

Trafford Council Electoral Review

Response to the Local Government of
England (LGBCE) consultation –
07.02.2022

Executive summary

The Local Government Boundary Review of England (LGBCE) are conducting an electoral review of Trafford Council. The review will determine the future size of Trafford Council and its ward boundaries. The review was launched in 2020 but had to be delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2021, the LGBCE agreed that Trafford Council should continue with 63 councillors elected from 21 wards across the borough.

The LGBCE published its Draft Recommendations for Trafford's future wards on 30 November 2021. These recommendations are similar to the warding scheme proposed by Trafford Council in August 2021. The Draft Recommendations have been considered by the Council's Corporate Leadership Team and officers have reviewed the proposals in detail.

We believe these recommendations fulfil largely the objectives for creating wards that ensure electoral equality, reflect community interests and identities, and promote effective local government.

There are, however, a number of specific proposals that we think the LGBCE should consider further, namely:

- To change the proposed Western Parishes ward to a ward solely comprising Carrington and Partington in the light of further evidence in support of this proposition;
- To include Dunham Massey and Warburton parishes in the Bowdon ward.
- To expand the proposed Old Trafford ward so that its border runs along City Road.
- To expand the proposed Timperley Central ward to include the entirety of the Broomwood housing estate.

This report will constitute the Council's formal response and will be submitted to the LGBCE as part of the final consultation of Trafford's electoral review. This consultation provides an opportunity for our residents, our community partners and our political groups to offer their feedback on the Draft Recommendations also.

1. Introduction

Trafford Council were informed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) in 2019 that it was to undergo its electoral review. The purpose of an electoral review is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor is approximately the same across Trafford and that the wards in the borough are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively. Trafford's previous electoral review was undertaken in 2003. It was therefore timely to reassess Trafford's ward boundaries. This review coincides with electoral reviews in seven other Greater Manchester local authorities.

During this electoral review, the LGBCE has agreed in principle to Trafford retaining 63 councillors, elected from 21 wards. On this basis, Trafford Council submitted its proposed warding scheme in August 2021. This helped inform the LGBCE to produce its Draft Recommendations for the future wards in Trafford.

The LGBCE Draft Recommendations were published on 30 November 2021. This started the final consultation exercise of Trafford's electoral review, which closes on 7 February 2022. The LGBCE will then evaluate all of the information submitted and will publish its final recommendations on 3 May 2022. These recommendations will be subject to parliamentary approval thereafter and the new wards will be introduced for the local government elections in May 2023.

Officers have considered the Draft Recommendations in detail. We endorse these proposals on the most part. The proposed wards would ensure the ward electorates are similar across the borough. With the exception of the proposals for the Western Parishes ward, the ward configuration broadly reflects the different towns, villages and communities in Trafford. And this ward scheme would help promote effective local government in Trafford.

Officers have raised a number of points that we would like the Boundary Commission to consider further. This report sets out the Council's response to the LGBCE's Draft Recommendations. The report includes several general points of order and then ward specific feedback. The ward commentary is presented geographically according to the Council's four localities – North, West, Central and South.

This report is submitted on behalf of officers. It has received input from colleagues across the Council and has been approved by Sara Saleh, Deputy Chief Executive.

We have informed the political group leaders for the Conservative, Green, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties of the Council's response to the Draft Recommendations. However, we did not seek the endorsement of political groups for the Council's response in this report. It does not therefore represent the specific views of any or all groups. It is understood that the individual groups are likely to submit their own responses to the LGBCE's Draft Recommendations.

2. Response to LGBCE Draft Recommendations

2.1. Warding pattern

Officers agree with retaining the River Mersey as the main boundary within the borough. Officers also agree with retaining eight wards in the north of the borough and 13 wards in the south. Officers have a number of specific boundary considerations. These points are expanded for the individual wards in the next section below.

2.2. Future proofing the proposed wards

Officers have suggested two boundary amendments to provide for more sustainable ward electorates in the 2020s and 2030s. These slight boundary changes between Old Trafford and Gorse Hill and between Timperley Central and Hale Barns and Timperley South reflect the large scale development planned in both areas over the next 15 years. Moreover, the changes proposed will ensure that all four wards' electorates are an acceptable size and will better serve to maintain electoral equality in the longer term. These changes are explained fully below.

2.3. 'Western Parishes' Ward proposal

Officers have raised a number of concerns about the configuration of the 'Four Parishes' ward. This report includes a more detailed account of the proposed development in this area to help the Boundary Commissioners to reassess the viability of a Carrington and Partington ward.

2.4. Parks and recreational spaces

As officers were compiling the Council's proposed ward scheme in summer 2021, we received members' feedback expressing their preference for parks and recreational spaces to be kept in their entirety within a single ward. Members stated that this ensures greater accountability from residents and is more straightforward for their casework. We have noted this in relation to the Draft Recommendation boundaries that run through Worthington Park (Sale Priory/Sale Moor), Abbotsfield Park

(Flixton/Urmston) and Altrincham golf course (Altrincham/Hale). We ask the Boundary Commission to consider amending these borders to retain each of these spaces in a single ward.

3. Ward analysis

3.1. North Trafford

3.1.1. Old Trafford, Gorse Hill and Longford

We agree with the overall configuration of the three north eastern wards in the borough. These represent the communities of Old Trafford and east Stretford well. The Boundary Commission should note that this area will see the most extensive development in Trafford over the next five years.

The proposed Gorse Hill ward is to experience the highest concentration of development in the north of the borough over the next decade (in addition to the developments cited in the previous submissions). This includes further development to the area around Trafford Town Hall, the second phase of the Pomona development and a number of other high density developments. We would therefore suggest a slight amendment to the boundary between the Old Trafford and Gorse Hill wards. We encourage the Boundary Commission to consider modifying the ward boundary to run along City Road and Chester Road, see figure 1.

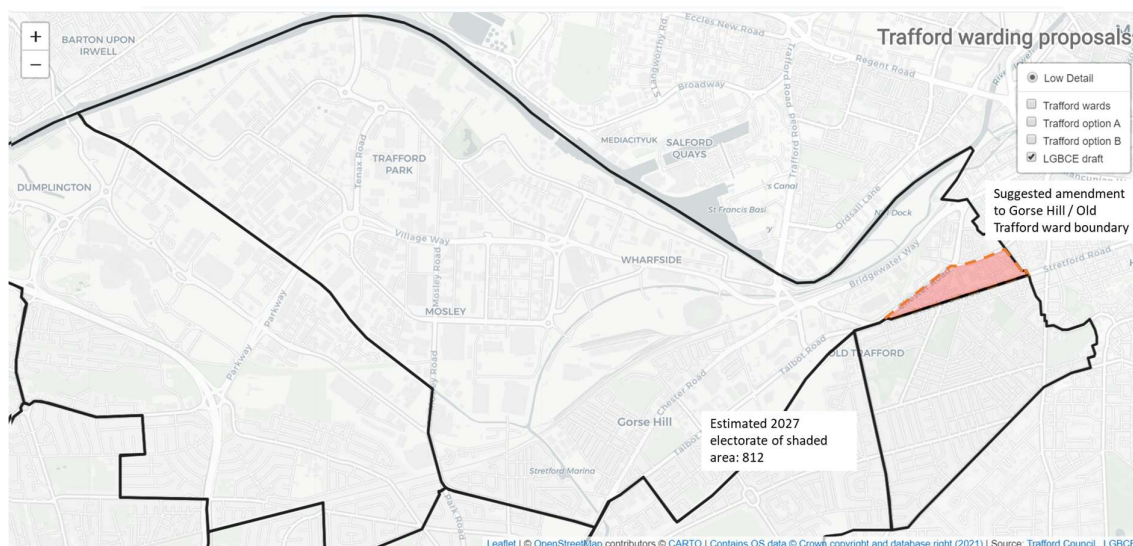


Fig. 1 – Suggested amendment to Gorse Hill and Old Trafford wards

This area is still recognisably part of Old Trafford, see figure 2. Moreover, the residents living between Stretford Road and City Road will use the amenities in Old Trafford, such as the health and leisure centres, and are in the catchment areas for the schools in the proposed Old Trafford ward.

This suggested change would still provide an identifiable boundary between the wards and it would provide a longer term electoral equality in the north east of the borough.

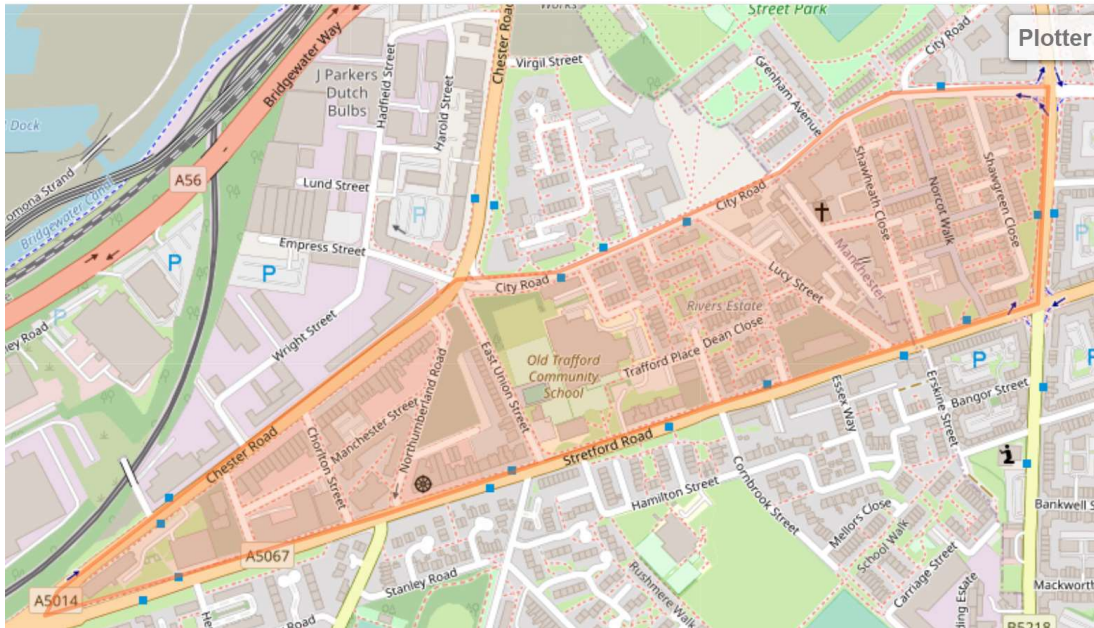


Fig. 2: Area between City Road and Stretford Road recommended to be included in Old Trafford ward

We estimate that this would change the 2027 ward electorates to be 9546 in Old Trafford and 8707 in Gorse Hill by 2027. Albeit, we expect the Gorse Hill's electorate would increase substantially thereafter.

3.1.2. Stretford

We agree with the boundaries for the proposed Stretford ward.

We recognise that some residents in the westernmost part of the proposed Stretford ward have strong links to Urmston. This is why we proposed the addition of the words 'Humphrey Park' to the ward's title. The proposed ward still retains Humphrey Park itself and Humphrey Park Community Centre. The Boundary Commission may wish to consider this recommendation in line with the views of local residents.

3.1.3. Lostock and Barton

We agree with the boundaries and the name for the proposed Lostock and Barton ward.

3.2. Trafford West

3.2.1. Urmston, Flixton and Davyhulme

We understand the changes made by the Boundary Commission to the ward scheme proposed by Trafford Council in August 2021 as a result of feedback from residents living in the Woodsend neighbourhood. We accept this recommendation.

3.3. Trafford Central

3.3.1. Sale Priory, Sale Moor and Brooklands

We agree with the proposed ward boundaries and ward names in Sale East. These wards reflect the communities in Sale, Sale Moor and Brooklands. We would suggest, however, a slight amendment to the boundary between Sale Priory and Sale Moor so that the entirety of Worthington Park is bounded in the Sale Priory ward.

3.3.2. Ashton-upon-Mersey and Manor

We agree with the proposed ward boundaries and both ward names in Sale West also.

3.3.3. 'Western Parishes' – Carrington, Dunham Massey, Partington and Warburton

Officers have very serious concerns about the proposed ward comprising Partington, Carrington, Warburton and Dunham Massey. The contrast between two areas of Partington and Carrington to the ward's north and Dunham Massey and Warburton to the south is stark. They are distinct communities with acutely different socio-economic characteristics. Partington includes some of the most economically disadvantaged areas in Greater Manchester with multiple issues linked to urban social deprivation. We are very concerned that the future ward Councillors will face too great a diversity of issues if they have to deal both with Partington and the very different ward matters associated with the most rural part of the borough in the south.

Officers think that the proposed four parish ward would be problematic for the council's service delivery. These parishes are divided by the Council's West and South localities. This also presents considerable problems for providing adequate surgeries to cover the issues in the ward and to conduct residents' casework.

Furthermore, residents in Warburton and Dunham Massey are much more closely linked to Bowdon village and Altrincham town centre for schools, employment, transport and leisure. These communities have almost no connection with Partington town centre. The four parishes are only linked by Warburton Lane/Manchester Road and a single bus route. This is at best a very tenuous connection.

We therefore ask the Boundary Commission to reconsider the original proposal from the Council for a separate ward for Carrington and Partington and for Dunham Massey and Warburton to remain in the Bowdon ward.

Furthermore, the most up-to-date planning information would make a Carrington and Partington ward viable in terms of its electoral equality, as we expound below.

We recognise the concerns held about the relatively small electorate in the Council's proposed 'Carrington and Partington' ward. Our Planning officers have reviewed the development plans for the area again. There have been a number of planning updates since we submitted the 2027 housing forecasts for the borough.

This now includes planning permission being granted for 1,870 new homes in Carrington and Partington, see Appendix 1, of which we now expect 1,075 will be complete by 2027. This far exceeds our previous forecast of 675 units.

We therefore estimate conservatively that the electorate for Carrington and Partington will be at least 7,500 by 2027¹. This would create a ward with an electorate variance of -14% in 2027. Officers believe that this creates a much more coherent and suitable ward for the residents of Carrington and Partington.

However, due to the scale of development and the number of sites being developed, we think that it is plausible that some of the other permissioned building projects will happen sooner. On completion of all current permissioned developments, we would forecast the electorate of the ward to increase to approximately 8,800 (+1%).² This is likely to happen soon after 2027.

Figure 3 illustrates the sites in Carrington and Partington that have already received planning permission.

The Boundary Commission should further note that as part of the 'New Carrington Masterplan', and in addition to the house building cited above, this area is expected to undergo the development of 2,500 more homes from 2027 to 2037.

As explained above, the Council does not support the 'Western Parishes' ward option. However, if the Boundary Commission wish to proceed with it, we would suggest the ward title of 'Bucklow'. This area was historically part of the Cheshire county 'hundred' of Bucklow. Furthermore, the four parishes were part of the former Bucklow Rural District that existed until 1974.

¹ Based on a conservative estimate of a further 400 units to be completed by 2027 (in addition to the 675 units in original forecast), multiplied by an elector to property ratio of 1.56 (average of current ward). This is an additional 624 electors.

² 1,870 additional housing units multiplied by 1.56 + existing forecasted population growth.

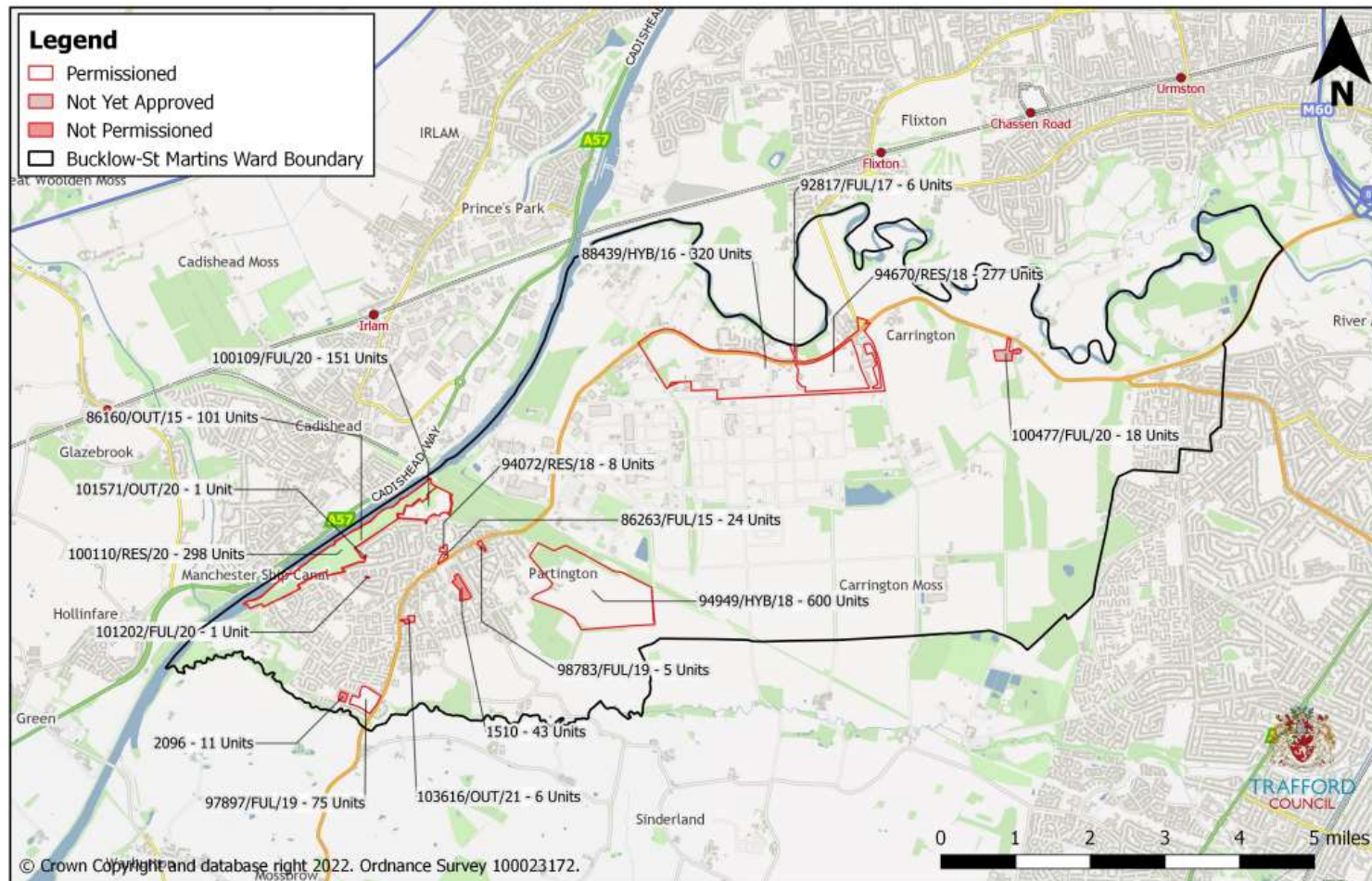


Fig. 3 – Planning permission and site location for current developments in Carrington and Partington

3.4. Trafford South

3.4.1. Broadheath

We agree with the proposed boundaries for the Broadheath ward. Officers believe this is the most practicable approach to reducing the size of the current Broadheath ward to ensure its electorate is comparable to the other wards in the Borough.

3.4.2. Timperley North, Timperley Central and Hale Barns and Timperley South

Officers recognise that delineating the ward boundaries in the wider Timperley area is one of the most sensitive aspects of this electoral review. We agree with the use of the railway line as the boundary dividing the Timperley North and Timperley Central wards.

We also appreciate the need to move the existing Hale Barns ward boundary further north to ensure its electorate is approximately equal to the others in the borough.

We ask the Boundary Commission to reconsider the boundary around the Broomwood housing estate so that the estate is kept entirely within the Timperley Central ward, see figure 4.

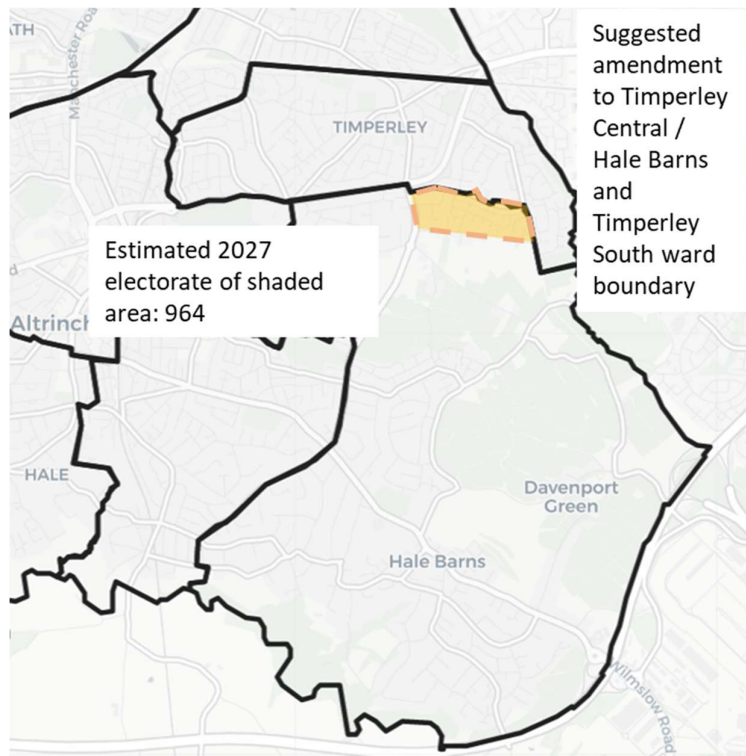


Fig. 4 – Suggested amendment to Timperley Central and Hale Barns and Timperley South wards

Broomwood has a clear community with distinct socio-economic characteristics. It is centred on the Broomwood Community Wellbeing Centre and Broomwood primary school. Both facilities are currently included in the Timperley Central ward. This community is linked much more closely to Timperley for its use of public amenities, shops, transport, and council services than to Hale Barns. We therefore suggest the boundary running along Thorley Lane from Shaftesbury Ave and along Ridgeway Rd.

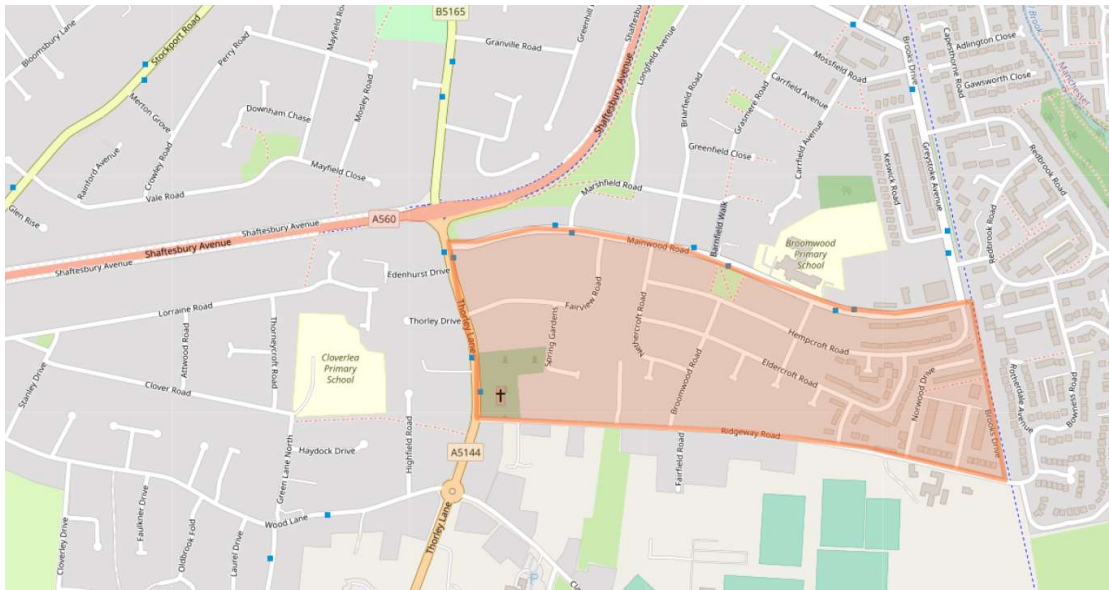


Fig. 5: Eastern part of Broomhill estate recommended to be included in Timperley Central ward

The Boundary Commission should note that the 'Timperley Wedge' development is planned to be built in the Hale Barns and Timperley South ward. The development proposes 1700 homes by 2037, with the potential to deliver 2,500 homes in total. This will increase its electorate considerably in the late 2020s and the 2030s.

Revising the ward boundary in this way would result in forecasted 2027 electorates of 9163 for Timperley Central and 8116 for Hale Barns and Timperley South. This would also create better electoral equality between the wards in the south of the borough in the longer term (due to the planned developed in the Hale Barns and Timperley South ward).

3.4.3. Hale, Altrincham and Bowdon

We agree with the proposed boundaries for the Hale ward. We agree mostly with the proposed boundaries of the Altrincham ward. We would, however, suggest keeping the entirety of Altrincham golf course within the Altrincham ward.

As stated above, officers have concerns about separating the Warburton and Dunham Massey parishes from the Bowdon ward. Reuniting the parishes of Warburton and Dunham Massey with the Bowdon ward would create a Bowdon ward electorate of 8882.

4. Conclusion

During the course of Trafford's electoral review, the Council has consulted officers, members and partners extensively for their views on the most appropriate warding scheme for the borough. This informed the Council's previous proposals to the Local Government Boundary Commission of England and further informs the Council's serious concern about the unsuitability of the proposed Western Parish ward.

The Council conclude that the wards in this submission provide the most balanced model for effective local government in Trafford. The proposed wards provide electoral equality and they reflect the different communities across our borough fairly.

Appendix 1: Planning Permissions Granted for Carrington and Partington

	Planning App Reference	No of Units in 2021 forecast to be complete by 2027	No. of units now forecast to be complete by 2027	Total no. of permissioned units	Road identifier
1	94949/HYB/18	148	250	600	Land at Heath Farm Lane, Partington
2	88439/HYB/16			320	Land off Manchester Rd Carrington
3	100110/RES/20		298	298	Land at Lock Lane*, Partington
4	94670/res/18	277	277	277	Land known as Carrington Village, on land off Manchester Road
5	1000109/FUL/20	151	151	151	Land at Lock Lane*, Partington
6	86160/OUT/15			101	Land at Lock Lane*
7	97897/FUL/19	75	75	75	Former School and red brick Public House, Oak Road Partington
8	86263/FUL/15	24	24	24	The Greyhound Public House, Partington
9	94072/RES/18			8	
10	94072/RES/18			8	
11	92817/FUL/17			6	
12	101571/OUT/20			1	
13	101202/FUL/20			1	
Totals		675	1075	1870	

* NB/ The Lock Lane development is a three-phase development with separate planning applications. We now forecast that phases 1 and 2 will be complete by 2027.