evidence and did not propose which ward Minstead should be in. In addition, we note the support for this ward. We are therefore confirming it as final. This ward is forecast to have 4% more electors than the district average by 2026.

Sway

53 The Council and local resident expressed support for the draft recommendation for Sway ward. In the light of no other comments, we are confirming this ward as final. This ward is forecast to have 1% fewer electors than the district average by 2026.

West



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2026
Bransgore, Burley, Sopley & Ringwood East	2	-5%
Downlands & Forest North	1	-1%
Fordingbridge, Godshill & Hyde	2	1%
Ringwood North & Ellingham	2	5%
Ringwood South	2	-2%

Bransgore, Burley, Sopley & Ringwood East

54 The Council expressed support for this ward, while a number of local residents argued that the eastern area of Ringwood parish should be included in this ward. They argued that this area is part of the National Park and therefore faces similar issues, particularly relating to planning and resource allocation, as other areas in Bransgore, Burley & Sopley that are also in the National Park.

55 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note the argument that the eastern part of Ringwood parish should be included in the Bransgore, Burley & Sopley ward. Although there was support for the draft recommendations, we note that transferring this area would improve electoral equality in Bransgore, Burley & Sopley ward to 5% fewer electors from the district average by 2026, from 11% fewer. It would also improve electoral equality in Ringwood South ward from 5% more to 2% fewer by 2026. Given the improvement in electoral equality and our view that this proposed arrangement would unite more rural communities, we are adopting this amendment as part of our final recommendations. The modified ward will be called Bransgore, Burley, Sopley & Ringwood East, representing the constituent areas.

Downlands & Forest North and Fordingbridge, Godshill & Hyde

56 We received a mixture of support and objections to our proposals for these wards. The Council expressed support but argued that Fordingbridge ward should be renamed Fordingbridge, Godshill & Hyde.

57 There were strong objections to our proposals from Godshill and Hyde parish councils. They argued the draft recommendations placed too much emphasis on electoral equality at the expense of reflecting communities and clear boundaries. Parish Councillor Burden and a number of local residents also objected to the draft recommendations, particularly linking Godshill and Hyde parishes to Fordingbridge. They reiterated earlier arguments that these parishes face different issues. A resident argued that Sandleheath parish should be in Fordingbridge ward.

58 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note the concerns of the respondents who objected to our proposals for Fordingbridge and Downlands & Forest North wards. However, they broadly reiterated evidence submitted in response to our warding patterns consultation. As stated in our draft recommendations, while we acknowledge there are concerns in relation to community identity and the use of clear boundaries, we were unable to identify a warding pattern that reflects these concerns while also securing reasonable levels of electoral equality. The option outlined in our draft recommendations would have resulted in a ward with 16% more electors than the district average by 2026. We remain of the view that, notwithstanding the concerns about community identity and clear boundaries, this poor level of electoral equality cannot be justified given the other options that are available.

59 We also note the suggestion that Sandleheath parish be in a ward with Fordingbridge, but this would worsen electoral equality in Downlands & Forest North to 18% fewer electors than the district average by 2026. We do not propose adopting a ward with this poor level of electoral equality.

60 We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for these wards as final. However, we are adopting the Council's proposal to rename Fordingbridge ward as Fordingbridge, Godshill & Hyde. We note that this name reflects all the parishes within the ward. This ward is forecast to have 1% more electors than the district average by 2026.

Ringwood North & Ellingham and Ringwood South

61 We received a mixture of support and objections to our proposals for these wards. The Council expressed support, although proposed that Ellingham & Ringwood North ward be named Ringwood North & Ellingham to reflect the relative size of the constituent areas.

62 New Forest West Labour Party objected to the proposal to join Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley parish with part of Ringwood parish. It asked that further consideration is given to proposals, considered as part of the draft recommendations, to join Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley parish with rural parishes to the north and to create wards for Ringwood parish that do not breach the parish boundary. It also suggested that there would be further development in Ringwood, but acknowledged that this would be beyond the five-year forecast period we can consider. Finally, the New Forest West Labour Party objected to the Ringwood Town Central ward name, arguing that a geographic name, such as Ringwood South or Ringwood South & East, would be in keeping with the other names.

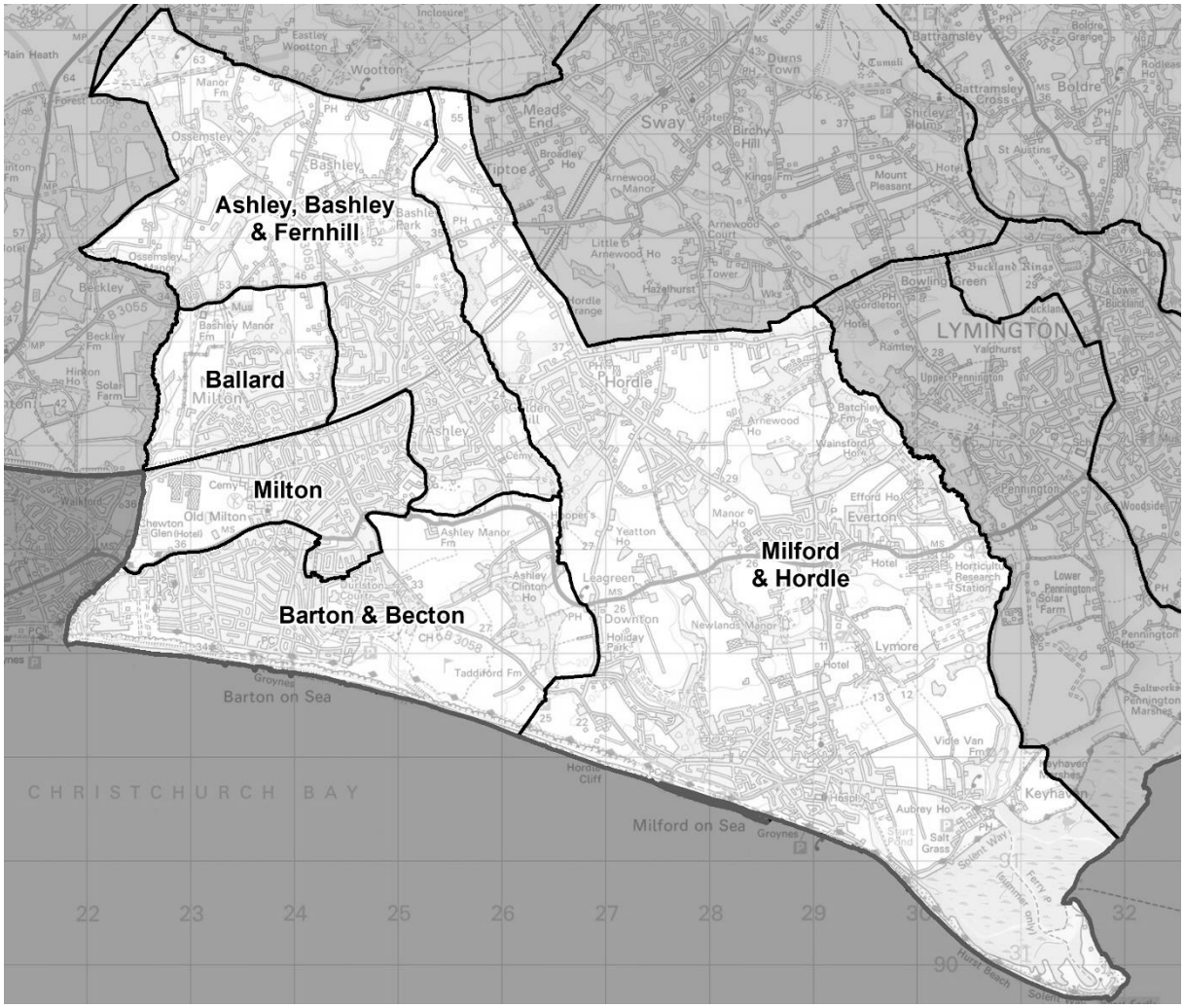
63 As stated in the Bransgore, Burley, Sopley & Ringwood East section (above), a number of local residents stated that the eastern area of Ringwood parish should be included in this Bransgore, Burley & Sopley ward. They argued that this area is part of the National Park and therefore faces similar issues to other areas in Bransgore, Burley & Sopley that are also in the National Park. For the reasons set out in paragraphs 54–55, we have been persuaded to adopt this amendment as part of our final recommendations.

64 We note the objections to the inclusion of Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley parish in a ward with part of Ringwood parish. However, no new information or alternative warding patterns have been provided and we have therefore not been persuaded to amend our draft recommendations in this area. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for these wards as final, subject to name changes.

65 We acknowledge the Council's suggestion that Ringwood should be put first in the Ellingham & Ringwood ward, but also note the New Forest West Labour Party's suggestion that it would be better for Ringwood Town Central to have a geographic

denomination. As part of our final recommendations, we are therefore changing Ellingham & Ringwood North and the modified Ringwood Town Central wards to Ringwood North & Ellingham and Ringwood South, respectively. These wards are forecast to have electoral variances of 5% and -2% by 2026.

South West



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2026
Ashley, Bashley & Fernhill	2	9%
Ballard	1	5%
Barton & Becton	2	4%
Milford & Hordle	3	0%
Milton	2	-6%

Milford & Hordle

66 We received no significant comments on this ward. The Council expressed support, while two residents suggested amendments to the north around Vaggs Lane. One suggested it should be in Sway, while the other suggested Ashley & New Milton North East.

67 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note that it was suggested that the Vaggs Lane area of Hordle parish be transferred elsewhere as part of our draft recommendations. We note that neither submission at this stage

agreed on where it would be better placed. Therefore, given the limited evidence to support an amendment, and the support for our draft recommendations, we are confirming Milford & Hordle ward as final. This ward is forecast to have an electoral variance equal to the district average by 2026 (0%).

Ashley, Bashley & Fernhill, Ballard, Barton & Becton and Milton

68 The Council expressed support for the draft recommendations for this area, but put forward a number of name changes. New Forest West Labour Party also expressed support for the draft recommendations. A number of local residents expressed support too, and also proposed name changes. There were also some limited suggestions that the Bashley area should be in a neighbouring rural ward.

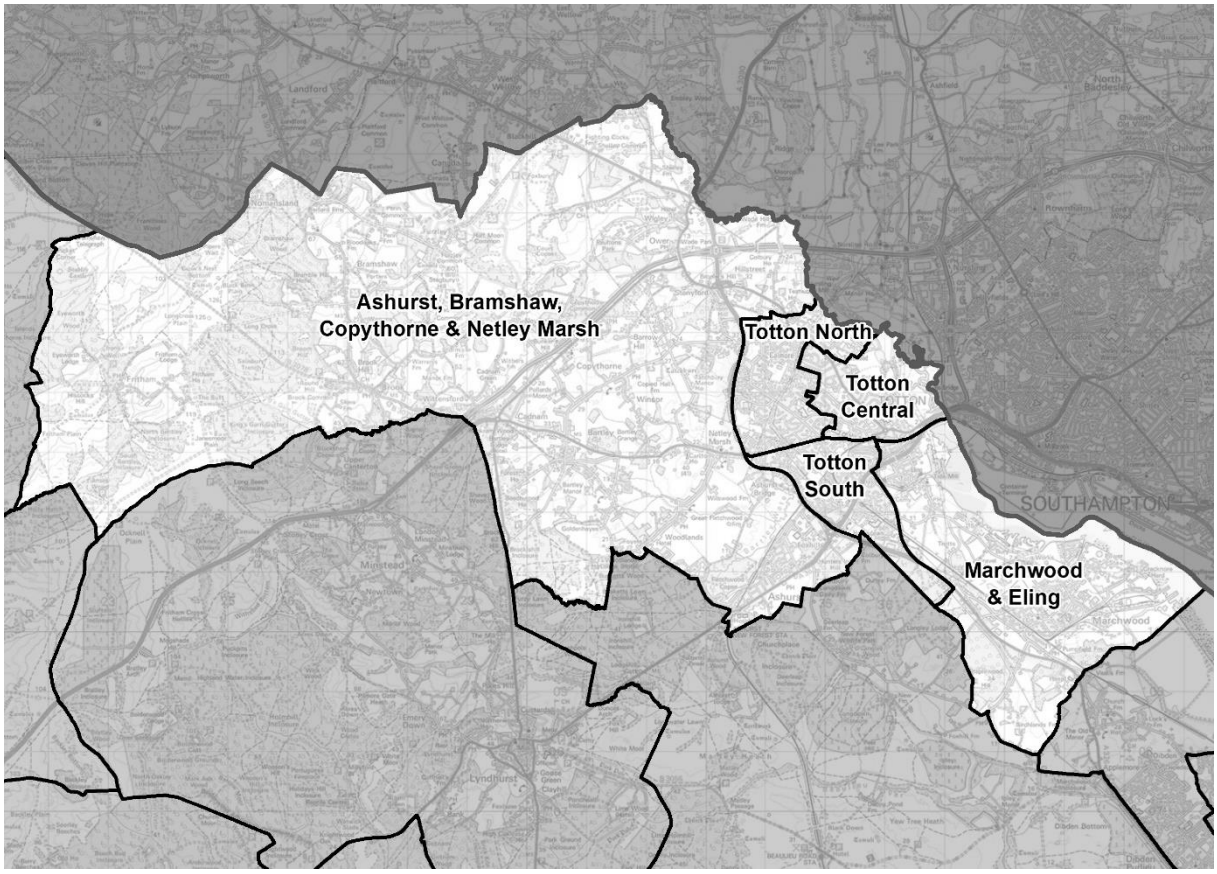
69 Councillor Tungate objected to the draft recommendations, expressing support for the Council's original proposals for the Ashley and New Milton North East area. A local resident objected to the Chestnut Avenue area being included in Milton ward, arguing that they use a range of facilities in Barton.

70 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note Councillor Tungate's objection to the Ashley &New Milton North East ward. However, given the limited evidence he provided and the fact we have received support for this ward, we are not proposing any changes. We also note the suggestion that the Bashley area be included in a rural ward. However, this was considered as part of our draft recommendations and was not included because of the poor levels of electoral equality that would result. Therefore, we are not incorporating this amendment as part of our final recommendations. Finally, we note the concerns of a resident over the inclusion of the Chestnut Avenue area in Milton ward. However, including this area in Barton ward would worsen electoral equality in Barton to 12% more electors than the borough average by 2026 and 14% fewer in Milton. We do not consider there to be sufficient evidence to justify these poor levels of electoral equality. We are therefore not proposing an amendment to our draft recommendations.

71 In light of the support for the draft recommendation for these wards, we are confirming them as final. However, we do propose a number of ward name changes to reflect evidence received.

72 There was some agreement among respondents that Bashley and Fernhill should be included in the Ashley & New Milton North East ward name. We are therefore naming this ward Ashley, Bashley & Fernhill within our final recommendations. There was also some agreement that New Milton North West ward should be named Ballard. We have also been persuaded to adopt this suggestion. Finally, the Council suggested that Barton ward should include Becton in the name. We are of the view that this suggestion would better reflect the communities in the area and we are therefore including the ward name Barton & Becton in our final recommendations.

North East



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2026
Ashurst, Bramshaw, Copythorne & Netley Marsh	2	6%
Marchwood & Eling	2	6%
Totton Central	2	-2%
Totton North	3	-3%
Totton South	2	7%

Marchwood & Eling

73 We received support and objections to our proposals for this area. The Council expressed support, but proposed that Eling & Marchwood ward be renamed Marchwood & Eling to reflect the fact that Marchwood forms the largest part of the ward. A number of local residents objected to the inclusion of Eling in a ward with Marchwood. They put forward similar evidence to that received as part of the warding pattern consultation, highlighting Eling's links into Totton and lack of links to Marchwood. Some argued that Marchwood should be in a ward by itself. One resident argued that Marchwood should be in a ward with Hythe & Dibden.

74 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note the Council's support for the draft recommendations, subject to its concerns about the

ward name. We also note the objections from local residents to linking Eling and Marchwood in a ward. Unfortunately, there was no significant new evidence or proposals for a warding pattern that would secure electoral equality while also reflecting community identity. As stated in our draft recommendations, removing Eling from the proposed ward would leave a Marchwood ward with 23% fewer electors than the district average by 2026. While respondents argued that too much weight has been given to electoral equality, we do not consider that the community evidence here is sufficient to justify such a poor level of electoral equality.

75 Finally, we note the comment about linking Marchwood with Hythe & Dibden, but we are not of the view that we have received evidence to support this. In addition, this arrangement would not provide good electoral equality and would require a substantial redrawing of the boundaries in Hythe & Dibden.

76 We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for this ward as final, subject to renaming it Marchwood & Eling. We accept the Council's argument that the larger area should be named first. This ward is forecast to have 6% more electors than the district average by 2026.

Totton Central, Totton North and Totton South

77 The Council expressed support for the draft recommendations for these wards. A local resident stated that Rushington should be in a ward with Eling, but offered no justification for this proposal.

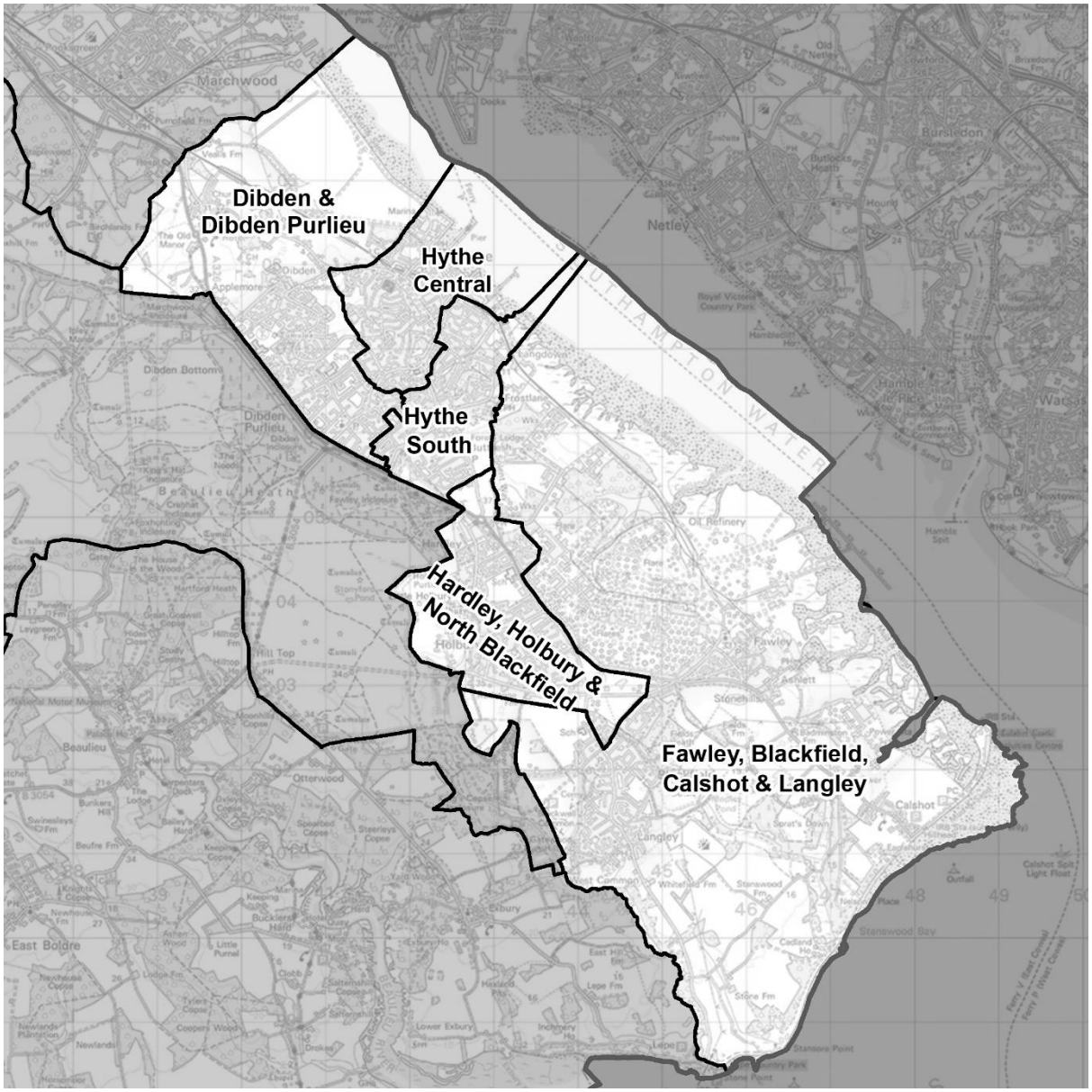
78 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note the comment from a resident about Rushington, but no evidence or specific proposals were provided. Therefore, in light of this and the Council's support, we are confirming our draft recommendations for these wards as final. Totton Central, Totton North and Totton South are forecast to have 2% fewer, 3% fewer and 7% more electors than the district average by 2026.

Ashurst, Bramshaw, Copythorne & Netley Marsh

79 The Council and Copythorne Parish Council expressed support for the draft recommendations for this ward.

80 We did not receive any other comments on this ward and are therefore confirming it as final. This ward is forecast to have 6% more electors than the district average by 2026.

South East



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2026
Dibden & Dibden Purlieu	2	-9%
Hythe Central	2	-9%
Hythe South	2	-7%
Fawley, Blackfield, Calshot & Langley	2	-7%
Hardley, Holbury & North Blackfield	2	-8%

Dibden & Dibden Purlieu, Hythe Central and Hythe South

81 We received significant objections to our proposals for these wards, with the Council, district councillors Delemare, Osborne, A. Wade and M. Wade, parish councillors Clark, Dowd and Roberts (all Hythe & Dibden Parish Council) putting forward identical proposals for three two-councillor wards for this area. These

respondents proposed two-councillor wards, which would have 10% fewer, 6% fewer and 10% fewer electors than the district average by 2026, respectively.

82 Respondents put forward similar detailed evidence to support these wards, highlighting a large range of facilities, including doctors' surgeries, hospitals, libraries and schools within each proposed ward.

83 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. While we note that there was very little discussion of the draft recommendations, there was strong agreement for the alternative proposals. We are of the view that the proposals generally use good boundaries and there is evidence of the community identity of each ward. We do, however, have a concern about the relatively poor level of electoral equality, noting the proposals create two wards with 10% fewer electors than the average by 2026.

84 On balance, we are persuaded to adopt these proposals, subject to two minor modifications to improve electoral equality while also further strengthening the boundaries. We are transferring all the electors on Partridge Road, including Ratcliffe Road, to Dibden & Dibden Purlieu ward. This unites all the properties on Partridge Road in one ward, while improving electoral equality in Dibden & Dibden Purlieu ward to 9% fewer electors than the district average by 2026. We are also placing both sides of the northern section of South Street in Hythe Central ward, which improves electoral equality to 9% fewer electors than the district average by 2026. Both amendments would leave Hythe South ward with 7% fewer electors than the district average by 2026.

Fawley, Blackfield, Calshot & Langley and Hardley, Holbury & North Blackfield

85 The Council and a local resident expressed support for the draft recommendations for these wards.

86 We did not receive any other comments on these wards so are confirming them as final. Fawley, Blackfield, Calshot & Langley and Hardley, Holbury & North Blackfield wards are forecast to have 7% fewer and 8% fewer electors than the district average by 2026, respectively.

Conclusions

87 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality in New Forest, referencing the 2019 and 2026 electorate figures. A full list of wards, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found at Appendix A to the back of this report. An outline map of the wards is provided at Appendix B.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2019	2026
Number of councillors	60	48
Number of electoral wards	34	26
Average number of electors per councillor	2,379	3,075
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	5	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	1	0

Final recommendations

New Forest District Council should be made up of 48 councillors serving 26 wards, representing six one-councillor wards, 18 two-councillor wards and two three-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for the New Forest District Council. You can also view our final recommendations for New Forest District Council on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Parish electoral arrangements

88 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 ('the 2009 Act'). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

89 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, New Forest District Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

90 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Fawley Parish Council, Hythe & Dibden Parish Council, Lymington & Pennington Town Council, New Milton Town Council, Ringwood Town Council and Totton & Eling Town Council.

91 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Fawley parish.

Final recommendations	
Fawley Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing five wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Blackfield & Langley	5
Calshot	1
Fawley	2
Hardley	1
Holbury	6

92 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Hythe & Dibden parish.

Draft recommendations	
Hythe & Dibden Parish Council should comprise 13 councillors, as at present, representing seven wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Butts Ash	2
Dibden	2
Dibden Purlieu	2
Furzedown	1
Hythe East	2
Hythe West	3
Langdown	1

93 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Lymington & Pennington parish.

Draft recommendations	
Lymington & Pennington Town Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Buckland	3
Lymington	5
Pennington	7

94 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for New Milton parish. In response to the draft recommendations a resident suggested changes to the parish ward names. However, we were not clear that there would be local agreement so we are naming the parish wards after the district wards they fall in.

Draft recommendations	
New Milton Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing six wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Ashley North	2
Ashley South	2
Ballard	3
Barton & Becton	5
Bashley	1
Milton	5

95 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Ringwood parish.

Draft recommendations	
Ringwood Town Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Ringwood East	1
Ringwood North	6
Ringwood South	7

96 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Totton & Eling parish.

Draft recommendations	
Totton & Eling Town Council should comprise 20 councillors, as at present, representing seven wards:	
Parish ward	**Number of parish councillors**
Totton Central	1
Totton East	4
Totton North	4
Totton South	3
Totton South East	2
Totton South West	3
Totton West	3

What happens next?

97 We have now completed our review of New Forest District Council. The recommendations must now be approved by Parliament. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the local elections in 2023.

Equalities

98 The Commission has looked at how it carries out reviews under the guidelines set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It has made best endeavours to ensure that people with protected characteristics can participate in the review process and is sufficiently satisfied that no adverse equality impacts will arise as a result of the outcome of the review.

Appendices

Appendix A

Final recommendations for New Forest District Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2026)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Ashley, Bashley & Fernhill	2	6,447	3,224	8%	6,679	3,339	9%
2	Ashurst, Bramshaw, Copythorne & Netley Marsh	2	6,263	3,132	5%	6,496	3,248	6%
3	Ballard	1	3,138	3,138	6%	3,222	3,222	5%
4	Barton & Becton	2	6,169	3,085	4%	6,385	3,192	4%
5	Bransgore, Burley, Sopley & Ringwood East	2	5,688	2,844	-4%	5,861	2,931	-5%
6	Brockenhurst & Denny Lodge	1	3,124	3,124	5%	3,222	3,222	5%
7	Dibden & Dibden Purlieu	2	5,386	2,693	-9%	5,596	2,798	-9%
8	Downlands & Forest North	1	2,917	2,917	-2%	3,035	3,035	-1%
9	Fawley, Blackfield, Calshot & Langley	2	5,469	2,735	-8%	5,701	2,851	-7%
10	Fordingbridge, Godshill & Hyde	2	6,006	3,003	1%	6,238	3,119	1%
11	Forest & Solent	1	3,031	3,031	2%	3,158	3,158	3%

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2026)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
12	Hardley, Holbury & North Blackfield	2	5,480	2,740	-8%	5,670	2,835	-8%
13	Hythe Central	2	5,420	2,710	-9%	5,616	2,808	-9%
14	Hythe South	2	5,554	2,777	-7%	5,708	2,854	-7%
15	Lymington	2	6,449	3,225	8%	6,652	3,326	8%
16	Lyndhurst & Minstead	1	3,128	3,128	5%	3,212	3,212	4%
17	Marchwood & Eling	2	6,332	3,166	6%	6,543	3,272	6%
18	Milford & Hordle	3	8,915	2,972	0%	9,234	3,078	0%
19	Milton	2	5,657	2,829	-5%	5,799	2,900	-6%
20	Pennington	2	6,375	3,188	7%	6,542	3,271	6%
21	Ringwood North & Ellingham	2	6,216	3,108	5%	6,430	3,215	5%
22	Ringwood South	2	5,932	2,966	0%	6,057	3,028	-2%
23	Sway	1	2,916	2,916	-2%	3,045	3,045	-1%
24	Totton Central	2	5,808	2,904	-2%	6,025	3,013	-2%
25	Totton North	3	8,585	2,862	-4%	8,916	2,972	-3%
26	Totton South	2	6,312	3,156	6%	6,550	3,275	7%

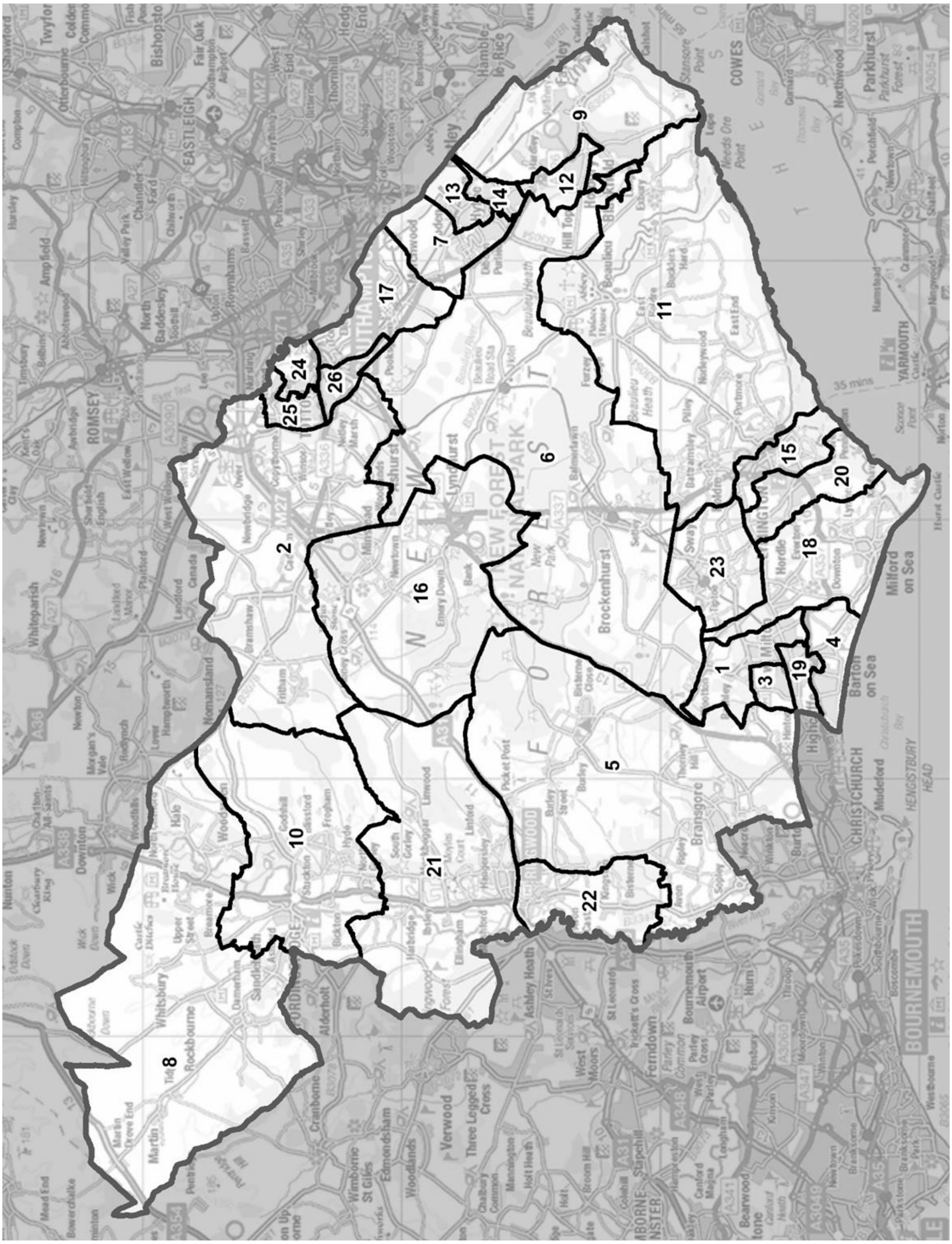
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2026)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Totals	**48**	**142,717**	**–**	**–**	**147,591**	**–**	**–**
Averages	**–**	**–**	**2,973**	**–**	**–**	**3,075**	**–**

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by New Forest District Council.

Note: The ‘variance from average’ column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number

Appendix B

Outline map



A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the large map accompanying this report, or on our website: www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/hampshire/new-forest

Number	Ward name
1	Ashley, Bashley & Fernhill
2	Ashurst, Bramshaw, Copythorne & Netley Marsh
3	Ballard
4	Barton & Becton
5	Bransgore, Burley, Sopley & Ringwood East
6	Brockenhurst & Denny Lodge
7	Dibden & Dibden Purlieu
8	Downlands & Forest North
9	Fawley, Blackfield, Calshot & Langley
10	Fordingbridge, Godshill & Hyde
11	Forest & Solent
12	Hardley, Holbury & North Blackfield
13	Hythe Central
14	Hythe South
15	Lymington
16	Lyndhurst & Minstead
17	Marchwood & Eling
18	Milford & Hordle
19	Milton
20	Pennington
21	Ringwood North & Ellingham
22	Ringwood South
23	Sway
24	Totton Central
25	Totton North
26	Totton South

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:
www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/hampshire/new-forest

Local Authority

- New Forest District Council

Political Groups

- New Forest West Labour Party
- New Forest Liberal Democrats

Councillors

- Councillor A. Bolton (Boldre Parish Council)
- Councillor Burden S. (Hyde Parish Council)
- Councillor M. Clark (Hythe & Dibden Parish Council)
- Councillor J. Davies (New Forest District Council)
- Councillor S. Delemare (New Forest District Council)
- Councillor P. Dowd (Hythe & Dibden Parish Council)
- Councillor M. Harris (New Forest District Council)
- Councillor O. Moore (Boldre Parish Council)
- Councillor S. Osborne (New Forest District Council)
- Councillor A. Penson (Lymington & Pennington)
- Councillor M. Roberts (Hythe & Dibden Parish Council)
- Councillor N. Tungate (New Forest District Council)
- Councillor A. Wade (New Forest District Council)
- Councillor M. Wade (New Forest District Council)

Parish and Town Councils

- Boldre Parish Council
- Copythorne Parish Council
- Exbury & Lepe Parish Council
- Godshill Parish Council
- Hyde Parish Council

Local Residents

- 1590 local residents

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral inequality	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents

Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) was set up by Parliament, independent of Government and political parties. It is directly accountable to Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. It is responsible for conducting boundary, electoral and structural reviews of local government.

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