

New electoral arrangements for Mole Valley District Council Draft Recommendations

March 2022

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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.

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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 Mole Valley?

7 We are conducting a review of Mole Valley Council ('the Council') as its last review was completed in 1998, and we are required to review the electoral arrangements of every council in England 'from time to time'.² Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where the number of electors per councillor is as even as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

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

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

Our proposals for Mole Valley

9 Mole Valley should be represented by 39 councillors, two fewer than there are now.

10 Mole Valley should have 13 wards, eight fewer than there are now.

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

How will the recommendations affect you?

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

13 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.

² Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 56(1).

Have your say

14 We will consult on the draft recommendations for a 10-week period, from 24 March to 6 June 2022. We encourage everyone to use this opportunity to comment on these proposed wards as the more public views we hear, the more informed our decisions will be in making our final recommendations.

15 We ask everyone wishing to contribute ideas for the new wards to first read this report and look at the accompanying map before responding to us.

16 You have until 6 June 2022 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 25 for how to send us your response.

Review timetable

17 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Mole Valley. We then held a period of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the district. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft recommendations.

18 The review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
21 September 2021	Number of councillors decided
28 September 2021	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
6 December 2021	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
24 March 2022	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
6 June 2022	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
6 September 2022	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and draft recommendations

19 Legislation³ states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors⁴ 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.

20 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.

21 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.

	2021	2027
Electorate of Mole Valley	68,654	75,731
Number of councillors	39	39
Average number of electors per councillor	1,760	1,942

22 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 Mole Valley will have good electoral equality by 2027.

Submissions received

23 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

24 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2027, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2022. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 10% by 2027.

25 We considered the information provided by the Council and are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our draft recommendations.

³ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

⁴ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

Number of councillors

26 Mole Valley Council currently has 41 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and have concluded that decreasing by two will ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

27 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 39 councillors.

28 As Mole Valley Council elects by thirds (meaning it has elections in three out of every four years) there is a presumption in legislation⁵ that the Council have a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. We will only move away from this pattern of wards should we receive compelling evidence during consultation that an alternative pattern of wards will better reflect our statutory criteria.

29 We received no submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on ward patterns. As an alternative to their primary proposal, the Liberal Democrats offered a proposal for a scheme retaining the existing number of 41 councillors, but did not argue that 41 councillors rather than 39 were necessary to effectively discharge the business of the Council. A 41-councillor warding pattern is incompatible with the presumption of three-member wards and we were not persuaded to adopt this proposal but note that some of the wards are the same or similar to the primary proposal that the Liberal Democrats made. Throughout the remainder of this report, references to the proposals made by the Liberal Democrats refer to the primary, 39-councillor, warding pattern.

Ward boundaries consultation

30 We received 56 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included one district-wide proposal from Mole Valley Liberal Democrats, together with a supplementary proposal for a 41-councillor warding pattern; and proposals covering the southern section of the district from Mole Valley Conservative Association (“the Conservatives”). The Council offered comments on the majority of areas without making specific proposals for full wards, and Councillor Heather Watson proposed a scheme covering the majority of the district, which in many areas was very similar to that proposed by the Liberal Democrats. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the district.

31 We carefully considered all of the proposals received and were of the view that the district-wide scheme proposed by the Liberal Democrats resulted in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the authority and generally used clearly

⁵ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 2(3)(d) and paragraph 2(5)(c)

identifiable boundaries. Accordingly, we have been persuaded to use this proposal as the basis of our draft recommendations.

32 Our draft recommendations also take into account local evidence that we received, which provided further evidence of community links and locally recognised boundaries. In some areas we considered that the proposals did not provide for the best balance between our statutory criteria and so we identified alternative boundaries.

33 We visited the area in order to look at the various different proposals on the ground. This tour of Mole Valley helped us to decide between the different boundaries proposed.

Draft recommendations

34 Our draft recommendations are for 13 three-councillor wards. We consider that our draft recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

35 The tables and maps on pages 8–22 detail our draft recommendations for each area of Mole Valley. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁶ criteria of:

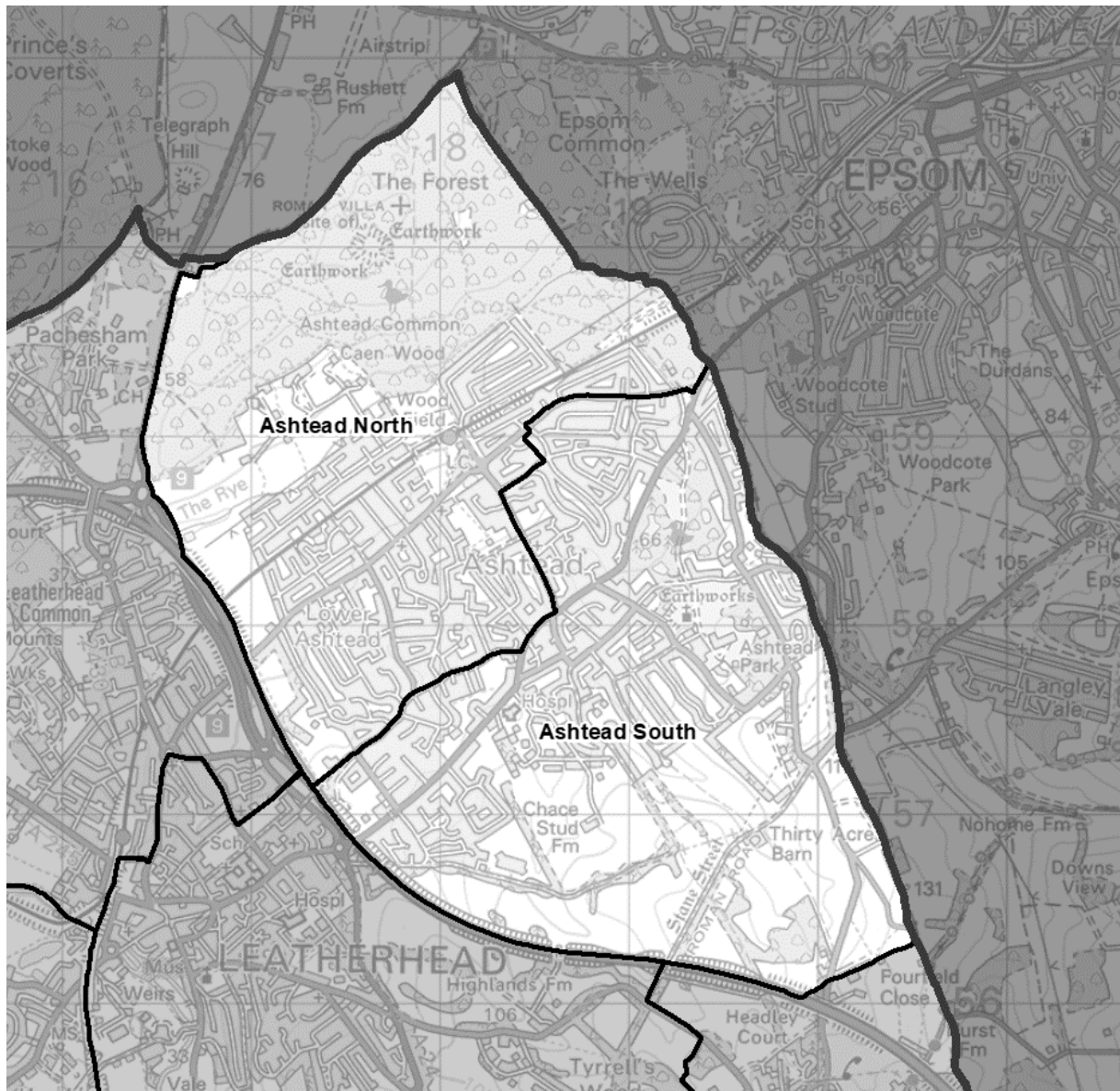
- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

36 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 31 and on the large map accompanying this report.

37 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations, particularly on the location of the ward boundaries, and the names of our proposed wards.

⁶ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Ashtead



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Ashtead North	3	10%
Ashtead South	3	8%

Ashtead North and Ashtead South

38 In addition to the district-wide proposal from the Liberal Democrats, we received a proposal from the Ashtead Independent Group regarding the village. The Ashtead Independents proposed that the M25 be retained as a boundary for two Ashtead wards which would, of necessity, have a somewhat larger than average number of electors. The Liberal Democrats, and Councillor Watson, proposed that the KT22 postcode area, covering Ermyrn Way and neighbouring streets, together

with developments to the south of this area should be included within Leatherhead South ward, which would cross the M25.

39 The Council's submission, and that of the Ashtead Independents, argued that this area was part of Ashtead, noting that it was covered by the Ashtead Neighbourhood Development Plan, Ashtead Residents' Association and other local community organisations. In contrast, the Liberal Democrats' proposal noted that a significant proportion of the forecast electors in this area were in future developments, and therefore, by definition, did not yet share any community ties. The Liberal Democrats also noted that moving this area into a Leatherhead-based ward would offer better electoral equality for both Leatherhead and Ashtead.

40 Councillor Wiltshire sent a separate submission supporting the proposal of the Ashtead Independents. Councillor Harper also supported this proposal, and noted that the postcode distinction pre-dated the construction of the M25, which now formed a stronger boundary. Councillor Townsend proposed the retention of seven councillors to cover Ashtead, a proposal which is incompatible with a uniform pattern of three-member wards.

41 We visited the Ashtead area on our tour of Mole Valley, to observe the links between the existing Ermyn Way area and facilities in both Ashtead and Leatherhead. Although residents of this area have relatively easy access to the centre of both Ashtead and Leatherhead, our observations combined with the evidence of Ashtead Independents and Mole Valley Council led us to conclude that the community identity of this area is better represented as part of an Ashtead-based ward. We observed that shops and community facilities in Ashtead are nearer than those in Leatherhead, and note in particular that the evidence provided by Ashtead Residents' Association, which quoted the Ashtead Development plan's description of the recognised boundaries of Ashtead.

42 This decision allows us to retain the use of the M25 as a strong, clear and recognisable boundary in this area. While this decision does mean that wards in both Ashtead and Leatherhead will have poorer electoral equality than might otherwise be the case, we remain able to propose wards within the bounds of good electoral equality, as discussed below.

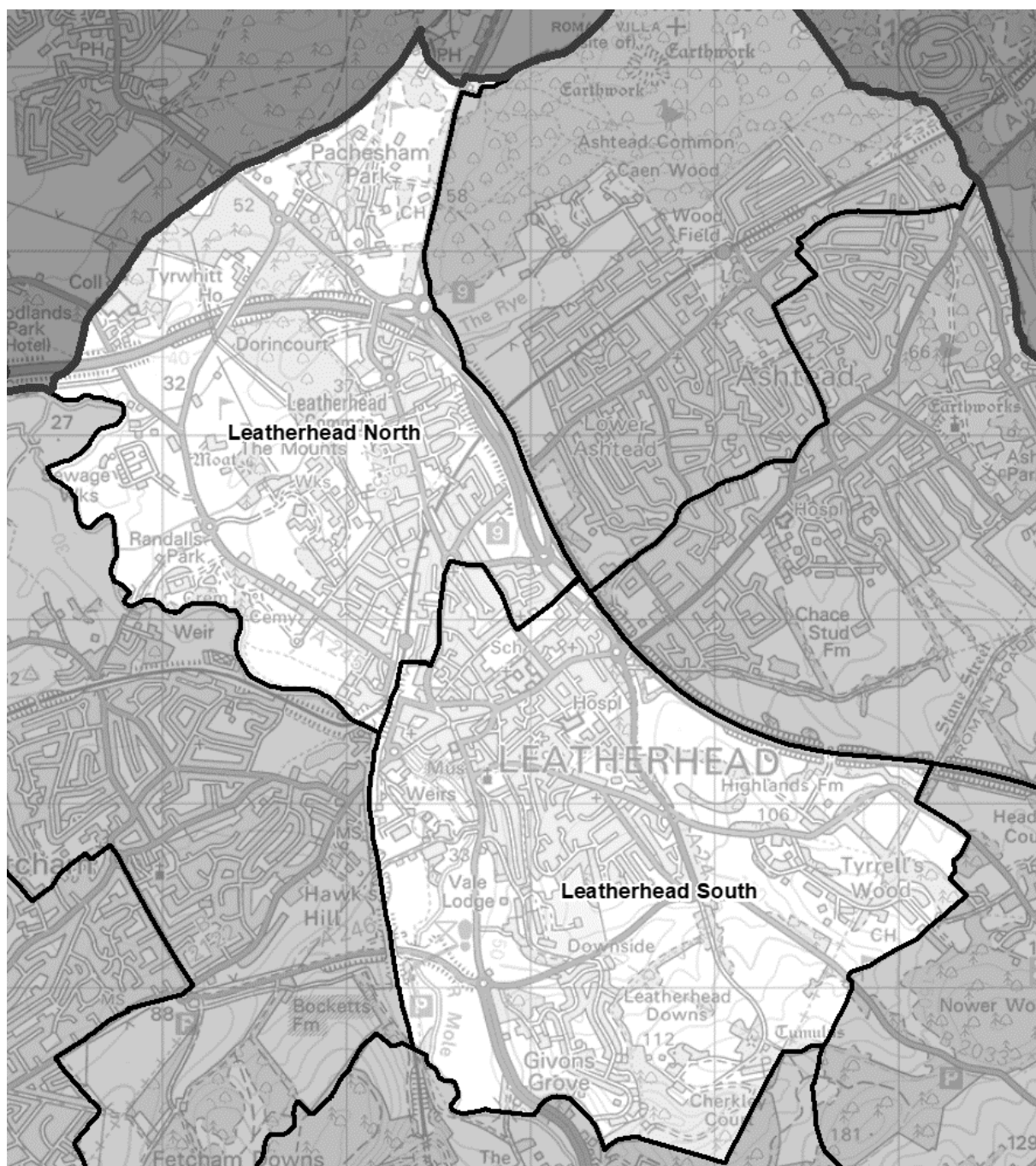
43 We would particularly welcome further evidence from residents of the Ermyn Way area as to whether they consider that their community identity lies towards Leatherhead, or within Ashtead.

44 The Ashtead Independents proposed a boundary between the two Ashtead wards running along Ottways Lane, Woodfield Lane and Bramley Way before following the A24 to the edge of the district. However, this does not offer good electoral equality, as the proposed Ashtead North ward would have 13% more

electors than the average across the district. We propose instead a boundary running behind houses on Cray Avenue, before following the existing boundary along Craddocks Avenue. This offers good electoral equality, with wards having 10% and 8% more electors than average respectively, and as clear and recognisable a boundary as is possible when dividing Ashtead village.

45 The Liberal Democrats proposed Ashtead North and Ashtead South as the names of the wards covering the village. We have adopted these as part of our draft recommendations, but would welcome further evidence as to whether retaining some of the existing names, such as Ashtead Common and Ashtead Park, might better reflect community identity. We retain an open mind on both the names and boundaries of our proposed Ashtead North and Ashtead South wards.

Leatherhead



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Leatherhead North	3	-7%
Leatherhead South	3	-7%

Leatherhead North and Leatherhead South

46 Other than the issues surrounding the Ermyn Way area (discussed above between paragraphs 38-42), we received little evidence suggesting changes to the external boundaries of the Leatherhead wards. The Liberal Democrats and

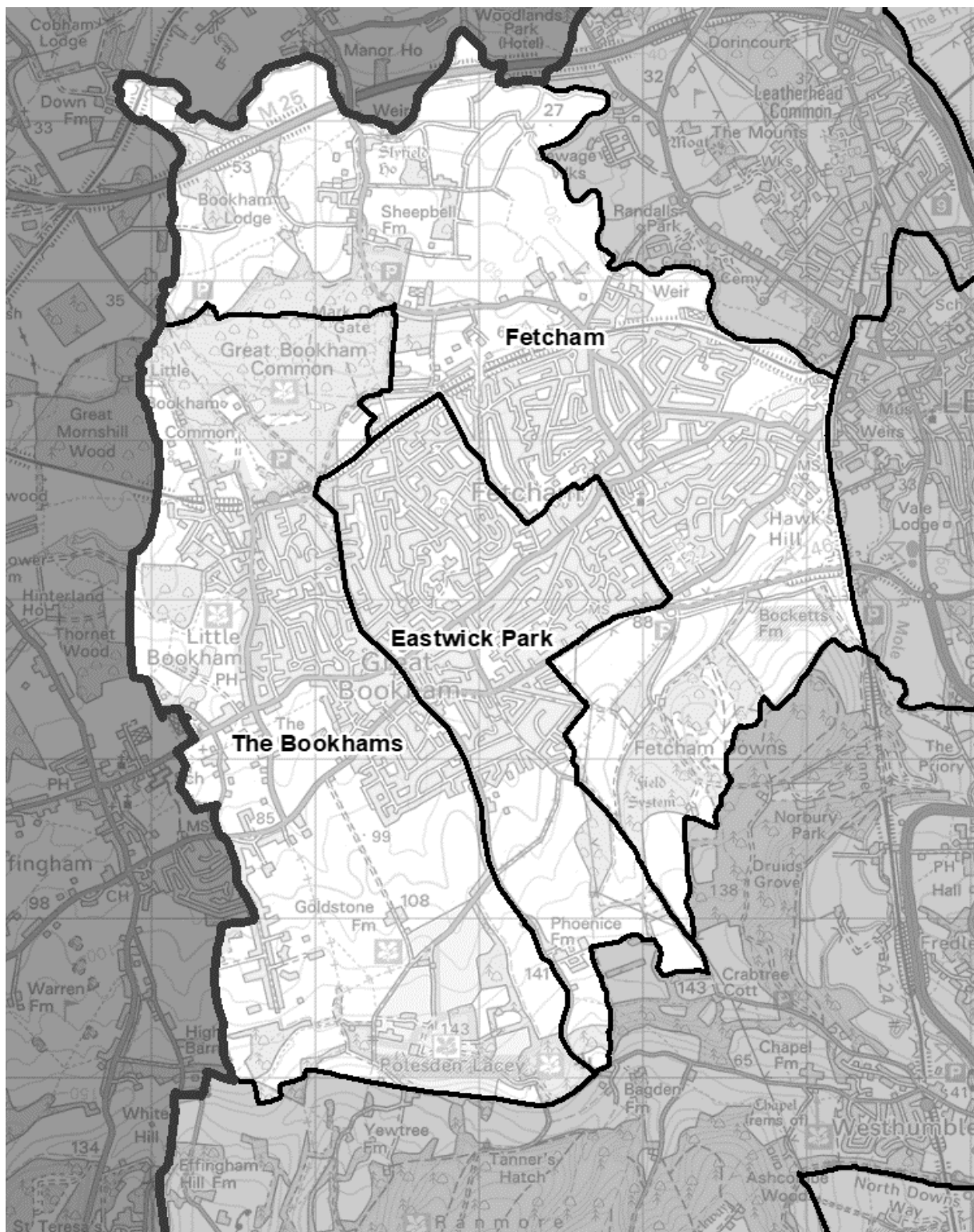
Councillor Watson proposed retaining the existing western boundary of these wards, following the River Mole and then the railway line. This was supported by the Fetcham Residents' Association, and we have adopted this boundary as part of our draft recommendations.

47 Headley Parish Council suggested an amendment to the southern boundary of Leatherhead South ward, in order to ensure that a new development at Headley Court is not split between wards. This is discussed in more detail below (paragraph 59).

48 For the internal boundary between the two Leatherhead wards, we propose our own boundary. Both the boundary proposed by the Liberal Democrats, following Linden Gardens and Leret Way, and that of Councillor Watson, following St John's Avenue and Upper Fairfield Road, were reliant on the Ermyn Way area being placed in Leatherhead South. As we have not adopted this proposal (discussed at paragraphs 38–42), the Leatherhead South wards proposed do not offer good electoral equality.

49 We propose a boundary following Copthorne Road and the A245, with both Leatherhead wards having 7% fewer electors than average across the district. We would be particularly interested in further evidence as to whether this adequately reflects community identities in this area.

North-western Mole Valley



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Eastwick Park	3	-8%
Fetcham	3	-2%
The Bookhams	3	-2%

Eastwick Park, Fetcham and The Bookhams

50 There was broad agreement among those who submitted proposals for this area that it should be covered by three wards. The Liberal Democrats and Councillor Watson submitted proposals that were very similar, and the Bookhams and Fetcham Residents' Associations offered evidence on the areas covered by their respective organisations. Councillors Brooks and Keeley supported the proposal of a single Fetcham ward and offered evidence regarding the location of key shopping and social facilities within Fetcham.

51 The Council, while not making a specific proposal for these wards, noted that there were relatively few clear boundaries, and that the communities of Bookham and Fetcham blended into one another. We visited this area on our tour of Mole Valley, and agree that there does not appear to be a clear distinction between the communities.

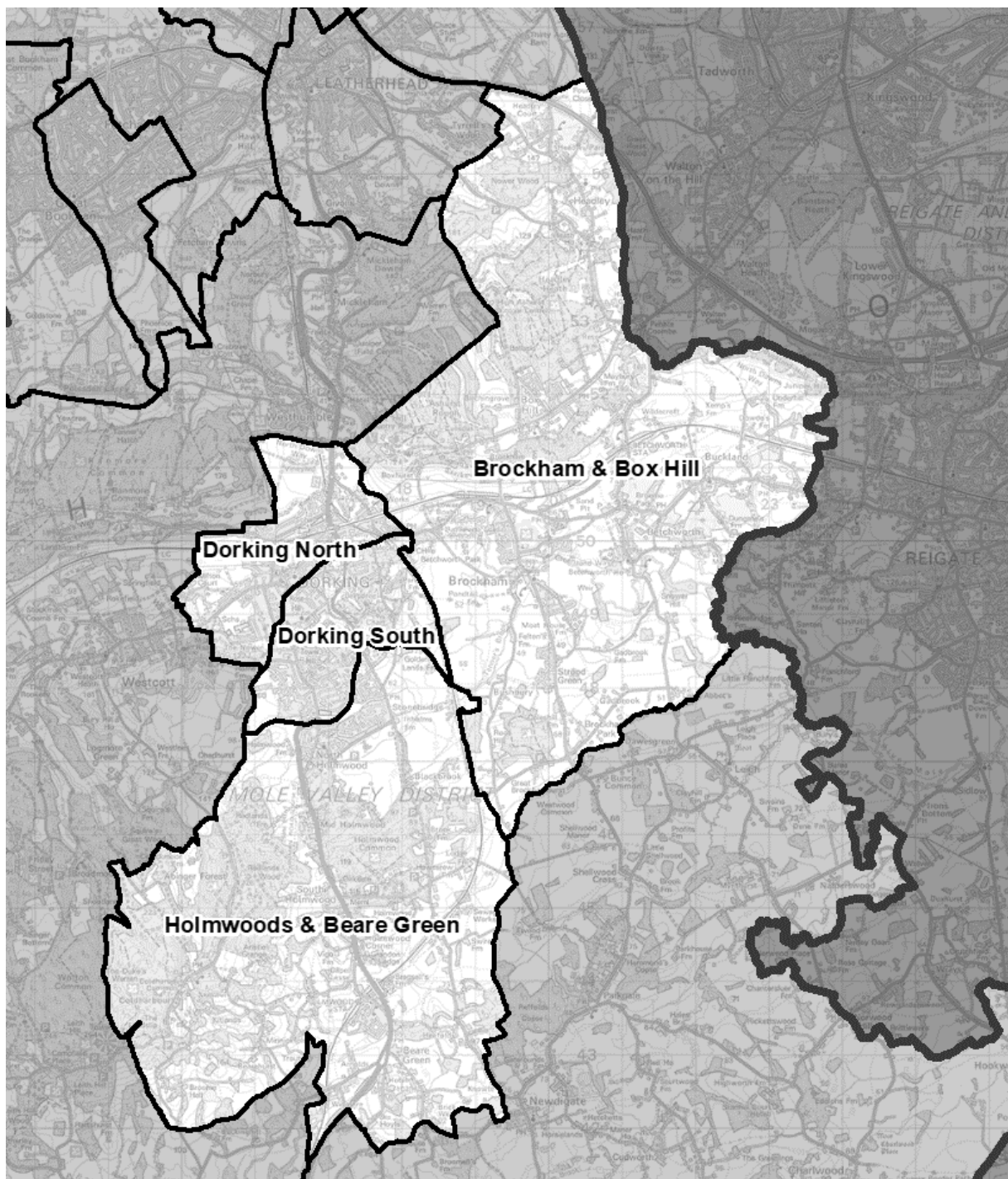
52 We have adopted the Liberal Democrat proposal for these three wards, with a boundary running along The Glade, Kennel Lane and The Ridgeway, and a second boundary running the length of Dorking Road and Church Road, dividing the area into three wards offering good electoral equality.

53 The Liberal Democrats proposed that rather than use the names Bookham East and Bookham West, it would be sensible for the central ward of this section to be named Eastwick Park. A resident also noted that current addresses refer to 'The Bookhams', and we have adopted these ward names.

54 The Bookhams and Fetcham Residents' Associations disagreed with regard to the southern rural section of Fetcham ward, outside the main villages. We note that there is no direct access from Roaring House Farm and other dwellings in this area to the remainder of Fetcham ward; equally we note that the area in question includes 'Fetcham Downs, which suggests a link to the village of that name. As part of our draft recommendations, we have adopted the proposal of the Liberal Democrats to retain the existing boundary in this area, and hence place these electors in Fetcham ward; however, we retain an open mind and would be particularly interested in further evidence regarding whether the rural area south of the A246 should be placed in Fetcham or Eastwick Park ward. The relatively small number of electors means that the implications for electoral equality are negligible.

55 We welcome any further evidence regarding the wards of Eastwick Park, Fetcham and The Bookhams, and whether our proposed wards reflect our statutory criteria.

Central and Eastern Mole Valley



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Brockham & Box Hill	3	0%
Dorking North	3	9%
Dorking South	3	10%
Holmwoods & Beare Green	3	-7%

Brockham & Box Hill

56 We received varying proposals in this area. The Conservatives, the parish councils of Betchworth, Brockham, Buckland and Headley, an “Informal Group” covering Headley and Box Hill, a number of residents and the Church of England parishes of Headley and Box Hill suggested that a merger of the existing two wards in this area would best reflect community identity within the confines of a three-member warding pattern. The Council also supported the proposition that Betchworth, Brockham and Buckland should remain together in the same ward, and this was supported by a separate submission from Councillors Budd and Potter.

57 In contrast, the Liberal Democrats proposed including Mickleham in a ward covering Headley and Brockham parishes, together with the unparished areas of Pixham and Box Hill, with Betchworth and Buckland joining a ward with other villages in the rural south and east of the district. The Westhumble Residents’ Association proposed a similar ward, including the village of Westhumble.

58 Brockham Parish Council proposed the retention of the existing single-member and two-member wards in this area, but noted that if a three-member ward was required, they would strongly support the merger with Headley and Box Hill, citing existing links between the communities, and a wide range of shared issues, including flood management of the River Mole, air traffic concerns surrounding Gatwick Airport, and shopping and medical facilities shared between the “3 Bs” of Brockham, Betchworth and Buckland. This evidence was supported by the submissions of Betchworth and Buckland parish councils.

59 Headley Parish Council, while supporting the principle of being joined with other rural settlements rather than being included in a Leatherhead-based ward, suggested that a small unparished area to the north of Headley parish be included with Headley. This area covers the proposed development at Headley Court, which is expected to straddle the Headley parish boundary. We consider that it would be undesirable to split a new development between wards, and have adopted the proposal to place this area in a ward with Headley parish.

60 We consider that very strong evidence of the community links between Brockham, Betchworth and Buckland has been provided, and that these three areas should not be placed in separate wards. We therefore propose to adopt the Conservative proposal in this area, and merge the existing wards of Brockham, Betchworth & Buckland and Box Hill & Headley to create a three-member ward with good electoral equality. Our proposed ward includes the parishes of Brockham, Betchworth, Buckland, Headley, the unparished area of Box Hill, and a small unparished area to the north of Headley.

61 We would be particularly interested in further evidence as to the name of this ward. As part of our draft recommendations, we propose to name it Brockham

& Box Hill after the largest two settlements, but we retain an open mind as to whether a longer name might be more inclusive of other settlements, or whether a name that attempted to include every settlement within our proposed ward might be too long for convenient use.

Dorking North and Dorking South

62 Both the Conservative and Liberal Democrat proposals for Dorking proposed two wards, with a boundary largely along the A25 Reigate Road. The key differences were with regard to peripheral areas on the edge of Dorking itself, with the Conservatives proposing to include Pixham in a Dorking South & East ward, while the Liberal Democrats placed Pixham in a rural ward and included the Goodwyns Road and Rough Rew areas in a Dorking-based ward.

63 Pixham Residents' Association noted that they saw two plausible alternatives for Pixham, being placed in either Dorking North or a rural-based ward. They did not offer a preference between the two, while noting that it would be impractical for Pixham to be included in a ward with all of Brockham, Betchworth and Buckland. Councillor Rosam suggested that Pixham could join with villages to the north to create a two-member ward, departing from the principle of a uniform pattern of three-member wards.

64 We visited Pixham on our tour of Mole Valley. We noted that the "Welcome to Dorking" sign on the A24 is placed to include Pixham, that the Aviva offices and neighbouring facilities appear to be associated more with Dorking than Pixham, and that several Dorking sports clubs have their main facilities within Pixham. All of these supported our conclusion that placing Pixham within a Dorking-based ward would reflect community identities and we have included Pixham in our proposed Dorking North ward.

65 With regard to the Conservatives' proposal to place Pixham in a Dorking South ward, we noted on our tour that it is not possible to turn right from the southern end of the B2308 Pixham Lane towards Dorking town centre. We consider that this difficulty of access means that it would not promote effective & convenient local government to place Pixham in Dorking South, as travel from Pixham to the remainder of Dorking South would involve a detour through Dorking North. We note that the Pixham Residents' Association suggested that a link with Dorking North was plausible, but did not make the same suggestion with regard to Dorking South.

66 Given our decision to include Pixham in Dorking North, further adjustments to the Conservatives' proposal are necessary in order to propose two Dorking wards with good electoral equality. We note that the Liberal Democrats' proposal for a boundary between Dorking North and South, following the A25 Reigate Road, offers good electoral equality, and we have adopted this subject to a minor amendment. In order to retain good electoral equality, we propose the boundary following Falkland

Grove, rather than the Liberal Democrats' proposed boundary of Horsham Road and Harrow Road West.

67 In the south of Dorking, the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives both proposed placing the Chart Downs area into a Dorking-based ward. Councillor Watson proposed using the A24 as a clear and recognisable southern boundary to Dorking, which was supported by the Council. While we have not adopted the remainder of Councillor Watson's proposed Holmwoods ward, we consider that the A24 does form a clear and recognisable boundary to the south of Dorking and we are proposing to use it as the boundary of our Dorking South ward.

68 The Conservatives proposed retaining the existing southern boundary of Dorking South, with the Goodwyns and Rough Rew area placed in a ward with the Holmwood villages. The Liberal Democrats proposed placing this area in a Dorking-based ward. The Council noted that this area comprised a single community that should not be split between wards, but suggested that it could reasonably be placed in either a Dorking-based, or a southern-facing, ward. Based on evidence provided by the Liberal Democrats that this area looks largely towards Dorking for services, we propose to place it in Dorking South ward.

69 Our proposals are for a Dorking South ward with 10% more electors than average across the district, at the limits of what we consider to be good electoral equality. We consider that the combination of reflecting the community identity of the areas and providing a strong boundary justifies the proposed variance. Our proposed Dorking North ward includes Pixham based on our observations on our tour of Mole Valley, and offers a clear and recognisable boundary with Dorking South.

Holmwoods & Beare Green

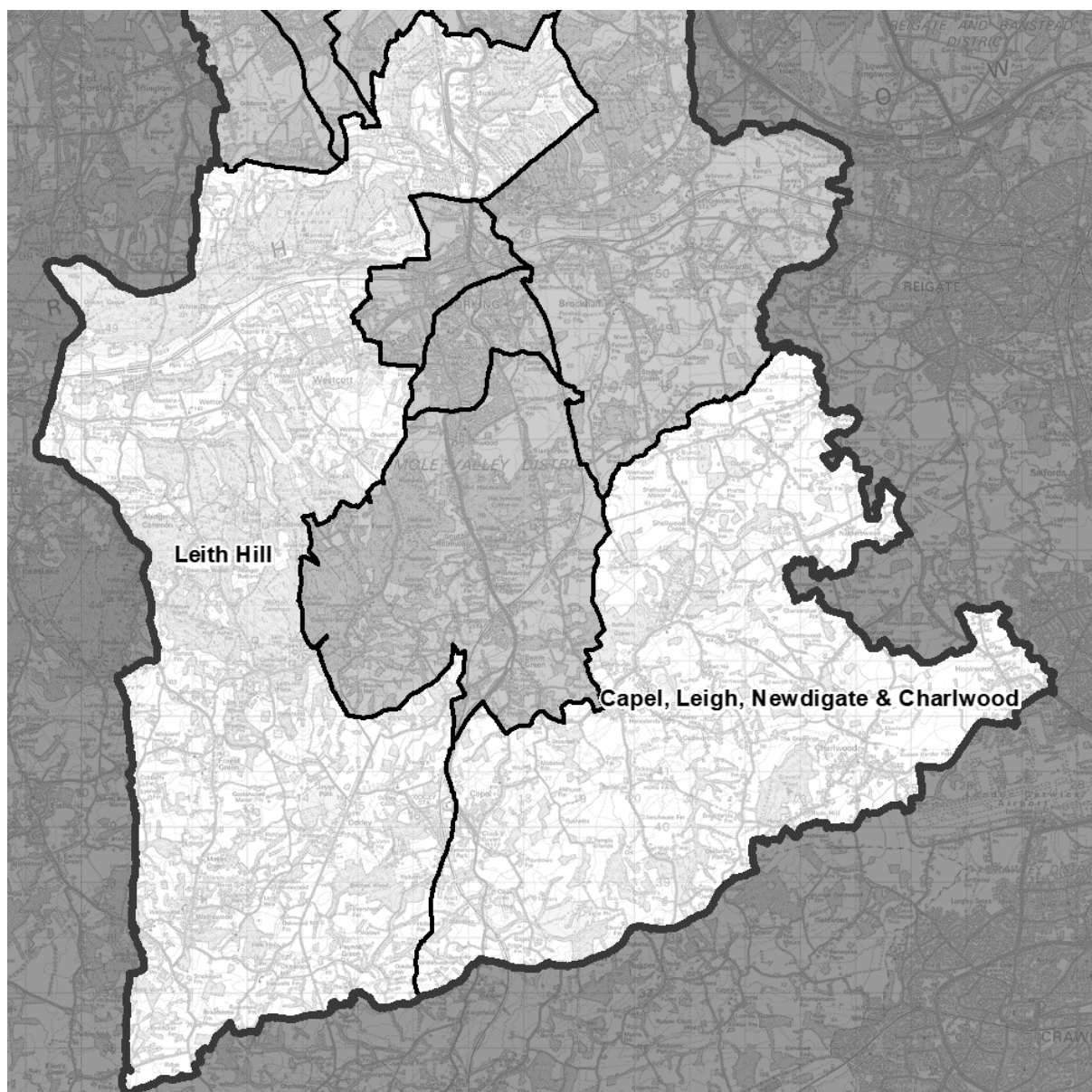
70 Both the Conservative and Liberal Democrat proposals suggested a ward linking the villages of North, Mid and South Holmwood with Beare Green, using the A24 as a link. This was supported by Councillor Salmon, who argued for Beare Green to remain as a single-councillor ward, but noted that if it was necessary for a three-member ward to be proposed, Beare Green should be linked with the Holmwoods, rather than to other villages in either the east or west of the district. Councillor Salmon noted that Beare Green shared similarities of community identity and housing tenure with South Holmwood in particular, and that St Mary Magdalene church was a shared asset between the two villages.

71 The Liberal Democrat proposal included the village of Capel in a "Southern Villages" ward, while the Conservative proposal retained the existing southern boundary of Beare Green ward, placing Capel village in a ward with Newdigate, Leigh and Charlwood parishes. Councillor Watson proposed Beare Green being placed in a ward with Abinger and Wotton parishes. Given the evidence from the

Council that the primary transport links in this area run on a north/south axis, such a ward would not be easy to traverse, and this proposal is also in conflict with other evidence received regarding the linked community identity of Beare Green and the Holmwoods villages. We have therefore not adopted this proposal.

72 Given the decision taken with regard to the Goodwyns/Rough Rew areas, and the evidence of Councillor Salmon as to the links between Beare Green and the Holmwoods, we have broadly adopted the Conservative proposal for a Holmwoods & Beare Green ward. We propose expanding this ward to incorporate the Coldharbour area of Capel parish. This improves the electoral equality of Holmwoods & Bear Green ward, and means that Capel parish is divided between two rather than three district wards.

Southern and Western Mole Valley



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Capel, Leigh, Newdigate & Charlwood	3	-2%
Leith Hill	3	-2%

Capel, Leigh, Newdigate & Charlwood

73 Charwood Parish Council proposed that, given the proximity to Gatwick Airport and the links with the neighbouring authority of Crawley, it should remain as a single-member ward, citing difficulties in merging with neighbouring areas within Mole Valley. The Council agreed that Charwood had a differing community identity from neighbouring parishes.

74 We carefully considered the prospect of retaining a single-member Charlwood ward, which would offer good electoral equality with 2% more electors per councillor than average. Given the statutory presumption of a uniform pattern of three-member wards, we are not currently persuaded that a departure from a uniform pattern of wards would be justified. We have therefore not adopted the proposal of Charlwood Parish Council for a single-member ward in this area.

75 Given this decision, and the constraints of the external boundary, we have decided to place Charlwood in a ward with neighbouring Newdigate parish. The Liberal Democrats proposed extending this configuration northwards, to include Leigh, Betchworth and Buckland parishes; while the Conservatives proposed adding Leigh and the southern section of Capel parish, merging the existing wards which cover this area. Councillor Watson proposed that Leigh parish should be added to Holmwoods ward, and that Ockley parish should be included in a Southern ward including Capel village, Newdigate and Charlwood.

76 As discussed above (paragraphs 56–60), we consider that there is strong evidence of community identity supporting the proposal that Betchworth and Buckland should be placed in a ward with Brockham. We have therefore not adopted the Liberal Democrat proposal for a “Rural East” ward. Councillor Watson’s proposal for this ward was dependent upon placing Beare Green village in a “Rural West” ward, which again we have not adopted as it does not reflect the evidence we received of community identity. We have therefore adopted the Conservative proposal to merge the two existing wards in the south-eastern section of the district into a single, three-member Capel, Leigh, Newdigate & Charlwood ward with good equality.

77 Leigh Parish Council provided evidence that there were links between many of the parishes in this area of Mole Valley, and that they had no strong preferences as to precisely which parishes were grouped with Leigh.

Leith Hill

78 We have broadly adopted the Conservative proposal for this ward, which ranges from Mickleham to Okewood Hill and includes the parishes of Mickleham, Wotton, Abinger and Ockley, as well as unparished areas surrounding Westhumble and Westcott. The Liberal Democrats proposed a broadly similar ward, excluding Mickleham parish, while Councillor Watson proposed placing Beare Green in a rural western ward, with Ockley parish moving into a southern-based ward.

79 The Liberal Democrat proposal relies upon a split of Brockham from Betchworth and Buckland, which we do not consider reflects the community identity of this area (see paragraphs 56–60). Equally, the proposal to place Mickleham in a separate ward from Westhumble goes against evidence received from the Council that these villages had relatively strong community links.

80 Ockley Parish Council suggested that the existing ward of Okewood could remain unchanged. Not only would the retention of this single-member ward be at odds with the presumption of a uniform pattern of three-member wards, but the existing Okewood ward is forecast to have 17% fewer electors per councillor than average by 2027. We have therefore not adopted this proposal.

81 Mickleham Parish Council suggested, as an alternative to their first choice of a two-councillor ward, that Mickleham should join with other villages along the western side of the district. The submission noted that they considered that Mickleham would be better served in a ward comprising relatively small villages, as opposed to being joined to any larger urban settlements.

82 We considered placing Mickleham in a ward with Brockham, Betchworth and Buckland, in order to reduce the geographic extent of Leith Hill ward. Such a ward would have acceptable equality, although poorer than our draft recommendations. However, the Council noted that the links between Westhumble and Mickleham were considered particularly strong, and we do not consider it would reflect community identity to place these villages in separate wards.

83 We are aware that we are proposing a ward which is relatively large geographically. The Council described this potential ward as “challenging for councillors to cover”, given the geographic size, but also noted that throughout the district transport links generally ran on a north–south axis.

84 We visited this area on our tour of Mole Valley, including driving from Ranmore Common to Okewood Hill. We consider that, while not on major roads, there are adequate road links between the significant settlements within this proposed ward to enable councillors to visit and represent these communities. We also note that the main A24, while passing through neighbouring wards, enables relatively rapid travel between the northern and southern sections of this proposed ward.

85 We note that any proposal to split this ward would still result in relatively large wards. The existing ward of Westcott would have good equality as a single-member ward, implying that the remaining areas would have to be split into two single-member wards on a relatively arbitrary boundary in order to maintain good electoral equality.

86 As well as further evidence as to potential boundaries, we would welcome further evidence as to a potential name for this ward. As part of our draft recommendations, we propose using the name of Leith Hill, as the dominating geographical feature, but would welcome views on any potential names that strike a balance between including as many communities as possible and being short enough for convenient use.

Conclusions

87 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality in Mole Valley, referencing the 2021 and 2027 electorate figures against the proposed number of councillors and wards. 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

	Draft recommendations	
	2021	2027
Number of councillors	39	39
Number of electoral wards	13	13
Average number of electors per councillor	1,674	1,942
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	3	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Draft recommendations

Mole Valley Council should be made up of 39 councillors representing 13 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 Mole Valley.

You can also view our draft recommendations for Mole Valley on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lqbce.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, Mole Valley 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 Capel parish.

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

Draft recommendations

Capel Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing three wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Beare Green	4
Capel	4
Coldharbour	1

Have your say

92 The Commission has an open mind about its draft recommendations. Every representation we receive will be considered, regardless of who it is from or whether it relates to the whole district or just a part of it.

93 If you agree with our recommendations, please let us know. If you don't think our recommendations are right for Mole Valley, we want to hear alternative proposals for a different pattern of wards.

94 Our website has a special consultation area where you can explore the maps. You can find it at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

95 Submissions can also be made by emailing reviews@lgbce.org.uk or by writing to:

Review Officer (Mole Valley)
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
PO Box 133
Blyth
NE24 9FE

96 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for Mole Valley which delivers:

- Electoral equality: each local councillor represents a similar number of electors.
- Community identity: reflects the identity and interests of local communities.
- Effective and convenient local government: helping your council discharge its responsibilities effectively.

97 A good pattern of wards should:

- Provide good electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of electors.
- Reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links.
- Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries.
- Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government.

98 Electoral equality:

- Does your proposal mean that councillors would represent roughly the same number of electors as elsewhere in the district?

99 Community identity:

- Community groups: is there a parish council, residents' association or other group that represents the area?
- Interests: what issues bind the community together or separate it from other parts of your area?
- Identifiable boundaries: are there natural or constructed features which make strong boundaries for your proposals?

100 Effective local government:

- Are any of the proposed wards too large or small to be represented effectively?
- Are the proposed names of the wards appropriate?
- Are there good links across your proposed wards? Is there any form of public transport?

101 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all representations will be placed on deposit at our offices and on our website at www.lqbce.org.uk A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

102 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers. This includes your name, postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, no matter who they are from.

103 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with the draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

104 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. The draft

Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the all-out elections for Mole Valley in 2023.

Equalities

105 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

Draft recommendations for Mole Valley District Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Ashtead North	3	6,005	2,002	20%	6,388	2,129	10%
2	Ashtead South	3	5,467	1,822	9%	6,309	2,103	8%
3	Brockham & Box Hill	3	5,283	1,761	5%	5,848	1,949	0%
4	Capel, Leigh, Newdigate & Charlwood	3	5,356	1,785	7%	5,700	1,900	-2%
5	Dorking North	3	5,521	1,840	10%	6,350	2,117	9%
6	Dorking South	3	5,806	1,935	16%	6,388	2,129	10%
7	Eastwick Park	3	5,071	1,690	1%	5,332	1,777	-8%
8	Fetcham	3	5,388	1,796	7%	5,723	1,908	-2%
9	Holmwoods & Beare Green	3	5,079	1,693	1%	5,441	1,814	-7%
10	Leatherhead North	3	4,457	1,486	-11%	5,430	1,810	-7%

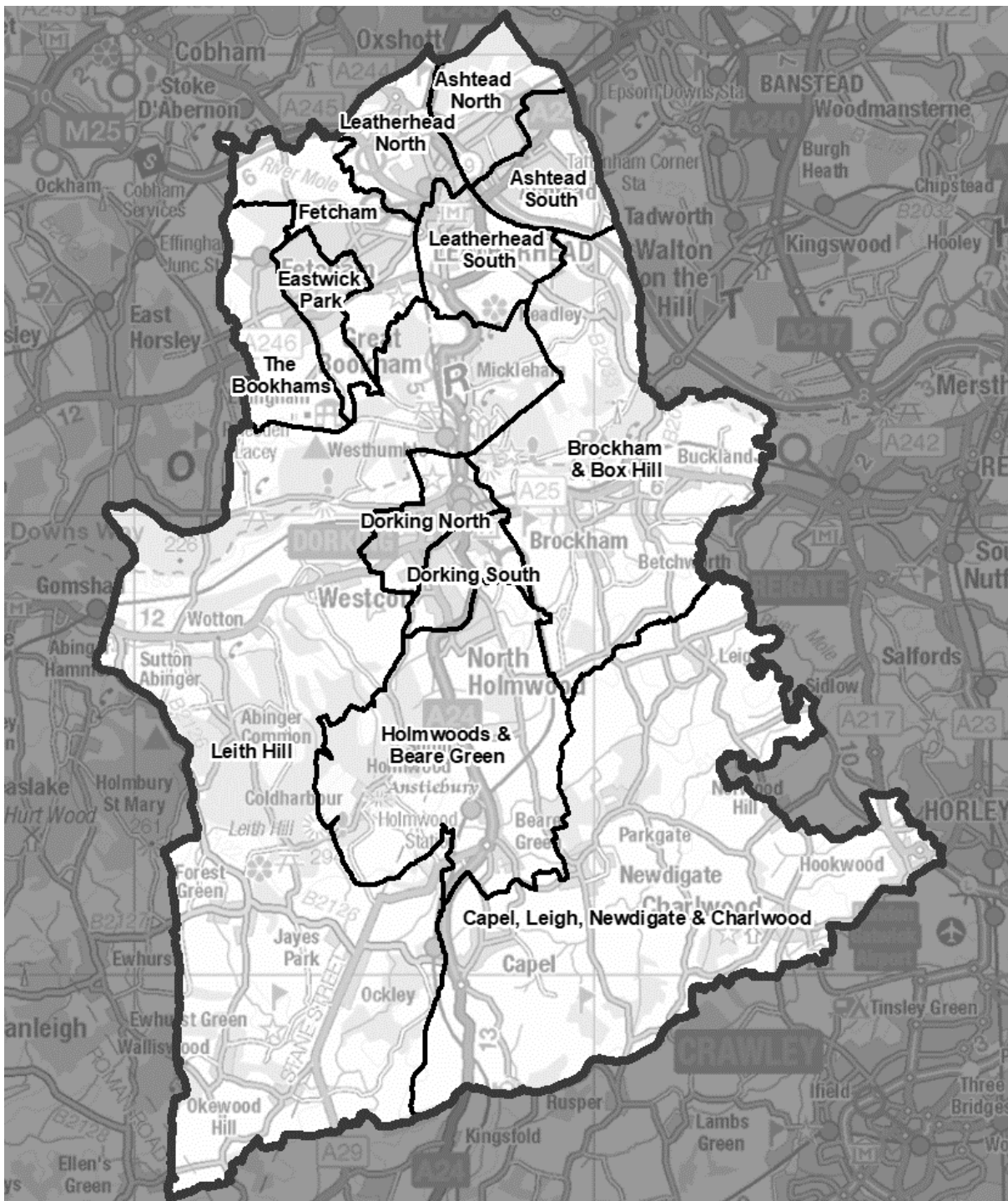
	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
11	Leatherhead South	3	4,591	1,530	-9%	5,408	1,803	-7%
12	Leith Hill	3	5,354	1,785	7%	5,717	1,906	-2%
13	The Bookhams	3	5,276	1,759	5%	5,696	1,899	-2%
	Totals	39	68,654	-	-	75,731	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,760	-	-	1,942	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Mole Valley 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/surrey/mole-valley

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:
www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/surrey/mole-valley

Local Authority

- Mole Valley District Council

Political Groups

- Ashtead Independent Group
- Brockham, Betchworth & Buckland branch, Mole Valley Conservative Association
- Mole Valley Conservative Association
- Mole Valley Liberal Democrats

Councillors

- Councillors L. Brooks & T. Keeley (Mole Valley District Council)
- Councillors S. Budd & P. Potter (Mole Valley District Council)
- Councillor D. Harper (Mole Valley District Council)
- Councillor E. Rosam (Mole Valley District Council)
- Councillor C. Salmon (Mole Valley District Council)
- Councillor C. Townsend (Surrey County Council)
- Councillor H. Watson (Mole Valley District Council & Surrey County Council)
- Councillor P. Wiltshire (Mole Valley District Council)

Local Organisations

- Ashtead Residents' Association
- Bookhams Residents' Association
- Church of England Headley & Box Hill Parishes
- Fetcham Residents' Association
- Headley & Box Hill Informal Group
- Pixham Residents' Association
- Westhumble Residents' Association

Parish and Town Councils

- Betchworth Parish Council
- Brockham Parish Council
- Buckland Parish Council
- Charlwood Parish Council
- Headley Parish Council
- Leigh Parish Council
- Mickleham Parish Council
- Ockley Parish Council

Local Residents

- 28 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 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. We only take account of electors registered specifically for local elections during our reviews.
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 can 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

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.

Local Government Boundary Commission for
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