LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION
2023 REVIEW OF SHROPSHIRE DIVISIONS
CONSULTATION ON DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS
Submission by David Murray

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Public Consultation On LGBCE Draft Recommendations

Revised Shropshire Divisions: 2 May 2023 to10 July 2023

Introduction

It has been determined that the Shropshire Unitary Council should have 74 Councillors in 2025 based on an average electorate of 3,369 electors in 2022, and an estimated 3,595 in 2028. The LGBCE is proposing 70 single-member divisions and two 2-member divisions in areas where it has not been possible to provide single-member divisions to meet the rules.

This response to the Draft Recommendations follows the order presented by the LGBCE in seven sections: North-Eastern Shropshire; North-Western Shropshire; Oswestry; Western & Central Shropshire; Shrewsbury; Southern Shropshire; and Eastern Shropshire.

Cheswardine, Hodnet and Shawbury (paragraphs 38 to 41)

It was good to see that Cheswardine and Hodnet are being retained unchanged, as the BCE is proposing to add these two divisions to The Wrekin constituency, and it will avoid problems with inconsistent boundaries. Most rural parishes do not want to be lumped in with large market towns or urban areas, and this view has been respected here too.

Shawbury is largely unchanged, with just the southernmost Hadnall Parish joining the Tern division, but otherwise keeping the other parishes (like Clive and Grinshill) together in the one division. A suggestion to the BCE consultation that Shawbury should join the other two divisions in The Wrekin seems likely to be rejected, despite its odd boundary with Hodnet, and the electorate of the North Shropshire constituency now just 10 below the maximum !

Market Drayton East & Rural, Market Drayton North, and South (paragraphs 42 to 46)

It was clear that Market Drayton already had divisions over the county average, and it would not have been possible to include Adderley and Moreton Say without exceeding the maximum, although the justification for adding the Western Way Parish Ward from the south of Adderley to Market Drayton East was accepted by the LGBCE which also has the added advantage of keeping the Prees division within range (qv).

The new boundaries for the North and South divisions work well, using major roads where possible. Adding in the Forest Road area to the South division was a logical adjustment, allowing the Shrewsbury Road to form the main boundary, with Shropshire Street and part of Frogmore Road to separate the East from the South division. This works for the town.

Prees, Whitchurch N, Whitchurch South & Rural, and Whitchurch W (paras. 47 to 49)

Prees was forecast to be well over the maximum by 2028, and the LGBCE has accepted the transfer of Ightfield parish to Whitchurch South & Rural, where it fits in well with the adjacent Ash parish, and allows some of the urban area to be transferred to Whitchurch North. Adding the Western Way area to Market Drayton from Adderley reduces the 2028 electorate from 10.8% to +5.6% bringing it within range.

In the initial consultation it was suggested that Wayland Road and Wayland Close were to remain in the South division and this has been accepted by the LGBCE. Maybe leaving Wheatsheaf Drive in the South division would have bolstered its electorate compared to West, although with the geography, it is preferable that larger rural divisions have lower electorates than compact urban ones.

A sensible change to the boundary between North and West was to include The Brambles at the bottom of The Firs off the Chester Road in North to avoid its isolation in the West division. This anomaly was noticed by the LGBCE and corrected in its draft proposals.

Wem Rural & Whixall and Wem Town (paragraphs 50 to 53)

Wem is currently a 2-member division, and the LGBCE has rejected proposals in the initial consultation to create two single-member divisions by splitting Wem east and west or north and south, with Wem Rural divided into three segments. The LGBCE points out that the 2-member division is forecast to retain excellent electoral equality, whereas Wem town on its own would have 41% more electors than average, and leave the rural area short. Instead, the LGBCE has identified the possibility of a Wem town of +10% cutting off the area to the east of the railway line, and south of the River Roden west of the railway line in the Rural area with an electorate of -10%. Combining these two areas would give a variation of 0%.

The areas suggested by the LGBCE look to the town and have little to do with the rural area surrounding the town. They would not be happy to be put in with Whixall in a rural division, and will probably object to that proposal. Combining the two areas (as now) has worked well for the last 15 years, and I am sure that a continuation would be welcomed.

The LGBCE has already had to propose two other 2-member divisions so it is not as if Wem would be the 'odd one out'. It is unlikely anyone will come up with 'an alternative which reflects community identity and the other statutory criteria' in this consultation. As the LGBCE 'remain open to the possibility of retaining a two-member division in this area' depending on the views expressed by Wem and others, that solution should be adopted.

Ellesmere Urban, Selattyn & Gobowen, St Martin's and The Meres (paras. 54 to 60)

Ellesmere Urban should remain as a compact urban division with the average electorate. This view is supported by the LGBCE and fits well with the other surrounding divisions.

Most respondents in the initial consultation argued that St Martin's parish should remain undivided and within a single division. But an examination of its position in the north-west corner of the county makes it virtually impossible to achieve without splitting up a number of other parishes in the neighbourhood to their detriment.

Local evidence suggests that St Martin's looks towards Weston Rhyn parish, and trying to create two single-member divisions would require St Martin's village and parish to be split which would not satisfy your other respondents. A 2-member division solves this problem. It is not likely that anyone could come up with an acceptable alternative that reflects the local communities. A 2-member division agreed by the LGBCE needs strong support as the only viable solution. It was suggested in the initial consultation that it only needed the transfer of one additional Ellesmere Rural parish (NPD) to give St Martin's -2% with The Meres balanced out with +2% as the figures published on 2 May showed. But the LGBCE has chosen to unite Ellesmere Rural by adding Tetchill (NPC) to St Martin's as well, giving it +3%, leaving The Meres with a mere -9% by clandestinely changing Appendix A to suit !

That leaves 3 whole polling districts of NLA, NLB & NLC to form a single-member division of Selattyn & Gobowen spot on the county average without an odd Oswestry Rural ward.

Llanymynech, Ruyton & Baschurch, St Oswald & Whittington (paragraphs 61 to 64)

With Ruyton & Baschurch the LGBCE has accepted a proposed extension to allow the entirety of Walford Heath ... to be united within a single division. However, the LGBCE has also included Old Woods on the grounds of using the railway line as a stronger boundary; but this cuts Old Woods in half instead. It can be seen from the following maps that it has properties and electors on both sides of the railway crossing. The new boundary should therefore leave the railway line just north of Old Woods (the wood!) skirt Oldwood Coppice up to the Ruyton & Baschurch boundary. Or it might be more logical to include Old Woods and the Coppice with Old Woods (the hamlet) as they obviously have a historical link !

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ELECTION MAPS

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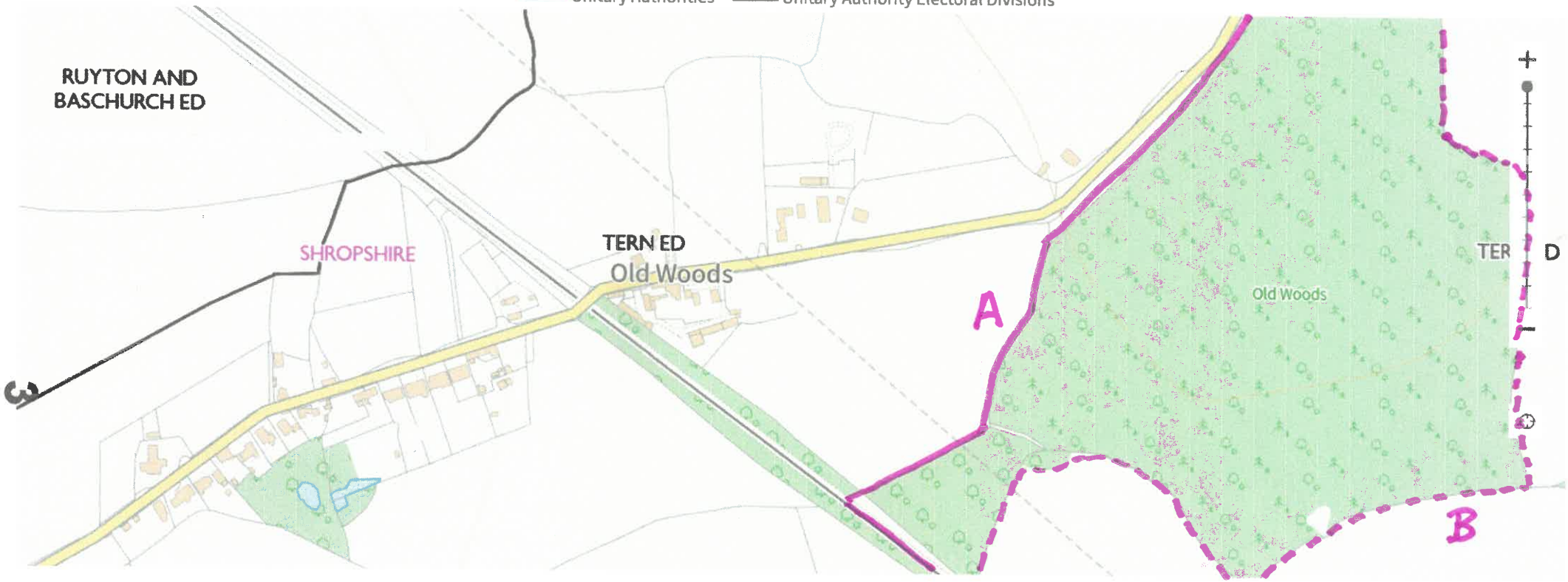

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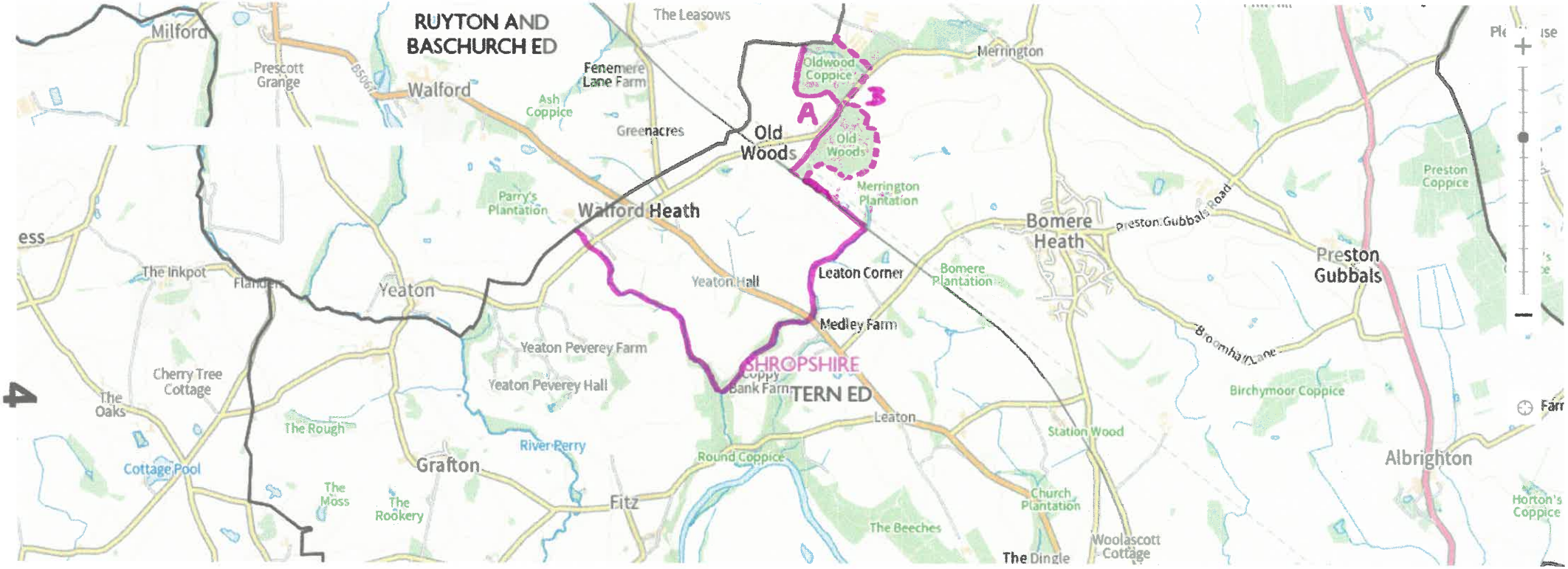

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The LGBCE has also adopted the proposal for St Oswald to unite the Oswestry Rural parish in one division with good electoral quality. Polling District NLD was not needed by the new single-member Selattyn & Gobowen division as Weston Rhyn is now included with the St Martin's 2-member division. The LGBCE accepts Llanymynech and Whittington divisions unchanged. Other proposals were not within the power of LGBCE to implement !

Oswestry (paragraphs 65 to 68)

The new boundary for the existing Oswestry West (with the NGC polling district from East) should follow the railway line as it does between the existing South and East, and not the Gobowen Road, which has properties both sides of it which would be trapped between it and the railway. With that addition, the division should become Oswestry North, both from a geographical point of view, and to complement Oswestry South beneath it. Oswestry NE and Oswestry SE are unbalanced by 11% but correcting this could lose the clear boundary between the two along Cabin Lane. They are both within range, so have to be acceptable.

Morda & Sweeney may well look towards Oswestry, as other rural areas round towns do, but Morda belongs in Oswestry Rural and would upset the balance if added to Oswestry South. It is noted that the River Morda provides something of a division between the two.

Bishop's Castle, Burnell & Bayston Hill and Strettondale (paragraphs 69 to 75)

The demand for a single-member Bayston Hill division with an excessive electorate has not abated in the 15 years since a 3-member division was created with Sutton & Column. There are serious objections to splitting Bayston Hill along Lyth Hill Road, Pulley Lane or anywhere else, so the LGBCE has opted for a 2-member division with Burnell. In order to do so it has had to shed other parishes and 3 Severn Valley ones to adjacent divisions.

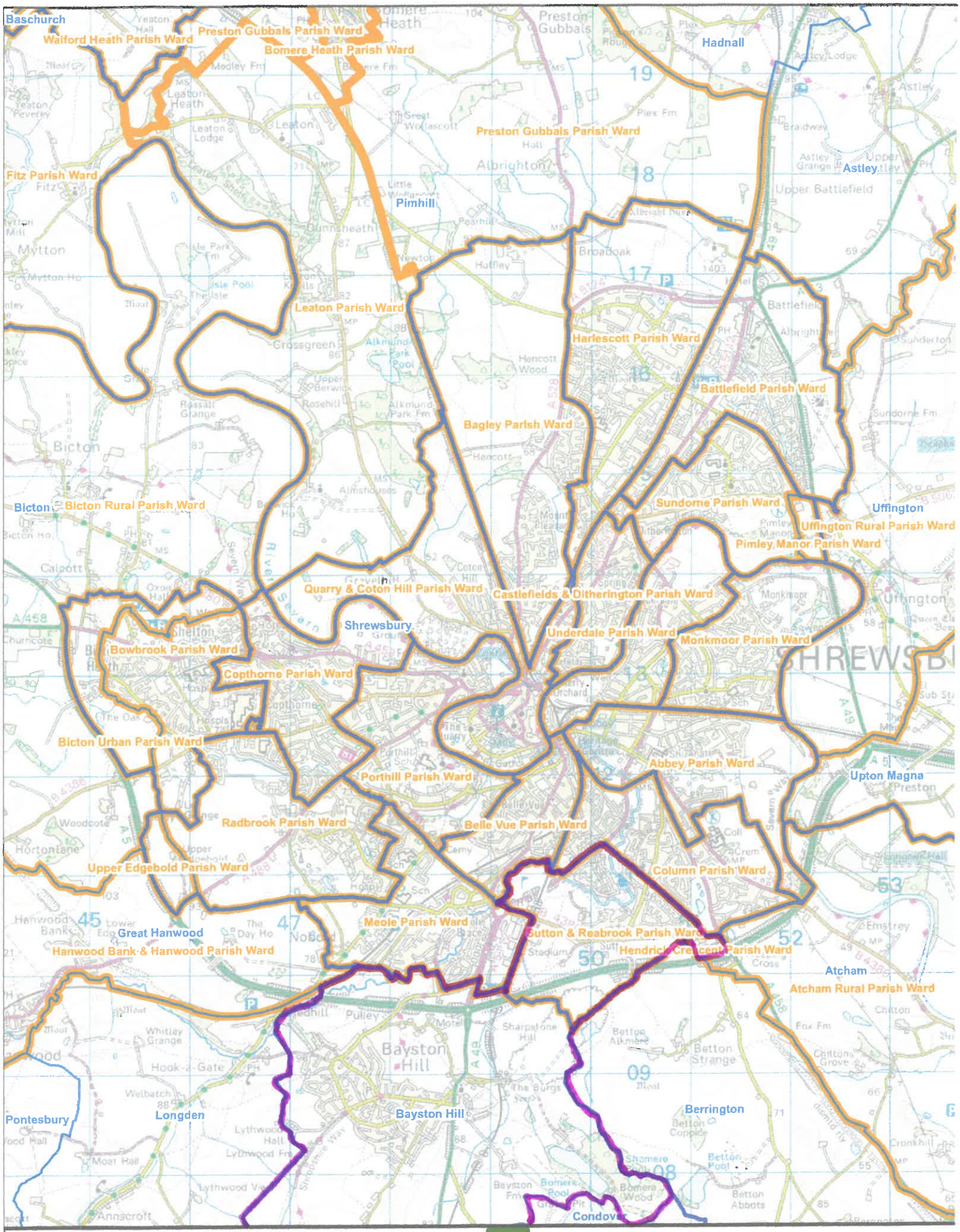
It is worth referring back to the Final Recommendations of the last Review in 2008 when this combination was rejected outright. Paragraph 43 stated, "However, in the Bayston Hill area, of the two options we considered, there was stronger evidence in opposition to combining Bayston Hill in a division with the rural parishes to the south than in support of our draft recommendations." (which ended up with an unsatisfactory 3-member division)

In paragraph 95, the impasse persuaded the Boundary Committee to undertake a further four-week period of limited further consultation to get further views on electoral arrangements in this area. Paragraph 97 echoed paragraph 43 in opposing the Burnell option and asserting a lack of commonality between Bayston Hill and the rural parishes to the south.

Paragraphs 101 and 102 listed the parishes objecting: Acton Burnell, Pitchford, Frodesley, Ruckley & Langley group of parishes, Cardington Parish Council, Condover Parish Council, and Leebotwood & Longnor. A joint letter was received from the parish councils of All Stretton, Bayston Hill, Cardington, Church Pulverbatch, Condover, Leebotwood & Longnor, and Longden echoing these sentiments.

Paragraph 104 noted that the evidence received in support of a two-member Bayston Hill & Burnell division was not substantive. The LGBCE should also 'note' that *the BCE plans to transfer the Burnell and Severn Valley divisions from Shrewsbury to the South Shropshire constituency,* but not Bayston Hill, so it would be sensible to keep them separate.

A better bet is to create a new 2-member division with Oteley (note spelling) & Reabrook, although Oteley is a family name (from Ellesmere) and not a place in Shrewsbury, despite the name of the road. (Otley is in Yorkshire near Ilkley on the River Wharfe). Maybe it would be better to call it just Reabrook, and the new division Bayston Hill & Reabrook. Combining these two now: 4,112 + 2,628 = 6,740 (0% variation for 2) and 4,398 + 3,261 = 7,659 in 2028 (+6.5% for 2). This gives good electoral quality without splitting Bayston Hill.



The Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Parish Warding

Shrewsbury

County

Draft Recommendations

Parishes

Parish Ward

0 0.25 0.5 1 Kilometers

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BAYSTON HILL & REABROOK — 6

The LGBCE has already combined Bayston Hill into a 2-member division with the Burnell division, which is not satisfactory, and will probably raise the same objections from the other Burnell parishes as it did 15 years ago. People have long memories in these rural areas. Combining Bayston Hill with Reabrook avoids exceptionally poor electoral equality, or a split of Bayston Hill (which the majority are against in any form) and is more compact and better balanced in this alternative 2-member division, rather than with the 3-member division now. Two more-urban areas are a better match, despite the declared autonomy of Bayston Hill. The previous Review referred to Schedule 11 of the 1972 Act about not splitting existing links, but made no mention of not linking different communities, as has to be done with all rural communities in order to create divisions with good electoral equality.

Column & Sutton would remain as a single-member division with 3,180 (-6%) in 2022 and 3,729 (+4%) in 2028. Burnell can then reclaim the 6 parishes from Bishop's Castle and Severn Valley, and return Harley from Much Wenlock to the Severn Valley division where it shares with Cressage and Sheinton in a combined parish council, rather than splitting it.

It is not strictly necessary to add the grouped parishes of Smethcott, Woolstaston and All Stretton to Bishop's Castle in addition to Church Pulverbatch on the grounds of meeting the county average, and shedding some of the Burnell parishes to accommodate the very much larger Bayston Hill parish in a 2-member division. Edgton Parish was against **any** increase in the size of the Bishop's Castle division. Church Pulverbatch alone brings it within range, similar to that of Chirbury & Worthen, and Clun. There is a good road south from Pulverbatch down the valley to Stitt and Bridges, thence to Norbury, Lydham and on to Bishop's Castle. But less good communication from the 3 other parishes in the shadow of the Long Mynd, which would make contact difficult, particularly in the winter months.

There seems no good reason to change the name of Church Stretton, a name everyone is familiar with, to Strettondale, or as some have suggested 'The Strettons'. The new division does not even include All Stretton parish, though Church Stretton has an All Stretton ward. What next? Cravendale for Craven Arms? The names could both be Shropshire cheeses!

Chirbury & Worthen, Longden, Loton, Rea Valley and Tern (paragraphs 76 to 80)

There is support for adding Westbury ward from Loton to bring Chirbury & Worthen within range. Other suggestions, such as disbanding Chirbury and Worthen, would cause major disruption to the surrounding area and not result in good electoral equality. It is not a good idea to bring North Shropshire wards into the Shrewsbury area to compensate, with some proposals naming Melverley and/or Knockin from the Llanymynech division as suitable. It is good to see that the LGBCE has adopted the proposal to add Ford to Loton from the Longden division which seems a much better compromise than some of the others, and the Yockleton ward towards Shrewsbury should stay within the revised Loton division.

Pontesbury Parish Council was happy with the current arrangement, and the LGBCE has kept the Rea Valley division unchanged. Bicton has been added to the Longden division to replace the loss of Ford, and this also reduces the spread of the Tern division around the north of Shrewsbury. This revision should be supported, as the proposal to split Tern in half carved up a number of parishes and resulted in poor electoral equality in both halves.

The LGBCE has adopted the proposal for the Tern division, adding just the Hadnall parish from Shawbury to replace the loss of Bicton, and giving good electoral equality, with Astley, Upton Magna and Withington parishes, and the majority of Pimhill and Uffington parishes.

Introduction to the Shrewsbury parishes (paragraphs 81 & 82)

Initial submissions based their proposals on the existing divisions, and the LGBCE has based its draft recommendations on these. It is noted that the Shrewsbury Town Council only commented on the external boundary of the parish, which would require a future Community Governance Review to modify.

Bagley, Battlefield, Castlefields & Ditherington, Harlescott, Quarry & Coton Hill, and Sundorne (paragraphs 83 to 86)

All submissions agreed on keeping the River Severn as a boundary for these six divisions. Keeping Bagley and Harlescott unchanged is supported, and the LGBCE adopts a Heath Farm modification if one is identified by the proposer which meets the statutory criteria.

It was proposed that in addition to the Albert Road area, Rosedale, Roseway, Rosemede, Roselyn, Haughmond Road, and Harlescott Close should also join Sundorne in exchange for returning the small STC square of Old Heath to Battlefield to make a clearer boundary. Old Heath is separate to the rest of Sundorne, whereas the 'Roses' are directly adjacent, and it seems odd that the LGBCE did not adopt this additional element of that proposal.

Abbey, Column & Sutton, Monkmoor and Underdale (paragraphs 87 to 92)

The addition of Corsten Drive to Monkmoor is accepted, and the Council's proposal for the Underdale division. The LGBCE considered that the railway line, like the River Severn was a strong and clear boundary that they did not intend to cross. Instead, they extended the boundary of the Abbey division to the south along the Wenlock and Ebnal Roads, including the Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology. This seems to work well with the Column & Sutton division, bringing the electoral equality in range, with its southern boundary along Thieves Lane. There seems to be no reason why these revisions should not be supported.

Belle Vue, Meole and Oteley (note spelling) & Reabrook (paragraphs 93 to 95)

It is noted that the LGBCE has mainly adopted the Council's proposals for these divisions. The southern boundary of Oteley & Reabrook now follows the parish boundary instead of the A5. It seems sensible to create a viable parish ward in the Hendrick Crescent area for this division from Atcham, and a pity that a similar one would not be viable in the adjacent Green Crescent area from Berrington. Hopefully a Community Governance Review could solve this anomaly, and keep the whole residential area north of the A5 in Shrewsbury.

The LGBCE has referred to the name as Otley, although Otley is near to Ilkley on the River Wharfe in Yorkshire, and not the River Severn in Shrewsbury ! Oteley is the name of the Road, but it does not exist as a place in Shrewsbury. Oteley is the name of a family based in a park to the east of Ellesmere, who may have had connections with Shrewsbury. It would be a good idea to drop the Oteley name and call the division just Reabrook, as the Sutton name has remained with the Column division.

Bicton Heath, Copthorne, Porthill and Radbrook (paragraphs 96 to 101)

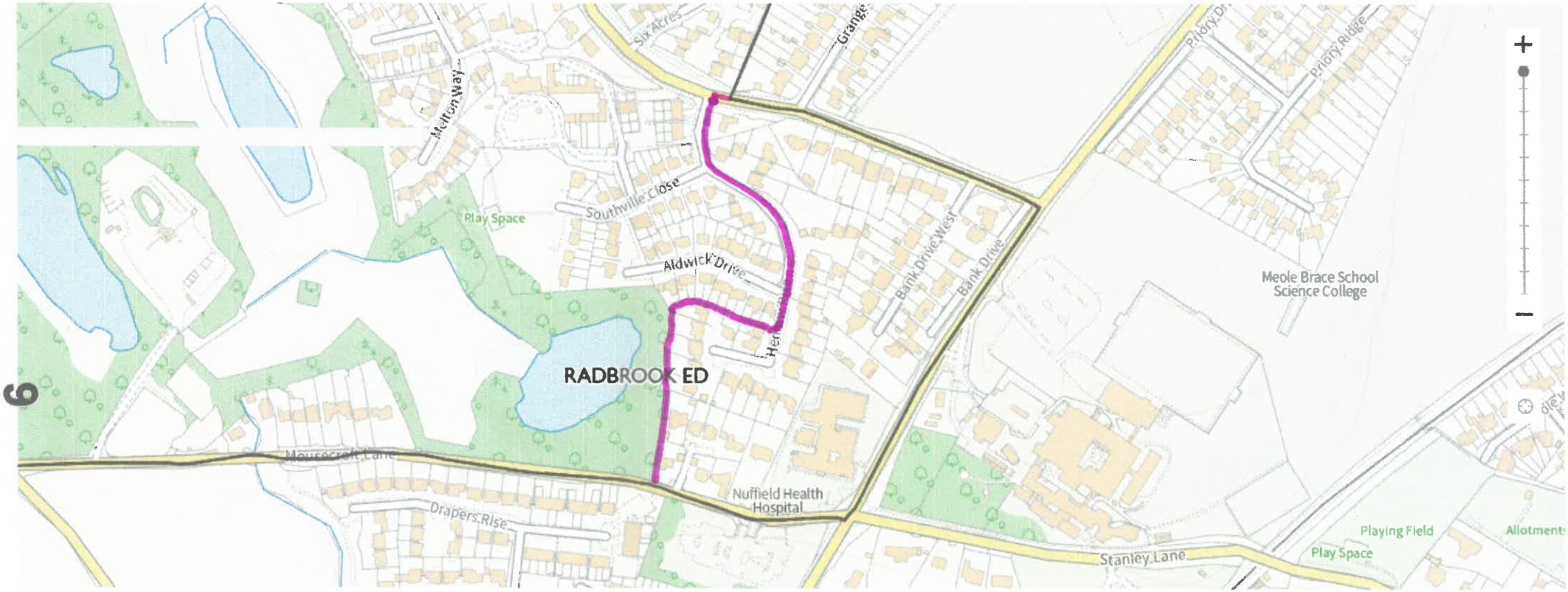
The adjustment between Belle Vue and Porthill is supported, although it is assumed that the area in question is Roman Close, and not Roman Way. It was good that the area of Ridgebourne Road was transferred from Radbrook to Porthill too, to help the electoral equality. However, this leaves Radbrook with +12% over the county average. The number of electors involved in the Six Acres estate would have transferred the excess to Meole, Possibly a smaller area around the Nuffield Health Hospital (Bank Drive, Bank Drive West, Bank Farm Road and Henlow Rise) could go to Meole to balance out the electoral equality.

The decision about the name Bicton Heath or Bowbrook is up to the people in that area. But the proposed addition and the Copthorne and Porthill modifications are supported.

ELECTION MAPS

BISHOP'S CASTLE ED

Unitary Authorities — Unitary Authority Electoral Divisions



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Broseley, Much Wenlock and Severn Valley (Paragraphs 102 to 109)

Broseley will remain as a division, and after careful consideration the LGBCE has opted to retain the existing division with Broseley Wood in the neighbouring Much Wenlock division. If Broseley Wood were to be included, residents in the Bridge Road, Spout Lane area may feel isolated. The possibility of substituting Jackfield and the eastern part of the division for Broseley Wood was raised, taking its place in the Much Wenlock division. The LGBCE will welcome further evidence on this, as well as on a possible extension of Broseley Wood to provide a better boundary than at present. But a mixed response will leave it as it is now !

The LGBCE has rightly rejected the split of Severn Valley with part of Tern which would have had poor electoral equality below the minimum. They have adopted the existing division with some parishes transferred out to keep the 2028 electorate below the maximum, leaving it with seven complete parishes (sic) although Atcham will be donating some of its electorate north of the A5 to Shrewsbury. According to the LGBCE figures in Appendix A, Severn Valley would have 2,781 now (-17%) and 3,529 in 2028 (-2%). The 2028 figure is based on ~450 new houses on the site of the old Ironbridge Power Station.

However, the LGBCE moved Harley into Much Wenlock from Severn Valley. This has to be returned as Harley is part of an active Cressage, Harley & Sheinton Parish Council, with its Parish Plan, started in 2012, revised in 2017 with an on-going Action Plan and website. On top of that, Harley is on the opposite side of Harley Hill from Much Wenlock at the northern end of Wenlock Edge, so there is a geographical lack of commonality which needs to be corrected. This will improve the equality of Severn Valley by 152 (2022) and 155 (2028).

Apart from Harley, there needs to be a further reversion in Much Wenlock. A 2-member Burnell & Bayston Hill is rejected for all the reasons listed in the previous Review. And no doubt the smaller Burnell parishes will object as they did before. On that basis, Burnell would return to be a single-member division, and as proposed in the initial consultation, the three parishes of Church Preen, Hughley and Kenley from Severn Valley would stay in the Burnell division in addition to Cound Parish Council which is already there in the LGBCE's draft recommendations. As a result of this, the submission from Easthope, Shipton and Stanton Long can be respected, which was to remain together in the same division, preferably in Much Wenlock which will remain as it is now with a +6% variance.

The three parishes had been moved into the Brown Clee division, but with the decision to include Astley Abbots in Brown Clee, it was becoming too large at +8% for a division with a large geographical spread around the market town of Bridgnorth. Making this correction reduces the variance to -2.5% the same as Burnell without the 3 parishes of All Stretton, Smethcott and Woolstaston, which the LGBCE put in with Bishop's Castle. As commented earlier, there are not such good communication links between these and Bishop's Castle, and they could be returned to Burnell, boosting its electoral variance to +7% again.

Brown Clee, Cleobury Mortimer, Highley and Stottesdon (paragraphs 110 to 113)

It is good that the town of Cleobury Mortimer has not been split to create 2 single-member divisions, and has its own division to the south of the pair, just under the county average. The northern part, where the name Stottesdon has been adopted, would have struggled to be within range without the addition of 3 parishes: Cleeton St Mary ward from Bitterley and Aston Botterell and Middleton Scriven from Brown Clee. These fit well with the geography of the area and keep Stottesdon in range with -9% from -6% in 2022. The LGBCE noted that Cleeton St Mary is separated from the rest of Bitterley with roads towards Stottesdon. In this case the split of the parish does offer a good reflection of community identity and it is to be hoped that the ward will also recognise the benefits of being with its local division. It was only necessary to add Billingsley to Highley. Chelmarsh looks towards Bridgnorth.

Burnell 1-member without Bayston Hill

Polling District		2022	2028
SGA	Acton Burnell PC	236	295
SGE	Condover Ward	708	720
SGF	Dorrington Ward	566	657
SGG	Ryton Ward	211	227
SGH	Stapleton Ward	218	230
SGI	Frodesley PC	135	139
SGJ	Leebotwood PC	196	206
SGK	Longnor PC	223	228
SGL	Pitchford PC	85	90
SGM	Ruckley/Langley	61	75
SSD	Church Preen PC	75	78
SSE	Cound PC	389	398
SSH	Hughley PC	48	49
SSI	Kenley PC	103	115
Total electorate:		**3254**	**3506**
% from average:		**- 3.4**	**- 2.5**

Much Wenlock division from Shropshire

Polling District		2022	2028
LQA	Barrow PC	133	133
LQB	Barrow PC	425	431
LQC	Broseley Wood	248	253
LQD	Easthope + PC	73	78
LQE	Much Wenlock	1118	1421
LQF	Much Wenlock	1175	1202
LQG	Shipton + PC	100	112
LQH	Stanton Long PC	175	180
Total electorate:		**3517**	**3810**
% from average:		**+ 4.4**	**+ 6.0**

This keeps Much Wenlock very much the same as now with Easthope, Shipton and Stanton Long (348/370 electors) asking the LGBCE to remain together, preferably in the Much Wenlock division.

The total is very similar to the LGBCE one by returning Church Preen, Hughley & Kenley (226/242 electors) to Burnell, but leaving All Stretton, Smethcott and Woolstaston (330/338 electors) with the LGBCE's Bishop's Castle for equality.

Harley should return to Severn Valley, the other side of Wenlock Edge from Much Wenlock, as Harley works closely with Cressage and Sheinton in S Valley.

Brown Clee division, modified Jun 2023

Polling District		2022	2028
LCA	Astley Abbots	397	390
LFA	Acton Round PC	105	105
LFC	Aston Eyre PC	59	59
LFE	Burwarton PC	93	101
LFF	Chelmarsh PC	432	445
LFG	Chetton PC	286	371
LFH	Cleobury N PC	86	86
LFI	Deuxhill PC	21	21
LFJ	Ditton Priors PC	659	707
LFK	Eardington PC	497	499
LFL	Glazeley PC	39	39
LFN	Monkhopton PC	162	197
LFO	Morville PC	322	336
LFP	Neenton PM	106	108
LFQ	Upton Cressett	40	40
Total electorate:		**3304**	**3504**
% from average:		**- 1.9**	**- 2.5**

Clee, Clun, Corvedale and Craven Arms (paragraphs 114 to 116)

There was agreement about the Clee division with two parishes joining Cleobury Mortimer, and Cleeton St Mary joining Stottesdon. Adding Cardington to Corvedale from Burnell was accepted and was supported by Rushbury Parish Council listing the links between the two.

Craven Arms covers the same area as it did as part of a 2-member division with Church Stretton. The different nature of the two towns was recognised and enabled these two to have their own divisions, as had been demanded unsuccessfully during the last Review.

The LGBCE accepted the addition of Mainstone into the Clun division, which fits in with its boundary geographically and has a direct route to Clun alongside the River Unk. With only ~80 electors it was just enough to bring Clun in range with -8% without adding more than was necessary by splitting parishes like Hopesay, which was rejected by the Boundary Committee when it was suggested in the 2008 Review (paragraph 163).

Ludlow East, Ludlow North and Ludlow South (paragraphs 117 to 120)

It was agreed to keep Ludlow North unchanged. The different opinions were to do with the transfer of part of Ludlow South to Ludlow East to even up their electorates within range.

There is limited scope to expand Ludlow East. Ludlow North is already at -8% and the LGBCE considers that the parish boundary along the A49 is a particularly clear and strong boundary. It is not keen to broach it for Ludlow East, despite the fact that Ludlow *South* represents the Ludford area to the *north* ! The result of adding Baker Close, Ballard Close and Vashon Close to East along with Dahn Drive, on the significant forecast expansion of Ludlow South, means East will get Close to South with around 3,400 electors (-5%) each.

Albrighton, Shifnal North, Shifnal Rural and Shifnal South (paragraphs 121 to 127)

This area has been under-represented with three councillors for the last 15 years, despite objections raised at the time that Bridgnorth was grossly over-represented with four, and had to bring in the Astley Abbots and Tasley parishes to try to bolster its electoral numbers. This time the allocation has been reversed, meaning major boundary changes in these areas than in other parts of Shropshire. In practice it has worked well with the proposal to have Shifnal town split into North and South divisions. The LGBCE has adopted this suggestion to put forward their own proposal and test the response.

There was some ambiguity in suggesting the boundary between North & South divisions should run along the B4379 because, as the Newport Road, the B4379 comes down from the north into Shifnal High Street and The Broadway. It should have defined the route as the B4379 along Shrewsbury Road which would have made it clearer. However, after the Shrewsbury Road there is not a clear boundary, as it snakes up Tudor Way to the south of Curriers Lane (not Way). It would be preferable for this boundary to continue up the B4379 in The Broadway and then follow the centre of Curriers Lane to the existing boundary at Greenfields Crescent. St Andrew's Close and south of Curriers Lane would join the South.

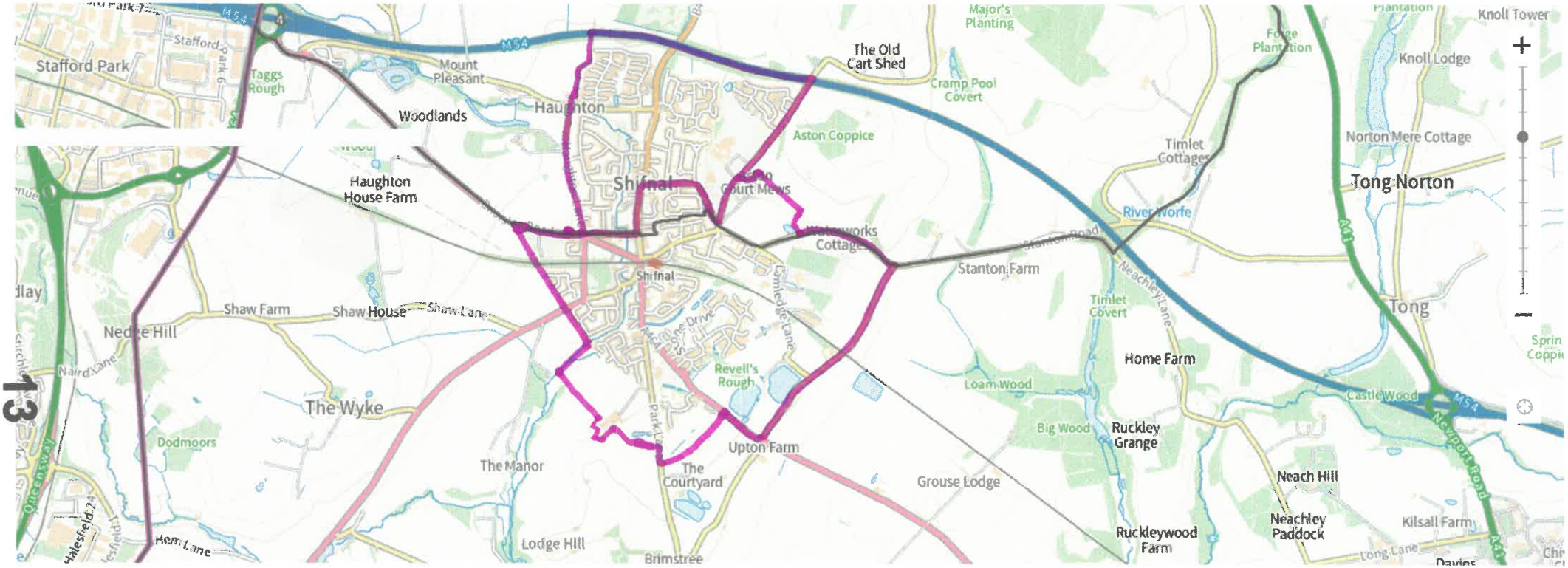
A further revision is needed for Aston Court Mews. This sits to the east of Coppice Green Lane and has no connection to the residential area in Shifnal North on the other side of the Shifnal Primary and Idsall Schools. It has 18 properties and 27 registered electors, mainly retired, and should be in Shifnal South to which they have direct access south along the Coppice Green Lane. The clear eastern boundary of Shifnal North should therefore run up the whole length of Coppice Green Lane to the M54. To the south-east, the new boundary of South crosses open countryside. It should follow the road from Upton Farm to Stanton Road, and then west along Stanton Road to the junction with the boundary from Aston Court Mews. The otherwise isolated Waterworks Cottages would then join Shifnal South.

Ordnance Survey

ELECTION MAPS

CLICK INSIDE A BOUNDARY FOR MORE INFO

Unitary Authorities — Unitary Authority Electoral Divisions



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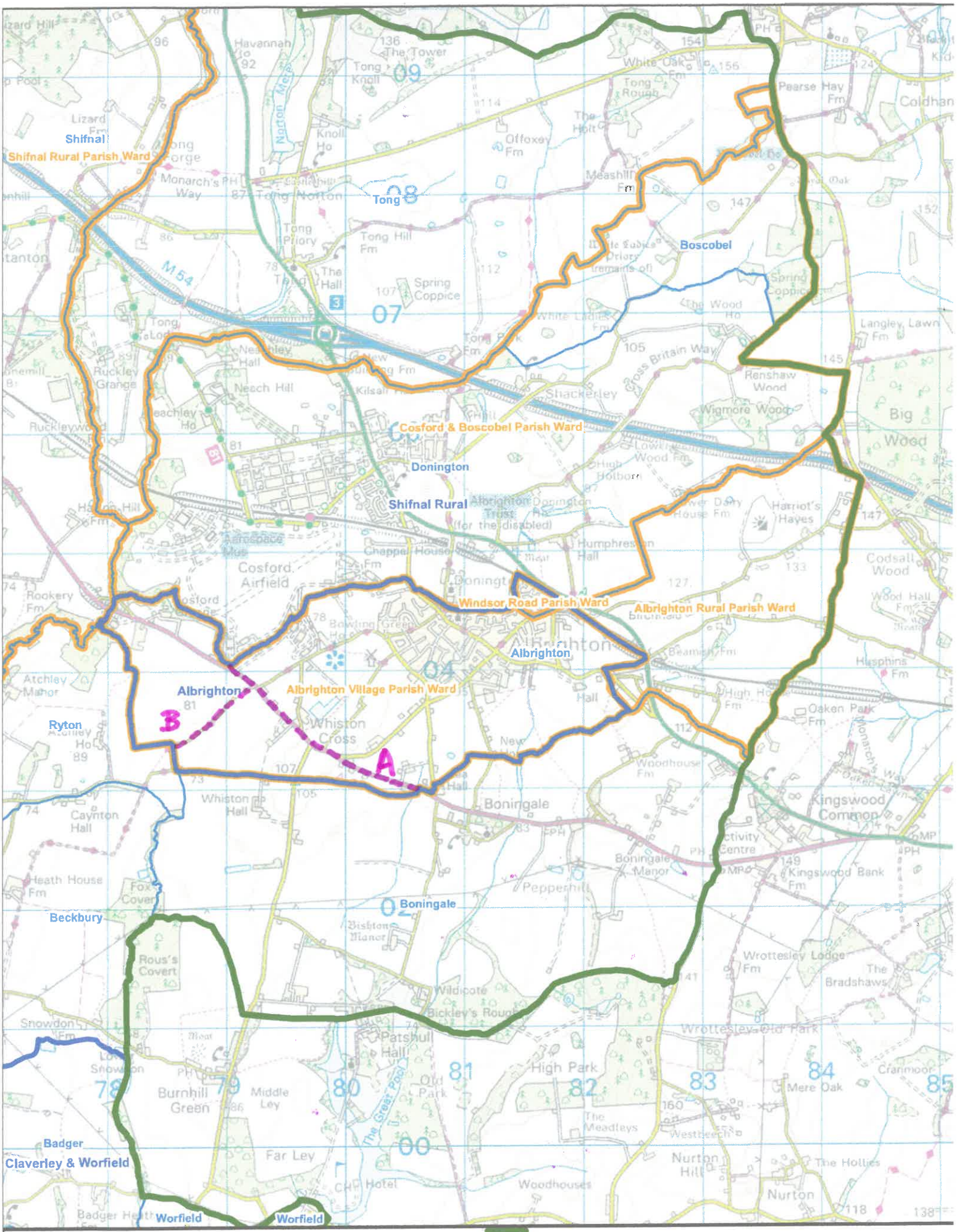
Shifnal North Parish Ward
CURRIERS LANE
The Broadway
Shrewsbury Road
Coppice Green Lane
Aston Court Mews
Stanton Road
Waterworks Cottages
Shifnal
Shifnal South Parish Ward
REVISED BOUNDARY



The Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Parish Warding

Albrighton

District_

Draft Recommendations

Parishes

Parish Ward

0 0.2 0.4 0.8 Kilometers

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Altogether, this would mean transferring ~120 electors from North to South depending on whether part of Tudor Way (37 electors) was included in North or South (poor boundary!) St Andrew's Close (17) Curriers Lane South (25) Aston Court Mews (27) Waterworks Cottages (4) and some from the eastern side of The Broadway (12?). Apart from the better boundaries, this transfer would even up the electorates between Shifnal North and Shifnal South. North would become ~3,539 (-1.6%) and South would become ~3,505 (-2.5%). The only other anomaly is the western boundary of Shifnal North that should come straight down Haughton Lane and not have a protuberance in the vicinity of Haughton Hall, which should be in the Rural division with Haughton village itself. It may be a net to catch a few electors, but not justified in being clear on the ground. Poor screen shot on previous page.

It is good that the LGBCE has adopted one Albrighton division, as against some proposals to split Albrighton in half unnecessarily. The Commission has also created a new Windsor Road Parish Ward to include the part of the residential area of Donington that should really have been in Albrighton from the start, but originally due to the course of a hidden brook forming the boundary ! Another good move was to include the new housing development north of Kingswood Road in the Albrighton division, but this takes the electorate over 10%.

There was a suggestion that the parish boundary could be curtailed to the west and views were welcomed on this proposal. To keep it compact like Shifnal with a clearly identifiable boundary, the south-west boundary should follow the A464, and the 'surplus' area moved into the Rural division. This is shown on the accompanying map as proposal A. Proposal B leaves the A464 after a short distance and then down the road on the south side to the present boundary. The area north-west of this road could join Donington parish instead of the Windsor Road area, and if proposal A was adopted the area between A & B could join Boningale parish. Or the whole area could join the Rural division, however it is named. It might bring the electorate of Albrighton down below 10% if enough electors are involved.

Shifnal Rural is a ward currently between the north of Shifnal and Sheriffhales, so it might need a change of name to differentiate it from the much wider area now proposed to be covered. At present there is a Shifnal South & Cosford ED, so when that goes, perhaps a better name for the area would be Cosford Rural ED. It is fairly central to the whole area, and the Cosford name is well known further afield for its Air Show and its Aircraft Museum. As the Commission is keeping an open mind on the name it should consider this proposal.

Bridgnorth Castle, Bridgnorth East, Bridgnorth Rural, Bridgnorth West & Tasley and Claverley & Worfield (paragraphs 128 to 135)

All the schemes proposed a very similar single-member Bridgnorth West & Tasley division. The LGBCE has modified the boundary slightly so that the lower part of Victoria Road is in the Castle division. The boundary continues south of the Wenlock Road to the boundary of the Tasley parish, including the four roads of the Portman's Way estate which will correctly remain in Bridgnorth West and not the Castle division as stated in paragraph 129.

The removal of Astley Abbots from a future Bridgnorth division is supported, and it will be with other rural parishes in the Brown Clee division. Hence the reason to return Easthope, Shipton and Stanton Long back to the Much Wenlock division where they asked to remain.

Another improvement is the adoption of a boundary along the High Street between the two divisions of East and Castle from whence it goes from the top end of Cartway down the Stoneway Steps to the bridge over the River Severn. This boundary is sufficiently clear and familiar to local people and is unlikely to be improved by any nearby alternative, such as snaking down Cartway and leaving the houses on each side in different divisions. The Bridgnorth East division is now compact on both sides of the river, not going south beyond the A458 bypass, or north into Astley Abbots. An improvement that should be welcomed.

Recreating a Bridgnorth Rural division along the A442 and east of the River Severn links Alveley to Bridgnorth, rather than Claverley, with which it has no community interest or commonality at all. The proposal to include the Hobbins in Bridgnorth Rural was because of a belief by the residents of the original married quarters of the old RAF station that they 'belonged' to Bridgnorth and felt isolated in the Worfield division. It was consideration of the community identity of the electors, rather than it being based on the industrial estate being a major source of employment in Bridgnorth !

Be that as it may, the Hobbins ward now remains part of the Claverley & Worfield division, without which its electorate would have fallen to -15% of the county average, so let it be. Instead, the Commission has moved the boundary north of the A458 bypass to run to the north of Goodwood Avenue and Kings Court. This adds sufficient electors to leave the new Bridgnorth Rural on the borderline with -10%. So this modification, although not so clear a boundary as the original proposal, is a necessity to keep both divisions in range.

Bridgnorth Town Council suggested that the western boundary of the division should follow the River Severn, rather than the parish boundary. There must be some way that parish boundaries can be changed without creating a separate parish ward, whether it has any electors or not. Eardington parish is extended to the river, and Bridgnorth parish retreats to the east of the Severn. It should be possible to correct a historical anomaly of this kind.

The Commission has wisely rejected the continuation of the Alveley & Claverley division, even if their names rhyme. The residents of these villages have had to put up with their forced cohabitation for 15 years, despite the requests to keep Claverley with Worfield as it was in the days of the old County Council. It is good that this has been recognised and the past links restored, both for this division and Bridgnorth Rural. In a way, Bridgnorth has kept its four Bridgnorth named divisions, with Castle, East, Rural and West. It is to be hoped that the residents will now respond strongly to support the Draft Recommendations.

Conclusion

Overall, the LGBCE is to be congratulated on sorting out all the different proposals that came in with the initial consultation about Shropshire identities and relationships, along with its own objective views about the combination or not of Shropshire's communities.

The current consultation ends on 10 July 2023 and it is to be hoped that constructive contributions will be made to inform the Final Recommendations later in the year. You ask people to read your report and consult your maps before responding, but the availability of the documentation or lack of knowledge of its existence is a barrier to meaningful action.

It seems that many people are not even aware that a Review is in progress, so local authorities and the local media need to encourage their residents to take part. Do you feed press releases to *'The Shropshire Star'* and other journals, and do they find the space to publish them? With inflation, cost-of-living increases, mortgage rises, rent increases, fuel costs, climate and environmental issues, people's attention may be focused elsewhere.

The LGBCE draft recommendations are for two two-member divisions and 70 one-member divisions. This submission adds one further two-member division (keeping Wem as now) and 68 one-member divisions. Although the Shropshire Council requested all one-member divisions, it is clear from a practical point of view that it is not 100% possible to meet this request in every area. Viable alternatives, if any, that meet the criteria will be considered.