

Boundary Commission Review – Warding Patterns Submission

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

July 2021



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1. Introduction and Background:

1.1 This submission sets out Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's response to the invitation from the LGBCE to put forward revised warding arrangements based on the draft recommendation of 43 councillors following the first consultation phase, which considered Council Size.

1.2 It seeks:

- to achieve the identified optimum figure for electoral equality wherever possible,
- to reflect the identities of local communities and
- to promote effective and convenient local government.

1.3 In Tonbridge and Malling, the projected electorate for 2027 is 106,828, this means that with a recommended 43 councillors, each councillor should represent approximately 2,484 electors.

2. Setting out Key Local Criteria

2.1 In addition to the 3 key criteria as set out by the LGBCE, the Council has also applied a number of more detailed 'core local criteria' in order to reach a warding pattern that meets local views on community identity. These are:

1. Parish boundaries should be respected where at all possible
2. The area of Tonbridge & Hildenborough along with Snodland, Larkfield & East Malling and Kings Hill should all be self-contained as they each represent coherent community identities.
3. A number of parished areas have a close relationship with each other and, where at all possible, should be kept together in any future warding arrangements – these are:
 - Borough Green and Platt
 - Birling and Ryarsh
 - Addington and Trottiscliffe
 - Burham and Wouldham
 - Mereworth and Wateringbury

2.2 A number of other key local considerations were also agreed which have influenced the proposals. These include:

- That 'Ightham, Wrotham and Stansted' has a coherent identity that looks more towards Addington and Trottiscliffe than it does towards Borough Green, Platt or Plaxtol.
- That East Malling being paired up with either Kings Hill or Ditton does not form a coherent identity.
- Wateringbury being linked to Kings Hill does not make sense from a community identity perspective.
- That the area along the border between Ditton and South Aylesford forms less of a community divide and could therefore be flexed to accommodate a future warding pattern.
- That Ryarsh and Birling have stronger links to Leybourne than they do with Snodland.

3. Building Blocks of the Proposal:

3.1 In considering warding patterns, the Borough Council then used the 3 LGBCE criteria, and the key local criteria to start pulling together building blocks of potential future wards. In doing so, a clear pattern started to emerge:

- Tonbridge and Hildenborough – **13** Councillors
- Snodland – **4** Councillors
- Kings Hill – **3** Councillors
- Larkfield and East Malling – **5** Councillors
- Borough Green & Platt – **2** Councillors (could be expanded to make 3 Councillors)
- Leybourne, Ryarsh and Birling – **2** Councillors (could be expanded to make 3 Councillors)
- Ightham, Wrotham, Stansted, Addington and Trottscliffe – **2** Councillors (could be expanded to make 3 Councillors)
- Burham and Wouldham – would need to be joined with another area to meet electoral equality thresholds for **2** Councillor - the viable options would be joining with Eccles (2 Councillor ward) or joining with Blue Bell Hill and Walderslade (which would create a 3 Councillor ward)
- Mereworth and Wateringbury – **1** Councillor (could be expanded to make a 2 or 3 councillor ward)

3.2 In total, these building blocks account for areas of the borough that could ultimately make up wards for approximately 33-34 Councillors.

4. Proposed Warding Pattern:

4.1 The proposed warding pattern put forward by Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council provides a mixed warding pattern of single member wards, two member wards and three member wards based on the statutory criteria.

4.2 Appendix 1 provides an overview of the proposed wards, setting out information on electoral equality and community identity. In addition, the following table also illustrates how the electoral equality will balance out for each of these proposed wards by 2027:

Name of ward	Number of Cllrs	Electorate 2021	Variance 2021	Electorate 2027	Variance 2027
Aylesford	3	7,062	3%	7,607	2%
Burham, Eccles and Wouldham	2	4,171	-9%	5,388	8%
Ditton and Holtwood	2	4,379	-4%	4,683	-6%
Snodland East and Ham Hill	2	4,227	-6%	4,498	-9%

Snodland West and Holborough Lakes	2	4,351	-6%	4,548	-8%
Larkfield	3	6,715	-2%	7,163	-4%
East Malling and Lunsford	2	4,121	-10%	4,464	-10%
West Malling	3	7,265	6%	7,761	4%
Kings Hill	3	6,269	-9%	7,662	3%
Mereworth and Wateringbury	1	2,372	4%	2,564	3%
Borough Green and Platt	2	4,514	-1%	4,783	-4%
Pilgrims	2	4,563	0%	4,861	-2%
Bourne	2	4,495	-2%	4,813	-3%
East Peckham	1	2,547	11%	2,724	10%
Tonbridge North East	2	5,089	11%	5,454	10%
Tonbridge North West	2	5,054	11%	5,413	9%
Tonbridge East	3	6,779	-1%	7,212	-3%
Tonbridge South	3	7,722	13%	8,137	9%
Hildenborough and Tonbridge West	3	6,629	-3%	7,093	-5%
TOTAL	43			106,828	

4.3 For the purposes of clarity, this submission provides a breakdown, ward by ward to help explain the geography proposed:

4.3.1 **Aylesford:** This ward comprises 4 existing polling district areas that all lie within Aylesford Parish – 3 complete polling district areas (CAA, CAB and CAD) and the majority of CBA. A small portion of CBA is moved over to Ditton and Holtwood (see 4.3.3). This ward has strong road connections running north to south via the A229 and Rochester Road, linking Walderslade to Aylesford. Aylesford has a number of facilities that serve the ward, with Aylesford School catchment area extending into Walderslade and the regular Aylesford Farmers Market acting as a draw from a wide area. Whilst the M20 runs across the ward east to west, this is not a barrier that defines community identity as there is unconstrained access along both Hall Road and Station Road:

Polling district	Parish	Parish ward	Proposed ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2027
CAA	Aylesford Parish	North Ward	Aylesford	Aylesford North and Walderslade	586	621
CAB	Aylesford Parish	Blue Bell Hill Ward	Aylesford	Aylesford North and Walderslade	1090	1160
CAD	Aylesford Parish	Walderslade Ward	Aylesford	Aylesford North and Walderslade	2084	2268
CBA (part 1)	Aylesford Parish	South Ward	Aylesford	Aylesford South	3302	3558

4.3.2 **Burham, Eccles and Wouldham:** One of the reasons for this current review is because the existing ward of Burham and Wouldham is a significant distance from an acceptable variance. Therefore, in

order to retain its two members, it is proposed to include Eccles within this ward. As such, this ward comprises three polling district areas (CAC, CCA and CCB) and reverts back to a warding pattern that was in place prior to 2015 and ensures all of the east bank villages are represented in the same ward:

Polling district	Parish	Parish ward	Proposed ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2027
CAC	Aylesford Parish	Eccles Ward	Burham, Eccles and Wouldham	Aylesford North and Walderslade	1330	1425
CCA	Burham		Burham, Eccles and Wouldham	Burham and Wouldham	1050	1122
CCB	Wouldham		Burham, Eccles and Wouldham	Burham and Wouldham	1791	2841

The 900-home development at Bushey Wood (outskirts of Eccles) is an ‘area of opportunity’ in the existing Tonbridge & Malling Local Plan, and was also included as an allocation in the new Local Plan, which was rejected by the Planning Inspectorate. Despite this, a planning application is scheduled to be submitted to the Planning Department in October 2021, and so with two major developments taking place in this ward (Bushey Wood and Peters Village), and the additional burdens on Members in supporting these new communities as they grow, it is suggested that ideally this ward would be better represented by 3 councillors rather than 2 if the circumstances allowed (making 44 councillors in total).

4.3.3 **Ditton and Holtwood:** comprises 3 polling district areas – CDA and CDB in Ditton, plus part of CBA, which has been marked as ‘1’ in the map below. As per the key local considerations, it was felt by Members that the existing boundary around the Woodlands Road area is far from clear, and it is in the best interests of all residents that the whole of Woodlands Road is included within the same ward. As such the boundary has been moved to the A20 as a more recognisable barrier. Woodlands shopping parade and nearby sports and community facilities (K Sports Cobdown and Ditton Community Centre) all act as strong community hubs for the entire ward.

Polling district	Parish	Parish ward	Proposed ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2027
CBA (part 2)	Aylesford	Holtwood	Ditton and Holtwood	Aylesford South	536	577
CDA	Ditton		Ditton and Holtwood	Ditton	1330	1415
CDB	Ditton		Ditton and Holtwood	Ditton	2513	2691



4.3.4 **Snodland:** As set out in Section 2, the proposal aims to keep Snodland self-contained (an area represented by 4 councillors) in order to best represent an area with a coherent identity. The best way of achieving this in a balanced way is to create 2 2-member wards which adhere closely to the existing polling district boundaries, but with amendments for the purposes of electoral equality:

- a) **Snodland East and Ham Hill:** comprises the existing Snodland East and Ham Hill ward, but with an adjustment to polling district CHA to include Malling Road, Bramley Road, Chapel Road, Bullfields, Recreation Avenue, St Katherine’s Lane, Wyvern Close, Orchard Way, Meadow Walk, Portland Place and High Street within the proposed new ward:

Polling district	Parish	Parish ward	Proposed ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2027
CGA	Snodland	Snodland East and Ham Hill	Snodland East and Ham Hill	Snodland East and Ham Hill	2274	2421
CGB	Snodland	Snodland East and Ham Hill	Snodland East and Ham Hill	Snodland East and Ham Hill	1375	1473
CHA (Part 2)	Snodland	Snodland west and Holborough Lakes	Snodland East and Ham Hill	Snodland west and Holborough Lakes	578	604

b) **Snodland West and Holborough Lakes:** is essentially the whole of the existing Polling District CHA apart from those roads moved into Snodland East and Ham Hill for reasons of electoral equality:

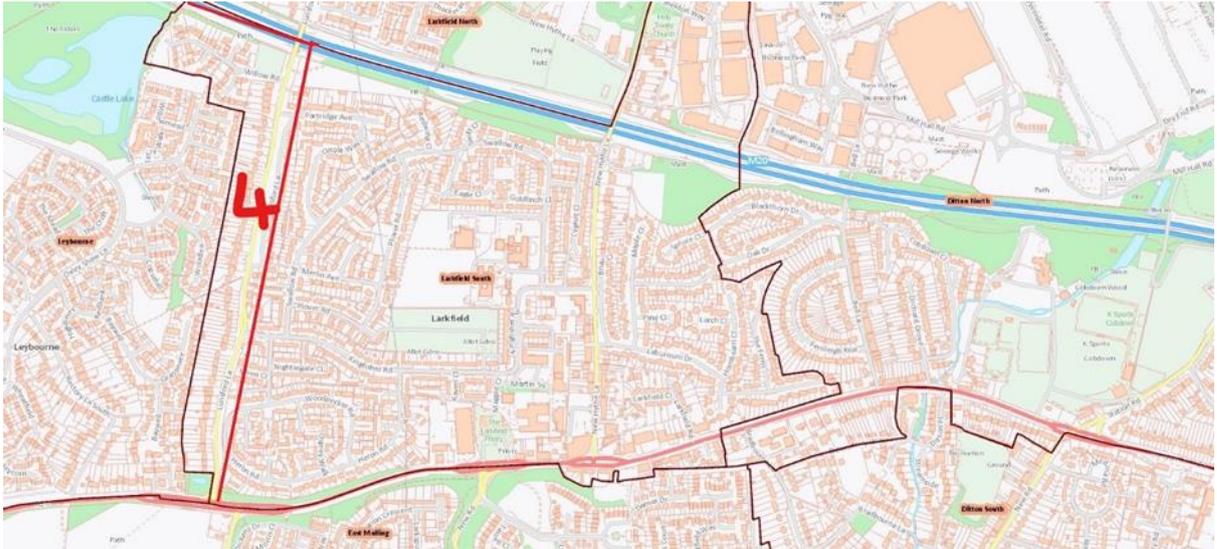
Polling district	Parish	Parish ward	Proposed ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2027
CHA (Part 1)	Snodland	Snodland West and Holborough Lakes	Snodland West and Holborough Lakes	Snodland West and Holborough Lakes	4351	4548

4.3.5 **Larkfield:** comprises the existing Larkfield North and Larkfield South wards, except for a small area of Larkfield South which is allocated into the proposed East Malling and Lunsford ward for the purposes of electoral equality. Ideally, Members would prefer a 3-member ward covering the existing area of Larkfield (North and South) and a 2-member ward covering East Malling, however, this is not possible under the forecast figures for 2027. As such, in order to create electoral equality an area around Lunsford Lane has been removed from this ward and placed in East Malling and Lunsford (see 4.3.6)

Polling district	Parish	Parish ward	Proposed ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2027
CEA	East Malling & Larkfield	Larkfield North Ward	Larkfield	Larkfield North	3558	3798
CFA (part 1)	East Malling & Larkfield	Larkfield South Ward	Larkfield	Larkfield South	3157	3365

4.3.6 **East Malling and Lunsford:** As referenced in 4.3.5, this proposed ward comprises the existing East Malling ward plus part of Larkfield South ward around Lunsford Lane and Willow Road as demonstrated on the map below (area marked '4'):

Polling district	Parish	Parish ward	Proposed ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2027
TEA	East Malling & Larkfield	East Malling Ward	East Malling and Lunsford	East Malling	3870	4197
CFA (part 2)	East Malling & Larkfield	Larkfield South Ward	East Malling and Lunsford	Larkfield South	251	267



The proposed East Malling and Lunsford ward is forecast to be at approximately 10% variance. However, in recent months there has been considerable progress at a couple of development sites within East Malling – Parkside (110 houses) and Forty Acres (250 houses) – that could either bring this proposed ward to a lower variance, or potentially enable the retention of the existing boundary between East Malling and Larkfield.

4.3.7 **West Malling:** The links between West Malling and Leybourne, which form an existing ward, are very strong and it is proposed to keep this arrangement. However, it is proposed that Birling, Ryarsh and Offham are included within this ward.

West Malling is an historic town that has acted as a focal point for the surrounding area for centuries. However, following the development of Kings Hill and the development of the Ashton Way bypass an obvious boundary has been created between East and West Malling. As such, this ward reflects the stronger links that West Malling now has with Leybourne and the surrounding rural areas to the north and west.

Offham has strong links to West Malling and Leybourne through the number 70 bus link, and looks to West Malling for all its services. Birling and Ryarsh are very closely linked with Ryarsh Primary School serving Birling, and strong road links between the two settlements. Both these villages look towards West Malling and Leybourne for their nearest GP practice.

The proposed name of West Malling reflects the fact that West Malling is the main town within the ward and acts as the main service centre for the rest of the ward:

Polling district	Parish	Further Description	Proposed ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2027
TDB	Birling		West Malling	Downs and Mereworth	359	380
TDD	Offham		West Malling	Downs and Mereworth	614	661

TDE	Ryarsh		West Malling	Downs and Mereworth	660	700
TQA	Leybourne		West Malling	West Malling and Leybourne	2343	2508
TQB	Leybourne	Leybourne Chase	West Malling	West Malling and Leybourne	1271	1298
TQC	West Malling		West Malling	West Malling and Leybourne	2018	2214

4.3.8 **Kings Hill:** comprises polling districts TKA and TKB covering Kings Hill parish. This ward accords with the wish of Members to see Kings Hill (not including the Airfield Estate) self-contained, recognising its strong sense of community identity. With only two access roads in and out of the settlement, it does not fit easily with any of its neighbours. Fortunately, it can retain its current 3-members based on future growth projections.

Polling district	Parish	Proposed ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2027
TKA	Kings Hill	Kings Hill	Kings Hill	2510	3466
TKB	Kings Hill	Kings Hill	Kings Hill	3759	4196

4.3.9 **Mereworth and Wateringbury:** comprises Mereworth and Wateringbury parishes (polling districts TKC, TDC and TPA) and adheres to the core local criteria of making sure Wateringbury and Mereworth are placed in the same ward. For Wateringbury, the closest connection it has to any another area in the borough is with Mereworth (via the A26), which are joined by the number 7 bus. Indeed, the road network to other parts of the borough either involves going into Maidstone borough (to reach East Peckham) or to navigate smaller roads (to East Malling). As such, a one-member ward is proposed.

The creation of this ward also allows for the Airfield Estate to move back to a ward with the rest of Mereworth Parish.

Polling district	Parish	Parish ward	Proposed ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2027
TKC	Mereworth	Airfield Ward	Mereworth and Wateringbury	Kings Hill	240	254
TDC	Mereworth	Village Ward	Mereworth and Wateringbury	Downs and Mereworth	568	622
TPA	Wateringbury		Mereworth and Wateringbury	Wateringbury	1564	1688

4.3.10 **Borough Green and Platt:** comprises the parishes of Borough Green and Platt, adhering to the core local criteria. This proposed ward reflects the closeness of the two communities, and like Aylesford and Ditton, development goes right up to the border between the two parishes (along the A25).

Whilst still clearly villages, this area is more densely populated than the surrounding parishes, with a focus on Borough Green High Street as the local centre and a number of other shared facilities such as King George’s Field which is situated near to the boundary. The issue of air quality (arising from the A25) is also a common issue faced by both parishes.

Polling district	Parish	Proposed ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2027
TAA	Borough Green	Borough Green and Platt	Borough Green and Long Mill	3158	3340
TAB	Platt	Borough Green and Platt	Borough Green and Long Mill	1356	1443

4.3.11 **Pilgrims:** comprises the rural parishes of Addington, Trottscliffe, Ightham, Stansted and Wrotham, and fits with the key local consideration that the existing ‘Wrotham, Ightham and Stansted’ ward looks more towards Addington and Trottscliffe than it does towards Borough Green, Platt or Plaxtol. Many of the challenges facing these villages are shared – such as protection of the Kent Downs AONB, the impact of the M20 and M26, and supporting the rural economy - and it is proposed calling this ward ‘Pilgrims’ because the Pilgrims Way runs through it from east to west.

Polling district	Parish	Proposed ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2027
TDA	Addington	Pilgrims	Downs and Mereworth	657	700
TDF	Trottscliffe	Pilgrims	Downs and Mereworth	421	449
TRA	Ightham	Pilgrims	Wrotham, Ightham and Stansted	1578	1686
TRB	Stansted	Pilgrims	Wrotham, Ightham and Stansted	438	461
TRC	Wrotham	Pilgrims	Wrotham, Ightham and Stansted	1469	1565

4.3.12 **Bourne:** covers the rural parishes of Plaxtol, Shipbourne, Hadlow and West Peckham that lie to the north and east of Tonbridge. Hadlow retains many services in its own right, many more than some of its smaller neighbours. As a result, the ward proposed has Hadlow at its heart, serving the surrounding rural villages and hamlets. This ward has the River Bourne running through its heart from the far north in Plaxtol to Golden Green in the south, as such it is recommended that this ward be referred to as ‘Bourne’ considering the shared identity.

The use of 'Bourne' also accords with The Bourne Partnership, which is a partnership between Hadlow Primary School and Shipbourne Primary School, which share an Executive Headteacher. In addition, Plaxtol Primary School has a catchment area that Hadlow and West Peckham.

Polling district	Parish	Parish ward	Proposed ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2027
TAC	Plaxtol		Bourne	Borough Green and Long Mill	854	919
TAD	Shipbourne		Bourne	Borough Green and Long Mill	398	414
TFB	Hadlow	Golden Green Ward	Bourne	Hadlow and East Peckham	432	475
TFC	Hadlow	Hadlow Ward	Bourne	Hadlow and East Peckham	2519	2690
TDG	West Peckham		Bourne	Downs and Mereworth	292	315

4.3.13 **East Peckham:** a proposed one-member ward comprising the parish of East Peckham. Given its size and location on the eastern boundary of the borough, a one-member ward that is co-terminous with the parish boundary is considered appropriate. Indeed, the main road that serves East Peckham (the A228) ensures that, in many ways, most of the residents in this area look more closely to Paddock Wood, Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone than other parts of Tonbridge and Malling borough. This is illustrated by the way in which the local community access education and health facilities.

Polling district	Parish	Proposed ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2027
TFA	East Peckham	East Peckham	Hadlow and East Peckham	2547	2724

4.3.14 **Tonbridge and Hildenborough:** the area of Tonbridge and Hildenborough covers a cluster that amount to 13 councillors. The Council feels that the existing boundaries do still substantially reflect the communities within this area and as such, in order to achieve electoral equality, the proposals look to alter boundaries in parts of the town that are most arbitrary:

- a) **Tonbridge North East:** comprises the whole of the existing Higham ward along with adjoining areas of Cage Green. The proposal for this ward has Martin Hardie Way at the heart, rather than on the edge as it currently now is, and includes those residential areas that look towards it as their local centre. Martin Hardie Way includes a range of local facilities and shops, along with a Methodist Church which is located nearby.

Polling district	Proposed ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2027
TBA (part 1)	Tonbridge North East	Cage Green	299	317
TBB (part 1)	Tonbridge North East	Cage Green	1137	1211
TGA	Tonbridge North East	Higham	3653	3926

The area of TBA proposed to be included in this ward covers Whistler Road (1-29 odd, 2-8 even), Knight Road, Landseer Close, Reynolds Close, Raeburn Close and Rembrandt Close. This area is marked '2' on the map below.



The area of TBB falling within this ward includes Royal West Kent Avenue, Norwich Avenue and all roads off Salisbury Road. These are the roads within the Polling District which are not included within Tonbridge East (see section on Tonbridge East)

b) **Tonbridge North West:** comprises the remainder of TBA (i.e., the part of the polling district not within Tonbridge North East as referenced above) and the existing Trench ward.

York Parade acts as the central focus for this ward, and this proposal would ensure that York Parade and the Sainsbury's over the road (which is now well connected following the recent installation of a pedestrian crossing) are no longer separated by an arbitrary ward boundary.

Polling district	Proposed ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2027
TBA (part 2)	Tonbridge North West	Cage Green	1524	1611
TMA	Tonbridge North West	Trench	3530	3802

- c) **Tonbridge East:** comprises the existing Medway ward at its core, along with parts of the existing Castle and Cage Green wards, along with a small area of the existing Vauxhall ward. It is proposed to call this area 'Tonbridge East' to avoid confusion with the unitary authority in Kent, which is called 'Medway'.

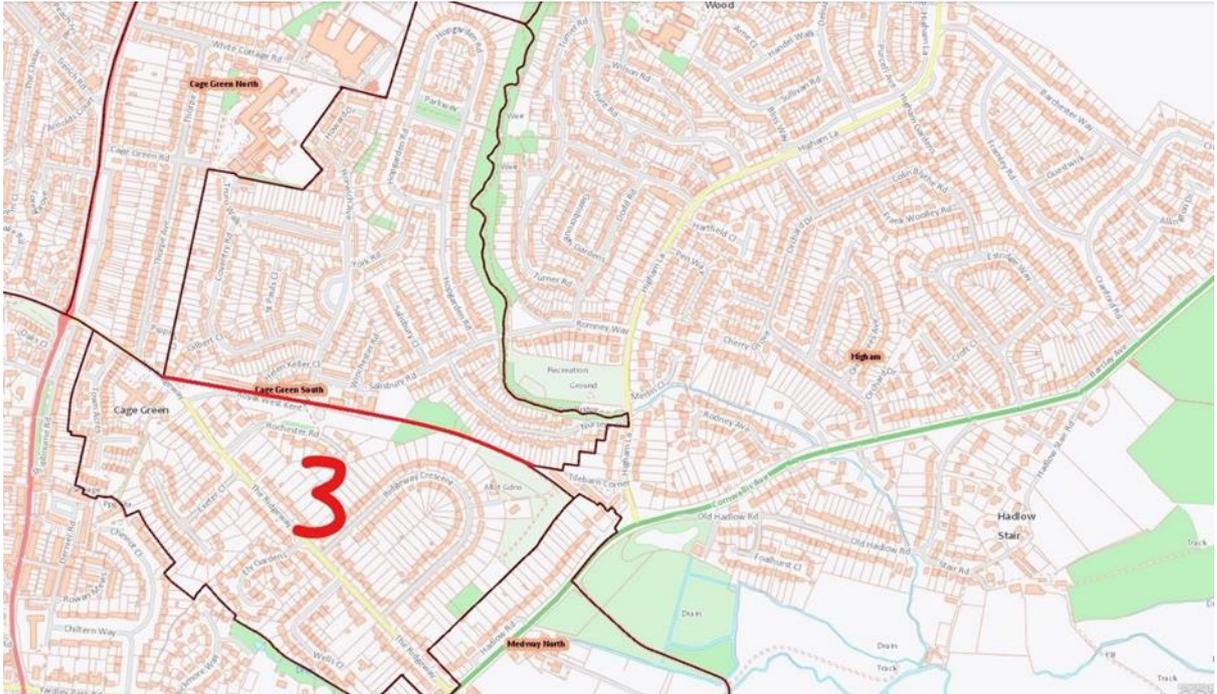
The creation of Tonbridge Retail Park in the last 5 years has created a new shopping area focus for residents in the east of the town, and as such residents in polling district TLB do look much more towards this area than Quarry Hill Parade, as such it is felt that it is appropriate that this Tonbridge East ward crosses both the River Medway and the railway line as it does so at the moment. In addition, there are strong footpath links between this area and the areas to the north of the river.

The inclusion of The Ridgeway and Yardley Park Road within this ward is related to the strong concerns that exist around traffic safety along the A26 at these junctions. For reasons of effective local government, it makes sense that these areas form part of one ward rather than be on the border of multiple wards.

The number 208 bus service also provides a strong link between The Ridgeway and the far south of this proposed ward.

Polling district	Proposed ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2027
TBB (part 2)	Tonbridge East	Cage Green	652	694
TCA (part 2)	Tonbridge East	Castle	640	685
TLA	Tonbridge East	Medway	2902	3065
TLB	Tonbridge East	Medway	2470	2643
TNA (part 2)	Tonbridge East	Vauxhall	59	62
TNB (part 2)	Tonbridge East	Vauxhall	56	63

It is proposed that The Ridgeway and all roads off it (excluding Royal West Kent Avenue and Thorpe Avenue), which are located within Polling District TBB are included within Tonbridge East (as marked '3' on the map below).



In addition, it is proposed that the area adjoining the Ridgeway, which is located within Polling District TCA, and comprises Yardley Park Road and all roads off it, including Haydens Mews, Cheviot Close, Dernier Road and Rowan Mews, is also included within Tonbridge East ward (as marked '7' on the map below).



Finally, it is proposed that an area of Pembury Road is also included within Tonbridge East – this covers 93-157 Pembury Road (TNA Polling District) – marked '5' on the map below - and 54-124 Pembury Road and Magnolia Close – marked '6' on the map below (TNB Polling District).



d) **Tonbridge South:** comprises the existing Judd ward and the majority of Vauxhall ward (bar the areas marked '5' and '6' in the maps above, which are proposed to join Tonbridge East for reasons of electoral equality). It is proposed to keep the existing boundary between the current Castle and Judd wards as this is essentially defined by the natural barrier of the River Medway.

This area has a very similar housing stock, built up around the time of the arrival of the railway in the 1840s. Quarry Hill Parade represents a focal point for facilities that serve the surrounding area, supported by the station itself at the northern end of the parade and St Stephens Church to the south. Haysden Country Park also provides the nearest high quality open space for residents within this ward.

In terms of transport connections, the 211 bus serves this ward, with Public Rights of Way also providing quick links to and from the nearest primary school and Sussex Road.

Polling district	Proposed ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2027
TNB (part 1)	Tonbridge South	Vauxhall	2456	2596
TNA (part 1)	Tonbridge South	Vauxhall	1338	1404
TJA	Tonbridge South	Judd	1223	1302
TJB	Tonbridge South	Judd	1363	1419
TJC	Tonbridge South	Judd	1342	1416

e) **Hildenborough and Tonbridge West:** when assessing the LGBCE criteria it was concluded that Hildenborough had much more in common with Tonbridge than its other neighbour, Shipbourne, where the only connection between them is one rural lane (Riding Lane). In addition, the vast majority of residents in Hildenborough live much closer to Tonbridge than Shipbourne. Indeed, the connections between Hildenborough and Tonbridge are strong and well-established:

- the railway station at Hildenborough lies on the line between Tonbridge and Sevenoaks, and the local rail user group (Tonbridge Line Commuters) covers issues at both Tonbridge and Hildenborough stations.

- The 402 bus provides a direct link along the B245 into Tonbridge, as does the 202 which heads to the Brookmead Estate.

There are also very strong ties when it comes to education establishments and health facilities. The ‘Tonbridge North and Hildenborough’ planning group at Kent County Council focuses on 6 primary schools across this area, and the local GP surgery is part of the Hildenborough and Tonbridge Medical Group.

Finally, the area of Hildenborough and Tonbridge West is united in the common issue of helping to mitigate flooding of the River Medway. The Leigh Expansion and Hildenborough Embankment Scheme is currently in development and is of huge interest to residents across the area, therefore this area would be best represented by the same ward in order to achieve effective local government.

Therefore, as Hildenborough is unable to retain its existing two members due to its size, the best solution is to join with some of Tonbridge in the existing Castle ward. As such, this ward comprises the parished area of Hildenborough, and the area of the existing Castle ward that lies west of the Shipbourne Road (i.e., not including the area around Yardley Park Road which will move in to Tonbridge East).

Polling district	Parish	Proposed ward	Existing ward	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2027
THA	Hildenborough	Hildenborough and Tonbridge West	Hildenborough	1616	1701
THB	Hildenborough	Hildenborough and Tonbridge West	Hildenborough	2140	2299
TCA (part 1)		Hildenborough and Tonbridge West	Castle	1408	1508
TCB		Hildenborough and Tonbridge West	Castle	1465	1585

5. Concluding Comments:

- 5.1 These proposals were agreed by Full Council on 13th July 2021 as the Council’s submission to the Commission in respect of warding arrangements in Tonbridge and Malling borough. The council considers that the submission meets the three key criteria – electoral equality, strong ward boundaries that reflect communities and will deliver effective and convenient local government in the Borough.

Appendix 1: Proposed Warding Pattern for Tonbridge & Malling Borough (Electoral Equality and Community Identity):

Name of Ward	Polling Districts	Number of Councillors	Electorate (2027)	Electors per Councillor	Average Electors per Councillor – 43	Variance (2027)	Community Identity
Aylesford	CAD, CAB, CAA and CBA1	3	7607	2535.7	2484.4	2%	All of the settlements in this ward fall within Aylesford Parish. Walderslade and Blue Bell Hill have strong links predominantly through the road connections, but also through the catchment area of Tunbury Primary School which extends into Blue Bell Hill. The A229 and Rochester Road provides a direct link between Blue Bell Hill and Aylesford, which has facilities that serve the local area, as well Aylesford Priory (which also hosts a regular Farmers Market and attracts visitors from a wide catchment), local Anglican church and community facilities.
Burham, Eccles and Wouldham	CCB, CCA and CAC.	2	5388	2694.0	2484.4	8%	Have been incorporated into one single ward in the past - these three villages share a common heritage and many shared facilities. The medical practice (currently based in both Eccles and Burham) extends to the whole area, and the catchment area for the three primary schools (at Peters Village, Burham and Eccles) all cater for children in other areas. The new community facilities in Peters Village (Wouldham Parish) will act as a further draw for residents in Eccles and Burham when they open up later on in 2021.
Ditton and Holtwood	CDA, CDB and CBA2	2	4683	2341.5	2484.4	-6%	Much of the current ward boundary between Ditton and the southern portion of Aylesford is relatively arbitrary with neighbours on the same street currently split between different wards. Woodlands shopping parade and nearby sports and community facilities (K Sports Cobdown and

							Ditton Community Centre) act as an attraction for the entire ward.
Snodland East and Ham Hill	CHA2, CGA and CGB.	2	4,498	2249.0	2484.4	-9%	<p>Snodland is a separate community in its own right, having an adopted Town Council in its name. Snodland is a single Anglican Church parish and has its own self-contained local facilities such as community centre; playing fields, parish run cemetery; town museum; central shopping centre; working men's club; and many Snodland based local organisations.</p> <p>Within this community, it is felt that the existing boundary does still reflect the communities in Snodland, and as such only a slight amendment has been made for electoral equality purposes.</p>
Snodland West and Holborough Lakes	CHA1	2	4,548	2274.0	2484.4	-8%	As per the above, with this area reflecting a more suburban and rural part of Snodland that has Potyns Sports Field and facilities at its core.
Larkfield	CEA and CFA1	3	7163	2387.7	2484.4	-4%	<p>This area of Larkfield acts as a single community linked by New Hythe and New Hythe Lanes. There is also a single Anglican church being Holy Trinity in New Hythe Lane called Larkfield Church. The schools serving Larkfield are situated off Swallow Road and many parents in both current wards send their children there. Larkfield Playing Fields are off New Hythe Lane with a good network of paths linking them into all parts of Larkfield including over the footbridge mentioned. The same applies to the Larkfield allotments off Kingfisher Road and the halls either side of the road bridge in New Hythe Lane at Larkfield Village Hall and Church Farm are extensively used by organisations based on Larkfield as a whole, such as Larkfield Active Retirement Association (LARA); Larkfield Ladies Club; and Larkfield Community Group as examples.</p>

East Malling and Lunsford	TEA and CFA2	2	4464	2232	2484.4	-10%	This area falls entirely within one Parish Council area (East Malling and Larkfield Parish Council), with a slight adjustment made with the boundary with southern Larkfield in order to achieve electoral equality. It has a strong identity and is served by a small community centre, with a local pub and Anglican church.
West Malling	TDB, TDD, TDE, TQA, TQB and TQC.	3	7761	2587.0	2484.4	4%	The rural settlements of Ryarsh and Birling have strong linkages with each other, being joined by the Birling/Ryarsh Road, and they have a much stronger community connection to Leybourne than they do to Snodland, which is not only more urban in nature but has a much weaker road network connection. Both Offham and Leybourne are closely linked to West Malling, which acts as a central hub for this local area.
Kings Hill	TKA and TKB	3	7662	2554.0	2484.4	3%	Kings Hill is a separate community in its own right. It has its own Parish Council, community and education facilities and a strong centre with a variety of shops, restaurants, public house, and pharmacy. It is a relatively new and growing community.
Mereworth and Wateringbury	TPA, TDC and TKC	1	2564	2564.0	2484.4	3%	Whilst it has a strong sense of community, Wateringbury is of an insufficient size to become a ward in its own right. Of the adjoining areas within the borough, it has the closest and most direct links to Mereworth via the A26.
Borough Green and Platt	TAA and TAB	2	4783	2391.5	2484.4	-4%	Borough Green has a vibrant High Street that acts as a draw for the ward. Borough Green and Platt also have excellent links between them, and share community facilities, for example there is a very strong connection demonstrated by their two primary schools each taking pupils from the other village.

Pilgrims	TRA, TRB, TRC, TDF and TDA	2	4861	2430.5	2484.4	-2%	Has a strong rural identity that is linked by the Pilgrims Way and has good connectivity between the villages within this ward. They have common issues such as the preservation of the Kent Downs AONB, supporting the rural economy and challenges around the M20/M26. Wrotham and Ightham are the main settlements in the ward, and offer a range of facilities to the surrounding area. Wrotham School has a catchment area that covers the whole area and as such acts as a hub for secondary education in the area.
Bourne	TAC, TAD, TDG, TFC and TFB	2	4813	2406.5	2484.4	-3%	A rural area of the Borough that falls within the hinterland of Tonbridge. This rural area has a number of villages and small settlements that have an historic connection to the River Bourne, which flows downstream from the Shipbourne and Plaxtol area and through Hadlow and surrounding areas. The area is also strongly connected through the work of education establishments and health facilities such as Hadlow Osteopath, which also serves Plaxtol and Shipbourne.
East Peckham	TFA	1	2724	2724.0	2484.4	10%	East Peckham has a strong identity, with a village centre that serves the local area, including a butchers, newsagents and small supermarket. East Peckham Primary School has a catchment that also acts as a hub for the Parish Council area. St Michaels is the Parish Church. Residents predominantly look outside of the borough for other facilities (GP service and secondary education)
Tonbridge North East	TGA, TBA2 and TBB1	2	5454	2727.0	2484.4	10%	Consists of the existing Higham Ward, along with similar adjoining part of suburban parts of Northern Tonbridge that currently are sited in Cage Green. This whole area feeds off Higham Lane, and is served by a local centre at Martin Hardie Way and the Woodlands Primary School.

Tonbridge North West	TMA and TBA1	2	5413	2706.5	2484.4	9%	Consists of the existing Trench ward and north Cage Green – this area has a local centre on York Parade that acts as a focal point. There are a number of community facilities that serve the local area, such as Tonbridge Baptist Church, the Six-in-One Club and Trenchwood Medical Centre.
Tonbridge East	TLA, TLB, TBB2, TCA2, TNA2 and TNB2	3	7212	2404	2484.4	-3%	Consists of the existing Medway ward, with expansion into some adjoining areas along The Ridgeway, Yardley Park Road and Pembury Road where the existing boundaries are less defined/more arbitrary. This area covers much of the commercial activity in the town along with much of the historic core, it is made up of a number of distinct communities in the town which feed off the A26. The number 208 bus service connects the south and north of this borough.
Tonbridge South	TJA, TJB, TJC, TNA1 and TNB1	3	8137	2712.3	2484.4	9%	Tonbridge South – comprises the Judd ward and the majority of Vauxhall. This area is defined by the River Medway to the North, and the railway line to the West and goes south to the borough boundary. It comprises a number of strong education institutions and local St Stephens Church, and has a central focus along Quarry Hill Parade.
Hildenborough and Tonbridge West	THA, THB, TCB and TCA1	3	7093	2364.3	2484.4	-5%	Strong connections along the B245 (London Road) between Sevenoaks and Tonbridge. Hildenborough has a number of local facilities which serve the community, but residents look to Tonbridge to access shopping, leisure facilities and bars and restaurants and as such have a much closer connect to Tonbridge than they do to Shipbourne. This area also has a shared history of flooding and flood management.
Total		43	106,828				

Explanation of Split Polling Districts:

CBA2 – Woodlands Road and surrounding area from Aylesford Parish (CBA1 is remainder of CBA Polling District)

CFA2 – Lunsford Lane south of the M20 and Willow Road (CFA1 is remainder of CFA Polling District)

CHA2 - Malling Road, Bramley Road, Chapel Road, Bullfields, Recreation Avenue, St Katherine's Lane, Wyvern Close, Orchard Way, Meadow Walk, Portland Place and High Street (CHA1 is the remainder of CHA Polling District)

TBA2 – Whistler Road (1-29 odd, 2-8 even), Knight Road, Landseer Close, Reynolds Close, Raeburn Close and Rembrandt Close (TBA1 is remainder of TBA Polling District)

TBB2 – The Ridgeway and all roads off it excluding Royal West Kent Avenue and Thorpe Avenue (TBB1 is remainder of TBB Polling District)

TCA2 – Yardley Park Road and all roads off it, including Haydens Mews, Cheviot Close, Dernier Road and Rowan Mews (TCA1 is remainder of TCA Polling District)

TNA2 – 93-157 Pembury Road (TNA1 is remainder of TNA Polling District)

TNB2 – 54-124 Pembury Road and Magnolia Close (TNB1 is remainder of TNB Polling District)

TONBRIDGE & MALLING WARDING PATTERNS PROPOSAL MAP

