

New electoral arrangements for Wigan Borough Council Final Recommendations

May 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 Wigan?

7 We decided to conduct a review of Wigan Borough Council ('the Council') as the last review was completed in 2003 and we are required to review the electoral arrangements of every council area in England 'from time to time'.² In addition, some councillors currently represent many more or fewer electors than others. This is 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where the number of electors is as equal as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

8 This electoral review has been carried out to ensure that:

- The wards in Wigan 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 borough.

Our proposals for Wigan

9 Wigan should be represented by 75 councillors, the same number as there are now.

10 Wigan should have 25 wards, the same number as there are now.

11 The boundaries of 23 wards should change; two, Wigan Central and Wigan West, will stay the same.

12 We have now finalised our recommendations for electoral arrangements for Wigan.

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 borough or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. The recommendations will not have an effect on local

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

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 Wigan. We then held two periods of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the borough. 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
15 June 2021	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
23 August 2021	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
30 November 2021	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
7 February 2022	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
10 May 2022	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and final recommendations

17 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.

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 Wigan	243,591	249,184
Number of councillors	75	75
Average number of electors per councillor	3,248	3,322

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'. 24 of our proposed wards for Wigan 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 2022. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 2% by 2027.

23 One resident suggested that Golborne & Lowton West's forecast should indicate a larger electorate due to the potential amount of new housing in this area. Councillor Marsh suggested that the forecast for Standish should also be increased because of development which has taken place, as well as proposed development.

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.

24 Whilst we noted the comments made, we received no detailed alternative electorate forecasts for these areas and consider the information provided by the Council regarding the projected electorate is the best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our final recommendations.

Number of councillors

25 Wigan Council currently has 75 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and have concluded that keeping this number the same will ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

26 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 75 councillors. As Wigan 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.

27 We received two submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on our draft recommendations. One submission said that 75 councillors was more than are needed for Wigan whilst the second proposed that there be two councillors for each of Wigan's wards, implying reduction by a third. Neither submission offered any comments about how the governance of the Council or representation of local people should be conducted with alternative numbers of councillors. We have therefore maintained our recommendation for 75 councillors for Wigan.

Ward boundaries consultation

28 We received 49 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included a submission from James Grundy MP (Leigh) which proposed wards for the parts of the borough which fall within the Bolton West and the Leigh parliamentary constituencies. A submission from the Wigan Conservative Federation ('the Conservative Federation') made proposals for wards for the parts of the borough which fall within the Makerfield and Wigan parliamentary constituencies. The councillors for the Bryn ward made a joint proposal for the boundaries of the Bryn ward whilst Councillors Merrett and Winstanley commented on Leigh, Golborne & West Lowton and Orrell wards. The remainder of the submissions, provided by residents, included localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the borough.

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

29 The constituency-based schemes provided uniform patterns of three-councillor wards for Wigan. We carefully considered the proposals received and were of the view that the proposed patterns of wards would, for the most part, result in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the authority and generally use clearly identifiable boundaries. We were concerned, however, that a proposal for Aspull, Haigh & Standish would result in a high level of electoral inequality and so made an alternative proposal for that area.

30 Some residents made comments which we are unable to act on when we make recommendations. Three asked us to change the boundaries of the borough by including areas which are not currently part of the borough. We do not have the power to make such changes as part of this review. Additionally, we do not have the power to determine whether parliamentary constituencies should change. The Boundary Commission for England is the body responsible for the review of parliamentary boundaries and two people made comments about proposed changes to those boundaries.

31 Our draft recommendations also took account of local evidence that we received, which provided some 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.

32 Given the travel restrictions, and the social distancing, arising from the Covid-19 outbreak, there was a detailed virtual tour of Wigan. This helped to clarify issues raised in submissions and assisted in the formulation of the proposed draft boundary recommendations.

33 Our draft recommendations were for 25 three-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

34 We received 132 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included detailed comments on our proposed borough wards from the Council and the Wigan & Leigh Local Government Committee of the Labour Party ('the Labour Local Government Committee'). The majority of the other submissions focused on specific areas, particularly our proposals in Atherton, Hindley Green, Leigh, Standish and the town of Wigan.

35 Our final recommendations are based on the draft recommendations with modifications to the wards in those areas based on the submissions received. We

also make four minor modifications to the draft recommendations in the Ashton-in-Makerfield, Golborne and Tyldesley areas.

Final recommendations

36 Our final recommendations are for 25 three-councillor wards. We consider that our final recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

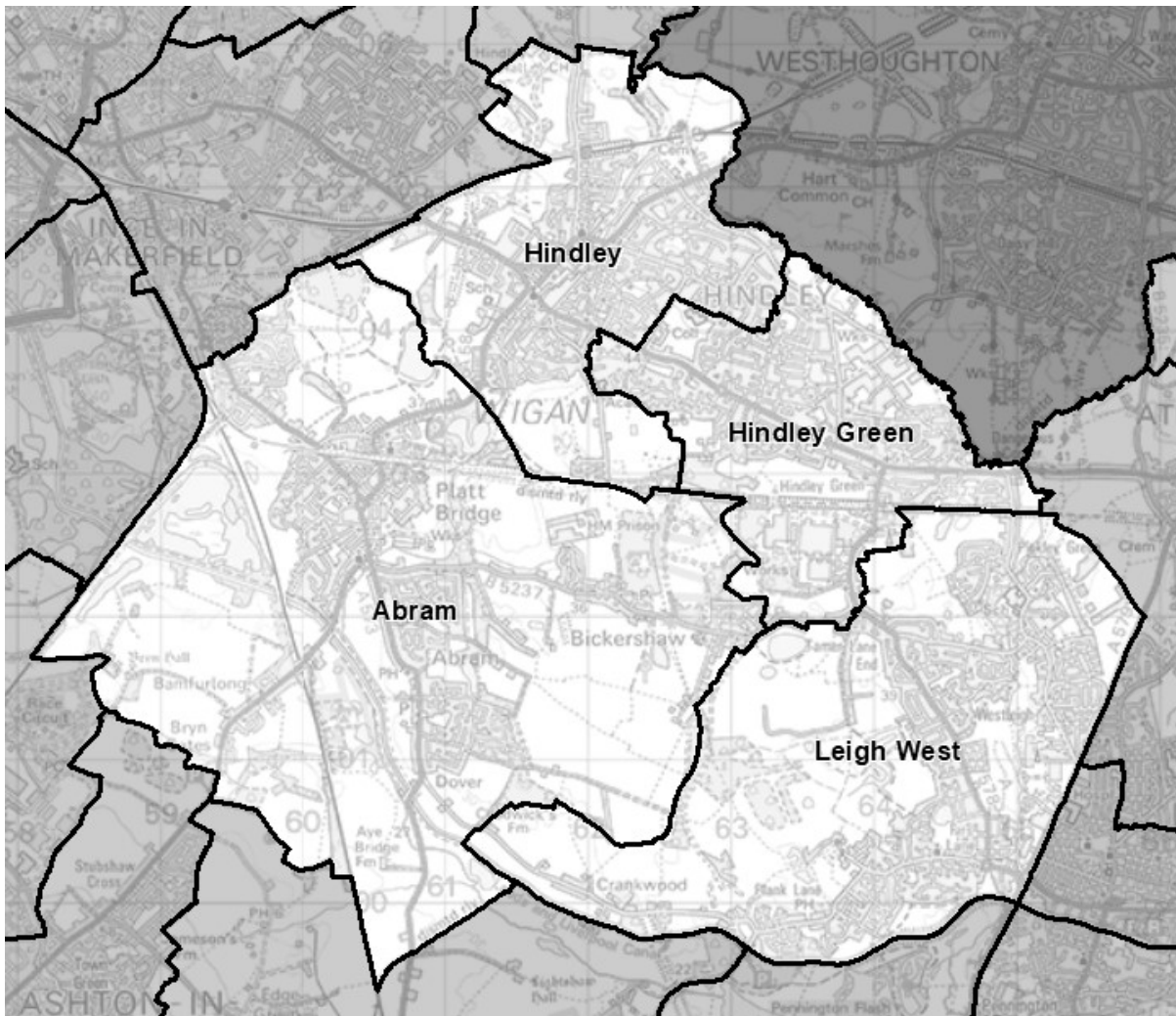
37 The tables and maps on pages 9–28 detail our final recommendations for each area of Wigan. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁶ criteria of:

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

38 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 35 and on the large map accompanying this report.

⁶ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Abram, Hindley and Leigh West



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Abram	3	5%
Hindley	3	5%
Hindley Green	3	-7%
Leigh West	3	8%

Abram

39 The Conservative Federation initially proposed that the current Abram ward be modified by excluding the part of the Chatsworth Fold estate which lies in the ward. We also received four submissions from residents about this estate. Two agreed that the estate should form part of Ince ward and one thought that it should form part of Abram ward. The fourth agreed the estate should be in one ward but invited us to pick either Abram or Ince.

40 We included the Conservative Federation's proposal as part of our draft recommendations. In response to those draft recommendations, the Council agreed

with the recommendations for Abram ward and that the ward name remain unchanged. However, the Labour Local Government Committee argued that properties on Smiths Lane as far as Bickershaw Lane in the east of Abram ward should be included in Hindley Green ward. The Committee described recent housing development, which includes Garvin Jones Grove, Mayers Nook, Nixon Phillips Drive and Rigley Potts Park, as having no community connection with Abram ward and that its residents interact with public services in the Hindley Green area. A resident of this area made a submission which similarly describes those public service connections to Hindley Green.

41 We are persuaded by the evidence received to modify our draft recommendations for Abram by including the Rigley Potts Drive development in Hindley Green ward. Our final recommendations mean that Abram ward is forecast to have 5% more electors per councillor than the average for the borough by 2027.

Hindley, Hindley Green and Leigh West

42 The Conservative Federation initially proposed that the current Hindley ward be modified by the inclusion of Pennington Green and the housing between Crossdale Road and Hollins Road. In particular, the Federation said that Pennington Green has stronger community links to Hindley than to Aspull, Whelley or New Springs.

43 We regarded Pennington Green to be part of the rural area which surrounds Aspull and were not persuaded that the relative proximity to Hindley outweighs the representation of rural issues.

44 The Conservative Federation also proposed some substantial amendments to the current Hindley Green ward, excluding the Crossdale Road area from the proposed ward but including Dangerous Corner. However, our draft recommendations differed from the Federation's proposals for Hindley Green in a number of respects. We proposed that all of the residential properties on Leigh Road as far north as Pauline Street should be included in our proposed Westleigh ward. We also considered that houses at the southern end of Schofield Lane and Lovers' Lane should be included in a single ward and propose that they be included in our Atherton South & Lilford ward. We also proposed a more substantial modification of the Federation's proposals at Pickley Green.

45 James Grundy MP (Leigh) proposed that Leigh West ward be modified by excluding the area to the east of Atherleigh Way (A579) and including the area which lies to the west of that road, and that the ward be named Westleigh to reflect the identity of that community. Whilst our draft recommendations reflected most aspects of his proposals, we were not persuaded that the Pickley Green area, which surrounds The Westleigh School, is more closely related to Hindley Green than to Westleigh. We considered that the open space between Pickley Green and Hindley

Green marks a distinction between those communities and reflected that distinction in our draft recommendations.

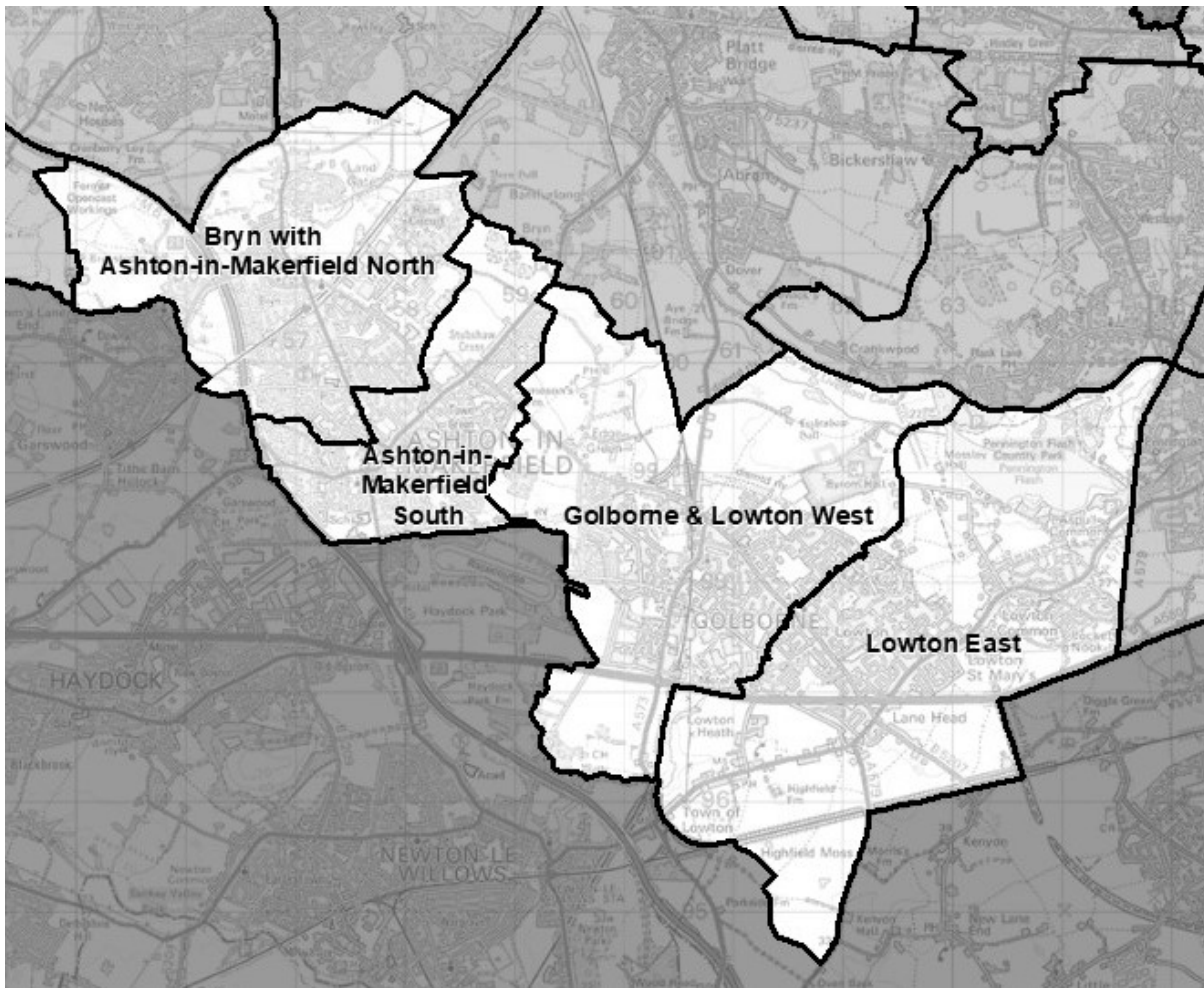
46 The Council agreed with our draft recommendations. We received two further submissions regarding Hindley. One resident of the Warbreck Close area asked that it be included in Hindley Green ward citing shopping opportunities in Hindley Green and Leigh, whilst another argued for the inclusion of properties on the east side of Park Road in Hindley ward rather than Hindley Green, citing proximity to Hindley Town Centre. On balance, we are not persuaded that the Warbreck Close area should form part of Hindley Green ward because of its proximity to Hindley but do accept that properties on the eastern side of Park Road should be included in Hindley as are those on the western side.

47 Our proposals for Hindley Green attracted more comment. Whilst our proposal to retain the name Hindley Green was supported, the Council, the Labour Local Government Committee and local residents sought the inclusion of Leigh Road, Smiths Lane and the Rigley Potts Drive development in Hindley Green ward. The relationship of people in those areas to public service and community bodies in Hindley Green, including the Council itself and the police service, was cited.

48 The Labour Local Government Committee also proposed that Smallbrook Lane be included in our Atherton South & Lilford ward, commenting that residents there associate themselves with Atherton rather than Hindley Green and our final recommendations reflect that proposal. James Grundy MP welcomed our proposal to encompass the Dangerous Corner area as a whole in Hindley Green ward but asked that Hindley Green ward also include the Pickley Green area. We are not persuaded, however, to make that change to Pickley Green which we consider relates better to the Westleigh area.

49 In addition to the boundary changes to the current Leigh West ward proposed in our draft recommendations, we also reflected the proposal by Mr Grundy that the ward name be Westleigh. This attracted objection from the Council and the Labour Local Government Committee who argued that the name does not adequately reflect the multiplicity of distinct communities in the ward, including Crankwood, Plank Lane, Firs Lane, Tamer Lane End and North Leigh Park. Based on the evidence received, we are persuaded to retain the ward name Leigh West in our final recommendations.

Ashton-in-Makerfield and Golborne



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Ashton-in-Makerfield South	3	-7%
Bryn with Ashton-in-Makerfield North	3	-8%
Golborne & Lowton West	3	-8%
Lowton East	3	5%

Ashton-in-Makerfield South and Bryn with Ashton-in-Makerfield North

50 The Conservative Federation proposed that the current Bryn and Ashton wards be retained. Councillors Jones, Collinson and Wilkinson proposed that they be amended by moving Jubilee Park and housing at the southern end of Wigan Road from Ashton ward to Bryn. We did not propose that change as part of our draft recommendations but did include a small area of industrial and commercial buildings at the northern end of Bryn Road in our Ashton-in-Makerfield South ward. We also proposed to include Gladden Hey Brow Farm in our Orrell ward in order that it has the same representation as other properties on, and accessed from, Ashton Road.

51 The Council agreed with our draft recommendations and proposed ward name changes for these wards. Whilst the Labour Local Government Committee suggested that our Ashton-in-Makerfield South ward be named Ashton, we consider that our proposed ward names accurately reflect communities both here and in our adjoining ward to the north.

52 Our draft recommendations proposed that the open space between Ashton-in-Makerfield and Golborne be encompassed in Golborne & Lowton West ward. This was supported by the Council, Councillor Merrett and two residents. The Labour Local Government Committee and the Ashton and District Linen and Woollen Stock Charity objected to our draft recommendations, arguing that the charity's land has historical connections to Ashton-in-Makerfield and that its board representation is drawn from that community. Helpfully, the charity provided a curtilage plan which made clear to us that our draft recommendations would divide the curtilage between our Ashton-in-Makerfield South and Golborne & Lowton West wards. In recognising the charity's ongoing contribution to, and identity with, the Ashton-in-Makerfield community, we are modifying our draft recommendations to include the whole of the curtilage in Ashton-in-Makerfield South ward.

53 James Grundy MP (Leigh) agreed with the inclusion of the open area between Ashton and Golborne in a single ward but proposed that it be extended to include farmhouses south of the canal on the A573 Wigan Road leading into Abram. Mr Grundy said that the canal would make a stronger boundary between the Abram ward and Golborne & Lowton West ward than the disused railway line which currently forms the boundary between those two wards. Mr Grundy added that his proposal would mean that the whole of the Abram Flashes SSSI would lie in Golborne & Lowton West ward. Whilst we received support for our proposed Abram ward we did not receive any evidence that those living on the part of the A573 referred to by Mr Grundy would consider themselves to have a stronger community identity with Golborne than with Abram. Furthermore, we have received no illustration of difficulties that the current ward boundaries give rise to in respect of the Abram Flashes SSSI. We therefore confirm, as final, our proposed boundary between Abram and Golborne & Lowton West wards.

54 We received a further representation from a local resident who proposed that the Three Sisters recreation area should be included in Bryn with Ashton-in-Makerfield North ward. The submission cited the history of association of the Three Sisters area with the Bryn community. We are modifying our draft recommendations to make the change suggested to us, and in doing so note that the vehicular access to the recreation area is through Bryn. We consider that management of the impact on the community of events at the Three Sisters area will be aided by including it in Bryn with Ashton-in-Makerfield North ward.

Golborne & Lowton West and Lowton East

55 James Grundy MP (Leigh) proposed some limited changes to the current ward boundaries in this area. Whilst proposing that the current ward names be retained, he proposed that Stone Cross Lane North and Slag Lane up to the end of the built-up area form the boundary between the two wards. He then proposed that the area to the west of the more rural part of Slag Lane be combined with the area to the east in Lowton East ward. We accepted those proposals as part of our draft recommendations. Commenting on our draft recommendations, Mr Grundy indicated that his initial proposal would omit a small part of Byrom Hall Wood from Lowton East ward.

56 Councillor Merrett initially proposed that housing estates at Plank Lane be included in Lowton East ward, but we noted that doing so would result in high levels of electoral inequality in both Lowton East and West Leigh. She suggested that moving the estates to the east of Stone Cross Lane North into Golborne & Lowton West would address electoral inequality in Lowton East and Golborne & Lowton West. However, without a clear view of where ward boundaries should be drawn to resolve that issue, we were not persuaded to make that change. Furthermore, a change of the nature suggested would not address electoral inequality in our proposed Westleigh ward.

57 The Council agreed with the draft recommendations and current unchanged ward names for Golborne & Lowton West ward and Lowton East ward. Meanwhile, the Labour Local Government Committee, whilst supporting some aspects of our recommendations for this area, objected to the inclusion of the open land between Ashton-in-Makerfield and Golborne & Lowton West ward (as described in paragraph 52). The Committee also objected to the use of the centre line of Stone Cross Lane North and Slag Lane as a ward boundary, and this was echoed by Councillor Merrett and three local residents. They argued that residents on the east side of those roads consider themselves to share a community identity with those who live on the west side. They also argued that Golborne & Lowton West ward should also include Byrom Hall Wood, stating that Lowton West residents have a strong connection with the wood, regularly taking part in its 'conservation'.

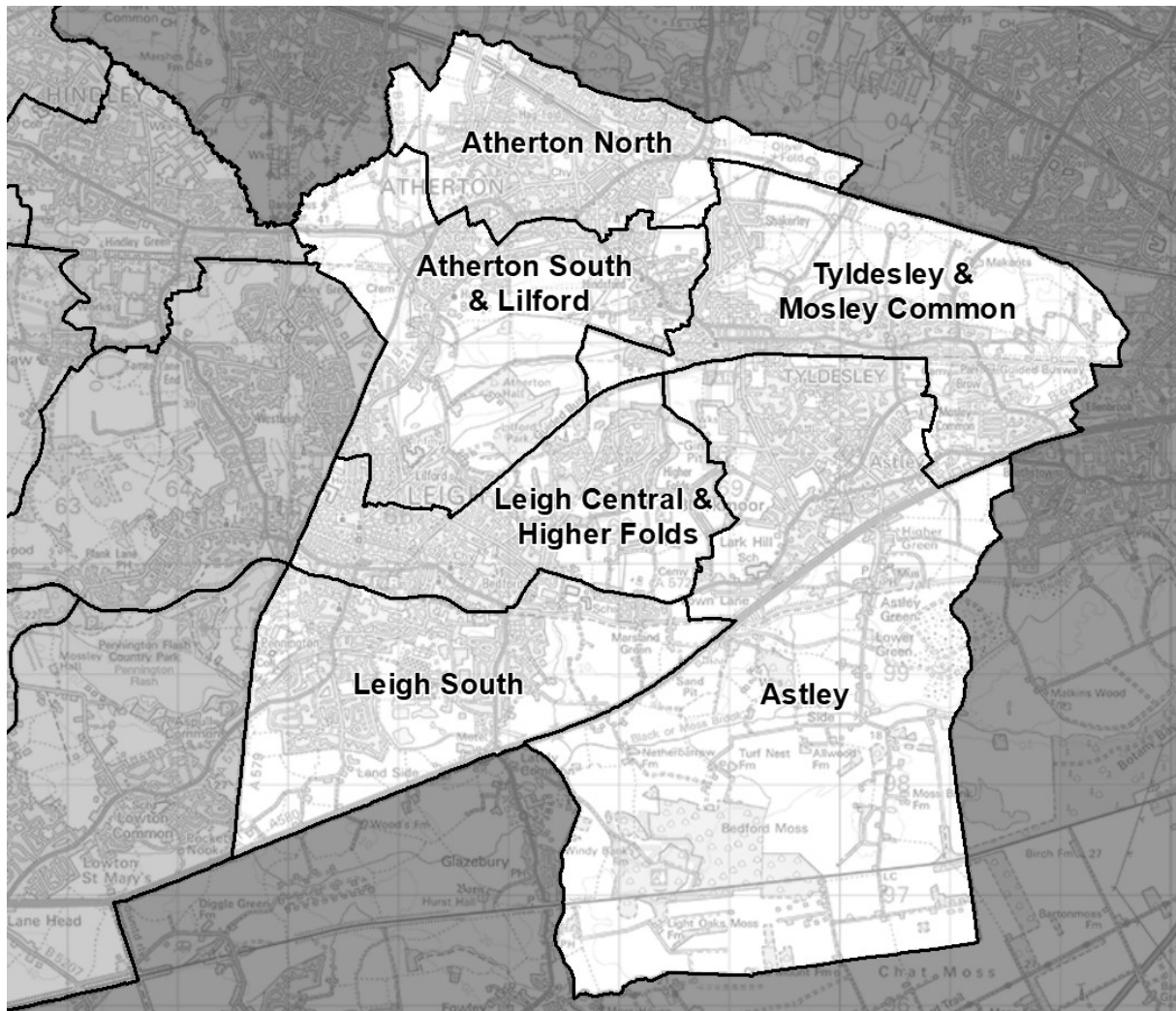
58 We are persuaded by these arguments to revert to the present boundary between Golborne & Lowton West and Lowton East wards.

59 The Labour Local Government Committee reiterated the earlier proposal made by Councillor Merrett that housing at the Stirrups Farm and Heath Lane estates be moved into Golborne & Lowton West from the current Lowton East ward. They argued that changing ward boundaries in this way would provide a better balance of elector numbers than is represented in the current or draft recommendations warding. Whilst we note that this would be a result of such a move, we have received

no evidence of the impact on community identity and interests in this area. As the electorate forecasts indicate that both wards would have variances within our normal range of tolerance, we are unwilling to make the change to boundaries purely for mathematical reasons.

60 Mr Grundy initially proposed that Warrington Road and Newton Road, which lie to the south of the East Lancashire Road (A580), form part of Lowton East ward. We were not persuaded that the identities and interests of people in that area are more closely tied to Lowton East than to Golborne and therefore proposed to retain the area as part of Golborne & Lowton West ward. We received no objection to this aspect of our draft recommendations which we therefore confirm as final.

Atherton and Leigh



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Astley	3	11%
Atherton North	3	2%
Atherton South & Lilford	3	8%
Leigh Central & Higher Folds	3	1%
Leigh South	3	-3%
Tyldesley & Mosley Common	3	-5%

Astley and Tyldesley & Mosley Common

61 We received only one proposal for this area in response to our first consultation. James Grundy MP (Leigh) proposed that the Astley & Mosley Common ward be modified by combining Mosley Common with Tyldesley and by including the area to the south of the busway (with the exception of the Porterfield Drive estate) in Astley. Noting that Well Street provides the only vehicular access to Porterfield, we accepted that proposal as part of our draft recommendations with one small

modification: houses on the south side of Chaddock Lane be included in Tyldesley & Mosley Common ward.

62 In responding to our draft recommendations, the Council expressed broad agreement with the recommendations for Astley, Mosley Common and Tyldesley. However, the Council's view was that the Leigh Guided Busway should be a continuous ward boundary between the two wards with the effect of moving Porterfield Drive into Astley ward. The Labour Local Government Committee made a similar proposal.

63 We have looked closely at the Porterfield Drive area and conclude that the area has good pedestrian and cycle access to the adjacent Bodmin Drive and Shearwater Drive areas, including the footway and cycleway alongside the guided busway. The adjacent areas are of similar character to Porterfield Drive. We are therefore modifying our draft recommendations in order to include the Porterfield Drive area in Astley ward. As a consequence, the ward will have 11% more electors per councillor than the average for the borough by 2027. Whilst this is a relatively high electoral variance, we consider that the nature and community identity of the Porterfield Drive area warrants its inclusion with neighbouring housing estates in Astley ward.

64 We received one submission from a local resident in the Meadowgrass Gardens area who proposed that this area be included in Astley ward. We consider that there is less justification for the increase in electoral variance that would result from this change than is evident at Porterfield Drive. We have therefore decided to maintain our recommendation that the Meadowgrass Gardens area form part of Tyldesley & Mosley Common ward.

65 In response to our draft recommendations, we received a number of comments about the Hindsford area. The Council, the Labour Local Government Committee, Councillor Gerrard and five local residents argued that Hindsford is regarded locally as part of Atherton and should be warded with that town rather than Tyldesley. We are persuaded by the evidence received to include Hindsford in Atherton ward, but find that the Labour Local Government Committee's specific proposal to include the area in Atherton North would result in that ward having 20% more electors per councillor than the average for the borough by 2027. That degree of electoral inequality is considerably greater than we are prepared to accept and therefore recommend that Hindsford form part of our Atherton South & Lilford ward, resulting in a variance of 8% in that ward by 2027. Our Tyldesley & Mosley Common ward will have an electoral variance of -5% by 2027.

66 James Grundy MP asked that Astley's Farm Boarding Kennels, a farmhouse at the top of Schofield Lane, be included in the proposed Atherton South & Lilford ward. We have described in paragraph 48 our modification to the draft recommendations in

order to include Smallbrook Lane in Astley South & Lilford ward and, in doing so, cover this point of detail suggested by Mr Grundy.

Atherton North and Atherton South & Lilford

67 The boundaries of the current Atherton and Atherleigh wards mean that both have high levels of current and future electoral inequality. However, alteration to the boundaries between these wards could even out the imbalances. James Grundy MP proposed to address this by including the Tyldesley Old Road area in his Atherton South & Lilford ward. We included his proposal as part of our draft recommendations with one small modification at Schofield Lane and Lovers' Lane.

68 Our draft recommendations for Atherton attracted over 20 responses from residents who wished to see the whole of Atherton represented in a single ward. Were Atherton town as a whole to be a three-councillor ward, it would have 82% more electors per councillor than the average for the borough: a far greater degree of electoral equality than we normally recommend and not consistent with the need to ensure good electoral equality. Furthermore, we do not recommend wards which have more than three councillors because we consider that this would dilute representation and not be conducive to effective and convenient local government.

69 Whilst some residents took the opportunity to comment on past reorganisations of local government, suggestions for restoration of former county boundaries are beyond the scope of this review. We are not, therefore, able to recommend such changes.

70 Whilst the Council agreed with our draft recommendations and proposed ward names for Atherton North and Atherton South & Lilford, the Labour Local Government Committee asked for changes to our Atherton North ward in order to include the Chanters Estate north of the A577 and Hindsford. We have discussed proposals for Hindsford in paragraph 65, above, and reiterate here our view that those areas should form part of Atherton South & Lilford ward. The Committee argued that it is expected that new housing will be built at Howe Bridge but not in our Atherton North ward. At this stage of the review, it would be inappropriate to revisit the Council's electoral forecasts in the absence of a clear methodical alternative and we therefore continue to rely on the Council's forecast.

71 The Labour Local Government Committee argued that the area to the south of Holden Road and properties on the north side of Holden Road should be included in our proposed Leigh Town Centre & Higher Folds ward. The Committee described Holden Road as an integral part of the main road infrastructure of the town that should be located in the ward, thus including the whole of this important road in one ward. The Committee said that the Leigh Town Centre & Higher Folds ward has limited scope for future development, unlike the proposed Atherton South & Lilford ward, and that moving the boundary just behind properties on Holden Road balances

up the electorate and reflects the majority of community associations. We are persuaded by the Committee's argument and accept their proposal in this respect as part of our final recommendations.

72 We also received proposals regarding the naming of wards in this area. The Labour Local Government Committee and Atherleigh Labour Party proposed that Atherton South & Lilford ward become Atherton South & Leigh North. We note, however, that Lilford Park is a major feature of our proposed ward and that, in community terms, the 595 bus route is described as the Leigh to Lilford circular bus route, and that the ward contains Lilford Park doctors' surgery. We therefore conclude that the name Lilford has currency in the area and are not persuaded to change the name of our recommended Atherton South & Lilford ward.

Leigh Central & Higher Folds and Leigh South

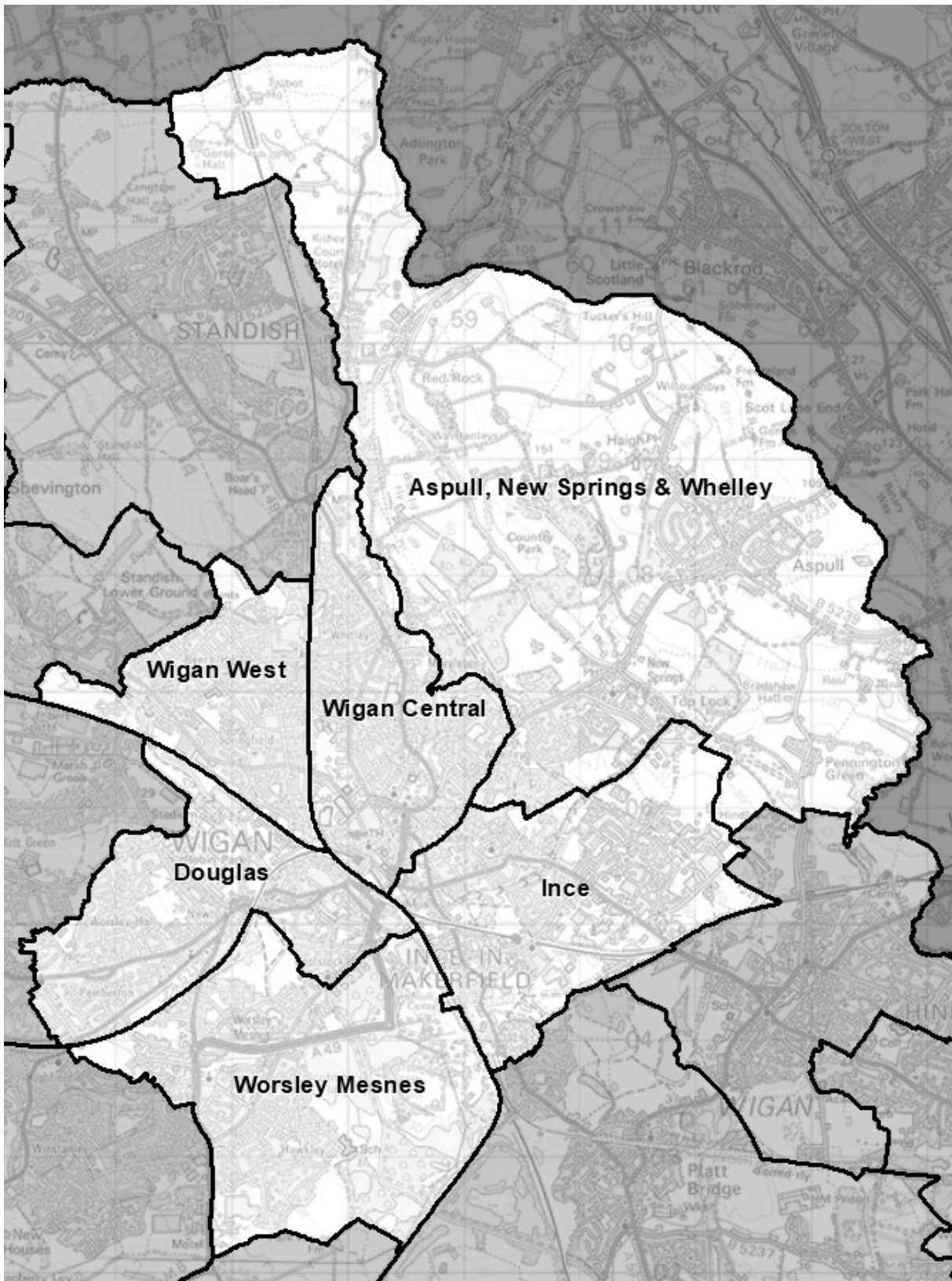
73 James Grundy MP (Leigh) initially made proposals for Leigh which retained many aspects of the current Leigh East and Leigh South wards. However, he did propose some modifications to facilitate his proposals for the wider area and to secure good electoral equality. He proposed that the part of Leigh which lies between the town centre and Atherleigh Way be included in a Leigh Town & Higher Folds ward. We broadly accepted Mr Grundy's proposal as part of our draft recommendations.

74 We have described in paragraph 71 our recommendations which modify our proposed boundary between Atherton South & Lilford and Leigh Town Centre & Higher Folds wards with the effect of including both sides of Holden Road in the latter ward.

75 Both the Council and the Labour Local Government Committee proposed that our recommended Leigh Town Centre & Higher Folds ward be named Leigh Central & Higher Folds. They argued that there is a large community within the ward which is unlikely to consider itself to be in either Leigh Town Centre or Higher Folds but would agree that it is situated in a central Leigh area. It was also noted that the primary school located on Windermere Road is also called Leigh Central. We are persuaded by this evidence and have therefore adopted the ward name of Leigh Central & Higher Folds in our final recommendations.

76 The Council and the Labour Local Government Committee proposed that Bedford & Pennington ward should be named Leigh South, remarking that the ward, which has boundaries little changed from the current Leigh South ward, includes other areas that may not associate with either Bedford or Pennington. Hope Carr, Siddow Common and Butts Bridge were given as examples. We are content to accept this locally-based evidence about community identities and include the ward name of Leigh South as part of our final recommendations.

Central Wigan



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Aspull, New Springs & Whelley	3	-3%
Douglas	3	0%
Ince	3	-6%
Wigan Central	3	-3%
Wigan West	3	0%
Worsley Mesnes	3	-5%

Aspull, New Springs & Whelley and Wigan Central

77 The Conservative Federation proposed a radical change to the current Aspull, New Springs & Whelley ward by replacing New Springs, Whelley and Pennington Green with a substantial part of Standish and Shevington Moor in a ward they would name Standish North & Aspull. The proposed ward would have 18% more electors per councillor than the average for the borough by 2027. This is a degree of electoral inequality we were not prepared to recommend based on the evidence received.

78 In our draft recommendations, we proposed that Worthington, part of Haigh parish, Standish and part of Chorley Road to the south of Rowton Rise, be combined with the Boar's Head area in Wigan Central ward.

79 One resident proposed that the whole of Scholes and Whelley be incorporated into a single ward. However, we were not able to identify boundaries to reflect that proposal which would reflect the extent of local communities or provide for electoral equality.

80 Our proposals for Standish led us, in order to provide for electoral equality, to propose that Bottling Wood, served by Bradshaw Street and Balcarres Avenue, form part of our Aspull, New Springs & Whelley ward. The Labour Local Government Committee and a local resident disagreed with this proposal citing strong connections with the area to the south and centre of Wigan, but not with Aspull or New Springs. The Committee also described the B5238 Whelley as a very busy road, with a constant stream of traffic forming a divide between communities in an area where there is no clear alternative natural division. They asked that the road be retained as a ward boundary. This would mean that the Northumberland Street area would form part of Aspull, New Springs & Whelley ward, as under the existing arrangements.

81 Meanwhile, the Council, also wishing to see communities kept together, asked us to consider adding streets between Great Acre and Moore Street to Aspull, New Springs & Whelley ward. We have considered this proposal but find that it would result in the ward having 18% more electors per councillor than the borough average and Wigan Central having 24% fewer. We are not prepared to recommend such

degrees of electoral inequality and therefore do not recommend that suggested change to the Great Acre/Moore Street area.

82 The Council and the Labour Local Government Committee proposed that the parished areas of Haigh and Worthington remain within Aspull, New Springs & Whelley ward. Both said that these rural communities have greater ties and tend to associate with Aspull, New Springs and Whelley rather than with Standish with Langtree. In our draft recommendations, we proposed that Haigh Parish Council be divided between Aspull, New Springs & Whelley and Standish with Langtree wards. The Parish Council objected to this split arguing that it would be contrary to the interests of effective and convenient local government and be damaging to community identity.

83 Our final recommendations for Standish, described in a following section of this report, allow us to also reflect the community identity evidence we received. This means that Bottling Wood will remain as part of Wigan Central ward. The Northumberland Street area and the whole of Haigh and Worthington parishes will continue to form parts of Aspull, New Springs & Whelley ward.

Douglas, Ince, Wigan West and Worsley Mesnes

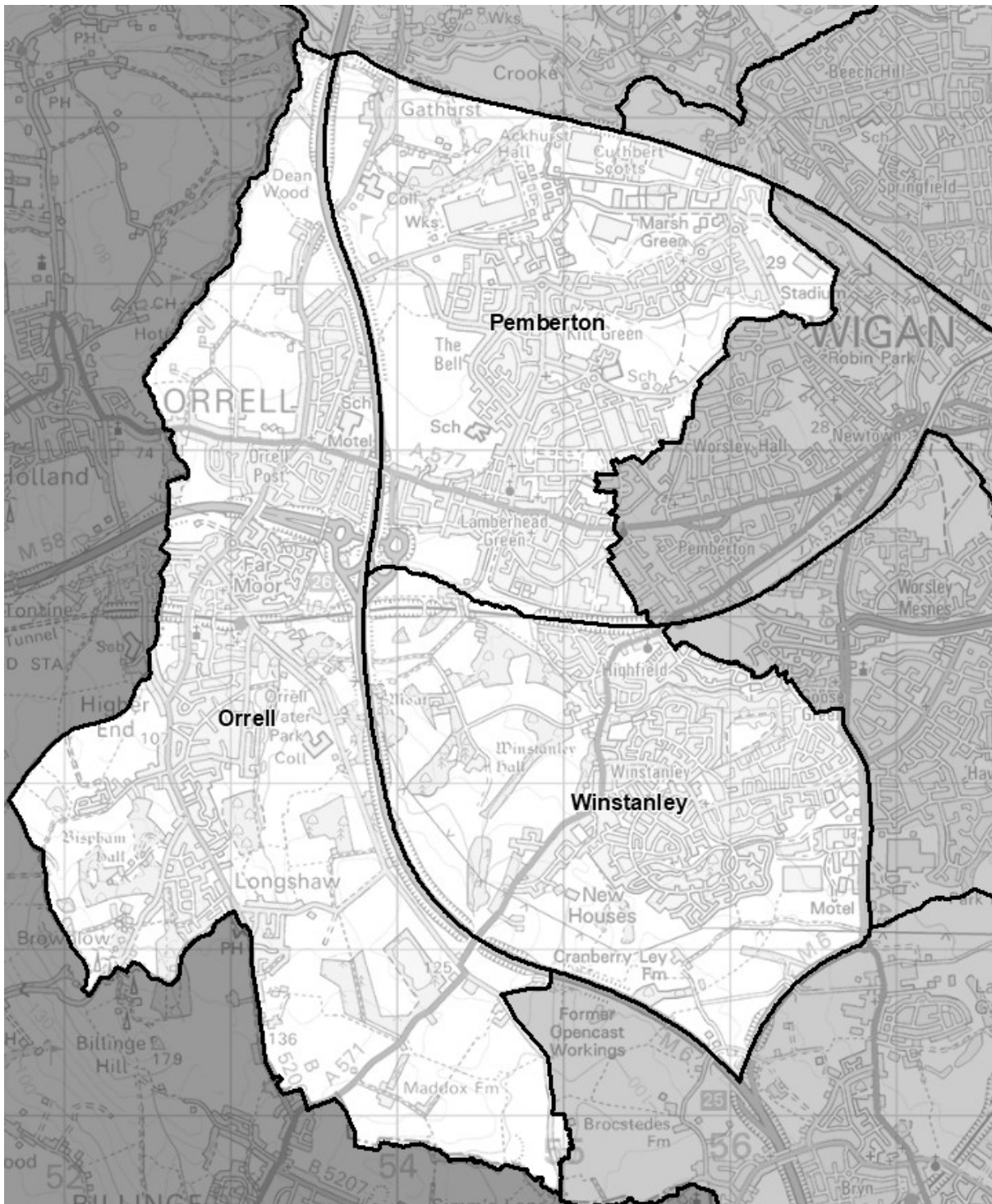
84 In initially proposing that the current Douglas, Ince, Wigan West and Worsley Mesnes wards be retained, the Conservative Federation provided the only comment that we received for this area during our first consultation. The Federation proposed a small modification to Ince ward to include the whole of the Chatsworth Fold estate.

85 Whilst we broadly accepted the Federation's approach, we proposed to include the whole of the Pemberton Business Park development site in our Worsley Mesnes ward. Our second modification was to the boundary between Douglas and Pemberton wards at St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School, where the current ward boundary follows the edge of an open space which lies between the school and properties on Sherwood Drive. We considered it appropriate to provide a clearer ward boundary by following the edges of residential properties in Severn Drive and Medway Place.

86 The Council and the Labour Local Government Committee agreed with the draft recommendations for these wards. However, one resident proposed that the Worsley Mesnes ward be modified to exclude 1–15 Clapgate Lane, which would then be added to Winstanley ward. We consider, however, that the houses to which this respondent refers form part of a community including those living at Hexham Avenue, Lady Lane, Sefton Road and 17–25 Clapgate Lane. Another resident argued that it is inappropriate that Oakley Drive is not in the Pemberton ward. However, it is unclear whether the respondent would expect this to be addressed by a change in ward names or a change in ward boundaries.

87 Noting the support for our draft recommendations and having received no further comment, we confirm our draft recommendations for these wards as final.

Orrell, Pemberton and Winstanley



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Orrell	3	0%
Pemberton	3	1%
Winstanley	3	-4%

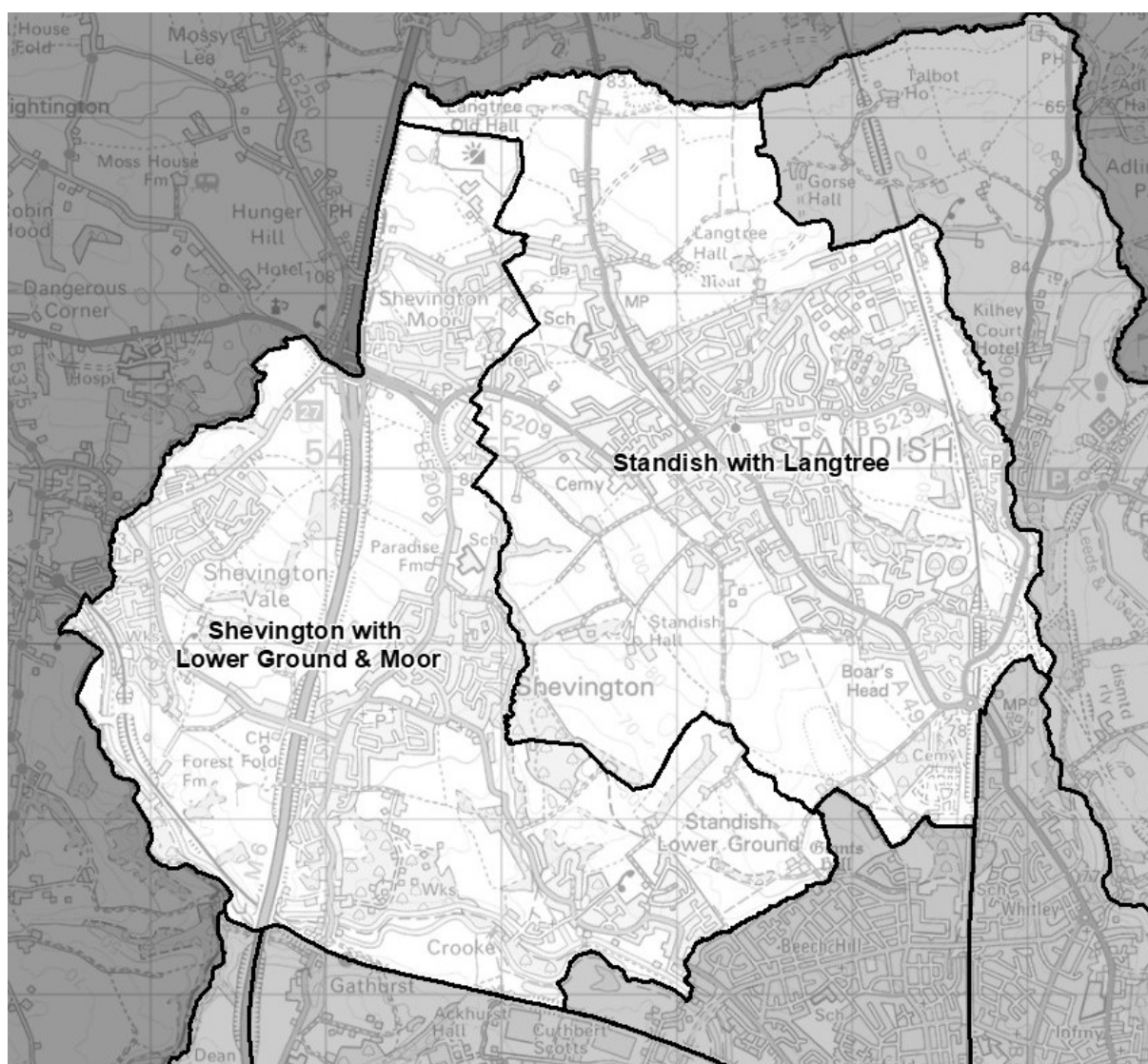
Orrell, Pemberton and Winstanley

88 The Conservative Federation proposed the retention of the current Orrell, Pemberton and Winstanley wards. In also proposing the retention of Orrell ward, Councillor Winstanley provided the only additional comment relating to this area. The current wards provide good electoral equality and have clearly identifiable boundaries which we consider reflect local communities.

89 Whilst broadly accepting the proposal to retain the wards, we proposed one small change to Orrell ward to enable Gladden Hey Brow Farm to be represented in that ward. Councillor Winstanley and the Council agreed with our recommended boundaries for Orrell. Whilst the Council agreed that the current ward name should be retained, Councillor Winstanley proposed that it be named Orrell & Billinge. We acknowledge Councillor Winstanley's assertion that 'the community of Billinge ... make up a sizeable amount of the electorate'. Whilst we have considered the history of Billinge, we note that adjacent to our Orrell ward and located in St Helens borough, is Billinge village, the parish of Billinge Chapel End and the ward of Billinge & Seneley Green. We consider that retaining the current name for Orrell ward maintains the distinction between areas in Wigan borough and those currently recognised in parish and ward names in St Helens borough.

90 The Council and the Labour Local Government Committee agreed with the draft recommendations for Pemberton and Winstanley wards which we now confirm as final.

Shevington and Standish



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Shevington with Lower Ground & Moor	3	4%
Standish with Langtree	3	9%

Shevington with Lower Ground & Moor and Standish with Langtree

91 The Conservative Federation initially proposed to divide the current Standish with Langtree ward between a Standish North & Aspull ward and a Standish South with Whitley ward. The current Shevington with Lower Ground ward would be retained. We differed, however, from the Federation's approach to Standish on the basis of securing good electoral equality.

92 We proposed to modify Standish with Langtree ward by adding the Worthington Park area. This is a modern housing development which spans the Worthington and

Haigh parish boundaries. Our proposed ward also included those living at the eastern end of Rectory Lane.

93 In order to provide electoral equality, we proposed to include the Boars Head Avenue area in Wigan Central ward. As a further measure to achieve electoral equality, and to consolidate the community at Shevington Moor, we are proposed a small addition to the current Shevington with Lower Ground ward bringing all those living on Old Pepper Lane together in one ward.

94 Our draft recommendations for this area attracted more comment than did those for any other part of the review area. The Labour Local Government Committee, expressing their reluctance, understood and accepted the basis of our draft recommendations but argued that the current ward names be retained. The Committee felt that referring to Shevington Moor in our naming would lead those living in the Shevington Vale area, who would regard themselves as living in Appley Bridge, to consider themselves unrecognised. We note, however, that the Appley Bridge community extends across the borough boundary into West Lancashire borough.

95 The Council, Councillor Marsh and 58 residents of the Boars Head area objected, however, to the exclusion of that area from Standish with Langtree ward. They described, with evidence, the association of this area with Standish, due to the strong community links forged by being closer to the amenities of Standish, including community buildings, places of worship, schools and healthcare. We acknowledge the evidence we have received and are prepared to reflect those community links in our final recommendations. However, we note that simply adding the Boars Head area to the Standish with Langtree ward of our draft recommendations would result in there being 18% more electors per councillor in that ward by 2027. We are not prepared to accept such a high degree of under-representation and therefore, in adding Boars Head to Standish with Langtree, must make further changes to our draft recommendations.

96 In our draft recommendations, we combined Worthington parish and part of Haigh parish with Standish with Langtree. In doing so we also added to Standish with Langtree unparished areas along Rectory Lane and Chorley Road. Councillor Marsh supported this proposal as did two residents of Haigh parish living in the modern housing development on the site of the former Worthington Mill.

97 The Council objected to our proposed inclusion of the two parishes in Standish with Langtree, arguing for their retention in Aspull, New Springs & Whelley ward in terms of community identity. The Council said that 'residents in this rural community have greater ties and tend to associate with the Aspull, New Springs & Whelley ward than with Standish with Langtree'. Haigh Parish Council also objected in respect of that parish, saying that our splitting the parish between borough wards 'would create

divisions between residents and conflicts of interests between parish councillors'. In responding to the draft recommendations, the Parish Council did not specify whether the parish as a whole should continue to be represented in Aspull, New Springs & Whelley ward or Standish with Langtree ward.

98 We do not consider that inclusion of the whole of Haigh parish in Standish with Langtree ward would reflect community identities throughout the parish and therefore recommend that the parish continue to form part of Aspull, New Springs & Whelley ward. Including the whole of Worthington parish in our Standish with Langtree ward would result in a variance from the borough average of 12% by 2027. We further consider that to separate Worthington from Haigh parish would mean that we would split representation of the Worthington Mill development, which we consider would not be conducive to effective and convenient local government.

99 We therefore recommend that Worthington parish remain with Haigh parish as part of Aspull, New Springs & Whelley ward. An effect of this is to avoid a high degree of electoral inequality in which there would, otherwise, be 14% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average in that ward by 2027.

100 Six residents of Standish with Langtree ward objected to parts of that ward being included in our Shevington with Lower Ground & Moor ward whilst one resident supported our proposal, having regard to the degree of housebuilding in the Standish area. Having resolved to include Boars Head in our Standish with Langtree ward, that ward would have 15% more electors per councillor than the average for the borough by 2027 were we to fail to include parts of the current ward in Shevington with Lower Ground & Moor ward. We do not consider that such a degree of electoral inequality is desirable or justified by the evidence we have received.

101 We therefore are modifying our draft recommendations in order to provide good electoral equality in both Standish with Langtree and Shevington with Lower Ground & Moor wards and a distinct boundary between them. By 2027, our Standish with Langtree and Shevington with Lower Ground & Moor wards will have 9% and 4% more electors per councillor, respectively, than the average for the borough.

Conclusions

102 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality in Wigan, 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	75	75
Number of electoral wards	25	25
Average number of electors per councillor	3,248	3,322
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	1	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Final recommendations

Wigan Council should be made up of 75 councillors representing 25 three-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for Wigan.

You can also view our final recommendations for Wigan Council on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

What happens next?

103 We have now completed our review of Wigan 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

104 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 Wigan Council

	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	Abram	3	10,351	3,450	6%	10,509	3,503	5%
2	Ashton-in-Makerfield South	3	9,000	3,000	-8%	9,251	3,084	-7%
3	Aspull, New Springs & Whelley	3	9,402	3,134	-4%	9,650	3,217	-3%
4	Astley	3	10,862	3,621	11%	11,042	3,681	11%
5	Atherton North	3	10,140	3,380	4%	10,197	3,399	2%
6	Atherton South & Lilford	3	10,519	3,506	8%	10,717	3,572	8%
7	Bryn with Ashton-in-Makerfield North	3	8,949	2,983	-8%	9,198	3,066	-8%
8	Douglas	3	9,773	3,258	0%	9,982	3,327	0%

	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 %
9	Golborne & Lowton West	3	9,050	3,017	-7%	9,204	3,068	-8%
10	Hindley	3	10,159	3,386	4%	10,465	3,488	5%
11	Hindley Green	3	9,104	3,035	-7%	9,244	3,081	-7%
12	Ince	3	9,060	3,020	-7%	9,374	3,125	-6%
13	Leigh Central & Higher Folds	3	9,977	3,326	2%	10,111	3,370	1%
14	Leigh South	3	9,493	3,164	-3%	9,710	3,237	-3%
15	Leigh West	3	10,633	3,544	9%	10,726	3,575	8%
16	Lowton East	3	10,270	3,423	5%	10,492	3,497	5%
17	Orrell	3	9,684	3,228	-1%	9,971	3,324	0%
18	Pemberton	3	9,773	3,258	0%	10,047	3,349	1%
19	Shevington with Lower Ground & Moor	3	10,022	3,341	3%	10,328	3,443	4%

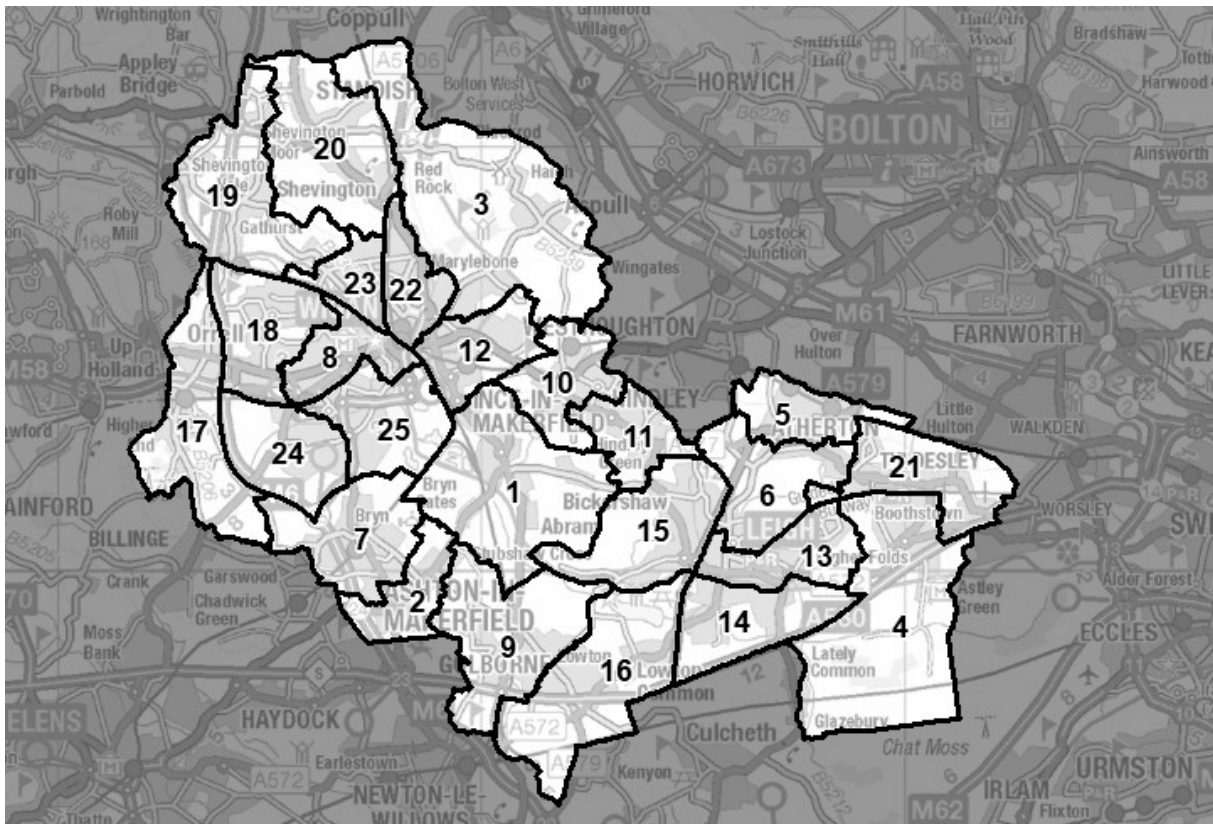
	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2020)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
20	Standish with Langtree	3	10,700	3,567	10%	10,848	3,616	9%
21	Tyldesley & Mosley Common	3	8,984	2,995	-8%	9,449	3,150	-5%
22	Wigan Central	3	9,451	3,150	-3%	9,669	3,223	-3%
23	Wigan West	3	9,788	3,263	0%	9,996	3,332	0%
24	Winstanley	3	9,317	3,106	-4%	9,570	3,190	-4%
25	Worsley Mesnes	3	9,130	3,043	-6%	9,434	3,145	-5%
	Totals	75	243,591	–	–	249,184	–	–
	Averages	–	–	3,248	–	–	3,322	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Wigan 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 borough. 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	Abram
2	Ashton-in-Makerfield South
3	Aspull, New Springs & Whelley
4	Astley
5	Atherton North
6	Atherton South & Lilford
7	Bryn with Ashton-in-Makerfield North
8	Douglas
9	Golborne & Lowton West
10	Hindley
11	Hindley Green
12	Ince
13	Leigh Central & Higher Folds
14	Leigh South
15	Leigh West
16	Lowton East
17	Orrell
18	Pemberton
19	Shevington with Lower Ground & Moor

20	Standish with Langtree
21	Tyldesley & Mosley Common
22	Wigan Central
23	Wigan West
24	Winstanley
25	Worsley Mesnes

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/north-west/greater-manchester/wigan

Appendix C

Submissions received

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

www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/north-west/greater-manchester/wigan

Local Authority

- Wigan Council

Political Groups

- Atherleigh Labour Party
- Wigan & Leigh Local Government Committee, the Labour Party

Councillors

- Councillor S. Gerrard (Wigan Council)
- Councillor A. Marsh (Wigan Council)
- Councillor G. Merrett (Wigan Council)
- Councillor M. Winstanley (Wigan Council)

Members of Parliament

- James Grundy MP (Leigh)

Local Organisations

- The Ashton and District Linen and Woollen Stock Charity

Parish and Town Councils

- Haigh Parish Council

Local Residents

- 121 local residents

Anonymous

- One anonymous submission

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

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

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

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

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