

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL: BOUNDARIES REVIEW
City Council Liberal Democrat Group submission

Electors per councillor (2016), county average 8,326

City average is $116,516 / 14 = 8,322$; permitted range (+/- 10%) = 7,490 x 9,154

Barton, Sandhills and Risinghurst	
VB-VE, UC-UE, TD	7,953
Churchill and Lye Valley	
TA-TC, SB, part XC*, part SA^	8,908
Marston, Headington Hill and Northway	
YA-YC, XA-XB, part XC*	7,925
Wolvercote and Summertown W	
AA-AD, BA	7,473
St Margaret's and Summertown E	
BB-BC, CA-CB	7,580
Jericho and North	
DA-DB, EA-EB, part FB^^	7,566
Holywell and Carfax N (Central)	
part FB^^, GA-GC	8,288
Hinksey Park, Osney and Carfax S (Isis)	
HA-HC, EC, FA	9,052
St Mary's and Iffley Fields	
Part KA**, KB, LA-LC	8,086
Littlemore and Rose Hill	
NA-ND, part MB~, MC, ME, part QB#	9,087
Blackbird Leys and Northfield Bk (Leys)	
PA-PB, OA-OB	8,493
Cowley and Iffley	
MA, part MB~, MD, QA, part QB#, RB, part SA^,	8,968
St Clement's and Cowley Marsh	
JA-JB, part KA**, KC, RA	9,033
Headington and Quarry	
WA-WC, UA-UB, VA	8,191

* XC: Include in Churchill and Lye Valley: John Garne Way = 1,297 electors

Remainder inc. in Marston, Headington Hill and Northway = 754

^ SA: Inc. in Churchill and LV: Horspath Rd, Page Rd and Normandy Cres northwards = 958

Remainder inc. in Cowley and Iffley = 1,501

^^ FB: Inc. in Jericho 218: Walton St (87), Wellington Sq (64), Beaumont Bdgs (26), St John's St (117) = 294

Remainder inc. in Jericho and North = 3,882

** KA: Inc. in St Clement's and Cowley Marsh: Iffley Road 1-101 (217), Circus St, Temple St, Stockmore St, Marston St, Cowley Rd 1-112 (126) = 744

Remainder inc. in St Mary's and Iffley Fields = 2,666

~ MB: Inc. in Cowley and Iffley: Iffley Turn (22) and Henley Avenue (85) = 107

Remainder inc. in Littlemore and Rose Hill = 1,361

QB: Inc. in Littlemore and Rose Hill: Bartholomew Rd (117), Lockheart Cres (62), Barns Rd S (187), Kersington Ave (97), and Dodgson Rd (98) = 561

Remainder include in Cowley and Iffley = 1,752

Oxfordshire County Council Boundaries Review Commentary on Liberal Democrat proposals

General comments

1.1 The scheme aims to meet the Commission's first criterion, equality of average electorate, while emphasising communities and respecting natural boundaries (criteria two and three respectively). There have also been expressions of support from electors, the fourth criterion.

1.2 The maths makes it difficult to produce an ideal solution but this scheme has much in common with the county officers' draft scheme and also with the proposals from the majority Labour Group. In the discussions of the City cross-party working group it was accepted on behalf of the Green Party members, and nine of the 14 proposed divisions (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 13 and 14) were agreed by the Labour Group's representative before his group brought forward their final submission.

Individual divisions

1. Barton, Sandhills and Risinghurst

1.1 The Commission requires the integrity of parishes to be respected. It is important, therefore, to include polling district TD within this division together with the other wards of Risinghurst Parish.

1.2 It is also important to meet the criteria of community and natural boundaries in respect of polling district VA, which it is proposed to include with Headington and Quarry (for the case in detail, see 14.2).

2. Churchill and Lye Valley

2.1 Inclusion of John Garne Way (1,297 electors) from polling district XC in the present Marston, Headington Hill and Northway division unites the area with the western part of Churchill with which it has educational and employment links, notably parts of the Oxford Brookes University campus and student accommodation (halls of residence and rented rooms/houses).

2.2 Similar to the majority group's scheme is our proposal to include the area of Horspath Road, Paget Road and Normandy Crescent northwards, currently in the Cowley division, 958 electors. This reflects a strong community of interests and achieves equality of electorates.

3. Marston, Headington Hill and Northway

3.1 The geographical focus of the division as proposed would be the neighbourhood shopping and services centre at the bottom of Headley Way.

3.2 An extremely strong case exists for linking Northway with neighbouring Marston, where its shops and schools are, rather than with much more distant Headington.

3.3 The proposed transfer of John Garne Way to Churchill and Lye Valley (see 2.1) strengthens the homogeneity of the Marston, Headington Hill and Northway division.

4. Wolvercote and Summertown West

4.1 The proposed division follows the county officers' draft scheme and is similar to the majority group's scheme also, except that it retains the integrity of the Cutteslowe estate, which the Labour Group propose to split in two.

4.2 Although the proposal divides one side of Summertown from the other, it is the only viable way to come as close as possible to the criterion of size.

4.3 In fact the proposed electorate falls just short by 17 voters of the permitted range. It is pointed out that some development is likely to take place in the Northern Gateway area, whether or not this is to the full extent proposed by the Labour majority, and we would request that this very minor exception be allowed.

5. St Margaret's and Summertown East

5.1 Here too the proposed division follows both the county officers' draft scheme and is very similar to the majority group's scheme; the importance of preserving the integrity of the Cutteslowe estate is again underlined (4.1)

5.2 As pointed out in 4.2, although the boundary divides one side of Summertown from the other, it is the only viable way to meet the criterion of equality of electorates.

6. Jericho and North

6.1 The proposal reflects the strong community of interests between these two areas of north central Oxford. Residents of North Ward have significant local shopping and services links with Jericho. Indeed the western boundary of polling district DB runs along Walton Street, the shopping and services heart of Jericho, whose top end also meets the boundary of DA.

6.2 There is little or no community of interest between Jericho and the areas of Osney and the Botley Road. Indeed the railway forms a geographical barrier crossed only at the pinch-point of Botley Road bridge.

6.3 To meet the criterion of equality of electorates, it is proposed to include the rest of Walton Street (87), Wellington Square (64), St John's Street (117) and Beaumont Buildings (26), a coherent groups of streets and naturally part of the Jericho community, but currently part of Carfax.

7. Holywell and Carfax North (Central)

7.1 The proposal seeks to create a strong, cohesive division in the city centre.

7.2 Only the Commission's criterion of size prevents Holywell and Carfax being united in their entirety.

8. Hinksey Park, Osney and Carfax South (Isis)

8.1 The proposal creates a more cohesive division than the existing Isis division, with stronger communities of interest.

8.2 In particular it is not so severely truncated by the river, which creates a substantial barrier between Hinksey Park and Iffley Fields.

8.3 This geographical barrier also separates the two communities with a large stretch of open land (see the accompanying photographs in the Appendix at the end of this commentary).

8.4 In this proposal the river in fact unites the most populous part of Hinksey Park with a community on the other side with which it actually does have commonality of interests, namely the densely populated Friars Walk development on the other side of Folly Bridge.

8.5 At the heart of the proposed division is the West End, the focus of major regeneration plans supported by both the City and County Councils.

9. St Mary's and Iffley Fields

9.1 It is sensible to end the odd and irksome connection of Iffley Fields with Hinksey Park (8.1-8.2), joined only by the bridge and a lengthy stretch of open space (see photographs in Appendix), the only purpose of which appears to be to make up numbers of electors.

9.2 The proposed division has more coherence and better reflects the strong homogeneity of character and community of interest in this part of East Oxford.

10. Littlemore and Rose Hill

10.1 The proposal reflects the strong community character and interests of Littlemore.

10.2 At the same time, there have been strong expressions of support for the ending of the combination of Iffley Village and Rose Hill. The two areas are certainly very different in character, having their own physical centres and 'looking' in different directions. The proposal is therefore to include Iffley Village (polling district MA) with the adjacent parts of the existing Cowley division (see 12.3).

10.3 While similar expressions of support for ending the connection between Rose Hill and Littlemore have certainly often been made, it is not so easily justified, and would be difficult to achieve, given the criterion for equal size of electorates.

10.4 To achieve equality of electorate size, it is proposed to include a small but coherent and contiguous area currently in the Cowley division: Bartholomew Road, Lockheart Crescent, Barns Road South, Dodgson Road and Kersington Avenue.

11. Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook (Leys)

11.1 The proposal retains the community of interests of the two areas and reflects their overall cohesion.

11.2 It also respects the strong geographical barrier of the Ring Road.

12. Cowley and Iffley

12.1 The proposal reflects the cohesion of Cowley's community.

12.2 The proposed division has Temple Square, the primary neighbourhood centre for south Oxford, at its centre.

12.3 Linking Iffley Village with Cowley (see 10.2), replaces the marriage of convenience with Rose Hill by associating Iffley Village with an area along Henley Avenue and the western part of the Florence Park neighbourhood with which it has more in common, both in the age and character of the area.

12.4 This part of the proposal also irons out the odd existing panhandle of polling district MB.

13. St Clement's and Cowley Marsh

13.1 The proposal preserves and reflects the strong character, geographical cohesion and community of interests in this part of East Oxford, including shops, schools, and services.

13.2 As with the North Oxford divisions, the mathematics determines that a central shopping area (in this case along the Cowley Road) falls into different divisions, but there is in fact a significance difference in character between the packed streets of St Mary's and Iffley Fields and the more open streets of St Clement's and Cowley Marsh.

13.3 Mathematics also dictates that polling district KC, together with a small number of streets at the northern end of the wedge between the Iffley and Cowley Roads (744 electors), is included in the St Clement's division rather than that of St Mary's. In fact this reflects a local area of coherence around The Plain and the eastern end of Magdalen Bridge.

14. Headington and Quarry

14.1 The proposal answers the very strong case to be made to reflect the integrity of Headington by creating a division centred on the Headington shops and bounded on the north and east by the Ring Road.

14.2 Part of that also achieves the important objective of meeting the criteria of community and natural boundaries in respect of polling district VA. It is proposed to include VA with the rest of Headington and Quarry (with which it shares shopping, schools and services) rather than preserving its existing attachment to Barton and Sandhills, from which it is divided by the physical and geographical barrier of the Ring Road and with which it otherwise has little or nothing in common.

Appendix:

Photographs: Open ground, mainly river meadows, separating Hinksey Park and Iffley Fields



