

New electoral arrangements for Stratford-on-Avon District Council Final 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 Stratford-on-Avon?

7 We are conducting a review of Stratford-on-Avon District Council ('the Council') as some councillors currently represent many more or fewer electors than others. We describe this as 'electoral inequality'. 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 Stratford-on-Avon 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 Stratford-on-Avon

9 Stratford-on-Avon should be represented by 41 councillors, five more than there are now.

10 Stratford-on-Avon should have 39 wards, three more than there are now.

11 The boundaries of all but two wards should change; Brailes & Compton and Tanworth-in-Arden will stay the same.

12 We have now finalised our recommendations for electoral arrangements for Stratford-on-Avon.

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, which other communities are in that ward, and, in some cases, which parish council ward you vote in. 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 take into account 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 area. We then held two 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
16 February 2021	Number of councillors decided
23 February 2021	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
18 June 2021	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
31 August 2021	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
6 December 2021	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
29 March 2022	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and final recommendations

17 Legislation² states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors³ 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.

	2020	2027
Electorate of Stratford-on-Avon	104,891	114,774
Number of councillors	41	41
Average number of electors per councillor	2,558	2,799

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 but one of our proposed wards for Stratford-on-Avon will have good electoral equality by 2027.

Submissions received

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

Electorate figures

22 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2027, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2027. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 9% by 2027.

23 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 final recommendations.

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.

Number of councillors

24 Stratford-on-Avon Council currently has 36 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and have concluded that increasing by five will ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

25 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 41 councillors. We received one submission about the number of councillors in response to the consultation on our draft recommendations. This submission argued the number of councillors should not increase from 36 but did not provide any detailed evidence as to why keeping the council size the same would allow the Council to carry out its roles and responsibilities more effectively. We have therefore maintained 41 councillors for our final recommendations.

Ward boundaries consultation

26 We received 25 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included two district-wide proposals from the Council and Stratford-upon-Avon Liberal Democrats ('the Liberal Democrats'). The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the district.

27 The two district-wide schemes provided uniform patterns of one-councillor wards for Stratford-on-Avon. 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.

28 Our draft recommendations were based on the two district-wide schemes received. However, we have also taken 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.

29 At the previous electoral review, which we completed in 2014, the authority formally requested prior to its start that it be a single-member ward review. Under such a review, we are obliged to provide a uniform pattern of single-councillor wards unless such a pattern does not meet our statutory criteria. While the Council indicated its preference for single-member wards in its council size submission, we did not regard this as a formal single-member ward review request. While both district-wide schemes were for 41 single-councillor wards, we created multi-member wards in certain areas where we considered this provided a better balance of our statutory criteria.

30 In light of the Covid-19 situation, we undertook a detailed virtual tour of the area in order to look at the various different proposals. This tour of Stratford-on-Avon helped us to decide between the different boundaries proposed.

31 Our draft recommendations were for six two-councillor wards and 29 one-councillor wards. We considered that our draft recommendations would provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

Draft recommendations consultation

32 We received 138 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included district-wide comments from the Council and the Liberal Democrats. The majority of the other submissions focused on specific areas, particularly our proposals in Southam, the north-east of the district, and Alcester.

33 During this consultation period, the Council expressed concern that we had not reflected its preference for a uniform pattern of single-member wards for the council. It subsequently passed a resolution to this effect. While we were not persuaded to change the whole premise of the review as it was drawing to a close, we extended the consultation period to allow the Council and others to provide strong evidence that would persuade us to recommend single-member wards where we had recommended two-member wards in our draft recommendations.

34 We carefully considered all the evidence received, particularly in light of the desire for single-member wards for the authority. In some areas, we have been persuaded to move away from our draft recommendations and recommend single-member wards. In others, we were not persuaded that such a pattern would provide an effective balance of our statutory criteria and have therefore recommended multi-member wards.

35 Our final recommendations are based on the draft recommendations, with modifications to the two-councillor warding proposals in Bidford-on-Avon, Shipston-on-Stour, Stratford-upon-Avon and Studley, based on the submissions received. We also make some modifications to the boundaries between Alcester East and Alcester West, between Claverdon & Snitterfield and Wootton Wawen wards, in southern Stratford-upon-Avon and between Gaydon, Kineton & Upper Lighthorne and Bishop's Itchington, Fenny Compton & Napton.

Final recommendations

36 Our final recommendations are for two two-councillor wards and 37 one-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.

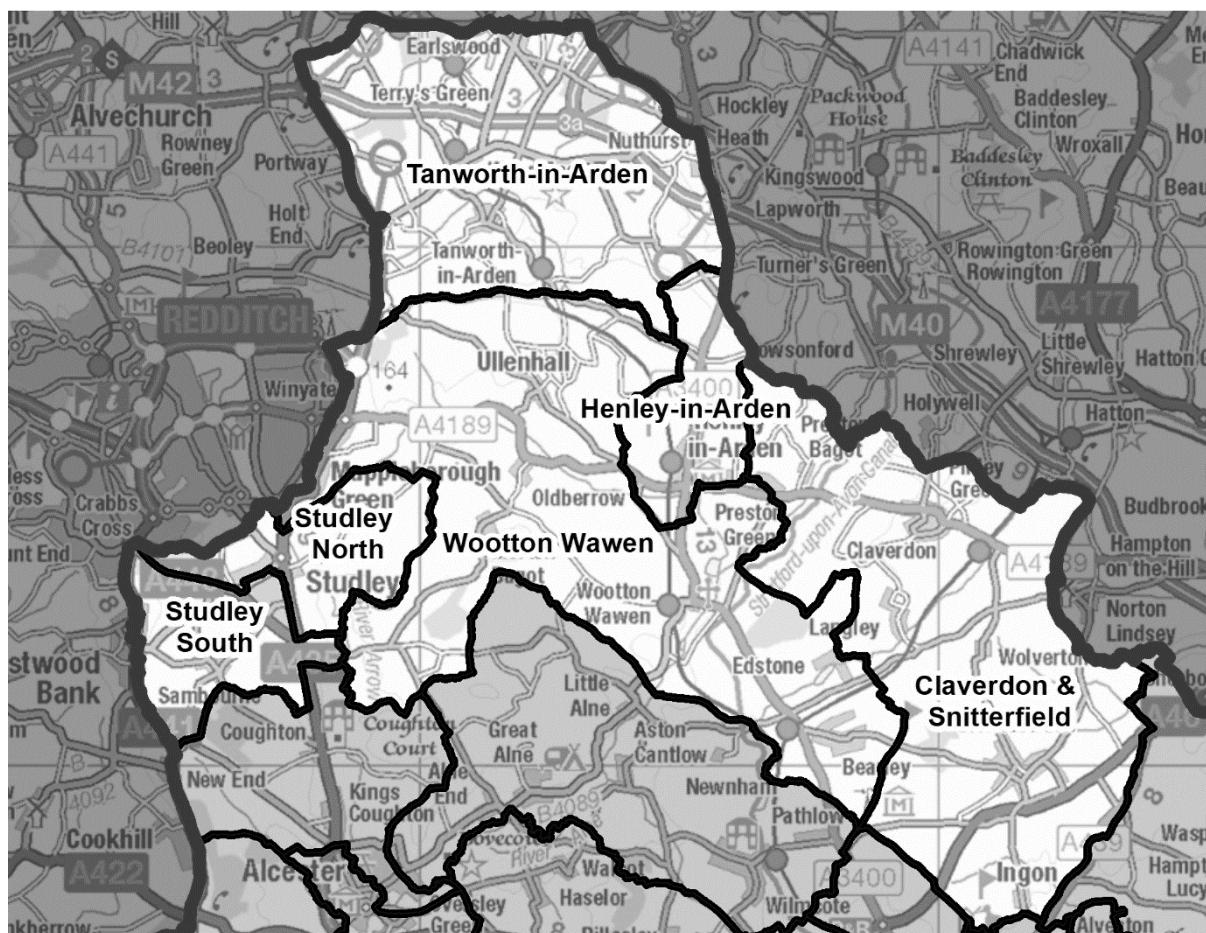
37 The tables and maps on pages 9–28 detail our final recommendations for each area of Stratford-on-Avon. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁴ criteria of:

- 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 27 and on the large map accompanying this report.

⁴ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

North-west Stratford-on-Avon



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Claverdon & Snitterfield	1	-5%
Henley-in-Arden	1	-3%
Studley North	1	-10%
Studley South	1	3%
Tanworth-in-Arden	1	-2%
Wootton Waven	1	10%

Tanworth-in-Arden

39 We did not receive any responses to our draft proposal to retain the existing Tanworth-in-Arden ward. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for this ward as final.

Claverdon & Snitterfield, Henley-in-Arden and Wootton Waven

40 The Council and the Liberal Democrats both supported all three of our wards proposed here in our draft recommendations. However, we received other comments from the local area regarding the placement of several parishes among these wards.

41 Councillor Shenton argued that Ullenhall parish should be in a ward with Henley-in-Arden parish rather than Wootton Wawen parish, given that it had stronger links with the former. This view was echoed in a submission by a resident. Councillor Shenton also commented that Bearley parish had better links to Wootton Wawen than to Snitterfield, mentioning services used by Bearley residents in Wootton Wawen. A resident argued that Preston Bagot and Langley parishes should be in a ward with Claverdon parish rather than with Wootton Wawen.

42 We considered combining Henley-in-Arden and Ullenhall parishes in the same ward but noted that this would require the removal of Beaudesert parish to provide a single-councillor ward with good electoral equality. We were not persuaded that this change was justified, given the apparent close links between Henley-in-Arden and Beaudesert. Additionally, we had not received any comments regarding Beaudesert and note that they share a grouped parish council. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Henley-in-Arden ward as final.

43 With regard to the other changes, we were persuaded that the evidence provided was sufficient to amend our draft recommendations. We therefore propose to move Bearley parish into Wootton Wawen ward, and Preston Bagot and Langley parishes into Claverdon & Snitterfield ward. Both wards will have electoral equality within 10% of the average for the district by 2027.

Studley North and Studley South

44 Our draft proposals were for a two-councillor ward combining Studley and Sambourne parishes. Both the Council and Liberal Democrats reiterated their support for a single-councillor arrangement of two wards in this area.

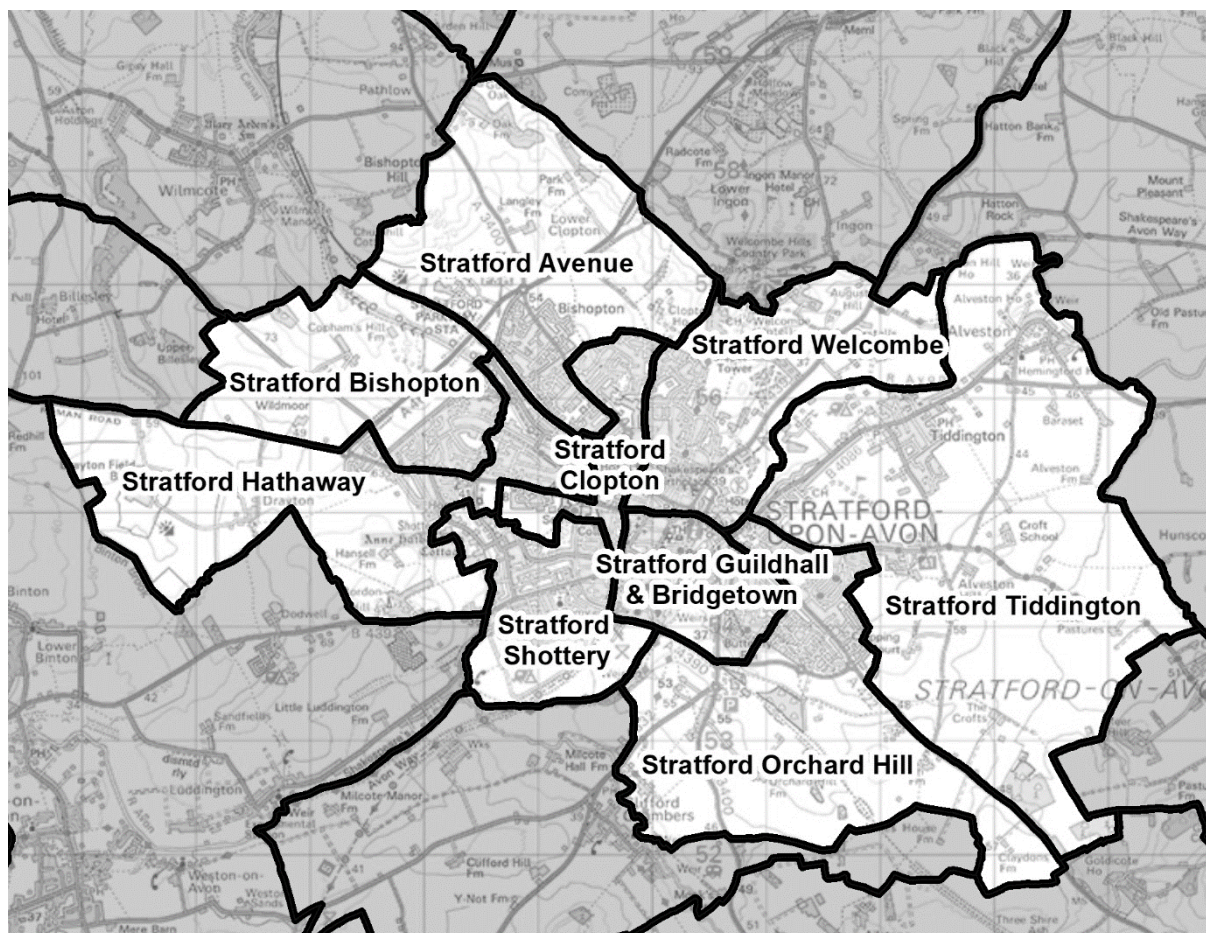
45 We did not receive any other comments regarding Studley or Sambourne. Mappleborough Green Parish Council did express its objection to our draft proposals but did not provide an alternative it would prefer.

46 We do acknowledge the strong desire expressed by the Council and the Liberal Democrats for a single-councillor warding arrangement here and more widely in the district. However, we were concerned that the Liberal Democrats' proposed Studley North with Sambourne ward would create an almost complete ring around their Studley South ward, and this would not reflect community identity in combining disparate rural areas in the same ward. Similarly, we considered that the Council's proposal would divide communities right through the centre of Studley.

47 While we have been persuaded to adopt a single-member warding pattern here, we propose a different arrangement which broadly follows the existing ward boundary, with the exception of transferring The Maltings, Railway Close, Knottesford Close and the roads leading off it into Studley North, so they are in the same ward as electors to the north of Station Road.

48 Our proposed Studley North and Studley South wards are forecast to have reasonable electoral equality by 2027 and reflect the local preference for single-member wards.

Stratford-upon-Avon



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Stratford Avenue	1	-7%
Stratford Bishopton	1	11%
Stratford Clopton	1	-7%
Stratford Guildhall & Bridgetown	1	3%
Stratford Hathaway	1	7%
Stratford Orchard Hill	1	7%
Stratford Shottery	1	8%
Stratford Tiddington	1	-5%
Stratford Welcombe	1	4%

Stratford Guildhall & Bridgetown and Stratford Welcombe

49 The Council and Liberal Democrats both expressed their support for our draft proposals for these two wards. A resident commented that the River Avon was a natural boundary within the town, and that the proposed Guildhall & Bridgetown ward would combine areas with very different demographics and needs.

50 We considered alternative arrangements on this basis, but the electorate on the east side of the River Avon is such that we could not identify wards with good electoral equality. The only way to resolve this would be to combine adjoining rural parishes and parts of the town in the same ward. We were not persuaded that this would reflect local community identities or would provide for clear ward boundaries. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations for these two wards as final.

Stratford Orchard Hill and Stratford Tiddington

51 The Council supported our proposals in this area. The Liberal Democrats argued in favour of an amended boundary between these two wards to provide for better electoral variances. However, we calculated that their proposals would significantly worsen variances with Orchard Hill being 18% above the average and Tiddington 16% below. We did not receive any other comments around these areas, so we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

Stratford Avenue

52 The only comment we received on this ward came from the Liberal Democrats, who argued that its southern boundary should be moved from the railway line to the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal. They argued this would mean the proposed Canal Quarter development would be part of Stratford Avenue ward, and therefore reduce the forecast electorate in Stratford Hathaway.

53 However, this development was not considered as part of our electoral forecasts agreed with the Council, given it only had outline consent. Further, this would necessitate the creation of a parish ward because of the Warwickshire County Council division boundary in this area. This parish ward would have very few electors and we do not consider that extremely small parish wards promote effective and convenient local government. We therefore confirm our draft Stratford Avenue ward as final.

Stratford Bishopton, Stratford Clopton, Stratford Hathaway and Stratford Shottery

54 We proposed single-councillor Clopton and Shottery wards, and a two-councillor Stratford West ward in our draft recommendations.

55 The Liberal Democrats proposed a minor amendment to the western boundary of Stratford Shottery, arguing that Church Lane and Cottage Lane should be included in the ward so the whole of Shottery village remained fully within one ward. On our virtual tour we agreed that this area appeared to form part of the Shottery community and have therefore adopted this amendment in our final recommendations.

56 We also received feedback that our draft proposals divided the estate to the east of The Willows between wards. The Liberal Democrats argued this should form

part of Stratford Clopton ward, while a resident argued that the area should be included in Stratford Shottery. On balance, we considered that the latter was more persuasive, given the lack of direct vehicular access from The Willows to Alcester Road, and that there appeared to be more of a clear boundary to the north of this area than the south.

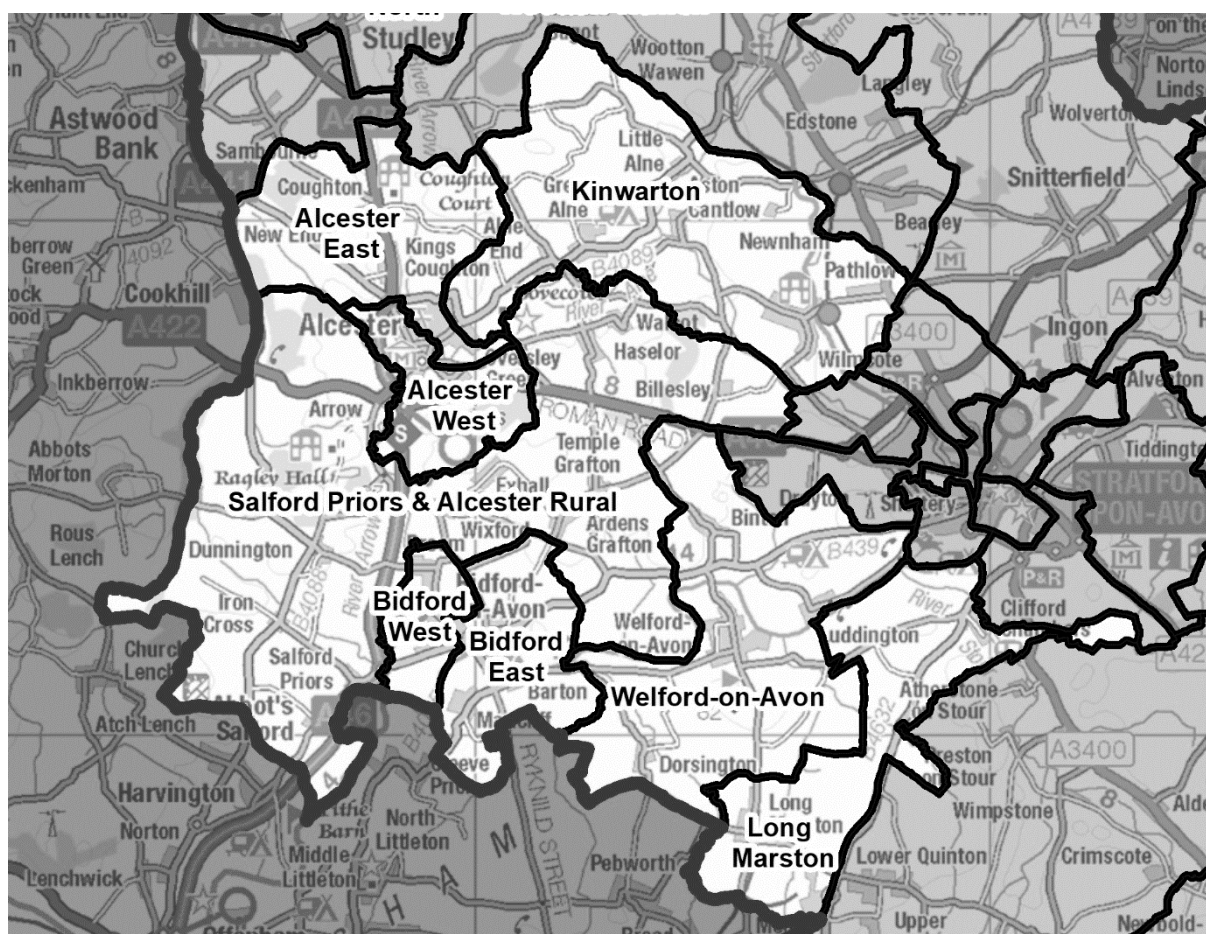
57 A resident argued that the estate off Alcester Road neighbouring Stratford-upon-Avon High School should form part of Shottery rather than Clopton ward, because electors here use services in Shottery rather than in Clopton. However, this would result in a high electoral variance for Shottery ward. We have therefore decided not to make this change as part of our final recommendations.

58 Both the Council and the Liberal Democrats again proposed two single-councillor wards in place of our two-councillor Stratford West ward. Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council also expressed its preference for single-councillor wards across the town.

59 The two schemes were broadly similar, with our proposed Stratford West ward split between a Stratford Bishopton and Stratford Hathaway ward. The Council included the Packhorse Road estate in Hathaway and drew the boundary along Alcester Road and Shottery Brook. The Liberal Democrats placed the Packhorse Road estate in Bishopton, but their boundary deviated from Shottery Brook to run through Bishopton. We considered that this boundary was less clear and identifiable, and may not be reflective of community interests and identities.

60 We therefore propose to adopt the Council's proposed Stratford Bishopton and Stratford Hathaway wards, with the aforementioned changes related to Stratford Shottery. While the proposed Stratford Bishopton ward will have an electoral variance of 11%, we consider that our proposals will reflect the pattern of communities in Stratford-upon-Avon and the evidence received in support of single-member wards in this area.

South-west Stratford-on-Avon



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Alcester East	1	-9%
Alcester West	1	3%
Bidford East	1	3%
Bidford West	1	-1%
Kinwarton	1	9%
Long Marston	1	-7%
Salford Priors & Alcester Rural	1	-9%
Welford-on-Avon	1	-6%

Alcester East, Alcester West and Kinwarton

61 The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats supported our proposed wards in Alcester and Kinwarton. We received eight other comments in relation to this area, from residents and the Oversley Green Residents' Association. All of them commented that the Oversley Green area of Alcester should remain in a ward with the western part of central Alcester, as there was much better connectivity with this part of the town than in our proposed Alcester East ward. It was also argued that

Kings Coughton had much in common with Coughton parish, but that we had proposed that they be in separate wards in our draft recommendations.

62 We were persuaded that both arguments had merit and, in making these changes, both Alcester East and Alcester West wards would still have good electoral equality by 2027.

63 We did not receive any comments regarding Kinwarton, so confirm our draft recommendations for this ward as final.

Bidford East, Bidford West and Salford Priors & Alcester Rural

64 The Council and Liberal Democrats both endorsed our Salford Priors & Alcester Rural ward. We have therefore decided to confirm as final our recommendations for Salford Priors & Alcester Rural.

65 In Bidford, both the Council and Liberal Democrats expressed their preference for single-councillor wards to cover the parish and submitted proposals to this effect. A resident also argued in favour of distinct Bidford East and Bidford West wards.

66 We considered that both proposals received, while delivering wards with very good electoral equality, would unnecessarily divide communities. For example, the Liberal Democrats' proposal would separate electors on either side of Bramley Way – a minor residential street – and the Council's proposal would do the same on Westholme Road.

67 Nevertheless, in light of the clear preference expressed by multiple stakeholders in this review for single-councillor wards, and it being possible to achieve this without compromising on electoral equality, we propose an amended version of the Council's proposals for Bidford East and Bidford West wards. In particular, we propose that the boundary follow the west side of Westholme Road, so all electors here are in Bidford East ward. We also propose that the boundary run to the north of the cul-de-sacs off St Laurence Way until meeting Waterloo Road. We consider that this provides the best balance of our statutory criteria, avoiding the separation of properties and electors along minor roads where possible. Both Bidford East and Bidford West wards are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2027.

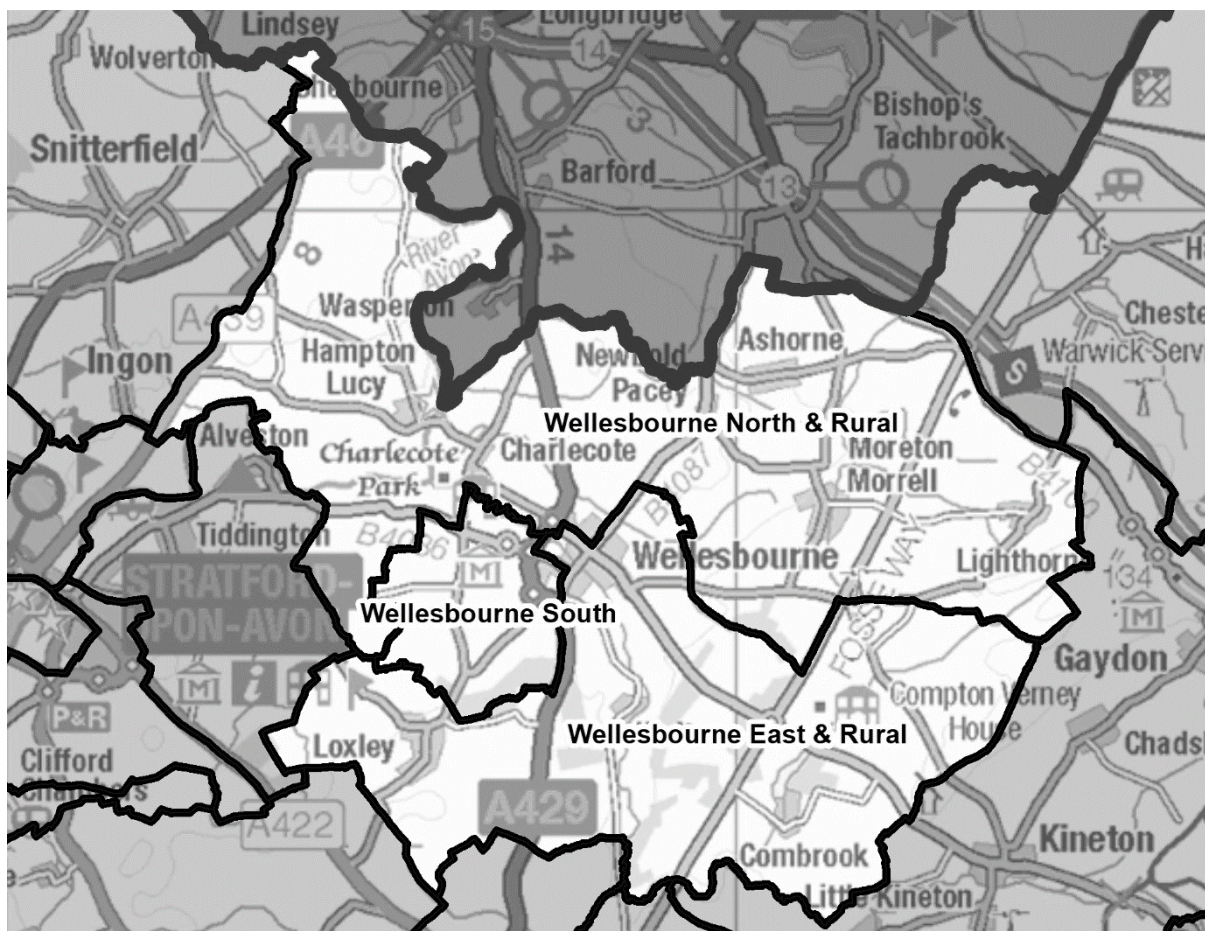
Long Marston and Welford-on-Avon

68 Meon Vale Residents' Association expressed its support for our proposal to place all of Meon Vale village within Long Marston ward. We did not receive any other comments on Long Marston so confirm our draft recommendations as final.

69 The only comment regarding Welford-on-Avon was from Councillor Flaxman of Binton Parish Council, who opposed our recommendation to include Binton parish in Welford-on-Avon ward. He instead argued it should remain with Salford Priors &

Alcester Rural ward, given its links to Temple Grafton and Wixford parishes. However, removing Binton from Welford-on-Avon would result in an electoral variance of -15%, and we did not consider that this would provide for good electoral equality. We did not consider that any areas that could be added to Welford-on-Avon in place of this (for example parts of Stratford-upon-Avon or Bidford-on-Avon) would reflect community identity. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Welford-on-Avon ward as final.

Wellesbourne



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Wellesbourne East & Rural	1	1%
Wellesbourne North & Rural	1	9%
Wellesbourne South	1	-5%

Wellesbourne East & Rural, Wellesbourne North & Rural and Wellesbourne South

70 Our draft proposals for Wellesbourne divided Wellesbourne & Walton parish across three wards, with North & Rural and East & Rural wards containing neighbouring parishes in addition to part of Wellesbourne town itself.

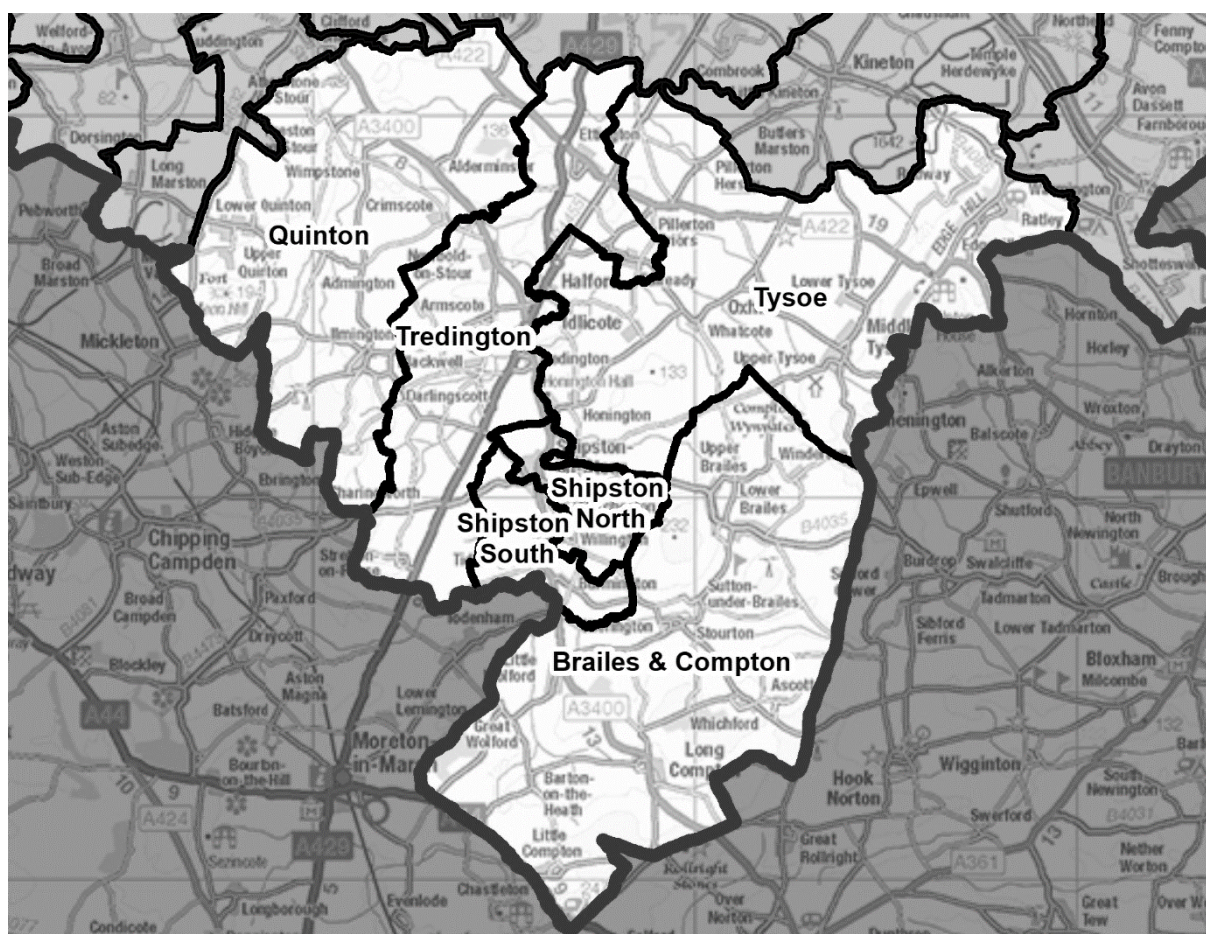
71 While the Council and Liberal Democrats both supported these proposals, we received two separate comments from residents and one from Councillor Parry. These argued in favour of Wellesbourne being divided into just two wards consisting solely of the built-up area, as it was argued that the rural areas would be underrepresented by our recommendations.

72 We considered these proposals, and while it was possible to create a pattern of wards for two councillors for Wellesbourne, the remaining areas would in effect form

a ring around the town. The Commission requires strong evidence to propose such a ward. In this case, we were not persuaded that the rural communities that would be represented in such a ward would share clear community identities and interests. In addition to this, such a warding configuration would not, in our view, follow clearly identifiable boundaries. Furthermore, the remaining rural areas of our proposed Wellesbourne wards would have significantly fewer electors per councillor than the average for the district. Improving this situation to the west would require adding part of either Stratford or Snitterfield, and we did not consider that either option would reflect local community identity. To the east, adding either Upper Lighthorne or Kineton parishes would not improve electoral equality for this ward, nor would it reflect community identity, as it would involve adding larger settlements to predominantly rural wards.

73 We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations for Wellesbourne East & Rural, Wellesbourne North & Rural and Wellesbourne South wards as final.

South Stratford-on-Avon



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Brailes & Compton	1	3%
Quinton	1	9%
Shipston North	1	-10%
Shipston South	1	-6%
Tredington	1	-5%
Tysoe	1	0%

Brailes & Compton and Tysoe

74 The Council and Liberal Democrats both supported our proposals for two predominantly rural wards in this area. We did not receive any other comments on this area, so confirm our draft recommendations as final.

Quinton, Shipston North, Shipston South and Tredington

75 The Council and Liberal Democrats both expressed their strong preference to divide our proposed two-councillor Shipston-on-Stour ward into two single-councillor wards and submitted specific proposed boundaries. They supported our proposed Quinton and Tredington wards.

76 We received several other comments in response to our proposals for these areas. Councillor Harvey, Shipston Town Council and two residents all argued that the villages around Shipston should be included in wards with the town, so rural communities could have their say on the town they were most connected to and where they accessed services and facilities. Councillor Harvey and a resident both argued that the proposed Tredington ward would not reflect community identities or interests as there were few links between the parishes in the proposed ward, other than being situated on the A429. Ettington Parish Council expressed its opposition to the proposed ward, and Shipston Town Council noted its support for Councillor Harvey's comments.

77 Councillor Harvey argued that Stretton-on-Fosse and Tredington parishes should be included in the same ward as Shipston, while Ettington looked more to Wellesbourne. He also provided evidence of the community links between Tredington, Stretton and Shipston, such as educational and medical facilities in Shipston used by residents of those parishes.

78 We have carefully considered Councillor Harvey's proposal. While adding both Stretton-on-Fosse and Tredington parishes to Shipston would still result in good electoral equality, we were unable to find a suitable option for Ettington parish. It was not possible either to combine it with another ward (and reduce the total number of councillors from 41 to 40) or to add it to other nearby areas to create a ward with good electoral equality. We were therefore not persuaded to adopt this proposed change as part of our final recommendations.

79 In assessing alternatives, we note that it was possible to place Stretton-on-Fosse parish in a ward with Shipston and still provide good electoral equality. However, the remainder of Tredington ward (Ettington and Tredington parishes) would have significantly fewer electors per councillor than the average for the district, so it would be necessary to add another area to ameliorate this. The only viable option which would sufficiently increase the number of electors in Tredington would be to move Alderminster parish from Quinton ward.

80 While this would create amended Quinton and Tredington wards which would have good electoral equality and which would be broadly similar to those proposed in our draft recommendations, we did not consider that we could make such a change on the basis of the evidence received. It would involve only partially adopting the proposals from Councillor Harvey and would have consequential effects for both Tredington and Quinton parishes which had not been otherwise commented on in the review. Furthermore, we note the support for our draft recommendations from other respondents.

81 Therefore, we confirm our draft recommendations for Quinton and Tredington wards as final.

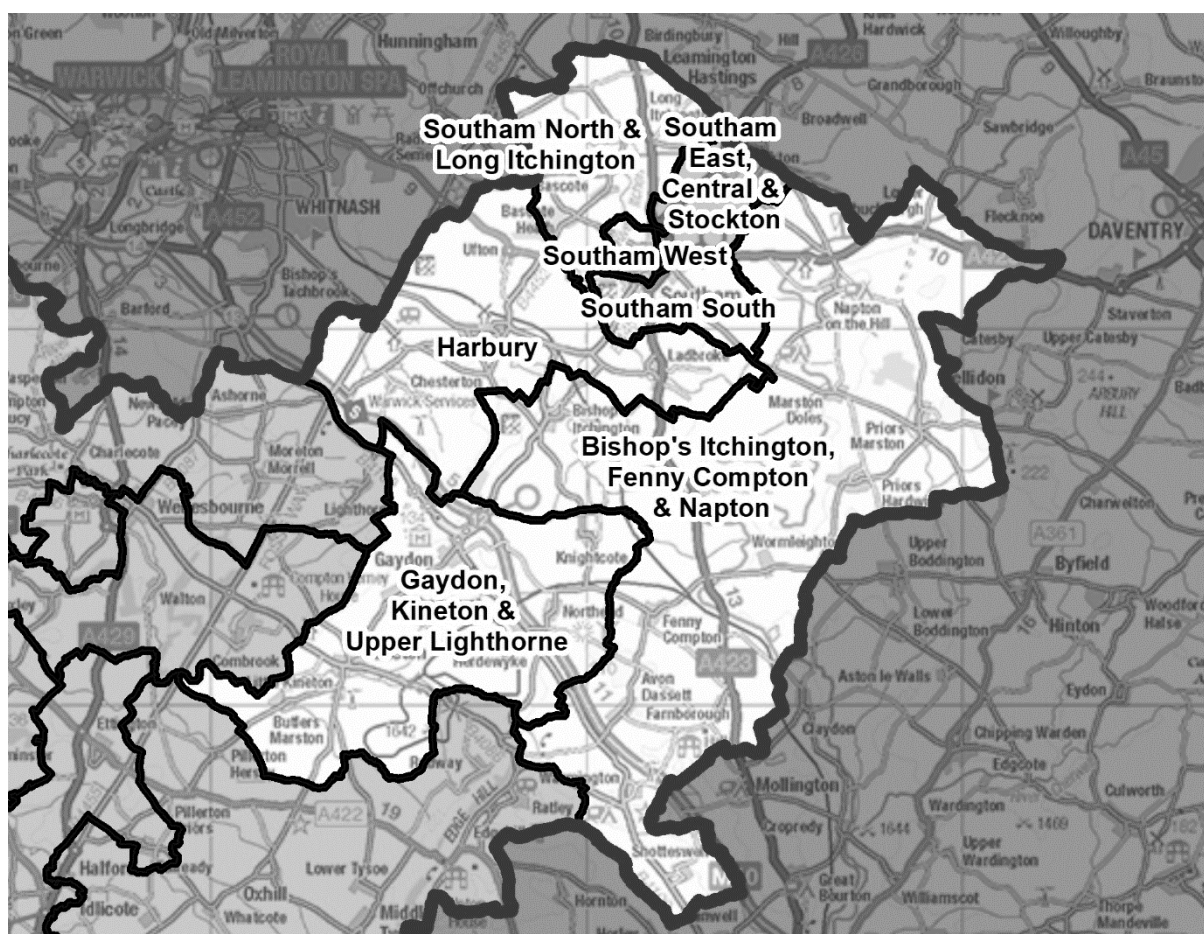
82 In Shipston itself, the Council and Liberal Democrats supported our proposal to combine Shipston in a ward with neighbouring Barcheston, Burmington and Tidmington parishes. However, they proposed dividing this wider area into two-single councillor wards, as opposed to our two-councillor proposal.

83 The Liberal Democrats proposed that the three parishes to the south of Shipston be combined in a ward with that area of Shipston to the south of Campden Road. While this provided clear and identifiable boundaries, it would result in poor electoral equality with the ward containing 24% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the district.

84 The Council proposed to include Barcheston parish in a ward with the northern part of Shipston, and Burmington and Tidmington parishes with the southern part. While this proposal used slightly less clear boundaries, we noted that it would ensure good electoral equality and would keep all new development together in the same ward. Councillor Harvey expressed his support for this split of Shipston in his submission.

85 We therefore propose to adopt the Council's proposals for single-councillor Shipston North and Shipston South wards as part of our final recommendations.

North-east Stratford-on-Avon



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Bishop's Itchington, Fenny Compton & Napton	2	5%
Gaydon, Kineton & Upper Lighthorne	2	5%
Harbury	1	5%
Southam East, Central & Stockton	1	-10%
Southam North & Long Itchington	1	-8%
Southam South	1	4%
Southam West	1	-6%

Southam East, Central & Stockton, Southam North & Long Itchington, Southam South and Southam West

86 The majority of the comments we received in response to our draft recommendations related to our proposals for Southam and the surrounding area. Many comments argued against combining Southam in district wards with any surrounding areas, particularly Long Itchington and Stockton. This was on the basis that parts of the town and the parishes surrounding it had different needs and were not well suited to being in the same ward.

87 For Southam specifically, we received some comments to the effect that the town would be better served by a multi-member ward as it had been prior to 2015. We also received comments on specific alterations that should be made to our single-councillor warding arrangement for the town.

88 Stockton Parish Council told us it would be unacceptable to be in a ward with parts of Southam, and Long Itchington Parish Council expressed similar views.

89 The Council and Liberal Democrats both proposed amended single-councillor wards for the town, which combined the northern part of Southam in a ward with Long Itchington. The Liberal Democrats split the remainder of Southam into East and West wards, as well as a South ward that would include Bishop's Itchington. The Council split the remainder of the town between East and West wards, with a distinct Bishop's Itchington ward. The Council's proposals were supported by Councillor Rock. However, both proposals provided at least one ward with significant electoral inequality which we did not consider would be justified. In particular, the Liberal Democrats' proposed Southam South and Bishop's Itchington & Southam East wards would both have variances of 17%. The Council's Southam East ward would have a variance of 22%.

90 We note that both proposals still included Long Itchington in a ward with part of Southam, which conflicts with the majority of responses we received. The electorate of Southam means that the town itself is entitled to between two and three councillors, so for the sake of good electoral equality, we considered that it was necessary for some wards to encompass parts of the town and the adjoining more rural areas. We did consider amendments to the proposals received which would minimise electoral variances. However, the best option we identified would still result in wards with variances of 11%, 13% and 13% respectively.

91 We therefore concluded that there were no alternative options, either submitted during consultation or those we sought to identify ourselves, that would both reflect the community identities of this area and ensure good electoral equality. On this basis, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for Southam and its environs as final. We acknowledge that there was strong local opposition to these proposals, but we are firmly of the view that all of the alternative proposals received would not provide an acceptable balance between our statutory criteria.

Bishop's Itchington, Fenny Compton & Napton, Gaydon, Kineton & Upper Lighthorne and Harbury

92 There was opposition to our draft recommendations for a two-councillor Bishop's Itchington, Fenny Compton & Napton ward. Local residents, Bishop's Itchington Parish Council, Fenny Compton Parish Council and Napton-on-the-Hill Parish Council argued that the ward was too large, covered too many parishes and linked areas that had little in common. Two comments also criticised the proposal on

the grounds that it would split Burton Dassett parish between district wards. We considered the possibility of dividing this ward into two. However, we were unable to identify an alternative warding option that would provide good electoral equality and avoid dividing rural parishes between wards. Having regard to this and the warding pattern for the wider area, we have concluded there was no alternative pattern that avoids splitting parishes between wards. Furthermore, we are not persuaded that adopting such a warding pattern would reflect community identities or provide for effective and convenient local government.

93 Gaydon Parish Council expressed concern about Burton Dassett parish being split between two wards. A local resident argued that Lighthorne parish should be included in a ward with Upper Lighthorne and Kineton parishes as there were stronger links to these areas than with the rest of Wellesbourne North & Rural ward.

94 The Council and Liberal Democrats proposed the same four single-councillor warding arrangement to cover this area. While we considered that these wards had some merit when taken in isolation, they were incompatible with securing a viable warding pattern across the wider area, including in Southam. In particular, the proposals would necessitate the creation of multiple wards with high electoral variances in the town. We were therefore unable to adopt these proposals. We do, however, propose to amend the boundary between our proposed wards so that Burton Dassett parish is wholly within Gaydon, Kineton & Lighthorne Heath ward. We have also decided that our proposed Gaydon, Kineton & Lighthorne Heath ward be renamed Gaydon, Kineton & Upper Lighthorne, after we were made aware of the change to the latter parish's name. Furthermore, we are creating parish wards for Upper Lighthorne because, as a result of that parish change, a Warwickshire County division boundary now runs through the parish. Our parish wards must lie wholly within our proposed district wards and have regard to existing county division boundaries too. The parish electoral arrangements are detailed later in this report.

95 We did not receive any comments regarding our proposed Harbury ward and have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

Conclusions

96 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality in Stratford-on-Avon, referencing the 2020 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

	Final recommendations	
	2020	2027
Number of councillors	41	41
Number of electoral wards	39	39
Average number of electors per councillor	2,558	2,799
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	16	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	3	0

Final recommendations

Stratford-on-Avon District Council should be made up of 41 councillors serving 39 wards representing 37 single-councillor wards and two two-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 Stratford-on-Avon District Council. You can also view our final recommendations for Stratford-on-Avon on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Parish electoral arrangements

97 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.

98 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, Stratford-on-Avon 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.

99 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 Alcester, Bidford-on-Avon, Quinton, Sambourne, Shipston-on-Stour, Southam, Stratford-upon-Avon, Studley, Upper Lighthorne and Wellesbourne & Walton.

100 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Alcester parish.

Final recommendations

Alcester Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
East	7
West	9

101 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Bidford-on-Avon parish.

Final recommendations

Bidford-on-Avon Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
East	6
West	5

102 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Quinton parish.

Final recommendations

Quinton Parish Council should comprise eight councillors, as at present, representing three wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Fernleigh Park	1
Meon Vale	1
Villages	6

103 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Sambourne parish.

Final recommendations

Sambourne Parish Council should comprise five councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
North	2
South	3

104 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Shipston-on-Stour parish.

Final recommendations

Shipston-on-Stour Town Council should comprise 13 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
North	6
South	7

105 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Southam parish.

Final recommendations

Southam Town Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
East	2
North	1
South	6
West	5

106 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Stratford-upon-Avon parish.

Final recommendations

Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing 12 wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Albany	1
Avenue	1
Bishopton	2
Brookside	1
Clopton	1
Darlow	1

Guildhall & Bridgetown	2
Hathaway	1
Orchard Hill	2
Shottery	2
Tiddington	2
Welcombe	2

107 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Studley parish.

Final recommendations

Studley Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
North	6
South	6

108 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Upper Lighthorne parish.

Final recommendations

Upper Lighthorne Parish Council should comprise eight councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
North	4
South	4

109 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Wellesbourne & Walton parish.

Final recommendations

Wellesbourne & Walton Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
East & Walton	4
North	2
South	5

What happens next?

110 We have now completed our review of Stratford-on-Avon 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

111 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 Stratford-on-Avon

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2020)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Alcester East	1	2,462	2,462	-4%	2,547	2,547	-9%
2	Alcester West	1	2,531	2,531	-1%	2,879	2,879	3%
3	Bidford East	1	2,816	2,816	10%	2,886	2,886	3%
4	Bidford West	1	2,278	2,278	-11%	2,768	2,768	-1%
5	Bishop's Itchington, Fenny Compton & Napton	2	5,413	2,707	6%	5,890	2,945	5%
6	Brailes & Compton	1	2,822	2,822	10%	2,876	2,876	3%
7	Claverdon & Snitterfield	1	2,585	2,585	1%	2,658	2,658	-5%
8	Gaydon, Kineton & Upper Lighthorne	2	4,230	2,115	-17%	5,903	2,952	5%
9	Harbury	1	2,725	2,725	7%	2,933	2,933	5%
10	Henley-in-Arden	1	2,643	2,643	3%	2,713	2,713	-3%
11	Kinwarton	1	2,974	2,974	16%	3,042	3,042	9%
12	Long Marston	1	1,905	1,905	-26%	2,595	2,595	-7%
13	Quinton	1	2,966	2,966	16%	3,045	3,045	9%
14	Salford Priors & Alcester Rural	1	2,406	2,406	-6%	2,551	2,551	-9%

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2020)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
15 Shipston North	1	2,520	2,520	-1%	2,516	2,516	-10%
16 Shipston South	1	2,097	2,097	-18%	2,629	2,629	-6%
17 Southam East, Central & Stockton	1	2,447	2,447	-4%	2,531	2,531	-10%
18 Southam North & Long Itchington	1	2,444	2,444	-4%	2,568	2,568	-8%
19 Southam South	1	1,916	1,917	-25%	2,925	2,925	4%
20 Southam West	1	2,511	2,511	-2%	2,630	2,630	-6%
21 Stratford Avenue	1	2,491	2,491	-3%	2,609	2,609	-7%
22 Stratford Bishopston	1	2,267	2,267	-11%	3,105	3,105	11%
23 Stratford Clopton	1	2,548	2,548	0%	2,597	2,597	-7%
24 Stratford Guildhall & Bridgetown	1	2,871	2,871	12%	2,897	2,897	3%
25 Stratford Hathaway	1	2,216	2,216	-13%	2,991	2,991	7%
26 Stratford Orchard Hill	1	3,024	3,024	18%	3,001	3,001	7%
27 Stratford Shottery	1	2,978	2,978	16%	3,034	3,034	8%
28 Stratford Tiddington	1	2,018	2,018	-21%	2,660	2,660	-5%
29 Stratford Welcombe	1	2,849	2,849	11%	2,898	2,898	4%
30 Studley North	1	2,477	2,477	-3%	2,528	2,528	-10%
31 Studley South	1	2,795	2,795	9%	2,880	2,880	3%
32 Tanworth-in-Arden	1	2,693	2,693	5%	2,749	2,749	-2%

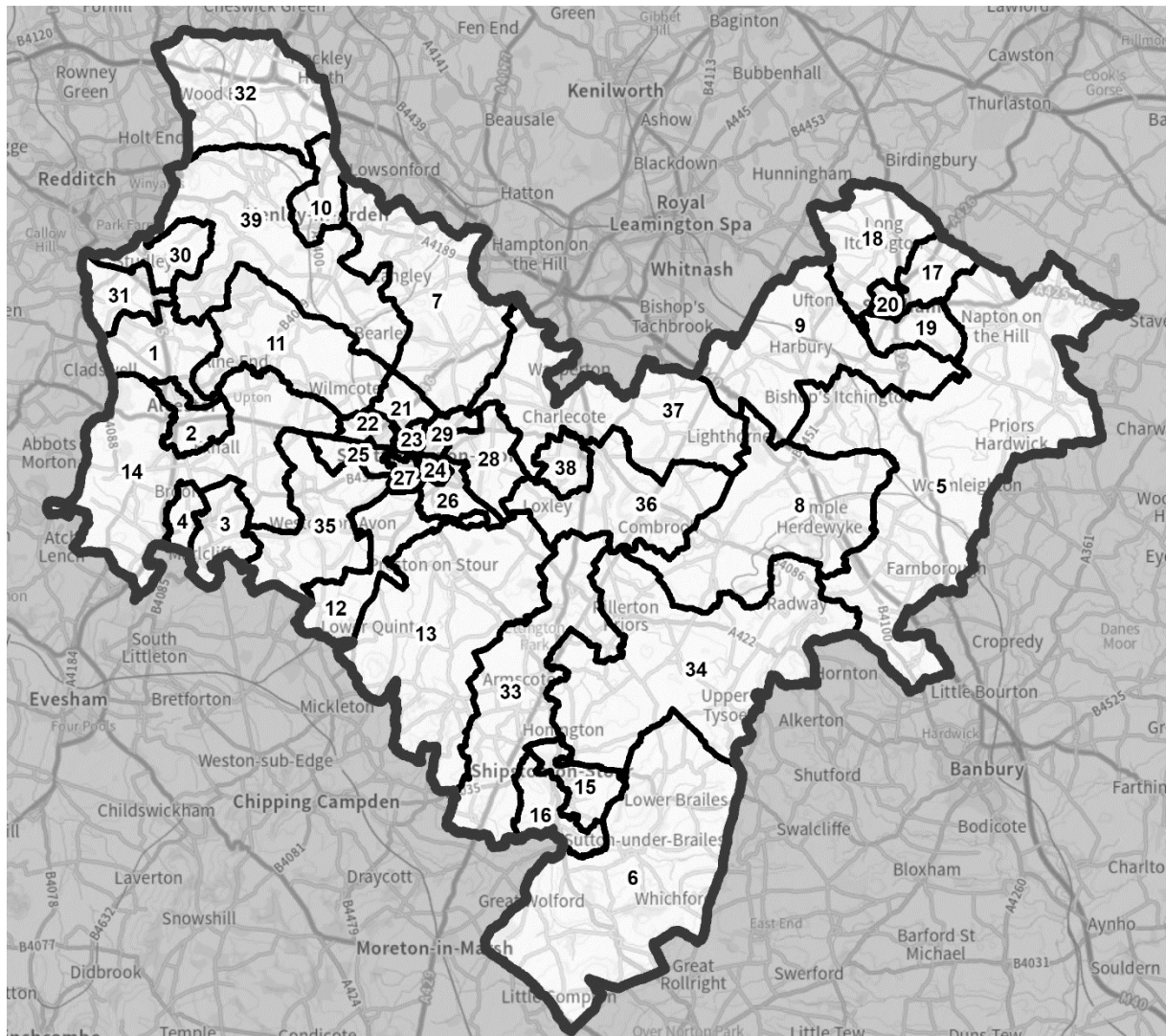
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2020)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
33 Tredington	1	2,711	2,711	6%	2,658	2,658	-5%
34 Tysoe	1	2,788	2,788	9%	2,810	2,810	0%
35 Welford-on-Avon	1	2,525	2,525	-1%	2,630	2,630	-6%
36 Wellesbourne East & Rural	1	2,499	2,499	-2%	2,824	2,824	1%
37 Wellesbourne North & Rural	1	2,988	2,988	17%	3,058	3,058	9%
38 Wellesbourne South	1	2,436	2,436	-5%	2,673	2,673	-5%
39 Wootton Wawen	1	3,026	3,026	18%	3,090	3,090	10%
Totals	41	104,891	–	–	114,774	–	–
Averages	–	–	2,558	–	–	2,799	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Stratford-on-Avon 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



Number	Ward name
1	Alcester East
2	Alcester West
3	Bidford East
4	Bidford West
5	Bishop's Itchington, Fenny Compton & Napton
6	Brailes & Compton
7	Claverdon & Snitterfield
8	Gaydon, Kineton & Upper Lighthorne
9	Harbury
10	Henley-in-Arden
11	Kinwarton
12	Long Marston
13	Quinton

14	Salford Priors & Alcester Rural
15	Shipston North
16	Shipston South
17	Southam East, Central & Stockton
18	Southam North & Long Itchington
19	Southam South
20	Southam West
21	Stratford Avenue
22	Stratford Bishopton
23	Stratford Clopton
24	Stratford Guildhall & Bridgetown
25	Stratford Hathaway
26	Stratford Orchard Hill
27	Stratford Shottery
28	Stratford Tiddington
29	Stratford Welcombe
30	Studley North
31	Studley South
32	Tanworth-in-Arden
33	Tredington
34	Tysoe
35	Welford-on-Avon
36	Wellesbourne East & Rural
37	Wellesbourne North & Rural
38	Wellesbourne South
39	Wootton Wawen

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/west-midlands/warwickshire/stratford-on-avon

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:

www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/west-midlands/warwickshire/stratford-on-avon

Local Authority

- Stratford-on-Avon District Council

Political Groups

- Stratford-upon-Avon Liberal Democrats

Councillors

- Councillor H. Collerson (Stockton Parish Council)
- Councillor M. Flaxman (Binton Parish Council)
- Councillor J. Gimblett (Tredington Parish Council)
- Councillor J. Gordon-Cumming (Burton Dassett Parish Council)
- Councillor T. Harvey (Stratford-on-Avon District Council)
- Councillor C. Kettle (Stratford-on-Avon District Council)
- Councillor A. Parry (Stratford-on-Avon District Council)
- Councillor N. Rock (Stratford-on-Avon District Council)
- Councillor I. Shenton (Stratford-on-Avon District Council)

Local Organisations

- Meon Vale Residents' Association
- Oversley Green Residents' Association

Parish and Town Councils

- Alcester Town Council
- Bishop's Itchington Parish Council
- Ettington Parish Council
- Fenny Compton Parish Council
- Gaydon Parish Council
- Lighthorne Parish Council
- Long Itchington Parish Council
- Mappleborough Green Parish Council
- Napton-on-the-Hill Parish Council

- Pillerton Hersey Parish Council
- Shipston Town Council
- Stockton Parish Council
- Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council

Local Residents

- 112 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 (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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