

# Contents

Summary	1
1 Introduction	3
2 Analysis and final recommendations	5
Submissions received	5
Electorate figures	6
Council size	6
Electoral fairness	7
General analysis	8
Electoral arrangements	8
Tonbridge	8
Central Tonbridge & Malling	9
North East Tonbridge & Malling	11
Conclusions	14
Parish electoral arrangements	15
3 What happens next?	17
4 Mapping	18
Appendices	
A Glossary and abbreviations	19
B Table B1: Final recommendations for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council	23



# Summary

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body that conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. The broad purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors, and the names, number and boundaries of wards or divisions – for a specific local authority. We are conducting an electoral review of Tonbridge & Malling to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the authority.

The review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. The Commission commenced the review in July 2011.

This review was conducted in four stages:

<b>Stage starts</b>	<b>Description</b>
13 December 2011	Information gathering – Council invited to submit proposals for warding arrangements to LGBCE
9 February 2012	LGBCE’s analysis and formulation of draft recommendations
17 April 2012	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
26 June 2012	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

## Draft recommendations

We proposed a council size of 53 members, comprising a pattern of one single-member, 17 two-member and six three-member wards. The recommendations were broadly based on Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council’s scheme. Our draft recommendations for Tonbridge & Malling sought to reflect the evidence of community identities received while ensuring good electoral equality and providing for effective and convenient local government.

## Submissions received

During Stage Three, the Commission received 78 submissions, including one from Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, one from Tracey Crouch MP (Chatham & Aylesford), two from local political groups, 19 from local councillors, 19 from parish and town councils, two from local organisations and 34 from members of the public. All submissions can be viewed on our website: [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

## Analysis and final recommendations

### Electorate figures

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2018, a period six years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2012. These forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 8.5% over this period.

We originally noted that a figure of 8.5% represented substantial growth over the period to 2018. We also noted the initial lack of evidence relating to the timing of two developments in particular, those at Peters Village and Preston Hall. We therefore discounted these developments from our draft recommendations.

We have since received further representations from the Council, the developers involved in both developments and members of the public which provide further evidence. We are persuaded that these developments are likely to be realised by 2018. We have therefore decided to accept the electorate figures provided by the Council, and our final recommendations are based on the forecast increase in the electorate of approximately 8.5% over the period to 2018.

## General analysis

Throughout the review process, the primary consideration has been to achieve good electoral equality, while seeking to reflect community identities and securing effective and convenient local government. Having considered the submissions received during Stage Three, we have sought to reflect community identities and improve the levels of electoral fairness. Our final recommendations take account of submissions received during Stage Three. As a result, we have proposed amendments to ward boundaries in the south of the borough, to the Medway and Castle wards; in the rural centre of the borough, in Addington, Ryarsh and Wateringbury; and in the north-east of the borough, in Aylesford, Ditton, Leybourne, Snodland and Larkfield.

Our final recommendations for Tonbridge & Malling are that the Council should have 54 members, with one single-member ward, 16 two-member wards and seven three-member wards. One of the wards would have an electoral variance of greater than 10% by 2018.

## What happens next?

We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament and will be implemented subject to Parliamentary scrutiny. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements which will come into force at the next elections for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, in 2015.

We are grateful to all those organisations and individuals who have contributed to the review through expressing their views and advice. The full report is available to download at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

**You can also view our final recommendations for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council on our interactive maps at [consultation.lgbce.org.uk](http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk)**

# 1 Introduction

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. This electoral review is being conducted following our decision to review Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's electoral arrangements to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the authority.

2 The submission received from Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council during the information gathering stage of this review informed our *Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council*, which were published on 17 April 2012. We then undertook a further period of consultation which ended on 25 June 2012.

## What is an electoral review?

3 The main aim of an electoral review is to try to ensure 'electoral equality', which means that all councillors in a single authority represent approximately the same number of electors. Our objective is to make recommendations that will improve electoral equality, while also trying to reflect communities in the area and provide for effective and convenient local government.

4 Our three main considerations – equalising the number of electors each councillor represents; reflecting community identity; and providing for effective and convenient local government – are set out in legislation<sup>1</sup> and our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

## Why are we conducting a review in Tonbridge & Malling?

5 We decided to conduct this review because based on the December 2010 electorate figures, 38% of the wards in the borough have 10% more or fewer electors per councillor than the borough average. One ward, Kings Hill, also has 46% more electors per councillor than the borough average.

## How will our recommendations affect you?

6 Our recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the council. They will also determine which electoral ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward and, in some instances, which parish ward you vote in. Your electoral ward name may change, as may the names of parish wards in the area. If you live in a parish, the name or boundaries of that parish will not change.

---

<sup>1</sup> Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

## What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

7 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Members of the Commission are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)  
Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)  
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL  
Sir Tony Redmond  
Dr Colin Sinclair CBE  
Professor Paul Wiles CB

Chief Executive: Alan Cogbill  
Director of Reviews: Archie Gall

## 2 Analysis and final recommendations

8 We have now finalised our recommendations for the electoral arrangements for Tonbridge & Malling.

9 As described earlier, our prime aim when recommending new electoral arrangements for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council is to achieve a level of electoral fairness – that is, each elector’s vote being worth the same as another’s. In doing so we must have regard to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009<sup>2</sup> with the need to:

- secure effective and convenient local government
- provide for equality of representation
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities, in particular
  - the desirability of arriving at boundaries that are easily identifiable
  - the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties

10 Legislation also requires that our recommendations are not based solely on the existing number of electors in an area, but reflect estimated changes in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place over a five-year period from the end of the review. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for the wards we put forward.

11 The achievement of absolute electoral fairness is unlikely to be attainable and there must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach is to keep variances in the number of electors each councillor represents to a minimum. In all our reviews we therefore recommend strongly that, in formulating proposals for us to consider, local authorities and other interested parties should also try to keep variances to a minimum, making adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. We aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral fairness over a five-year period.

12 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council or the external boundaries or names of parish or town councils, or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that our recommendations will have an adverse effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. Our proposals do not take account of parliamentary constituency boundaries and we are not, therefore, able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

### Submissions received

13 Prior to and during the initial stages of the review, members and officers of the Local Government Boundary Commission visited Tonbridge & Malling and met with officers, members and parish councils. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 78 representations during consultation on our draft recommendations, all of which may be inspected at both our offices and those of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council. All representations received can also be viewed on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

---

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

14 We take the evidence received during consultation very seriously and the submissions received were carefully considered before we formulated our final recommendations. Officers from the Commission have also been assisted by officers at Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council who have provided relevant information throughout the review.

## Electorate figures

15 As part of this review, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council ('the Council') submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2018, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 8.5% over the period 2011–18.

16 This included significant growth in the greater Tonbridge and north-eastern Tonbridge & Malling areas, focused on a few large-scale developments. We originally had concerns regarding the developments at Peters Village and Preston Hall, where we felt insufficient supporting evidence relating to the timing of these developments had been provided for us to include them in our electorate figures.

17 During consultation on our draft recommendations, we received submissions regarding development from the Council, the developer of Peters Village (Trenport Investments Ltd), and Wouldham Parish Council. Six borough councillors made submissions specifically relating to one or both of these developments. We met with officers from the Council to discuss the developments.

18 The Council confirmed that some development would be able to begin prior to the bridge connecting the development with the A228 being built. We were informed that a Compulsory Purchase Order enabling the construction of the bridge was being drafted, and that the development has already involved a registered social landlord. Previous delays were partially a result of the need to acquire a River Works Licence and complete Environmental Impact work. We note that the timetable for this work is now more firmly set, and as this addresses our major concerns, we are content to include the 1,128 electors forecast to be located at the development by 2018 in our electorate projections.

19 During consultation on our draft recommendations, we also received further evidence regarding the progress of the Preston Hall development. We have been notified that a planning application to develop the site has been lodged, and that discussions have already taken place between the applicants and the Council's planning department. We are therefore content to include the 338 electors forecast to be located at the development by 2018 in our electorate projections.

20 Based on the evidence received, we are satisfied that these figures, projecting an increase in the electorate of 8.5% over the period 2011–18, are the best available at the present time and these figures form the basis of our final recommendations.

## Council size

21 Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council currently has a council size of 53, elected from three single-member, 19 two-member and four three-member wards. During preliminary discussions on future council size, the Council proposed that this size be retained.



22 The Council provided extensive evidence relating to the representational role of councillors, detailing the work members undertake in the community. The Council argued that the current size of committees is in line with the Council's inclusive approach, and that to reduce council size would compromise this approach and the way committees operate. We carefully considered the evidence received and were minded to agree a council size of 53. We invited the Council to submit warding proposals to us based on that council size.

23 During our information gathering stage, the Council submitted a warding pattern based on a council size of 54. They argued that their scheme provided for electoral equality, maintenance of community identity, and effective and convenient local government across the borough. We considered that insufficient evidence was provided in support of a council size of 54 compared with 53. Therefore, our draft recommendations were based on a council size of 53.

24 During our consultation on draft recommendations, the Council argued again that a council size of 54 would provide for better representation across the borough. We noted that the changes to electorate projections between draft and final recommendations significantly altered the distribution of electors in the north-east of the borough. We investigated possible warding arrangements in the north-east of the borough based on a council size of 53. However, such warding arrangements would create ward boundaries significantly at odds with the evidence of community identity received during consultation, and would have significant knock-on effects across the borough. Given the change in electorate forecasts, we are persuaded that a warding pattern based on a council size of 54 provides a better distribution of elected members across the borough while continuing to reflect the community identities and providing for good electoral equality. We have therefore based our final recommendations on a council size of 54 elected members for the borough.

## Electoral fairness

25 As discussed in the introduction to this report, the prime aim of an electoral review is to achieve electoral fairness within a local authority.

26 Electoral fairness, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. It is expected that our recommendations will provide for electoral fairness, reflect communities in the area, and provide for effective and convenient local government.

27 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor. The borough average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the borough (89,894 in December 2011 and 97,539 by December 2018) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 54 under our final recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our final recommendations is 1,665 in 2011 and 1,806 by 2018.

28 Under our final recommendations, 23 of our proposed 24 wards will have electoral variances of less than 10% from the average for the borough by 2018. We are therefore satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness for Tonbridge & Malling.

## General analysis

29 Prior to formulating our draft recommendations, we received a submission from Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council providing a borough-wide warding pattern.

30 Our draft recommendations for Tonbridge & Malling proposed a council size of 53 members, comprising a pattern of one single-member ward, 17 two-member wards and six three-member wards. Our draft recommendations broadly reflected the Council's proposal, with amendments most notably in the north-east of the borough to better reflect our statutory criteria.

31 During consultation on our draft recommendations, 78 submissions were received, including one from Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, one from Tracey Crouch MP (Chatham & Aylesford), two from local political groups, 19 from local councillors, 19 from parish and town councils, two from local organisations, and 34 from local residents.

32 We have carefully considered all submissions received during consultation on our draft recommendations. In our final recommendations for Tonbridge & Malling, we have sought to address evidence received during consultation and achieve good levels of electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests. Based on the evidence received, we have proposed changes to our draft recommendations across the borough, most notably in the north-east and in the rural centre of the borough.

33 Our final recommendations for Tonbridge & Malling are for 54 councillors representing one single-member ward, 16 two-member wards and seven three-member wards. We consider our recommendations to provide good electoral equality while providing an accurate reflection of community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during consultation. Only one ward would have an electoral variance of more than 10% from the average for the borough by 2018.

34 A summary of our proposed electoral arrangements is set out in Table B1 (on pages 23–5) and Map 1.

## Electoral arrangements

35 This section of the report details our final recommendations for each area of Tonbridge & Malling. The following areas of the authority are considered in turn:

- Tonbridge (pages 8–9)
- Central Tonbridge & Malling (pages 9–11)
- North East Tonbridge & Malling (pages 11–14)

36 Details of the final recommendations are set out in Table B1 on pages 23–5, and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

### Tonbridge

37 Tonbridge comprises the unparished greater Tonbridge area in the south of the borough. It is largely urban, focused around the settlement of Tonbridge, with rural

areas on its northern fringes. The electorate in this area is predicted to grow moderately, with the majority of the growth forecast to occur in the proposed Medway ward.

38 Our draft recommendations were based broadly on the Council's scheme, with some amendments to the boundary of the proposed Medway ward.

39 During consultation on our draft recommendations, we received four submissions relating specifically to the Tonbridge area, as well as the Council's borough-wide submission.

40 Councillors Davis and N.J Heslop (Cage Green ward) and Councillors M.F Heslop and Spence (Vauxhall ward) supported our proposed boundaries for Tonbridge in their entirety. A local resident suggested that boundaries be amended to over-represent Tonbridge due to it not having a parish council. However, we do not have regard to the presence of a parish council when determining the overall representation of a given area at borough council level.

41 Councillor Bolt (Judd ward) objected to our proposed boundary between Judd and Castle wards, arguing that internal ward access should not be a relevant factor in determining the boundary between Judd and Castle wards. This argument was also made in the Council's submission. We maintain that a ward in which all parts of the ward can be accessed without leaving the ward is a key consideration when ensuring effective and convenient local government, and therefore have not amended our draft recommendations in relation to Judd and Castle wards.

42 The Council proposed an identical warding arrangement to that made prior to draft recommendations. It argued that the area around Portman Park, which we had proposed to include in Medway ward, identified more with properties in Castle ward. We visited the area and noted that the properties' primary access is towards the north-west, into Castle ward. As such, we have adopted the Council's proposal for Portman Park, and moved the area into Castle ward.

43 We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for the Tonbridge area as final, with the small modification outlined above to the boundary between Castle ward and Medway ward around Portman Park. Our final recommendations for the Tonbridge area are for two-member Cage Green, Castle, Higham, Judd, Trench and Vauxhall wards, and a three-member Medway ward. These wards are forecast to have 6% fewer, 1% fewer, 2% more, 6% more, 1% fewer, 1% more and 8% fewer electors per councillor respectively than the borough average by 2018.

## Central Tonbridge & Malling

44 The rural area in the centre of the borough comprises the parished area from Hildenborough in the south-west to Birling in the north-east. The area is mainly rural, with larger settlements such as Hildenborough, Hadlow, Borough Green and East Peckham. While electorate growth across this area is mostly static, there is some growth forecast as a result of developments in Ryarsh and Borough Green parishes.

45 Our draft recommendations were for a single-member Downs ward, two-member Mereworth & Wateringbury, Wrotham, Ightham & Stansted, and Hildenborough wards, and the three-member Borough Green & Long Mill and

Hadlow & East Peckham wards. Our draft recommendations were broadly based on the Council's submission. Where we proposed changes, these were in order to improve electoral equality in central Tonbridge & Malling.

46 During our consultation on the draft recommendations, we received submissions relating to all areas where we departed from or modified the Council's proposals. We also received submissions from parish councils in Hadlow, Hildenborough and Wrotham, supporting our draft recommendations for those areas.

### **Downs, Mereworth & Wateringbury**

47 We received submissions from parish councils in Wateringbury, Offham and Mereworth, as well as a submission from Councillor Long (Malling Rural East division), all arguing that Wateringbury should not be in a ward with the parish of Mereworth and surrounding parishes. Councillor Long argued specifically that residents of Wateringbury look towards Maidstone for their services, whereas residents of Mereworth and West Peckham look towards Hadlow. These submissions proposed a single-member Wateringbury ward, and for Mereworth to be part of the Council's initially proposed two-member Downs & Mereworth ward. This argument was also made in the Council's submission.

48 We noted that adopting the Council's proposals for this area would result in a single-member Wateringbury ward with an electoral variance of more than 10% from the borough average. However, we considered that the evidence supplied during consultation was highly persuasive and demonstrated that Wateringbury is a separate community. We are therefore proposing a single-member Wateringbury ward which would have an electoral variance of -11% by 2018.

49 Addington Parish Council, Trottiscliffe Parish Council, Councillor Kemp (Downs ward) and a local resident objected to the parish of Addington being split between two borough wards. These submissions argued that the split was arbitrary and divided a cohesive community, damaging the representation in Addington. The same argument was made in the Council's submission.

50 We note that a single-member Wateringbury ward removes the need for the parish of Addington to be divided. Under our draft recommendations, Addington parish was divided in order to provide for good electoral equality. We noted the strong evidence received in support of including the entirety of Addington parish in one ward. We therefore propose adopting an amended version of the Council's proposal for a two-member Downs & Mereworth ward. This ward would contain the parishes of West Peckham, Mereworth (with the exception of Airfield parish ward), Offham, Addington, Birling, Trottiscliffe and part of the parish of Ryarsh. Under our final recommendations, Downs & Mereworth ward would have 1% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the borough by 2018.

### **Ryarsh and Leybourne Grange**

51 Our draft recommendations divided the parish of Ryarsh between our proposed Downs and West Malling & Leybourne wards. We proposed that the boundary run along the M20, in order to take account of the development at Leybourne Grange, which straddles the parish boundary between Ryarsh and Leybourne parishes.

52 The submissions we received relating to this focused primarily on the way Ryarsh parish was divided in our draft recommendations. Eighteen submissions, including those from Ryarsh, Birling and Trottiscliffe parish councils and 15 local

residents, objected to Ryarsh parish being divided between two borough wards. The main objection was that those areas of the village south of the M20 – notably the parish church – would be split from the majority of the village. Ryarsh Parish Council argued that Ryarsh village is a united community, with parish councillors from all areas of the village, and that the village is united by a number of village-wide events.

53 Leybourne Parish Council, Leybourne Chase Community Development Trust and Councillor Luker (West Malling & Leybourne ward) supported the principle of keeping the development at Leybourne Grange entirely within one borough ward, echoing the arguments in our draft recommendations.

54 We noted that the previously proposed ward boundary running through Ryarsh parish was clearly undesirable given the level and nature of community evidence received. However, none of the submissions objecting to the boundary proposed a specific arrangement for the development at Leybourne Grange. We considered it necessary for the entirety of Leybourne Grange to be included in one ward in order to avoid dividing a community, and explored alternative warding arrangements.

55 Were we to include the section of the Leybourne Grange development in Ryarsh parish with a West Malling & Leybourne ward, we would be creating a ward with no internal access. This is because the road connecting the development to Birling Road, in Leybourne parish, is not scheduled to open until 2018. We are therefore proposing to include the access road south from the Leybourne Grange development in a West Malling & Leybourne ward. This will also therefore include a small number of properties north of London Road in the south-east extreme of Ryarsh parish.

56 We are therefore persuaded to amend our draft recommendations for Central Tonbridge & Malling as described in the preceding paragraphs. Our final recommendations for central Tonbridge & Malling are for a single-member Wateringbury ward, and the two-member wards of Downs & Mereworth, Hildenborough and Wrotham, Ightham & Stansted. We also recommend the three-member wards of Borough Green & Long Mill and Hadlow & East Peckham. These wards are forecast to have 11% fewer, 1% fewer, 8% more, 5% fewer, 6% more and 6% more electors per councillor respectively than the borough average by 2018.

## North East Tonbridge & Malling

57 The north-eastern area of the borough combines both urban and rural areas. The urban areas include the settlements of Snodland, Larkfield, Leybourne, Aylesford, Ditton, East Malling, West Malling and Kings Hill. It also includes a section of Walderslade, in the far north-east of the borough, although the majority of the Walderslade settlement lies outside Tonbridge & Malling borough. The entirety of this area is parished.

58 Electorate growth forecasts in this area are moderate, with the most significant development occurring in the Aylesford South, Leybourne and Wouldham areas. As noted in paragraphs 17-20, we have amended our electorate forecasts for this area in light of having received further evidence relating to developments at Peters Village and Preston Hall.

59 Our draft recommendations were for the two-member wards of Aylesford North & Walderslade, Aylesford South, Ditton, East Malling, Larkfield North, Larkfield South and Snodland East & Ham Hill wards. We also recommended the three-member wards of Kings Hill, Snodland West & Holborough Lakes and West Malling & Leybourne.

60 Our draft recommendations were broadly based on the Council's submission, and where we proposed changes it was to better reflect our statutory criteria. Our recommendations differed from the Council's proposals in the proposed Ditton, East Malling, Larkfield South, Snodland East & Ham Hill and Snodland West & Holborough Lakes wards, primarily in order to reflect internal access links between communities in each of the proposed wards.

61 During consultation on our draft recommendations, we received submissions relating to all areas in which we modified the Council's proposals.

### **Snodland**

62 In our draft recommendations we proposed that the boundary between Snodland East & Ham Hill ward and Snodland West & Holborough Lakes ward should be drawn down the A228 and along Holborough Road. This differed from the Council's proposal that the boundary run down the rear of houses on Holborough Road. The rationale for our proposed boundary was a concern about internal access routes within the Council's proposed Snodland West & Holborough Lakes ward, as the Council's proposed boundary would result in residents in the Holborough Lakes development having to leave the Snodland West & Holborough Lakes ward in order to access the remainder of the ward.

63 During consultation, Snodland Town Council's submission drew our attention to the construction of a bus link between Poynder Drive in the Holborough Lakes development, and Cemetery Road in the town of Snodland. We visited this area and noted that the road for the bus route had been fully built, and would seemingly be opened when the development was complete. As this addressed the main concern in our draft recommendations, we are now proposing wards in Snodland based on the Council's proposal under our final recommendations.

### **West Malling & Leybourne**

64 Leybourne Parish Council argued that the Leybourne and West Malling areas should be in separate borough wards. It stated that they have become discrete communities, a change which will be emphasised by the development at Holborough Lakes. However, we also received submissions from Councillor Luker and a local resident supporting the retention of a three-member West Malling & Leybourne ward as the two areas retain links and have an affect on each other. We have carefully considered the evidence received for this area. On balance, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations in this area as final.

### **East Malling, Larkfield and Ditton**

65 We received submissions from East Malling & Larkfield Parish Council and a local resident regarding our proposed boundary between East Malling and Larkfield South wards. Our draft recommendations used London Road, as we considered that this represented a strong barrier between communities. However, the parish council submission, including a petition, argued that the properties from 695 to 789 London Road strongly identified with the town of Larkfield, and that historically they considered themselves to be part of the Larkfield community. The parish council

further argued that London Road provided a focus for communities on either side and noted the existence of a pedestrian crossing point on the road. We are persuaded by this evidence, and therefore adopt the Council's proposal to draw the boundary between East Malling and Larkfield South wards down the backs of houses on the south side of London Road.

66 Ditton Parish Council, East Malling & Larkfield Parish Council, councillors Parry-Waller and Taylor (Larkfield North ward) and a local resident objected to our draft recommendations regarding Ditton ward and Larkfield South ward.

67 Our draft recommendations proposed that areas of Ditton parish north of the M20 and west of Orchard Grove and Cobdown Close be included in Larkfield South ward. The rationale was that the area of Ditton parish north of the M20 has no vehicular access to the remainder of the parish. Under our draft recommendations, the area north of the M20 would be able to access Larkfield South ward via Bellingham Way and New Hythe Lane, thus ensuring internal ward access.

68 During consultation on our draft recommendations, East Malling & Larkfield Parish Council disputed the need to move this area from Ditton ward. It argued that as the area north of the M20 had no electors, placing it in Ditton would have no material effect on the ward or on electors. Ditton Parish Council stated that the electors on Fernleigh Rise and Oak Drive were a part of Ditton, and that moving them into Larkfield South would separate them from their wider community.

69 The warding options available to us with regard to this area of Ditton are either a ward with no internal access, which could have an impact on securing effective and convenient local government, or a parish split across two wards. Considering firstly the community evidence given, and secondly that there are no electors in the area of Ditton north of the M20, we have decided to amend our draft recommendations to make the boundary between Ditton and Larkfield South coterminous with the parish boundary, thus placing the entirety of Ditton parish in a two-member Ditton ward.

70 Under our draft recommendations for the east of Ditton parish we proposed to include Robson Drive (which is part of Aylesford parish) in our proposed Ditton ward. This was because Robson Drive does not have a direct access route to Teapot Lane at its eastern edge, instead accessing towards Station Road and the parish of Ditton. Our proposal was therefore designed to ensure convenient and effective local government.

71 We received submissions from Aylesford Parish Council, Tracey Crouch MP (Chatham & Aylesford), and 13 local residents objecting to our proposal to include Robson Drive in Ditton ward. We also received a submission from Ditton Parish Council supporting our draft recommendations.

72 The submission from Aylesford Parish Council focused on two matters. Firstly, it highlighted that parish representation would be skewed so that members of our proposed Robson Drive parish ward would be 'vastly' over-represented. Secondly, it disputed the necessity of moving the area to reflect access routes, highlighting the foot link to Teapot Lane, and that vehicular access along the parish boundary is possible via Station Road and Hall Road. The submissions received from local residents supported these arguments, as well as arguing that Robson Drive is part of Aylesford and does not associate with Ditton.

73 Having considered the evidence received opposing our draft recommendations, and that the argument made regarding vehicular access reflects our statutory criteria, we have decided to amend our draft recommendations to include the Robson Drive area as part of Aylesford South ward. Our proposal ensures that residents of Robson Drive are united with the remainder of the community they identify as a part of, and that our proposed Aylesford South ward maintains internal ward access.

### **Aylesford**

74 Our draft recommendations in the Aylesford area had been informed by our decision to discount developments at Peters Village and Preston Hall. As discussed in paragraphs 15-24, during consultation on our draft recommendations we received significant evidence regarding the timing of these developments. We have decided to revise the electorate figures to include both these developments in our five-year electorate forecast.

75 The change to electorate figures meant that, without further modification, our draft recommendations would now result in a Burham, Eccles & Wouldham ward which would have 32% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018. We therefore explored alternative warding patterns in this area.

76 We received submissions from Wouldham Parish Council, four local councillors, and the Burham, Eccles & Wouldham Ward Branch Committee of Chatham and Aylesford Conservative Association. All submissions dealt with alternative warding arrangements, arguing that Eccles, as part of Aylesford parish, identifies more closely with Aylesford village than with the areas of Burham & Wouldham to the north. As this arrangement would provide for good electoral equality, as well as being based on a good level of community evidence, we are persuaded that the area of Eccles should be transferred into our proposed Aylesford North & Walderslade ward.

77 As mentioned in paragraph 24, the change in electorate projections has a significant impact on warding arrangements for this part of Tonbridge & Malling. Our draft recommendations for this area, based on previous electorate figures, were for four councillors in the area north east of the River Medway. However, under the revised electorate figures, five councillors would be required to ensure electoral equality. We noted that the Council had proposed an extra councillor in their submission. With a council size of 54, by adding a councillor to the newly expanded Aylesford North & Walderslade ward we would create wards with good electoral equality.

78 We have therefore decided to amend our draft recommendations for North East Tonbridge & Malling as described in the preceding paragraphs. Our final recommendations for North East Tonbridge & Malling are for the two-member wards of Aylesford South, Burham & Wouldham, Ditton, East Malling, Larkfield North, Larkfield South and Snodland East & Ham Hill, and the three-member wards of Aylesford North & Walderslade, Kings Hill, Snodland West & Holborough Lakes, and West Malling & Leybourne. These wards are forecast to have 8% more, 4% fewer, 3% more, equal to, 3% fewer, 8% fewer, 9% fewer, 4% fewer, 7% more, 4% fewer and 6% more electors per councillor respectively than the borough average by 2018.



# Conclusions

79 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Table B1 on pages 23–5, and illustrated the large map we have produced. The outline map which accompanies this report shows our final recommendations for the whole authority. More detailed mapping is available through our online mapping portal, at [consultation.lgbce.org.uk](http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk)

80 Table 1 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements based on 2011 and 2018 electorate figures.

**Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements**

	Final recommendations	
	2011	2018
Number of councillors	54	54
Number of electoral wards	24	24
Average number of electors per councillor	1,665	1,806
Number of electoral wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	7	1
Number of electoral wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	1	0

**Final recommendation**

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council should comprise 54 councillors serving 24 wards, as detailed and named in Table B1 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

## Parish electoral arrangements

81 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.

82 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, Tonbridge & Malling 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.

83 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parish of Aylesford.

**Final recommendation**

Aylesford Parish Council should return 20 parish councillors, as at present, representing five wards: Aylesford North (returning two members), Aylesford South (returning eight members), Blue Bell Hill (returning two members), Eccles (returning three members) and Walderslade (returning five members).

84 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parish of East Malling & Larkfield.

**Final recommendation**

East Malling & Larkfield Parish Council should return 17 parish councillors, as at present, representing three wards: East Malling (returning six members), Larkfield North (returning six members) and Larkfield South (returning five members).

85 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parish of Ryarsh.

**Final recommendation**

Ryarsh Parish Council should return seven parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Leybourne Grange (returning one member) and Ryarsh Village (returning six members).

86 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parish of Snodland.

**Final recommendation**

Snodland Town Council should return 15 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Snodland East & Ham Hill (returning six members) and Snodland West & Holborough Lakes (returning nine members).

### 3 What happens next?

87 We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements which will come into force at the next elections for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council in 2015.

#### Equalities

88 This report has been screened for impact on equalities, with due regard being given to the general equalities duties as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. As no potential negative impacts were identified, a full equality impact analysis is not required.

## 4 Mapping

### Final recommendations for Tonbridge & Malling

89 The following map illustrates our proposed ward boundaries for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.

You can also view our final recommendations for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council on our interactive maps at [consultation.lgbce.org.uk](https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk).

# Appendix A

## Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Boundary Committee	The Boundary Committee for England was a committee of the Electoral Commission, responsible for undertaking electoral reviews
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward, expressed in parishes or existing wards, or parts of either
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve 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 ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral Commission	An independent body that was set up by the UK Parliament. Its aim is integrity and public confidence in the democratic process. It regulates party and election finance and sets standards for well-run elections
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral imbalance	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
Multi-member ward or division	A ward or ward represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	The 13 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and can be found at <a href="http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk">www.nationalparks.gov.uk</a>
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 ward 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

PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Committee for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England
Political management arrangements	The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enabled local authorities in England to modernise their decision making process. Councils could choose from two broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet or a cabinet with a leader
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 ward than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or ward 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





## Appendix B

**Table B1: Final recommendations for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council**

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2011)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2018)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
1	Aylesford North & Walderslade	3	5,135	1,712	3%	5,185	1,728	-4%
2	Aylesford South	2	3,231	1,616	-3%	3,914	1,957	8%
3	Borough Green & Long Mill	3	5,317	1,772	6%	5,754	1,918	6%
4	Burham & Wouldham	2	2,158	1,079	-35%	3,471	1,736	-4%
5	Cage Green	2	3,394	1,697	2%	3,406	1,703	-6%
6	Castle	2	3,447	1,724	4%	3,567	1,784	-1%
7	Ditton	2	3,705	1,853	11%	3,728	1,864	3%
8	Downs & Mereworth	2	3,343	1,672	0%	3,588	1,794	-1%
9	East Malling	2	3,514	1,757	6%	3,604	1,802	0%
10	Hadlow & East Peckham	3	5,694	1,898	14%	5,721	1,907	6%

**Table B1 (cont.): Final recommendations for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council**

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
11 Higham	2	3,683	1,842	11%	3,702	1,851	2%
12 Hildenborough	2	3,839	1,920	15%	3,907	1,954	8%
13 Judd	2	3,656	1,828	10%	3,832	1,916	6%
14 Kings Hill	3	4,940	1,647	-1%	5,815	1,938	7%
15 Larkfield North	2	3,488	1,744	5%	3,495	1,748	-3%
16 Larkfield South	2	3,275	1,638	-2%	3,333	1,667	-8%
17 Medway	3	4,088	1,363	-18%	5,005	1,668	-8%
18 Snodland East & Ham Hill	2	3,186	1,593	-4%	3,272	1,636	-9%
19 Snodland West & Holborough Lakes	3	4,285	1,428	-14%	5,226	1,742	-4%
20 Trench	2	3,575	1,788	7%	3,579	1,790	-1%
21 Vauxhall	2	3,462	1,731	4%	3,654	1,827	1%
22 West Malling & Leybourne	3	4,540	1,513	-9%	5,749	1,916	6%

**Table B1 (cont.): Final recommendations for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council**

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
23 Wrotham, Ightham & Stansted	2	3,343	1,672	0%	3,425	1,713	-5%
24 Wateringbury	1	1,596	1,596	-4%	1,607	1,607	-11%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>89,894</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>97,539</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,665</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,806</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each 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.