

# New electoral arrangements for Wokingham Council Final Recommendations

July 2023

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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.<sup>1</sup> 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
- Amanda Nobbs OBE
- Steve Robinson
- Liz Treacy
- 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

## Why Wokingham?

7 We are conducting a review of Wokingham Borough 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 Wokingham 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 Wokingham

9 Wokingham should be represented by 54 councillors, the same number as there are now.

10 Wokingham should have 18 wards, seven fewer than there are now.

11 The boundaries of 22 wards should change; three will stay the same.

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

## 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 taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums and we are not able to consider any representations which are based on these issues.

## Review timetable

15 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Wokingham. 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
23 August 2022	Number of councillors decided
30 August 2022	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
7 November 2022	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
31 January 2023	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
10 April 2023	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
4 July 2023	Publication of final recommendations





## Analysis and final recommendations

17 Legislation<sup>2</sup> states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors<sup>3</sup> 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.

	2021	2028
Electorate of Wokingham	130,690	132,562
Number of councillors	54	54
Average number of electors per councillor	2,420	2,455

20 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having 'good electoral equality'. All of our proposed wards for Wokingham are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

### 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](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

### Electorate figures

22 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2028, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2023. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 1% by 2028.

23 In response to the warding patterns consultation, Wokingham Without Parish Council expressed concern that the forecasts did not consider developments that are expected to occur after 2028. A number of residents also expressed concerns that

<sup>2</sup> Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

the forecasts in various parts of the borough do not take into account all the expected development. One resident expressed concern that the electorate in EFW polling district is forecast to decline by 253 between 2021 and 2028. We noted the concerns about developments beyond 2028, but under the legislation we must only have regard for developments forecast to be completed and occupied five years from the end of the review. Therefore, we cannot consider developments beyond this.

24 We noted the concerns about EFW polling district and queried this with the Council who believe an issue had arisen around the volatile levels of voter registrations in the area of Reading University Campus that falls within the borough. The Council therefore revisited its projections and concluded that the fall in electorate resulted from the changing levels of registration in the university area and that these had been carried through into its forecasting methodology. It did not consider this an accurate reflection, so revised its forecasts for this area.

25 Having considered the evidence received, we considered the information provided by the Council and are satisfied that the projected figures, subject to the amendment to EFW polling district, are the best available at the present time. We used these figures to produce our draft recommendations.

26 We received no significant new evidence on electorate forecasts and remain satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our final recommendations.

## Number of councillors

27 Wokingham Borough Council currently has 54 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.

28 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 54 councillors. As the Council elects by thirds (meaning it has elections in three out of every four years) there is a presumption in legislation<sup>4</sup> that it have a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. We will only move away from this pattern of wards should we receive compelling evidence during consultation that an alternative pattern of wards will better reflect our statutory criteria.

29 In response to the warding patterns consultation we received a number of submissions making general comments about the number of councillors. However, there was no significant new evidence. Therefore, we based our draft recommendations on a 54-councillor council.

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<sup>4</sup> Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 2(3)(d) and paragraph 2(5)(c).

30 In response to our draft recommendations we did not receive any significant new comments on council size or the number of councillors per ward. We are therefore basing the final recommendations on a 54-councillor council.

## Ward boundaries consultation

31 We received 146 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries, including two borough-wide proposals. The Council put forward proposals for a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. In a few areas it put forward 'minority proposals' for a mixed pattern of wards. A resident also put forward proposals for a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. A number of their boundaries mirrored the Council's proposals and other wards were broadly similar, except where polling districts were split. However, the resident did not provide specifics on how to divide these areas. On the basis of the similarities with the Council's proposals, and the fact their proposals split the same polling districts, we read their proposals together with the Council's, albeit noting that the resident did propose alternative ward names.

32 A number of respondents put forward proposals that would require changes to the external boundary of the borough. However, we are unable to do this as part of this review. It can only be addressed by a Principal Area Boundary Review, which is a separate process.

33 There were some objections to proposals for a uniform pattern of three-member wards, with some respondents proposing alternative multi-member proposals. However, as stated in paragraph 28, we need compelling evidence to persuade us to move away from a uniform pattern. We did not consider these respondents put forward sufficient evidence to persuade us to move away, particularly in light of well-argued three-member proposals.

34 One resident objected to the division of Twyford parish for parish council elections. However, where a borough ward divides a parish, we are obliged under the legislation to divide the parish into parish wards.

35 Councillor Cowan argued against the current electoral cycle, stating his preference for all-out elections. However, changes to the electoral cycle fall within the Council's powers, so we cannot recommend such changes as part of this review.

36 We received a number of general comments or requests for no change to the existing wards. We also received comments about links to parliamentary boundaries. However, these are considered by a different body under a different review process.

37 Our draft recommendations also took 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. Our draft recommendations were for 18 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

38 We received 62 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included borough-wide comments from the Council. The majority of the other submissions focused on specific areas of the borough, providing a mixture of support and objections. We also received a number of suggestions for alternative ward names.

39 A number of respondents made reference to parliamentary boundaries. However, we cannot change, or take account of, the boundaries of Parliamentary constituencies. These are reviewed under separate legislation by a separate body, the Boundary Commission for England, which has traditionally based its recommendations on the ward boundaries put in place as a result of electoral reviews we undertake. A number of respondents also put forward changes that would require changes to parish boundaries. These would be best addressed as part of a Community Governance Review. This is a separate process to this review, with the powers lying with Wokingham Borough Council.

## Final recommendations

40 Our final recommendations are for 18 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.

41 Our final recommendations are based on the draft recommendations, subject to a number of name changes.

42 The tables and maps on pages 10–22 detail our final recommendations for each area of Wokingham. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory<sup>5</sup> criteria of:

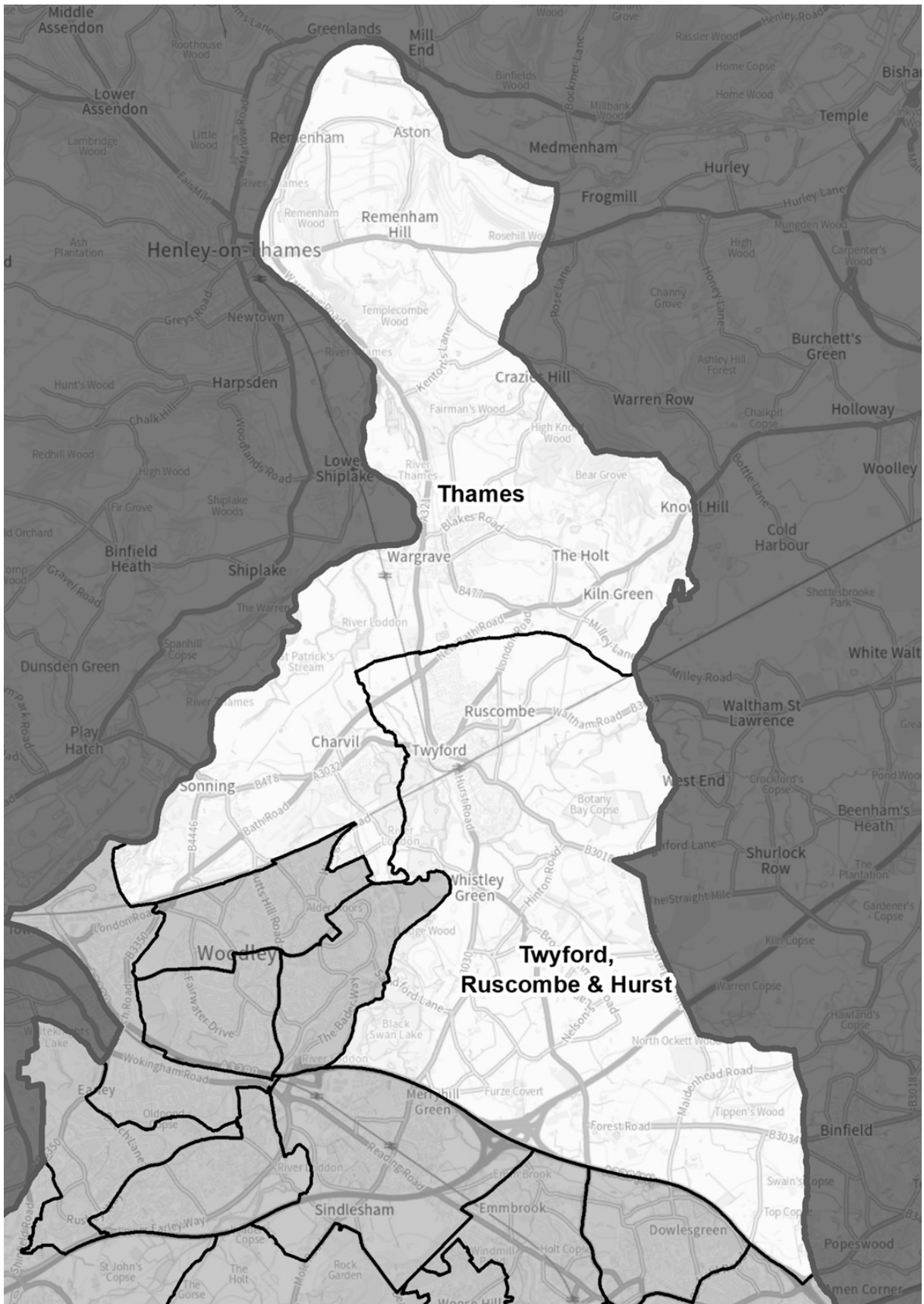
- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

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<sup>5</sup> Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

43 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 29 and on the large map accompanying this report.

# North



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Thames	3	-3%
Twyford, Ruscombe & Hurst	3	7%

#### *Thames and Twyford, Ruscombe & Hurst*

44 In response to the draft recommendations we received limited comments on our proposed Northern ward, with only name changes suggested. The Council proposed naming the ward Thames ward. A resident suggested Thames-Side ward, arguing that consideration should be given to the fact there is a Thames ward in neighbouring Reading district.

45 We received a mixture of support and objections for our proposed Twyford & Hurst ward. A number of respondents objected to the inclusion of Ruscombe and St Nicholas Hurst parishes in a ward with Twyford parish, arguing for the retention of a mixed-member warding pattern. A number of others supported this, while others made no comment on the composition of the ward, but did suggest changing the name. The Council stated that the majority view supported the proposed three-councillor Twyford & Hurst ward, while there was a minority view in favour of retaining a mixed pattern. No new evidence was provided to support this position. The Council, along with Ruscombe Parish Council and a number of residents, argued that Ruscombe should be included in the proposed ward name, suggesting Twyford, Ruscombe & Hurst.

46 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note that there were no significant comments about our proposed Northern ward, with the exception of the name. We are therefore confirming the boundaries as final. We note there was some support for including Thames in the ward name, and note that the west boundary of the ward abuts the River Thames. We note the argument that there is a 'Thames ward' in neighbouring Reading, but we do not consider this precludes a Thames ward in Wokingham.

47 We note the mixture of support and objections to our Twyford & Hurst ward, but do not consider there to be significant and compelling new evidence to persuade us to move away from the proposed boundaries. However, we do note that there was more consensus about including 'Ruscombe' in the ward name. We are therefore renaming our Twyford & Hurst ward as Twyford, Ruscombe & Hurst ward.

48 Our final recommendations are for three-councillor Thames and Twyford, Ruscombe & Hurst wards, with 3% fewer and 7% more electors than the borough average by 2028.

## Earley and Woodley



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Bulmershe & Coronation	3	-9%
Hawkedon	3	5%
Hillside	3	-1%
Loddon	3	-9%
Maiden Erlegh & Whitegates	3	9%
South Lake	3	-2%



### *Bulmershe & Coronation, Loddon and South Lake*

49 In response to the draft recommendations we received general support for these wards, although a number of respondents proposed name changes. The Council expressed support for the draft recommendation, but stated that our proposed three-councillor North Woodley, East Woodley and South Woodley wards should be renamed as Bulmershe & Coronation, Loddon and South Lake, respectively. A resident also supported the retention of the existing Loddon ward name, stating that the draft names ‘lack imagination’ and that it is better to use locally recognised names, rather than compass point names. Another resident expressed support for the inclusion of compass points in names, but argued they should be a suffix, rather than prefix – for example supporting Woodley East, rather than East Woodley. Woodley Town Council expressed general support for the draft proposals.

50 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received, noting the general support for the proposed ward boundaries in Woodley. We have considered the different comments on the proposed names. While we note that there is some support for retaining names with compass point references, albeit it in a different format, we also note the objections. We find the evidence of names that reflect locally recognised areas compelling and note that this argument is used elsewhere in the borough, as well as our draft proposals for the Wokingham Town area, where we have used local names. We are therefore persuaded to adopt the Council’s proposed names, noting that these also reflect names of existing wards.

51 Our final recommendations are for three-councillor Bulmershe & Coronation, Loddon and South Lake wards with 9% fewer, 9% fewer and 2% fewer electors than the borough average by 2028, respectively.

### *Hawkedon, Hillside and Maiden Erlegh & Whitegates*

52 In response to the draft recommendations we received a mixture of support and objections to our draft recommendation for this area, with a number of respondents proposing name changes. The Council expressed general support for the draft recommendations, including the inclusion of the Ryhill Way area of Shinfield parish. It also recommended renaming North Earley, South East Earley and South West Earley wards as Maiden Erlegh & Whitegates, Hawkedon and Hillside, respectively. Earley Town Council put forward comments on the parish wards, but not the district wards.

53 Earley & Shinfield Liberal Democrats proposed including all the odd-numbered properties on Beech Lane and Dene Close in South East Earley ward, rather than North Earley ward. They also proposed renaming all the wards so that the compass point part of the name is a suffix, rather than prefix – for example Earley North, rather than North Earley.

54 A number of residents expressed support for the inclusion of Ryhill Way in an Earley ward, while one resident said that the existing parish boundaries should be respected. Shinfield Parish Council expressed support for the draft recommendations. A resident objected to the inclusion of the Sellafield Way to Markby Way area in our proposed South West Earley ward, arguing this would be better placed in the North Earley or South East Earley ward. A number of residents expressed concern about the loss of Maiden Erlegh ward.

55 We received a range of comments on the proposed ward names. A number of respondents objected to using names with compass point references, favouring 'traditional' names. Other respondents supported the compass point references, but argued that they should be a suffix, rather than prefix – for example Earley North, rather than North Earley. A resident and the Council supported renaming South East Earley and South West Earley wards as Hawkedon and Hillside wards, respectively. They did not agree on the name for North Earley, with the Council suggesting Maiden Erlegh & Whitegates, while the resident suggested Sol Joel or Earley Crossroads.

56 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received, noting the support for the draft recommendations. We note that there was some objection to the inclusion of the Ryhill Way area of Shinfield parish in an Earley ward, but there was also support for this arrangement. We remain of the view that this area, which has no direct access into Shinfield parish, is best served in an Earley ward. We also note the amendment put forward by Earley & Shinfield Liberal Democrats. While this provides a marginal improvement to electoral equality, the Group did not provide any compelling evidence to support this amendment. In addition, there was no other support for this change and we note that it moves away from the clear boundary of Beech Lane. Therefore, we are not adopting this amendment.

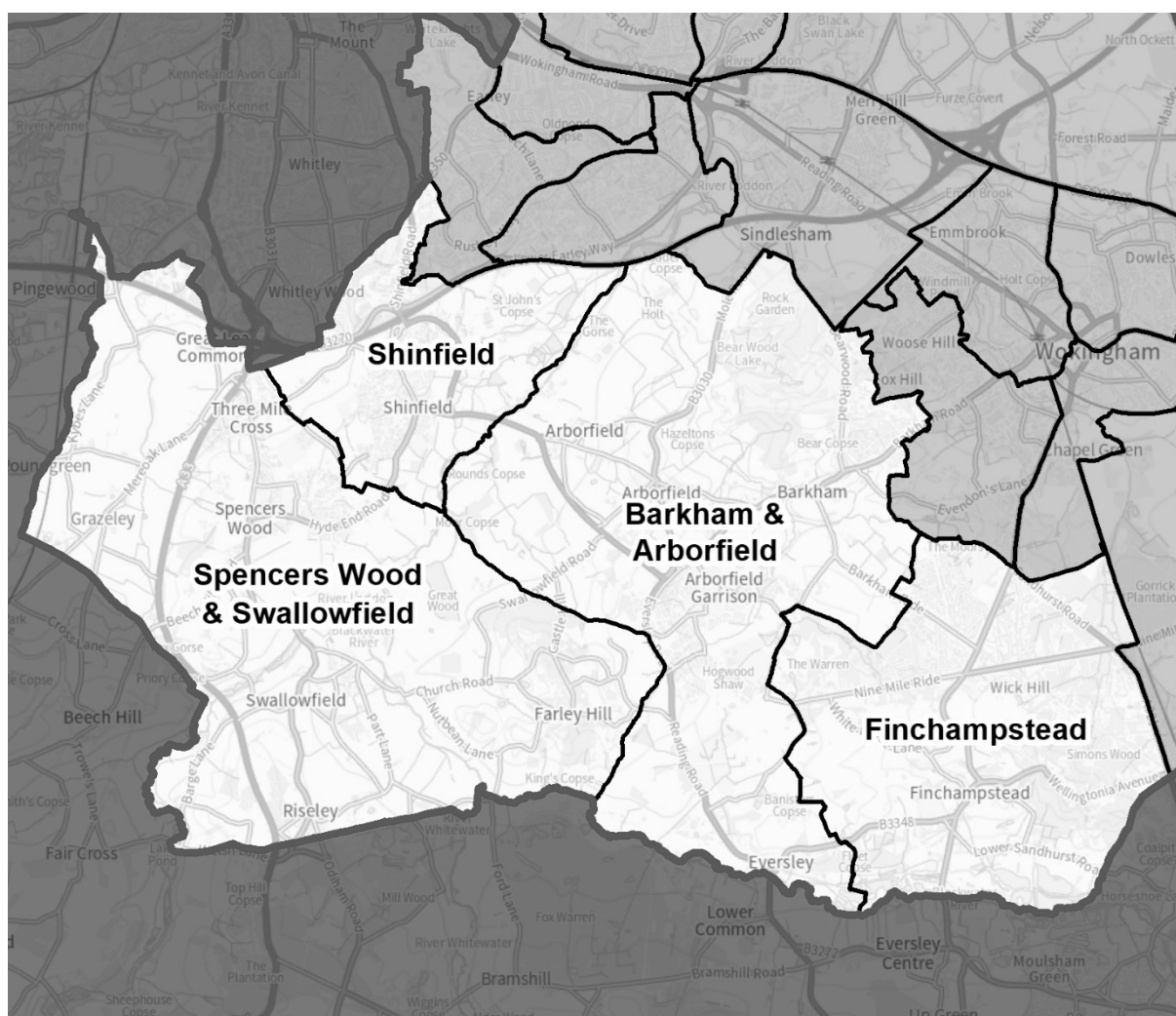
57 We also note the resident's objection to the inclusion of the Sellafield Way to Markby Way area in our proposed South West Earley ward. However, this area cannot be placed in either of the suggested wards without significantly worsening electoral equality in the neighbouring wards. Therefore, we are not adopting this amendment.

58 Finally, we note the comments on ward names. We note that some respondents were happy with the use of compass points in the name, albeit as suffix rather than a prefix. Others favoured more local names. On balance, as with Woodley (discussed above), we are more persuaded by retaining local names. We note that there was agreement for renaming South East Earley and South West Earley wards as Hawkedon and Hillside wards. We are therefore adopting these names. We note that there was not agreement on an alternative name for North Earley. However, we are persuaded by the Council's proposals, noting that the

Maiden Erlegh & Whitegates name reflects concerns from some residents about the loss of Maiden Erlegh. We are therefore adopting the Council's proposed name.

59 Our final recommendations are for three-councillor Hawkedon, Hillside and Maiden Erlegh & Whitegates wards with 5% more, 1% fewer and 9% more electors than the borough average by 2028, respectively.

## South



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Barkham & Arborfield	3	8%
Finchampstead	3	8%
Shinfield	3	-9%
Spencers Wood & Swallowfield	3	3%

### *Barkham & Arborfield and Finchampstead*

60 In response to our draft recommendations for this area we received a mixture of support and objections. The Council expressed support for the draft recommendations. Barkham Parish Council expressed support for Arborfield with Barkham ward, but argued that it should be renamed Barkham & Arborfield. It objected to the use of 'with', arguing this is not consistent with naming of other wards. The Parish Council also argued that Barkham contains the majority of electors, which should be reflected in the ward name.

61 Finchampstead Parish Council expressed support for the draft recommendations, but objected to reference to 'Eversley', arguing this lies in neighbouring Hampshire. A resident objected to the inclusion of the Soldiers Rise area of Finchampstead parish in Wokingham Without ward, arguing its links are into Finchampstead.

62 A resident expressed support for the draft recommendations for the Barkham area. Another resident supported the inclusion of the whole of the Arborfield Garrison development in a single ward, but objected to other elements of the boundary between Arborfield with Barkham ward and the neighbouring wards. They put forward alternative boundaries. They rejected our argument that the 'Eversley area' (the area around the junction of Reading Road and Fleet Hill) of Finchampstead parish has better links to Arborfield with Barkham, arguing this should be retained in Finchampstead ward. They also objected to the boundary between Arborfield with Barkham and Finchampstead wards, arguing it cuts through fields.

63 Another resident argued that the Arborfield with Barkham ward combines an 'odd mix' of residential areas and suggested that the Arborfield Garrison development should be in a separate ward. However, if this was rejected and the draft recommendations retained, they argued the ward should be renamed Barkham & Arborfield, reflecting the relative populations of the parishes in the ward. Another resident argued for a small amendment between Arborfield with Barkham and Finchampstead wards. However, this change would require the creation of an unviable parish ward.

64 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received, noting a mixture of support and objections, particularly to the boundaries of the Arborfield with Barkham ward, as well as concerns about the name. We note that various amendments have been suggested, many with limited supporting evidence and a lack of wider support.

65 We have considered the proposals for retaining the 'Eversley area' (the area around the junction of Reading Road and Fleet Hill) in Finchampstead ward. However, this would worsen electoral equality in Finchampstead ward to 13% more electors than the borough average by 2028. We do not consider there to be sufficiently compelling evidence to justify this worsening of electoral equality. We also note the concerns about the proposed boundary between these wards as it cuts through fields, but in light of the general support for this boundary and a lack of specific alternatives, we do not propose changing it within our final recommendations.

66 We also note the suggestion from another resident that the Arborfield Garrison development should be separated from the Arborfield with Barkham ward. However,

this would require us to move away from the three-councillor pattern and, in our view, there is not sufficient evidence to justify this departure.

67 We note the comments from a resident about transferring the Soldiers Rise area in Finchampstead parish back to Finchampstead ward. Transferring this area would worsen electoral equality in Wokingham Without ward to 10% fewer electors than the borough average by 2028. In addition, it would not address the concerns discussed in the draft recommendations about the rest of this parish ward and its links to Finchampstead – transferring all of this to Finchampstead ward would worsen electoral equality in Wokingham Without ward to 19% fewer. Therefore, given these concerns and the lack of other support, we are not adopting this amendment.

68 Finally, we note the comments about the name of the proposed Arborfield with Barkham ward. Although there was some support for our proposal, we note the argument that Barkham is the larger parish and that using ‘with’ is not consistent with other wards. We therefore propose renaming Arborfield with Barkham ward as Barkham & Arborfield.

69 Our final recommendations are for three-councillor Barkham & Arborfield and Finchampstead wards, each with 8% more electors than the borough average by 2028.

#### *Shinfield and Spencers Wood & Swallowfield*

70 In response to our draft recommendations for this area we received general support, with a number of localised objections. The Council said it could not reach a consensus view on the draft recommendations, but that there was support for the inclusion of the Ryeish Green area in our Southern ward. It also stated that Southern ward should be renamed Spencers Wood & Swallowfield. A resident argued that Shinfield and Southern wards should be renamed as Shinfield East and Shinfield West & Swallowfield wards, respectively.

71 As discussed in the Earley and Woodley section, a number of residents expressed support for the inclusion of Ryhill Way in an Earley ward, while one resident said that the existing parish boundaries should be respected. Shinfield Parish Council expressed support for the draft recommendations.

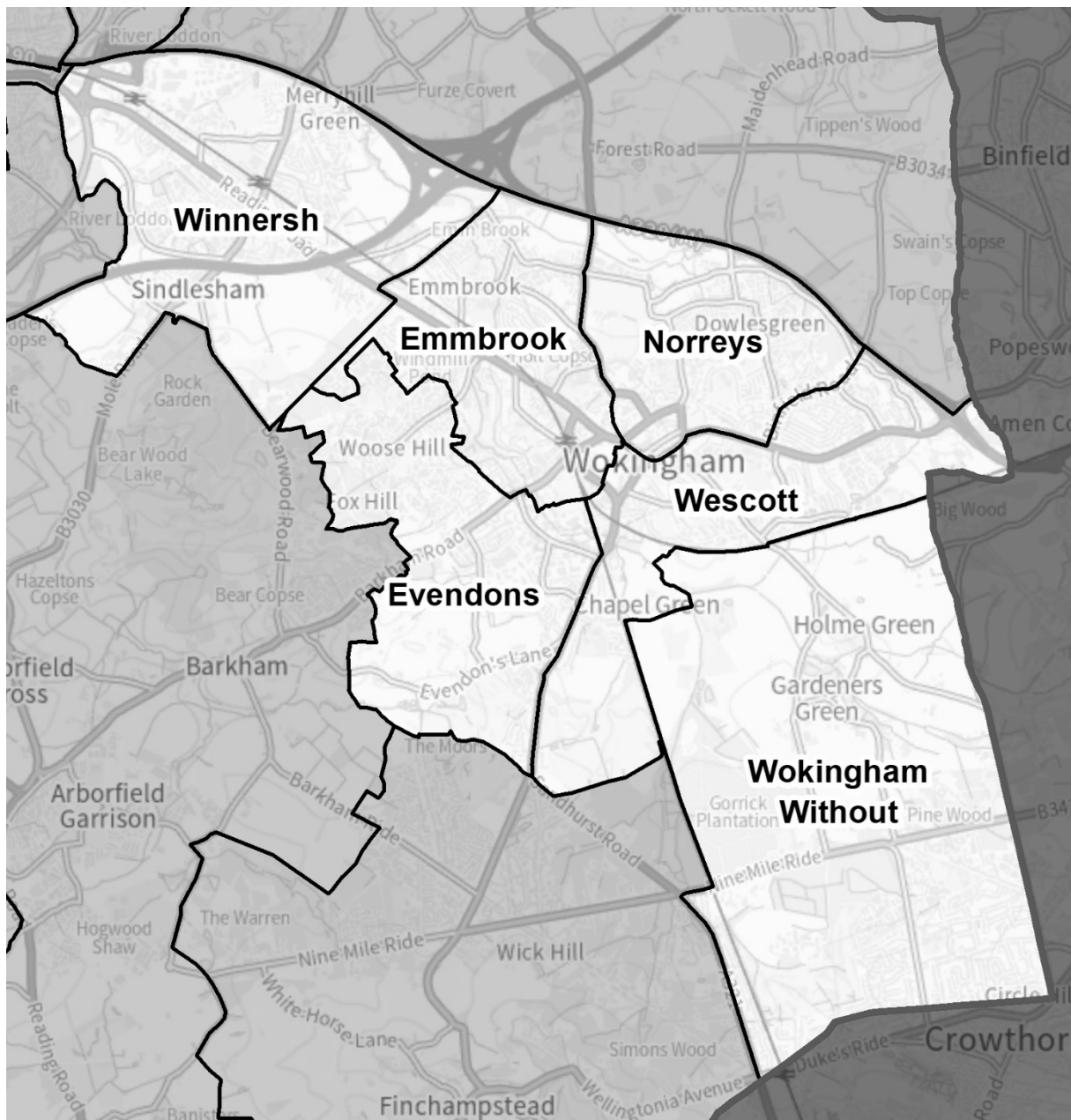
72 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received, noting the support for the draft recommendations. We note that there was some objection to the inclusion of the Ryhill Way area of Shinfield parish in an Earley ward, but there was also support for this arrangement. We remain of the view that this area, which has no direct access into Shinfield parish, is best served in an Earley ward. We therefore do

not propose any changes to the ward boundaries in this area.

73 We note the suggestion that Southern ward should be renamed and also the proposal from a resident to rename Shinfield ward. We note that both respondents proposed including Swallowfield, but disagreed on whether the remaining area should reference the part of Shinfield parish, or rather the name of its key settlement. We note that the resident's proposals also renames Shinfield ward. On balance, we are persuaded that the Council's proposals provide more localised names. The use of Shinfield East and Shinfield West as names may suggest, in our view, that the village of Shinfield is divided, rather than the parish. We are therefore adopting the name Spencers Wood & Swallowfield, while retaining Shinfield ward.

74 Our final recommendations are for three-councillor Shinfield and Spencers Wood & Swallowfield wards. These would have 9% fewer and 3% more electors than the borough average by 2028, respectively.

## Wokingham, Wokingham Without and Winnersh



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Emmbrook	3	1%
Evendons	3	-1%
Norreys	3	-8%
Wescott	3	3%
Winnersh	3	5%
Wokingham Without	3	-9%



### *Emmbrook, Evendons, Norreys and Wescott*

75 In response to our draft recommendations for this area we received general support, with a number of localised objections. The Council expressed support for the draft recommendations. Wokingham Town Council put forward comments on the parish wards. A number of local residents expressed general support for the draft recommendations. Parish Councillor Gee proposed an amendment between Embrook and Westcott wards, arguing the boundary through Earle Crescent 'makes no sense'. They also proposed transferring an area of Wokingham Without parish that will be subject to development to a Westcott ward, arguing this area will look towards the town for services. Finally, they proposed a change to the boundary between Wescott ward and Finchampstead ward. A resident proposed adding Wokingham as a prefix to the proposed wards for the Wokingham parish area.

76 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received, noting the general support for the draft recommendations. We note the comments from Parish Councillor Gee. We are not persuaded that their revised boundary between Embrook and Westcott wards is clearer than the draft recommendations. Given the lack of other support for this change, we are not adopting it. We also note their proposals to transfer part of Wokingham Without parish to Wescott ward and part of Wokingham parish to Finchampstead ward. However, both proposals would require the creation of small parish wards in Wokingham Without and Wokingham parishes. Given this, and the lack of other supporting evidence, we are not persuaded to adopt these changes.

77 Finally, we note the suggestion from a resident that Wokingham should be used as a suffix for the ward names, but there is no other evidence to support this. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations as final.

78 Our final recommendations are for three-councillor Emmbrook, Evendons, Norreys and Wescott wards. These wards would have 1% more, 1% fewer, 8% fewer and 3% more electors than the borough average by 2028, respectively.

### *Winnersh*

79 In response to the draft recommendations we received general support for this ward, including from the Council and Winnersh Parish Council. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendation for a three-councillor Winnersh ward as final. Our three-councillor Winnersh ward would have 5% more electors than the borough average by 2028.

### *Wokingham Without*

80 In response to the draft recommendations we received general support for this ward, including from the Council. However, as discussed in the South section (above), a resident objected to the inclusion of the Soldiers Rise area of

Finchampstead parish in Wokingham Without ward, arguing its links are into Finchampstead.

81 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received, noting the general support for the draft recommendations. We note the comments from a resident about transferring the Soldiers Rise area in Finchampstead parish back to Finchampstead ward. However, transferring this area would worsen electoral equality in Wokingham Without ward to 10% fewer electors than the borough average by 2028. In addition, it would not address the concerns discussed in the draft recommendations about the rest of this parish ward and its links to Finchampstead – transferring all of this to Finchampstead ward would worsen electoral equality in Wokingham Without ward to 19% fewer. Therefore, given these concerns and the lack of other support, we are not adopting this amendment.

82 We are confirming our draft recommendations for Wokingham Without as final. Our three-councillor Wokingham Without ward would have 9% fewer electors than the borough average by 2028.

## Conclusions

83 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality in Wokingham, referencing the 2021 and 2028 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	
	2021	2028
Number of councillors	54	54
Number of electoral wards	18	18
Average number of electors per councillor	2,420	2,455
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	5	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

#### Final recommendations

Wokingham Borough Council should be made up of 54 councillors serving 18 three-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

#### Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for Wokingham Borough Council. You can also view our final recommendations for Wokingham Borough Council on our interactive maps at [www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk)

### Parish electoral arrangements

39 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.

40 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, Wokingham Borough 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.

84 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 Earley, Finchampstead, Shinfield, Swallowfield, Wokingham and Woodley parishes.

85 In response to the draft recommendations, Earley Town Council requested that Redhatch parish ward is combined with Maiden Erlegh parish ward, while Egremont parish ward is combined with Radstock parish ward. It argued that it wanted to avoid single-councillor parish wards. We are adopting these amendments and providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Earley parish.

#### Final recommendations

Earley Town Council should comprise 25 councillors, as at present, representing seven wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Cutbush	4
Hawkedon	4
Hillside	3
Maiden Erlegh	3
Radstock	5
St Nicolas	2
Whitegates	4

86 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Finchampstead parish.

#### Final recommendations

Finchampstead Parish Council should comprise 17 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Finchampstead North	7
Finchampstead South	6
Finchampstead West	3
Lower Wokingham	1

87 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Shinfield parish.

#### Final recommendations

Shinfield Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing six wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Grazeley	2
Shinfield North	2
Shinfield North East	1
Shinfield Village	5
Spencers Wood & Three Mile Cross	4
Spencers Wood South	1

88 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Swallowfield parish.

#### Final recommendations

Swallowfield Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
East	1
West	8

89 In response to the draft recommendations, Wokingham Town Council requested that Norreys East parish ward is renamed as Wescott North parish ward, while Norreys Central parish ward is renamed Norreys East parish ward. We are adopting these amendments and providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Wokingham parish.

#### Final recommendations

Wokingham Town Council should comprise 25 councillors, as at present, representing nine wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Emmbrook North	3
Emmbrook South	3
Evendons East	3
Evendons West	4
Norreys East	2
Norreys West	4
Wescott North	2
Wescott East	2
Wescott West	2

90 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Woodley parish.

#### Final recommendations

Woodley Town Council should comprise 25 councillors, as at present, representing 10 wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Bulmershe East	2
Bulmershe West	2
Coronation Central	1
Coronation East	3
Loddon Airfield	5
Loddon South	3
Loddon West	2
South Lake North	2
South Lake South	3
Warren	2

## What happens next?

44 We have now completed our review of Wokingham Borough 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 2024.





## Equalities

45 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 Wokingham Borough Council

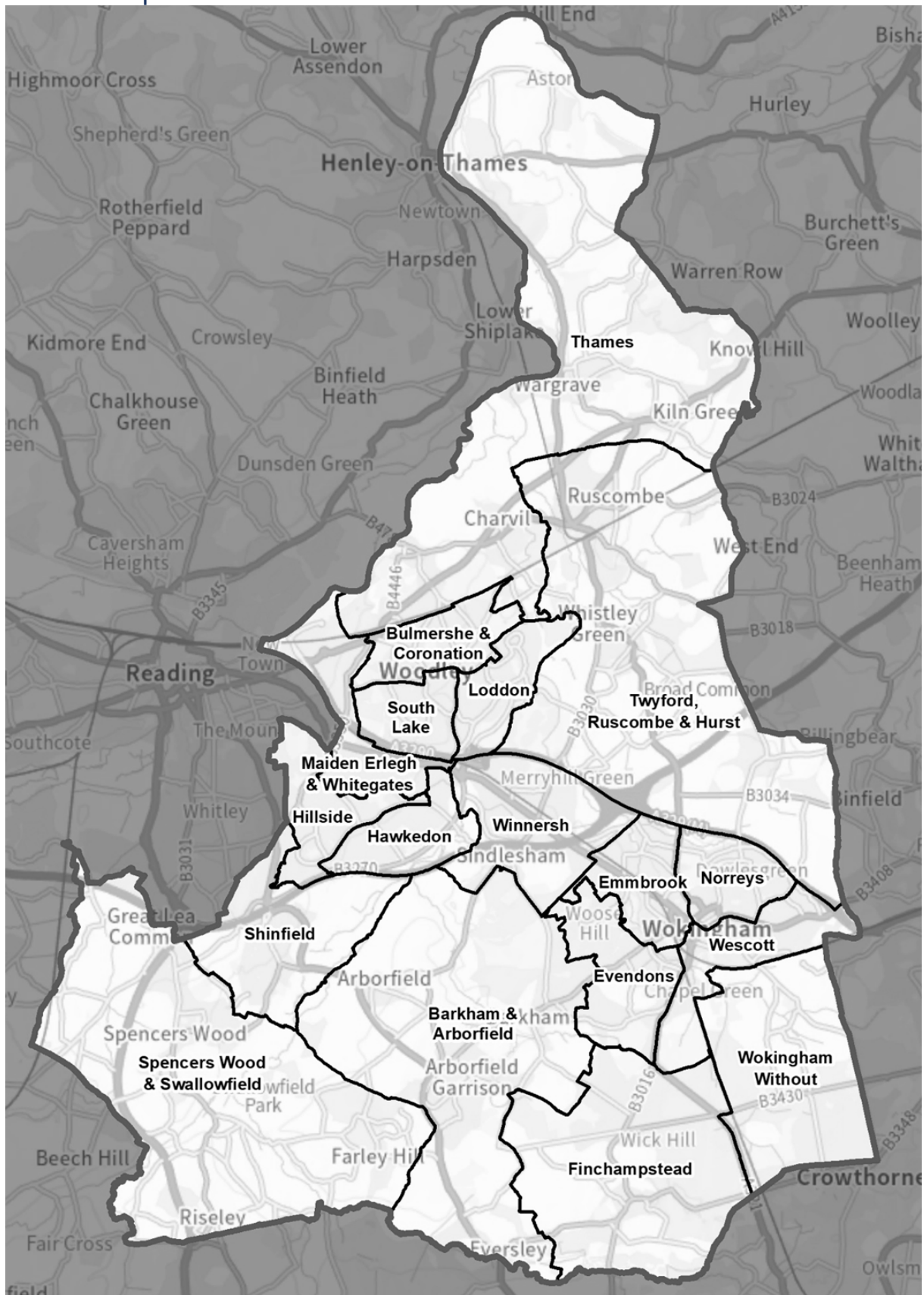
	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2028)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Barkham & Arborfield	3	6,384	2,128	-12%	7,935	2,645	8%
2	Bulmershe & Coronation	3	7,199	2,400	-1%	6,711	2,237	-9%
3	Emmbrook	3	7,388	2,463	2%	7,455	2,485	1%
4	Evendons	3	7,162	2,387	-1%	7,315	2,438	-1%
5	Finchampstead	3	8,152	2,717	12%	7,971	2,657	8%
6	Hawkedon	3	7,865	2,622	8%	7,768	2,589	5%
7	Hillside	3	7,481	2,494	3%	7,297	2,432	-1%
8	Loddon	3	6,729	2,243	-7%	6,717	2,239	-9%
9	Maiden Erlegh & Whitegates	3	8,256	2,752	14%	8,063	2,688	9%
10	Norreys	3	6,543	2,181	-10%	6,747	2,249	-8%
11	Shinfield	3	6,049	2,016	-17%	6,731	2,244	-9%
12	South Lake	3	7,485	2,495	3%	7,182	2,394	-2%

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2028)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13 Spencers Wood & Swallowfield	3	7,381	2,460	2%	7,550	2,517	3%
14 Thames	3	7,170	2,390	-1%	7,122	2,374	-3%
15 Twyford, Ruscombe & Hurst	3	7,794	2,598	7%	7,902	2,634	7%
16 Wescott	3	7,383	2,461	2%	7,619	2,540	3%
17 Winnersh	3	7,867	2,622	8%	7,756	2,585	5%
18 Wokingham Without	3	6,400	2,133	-12%	6,721	2,240	-9%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>130,690</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>132,562</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>2,420</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>2,455</b>	<b>–</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Wokingham Borough 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



A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the large map accompanying this report, or on our website: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/wokingham>

## Appendix C

### Submissions received

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

<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/wokingham>

#### *Local Authority*

- Wokingham Borough Council

#### *Political Groups*

- Earley & Shinfield Liberal Democrats

#### *Councillors*

- Councillor M. Gee (Wokingham Town Council)

#### *Parish and Town Councils*

- Barkham Parish Council
- Earley Town Council
- Finchampstead Parish Council
- Ruscombe Parish Council
- Shinfield Parish Council
- Winnersh Parish Council
- Woodley Town Council
- Wokingham Town Council

#### *Local Residents*

- 51 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 <a href="http://www.nalc.gov.uk">www.nalc.gov.uk</a>
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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