

**Stevenage Borough Council****Personal Details:****Name:** Jim Callaghan**E-mail:** [REDACTED]**Postcode:** [REDACTED]**Organisation Name:** Stevenage Constituency Labour Party**Comment text:**

Stevenage Labour Group submission in response to draft proposals

**Uploaded Documents:**

**[Download \(https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download\\_document?file=draft%2F1659462254 Stevenage+Labour+Group%2C+LGBCE+Draft+Recommendation+Response%2C+August+2022.pdf\)](https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1659462254%20Stevenage+Labour+Group%2C+LGBCE+Draft+Recommendation+Response%2C+August+2022.pdf)**

**Stevenage Borough Council Labour Group**  
**Response to LGBC Draft Recommendations**

## 1. Introduction

Stevenage Borough Council Labour Group was pleased to receive the LGBC's draft recommendations, particularly as these largely reflect the proposals we submitted as part of the Stage 2 Review in February. We are grateful for the LGBC's consideration of our submission.

Whilst we are broadly supportive of the LGBC's draft recommendations, we have some reservations about the variance in a number of wards, particularly Chells (+10.4%), Bedwell (+9.0%), Woodfield (-9.6%) and Longmeadow (-8.7%). These variances give rise to concerns that a subsequent mandatory ward boundary review may be triggered sooner rather than later.

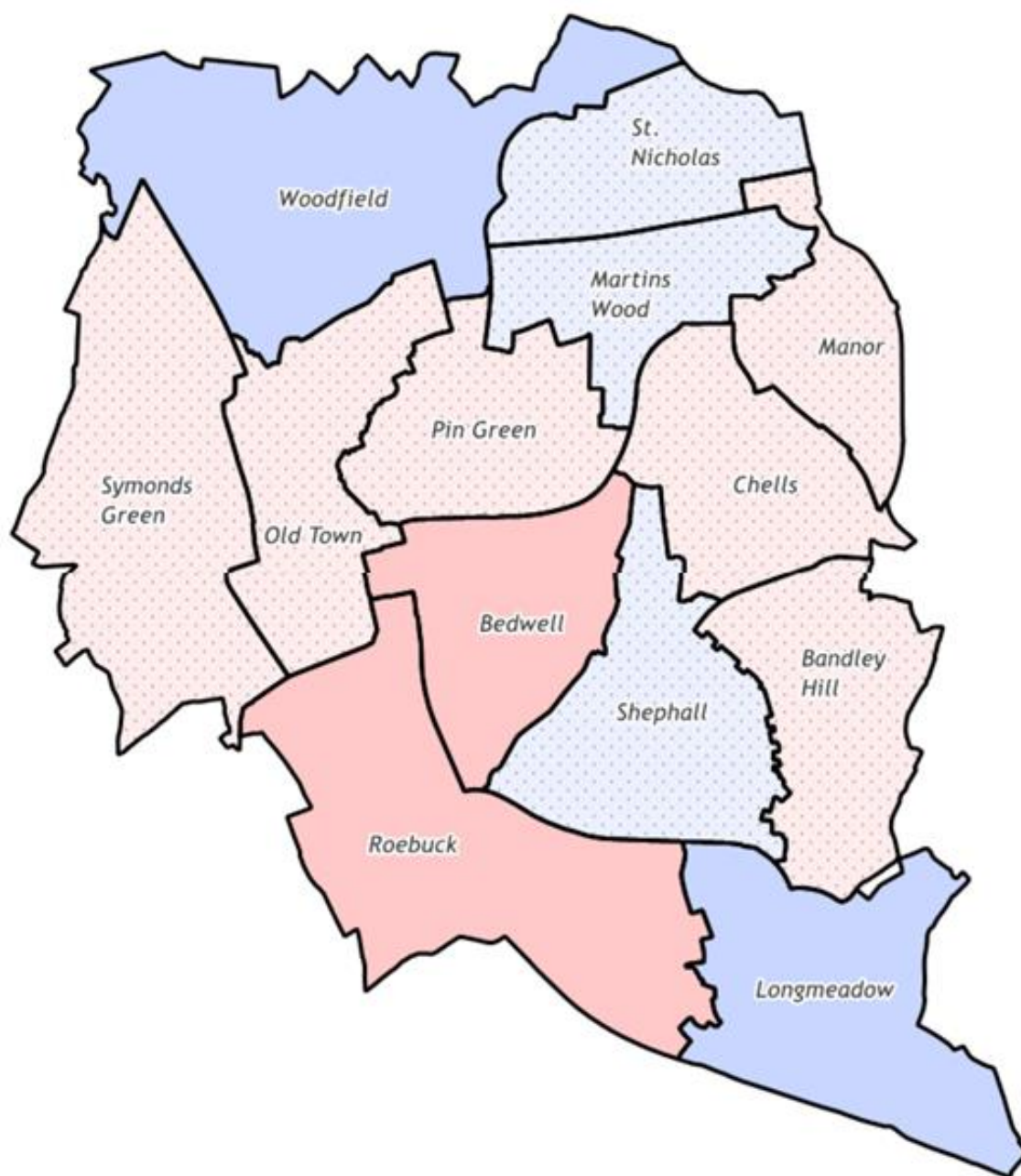
Ward	Elector count (Deviation)	Difference	Councillors: 39
Bandle Hill	5559 (+138)	+2.6%	3
Bedwell	5907 (+486)	+9.0%	3
Chells	5982 (+561)	+10.4%	3
Longmeadow	4949 (-472)	-8.7%	3
Manor	5082 (-339)	-6.2%	3
Martins Wood	5180 (-241)	-4.4%	3
Old Town	5694 (+273)	+5.0%	3
Pin Green	5565 (+144)	+2.7%	3
Roebuck	5589 (+168)	+3.1%	3
Shephall	5182 (-239)	-4.4%	3
St. Nicholas	5354 (-67)	-1.2%	3
Symonds Green	5522 (+101)	+1.9%	3
Woodfield	4902 (-519)	-9.6%	3

This response looks to address this issue by reverting to our original proposals in a number of wards, as outlined further in this submission. A zip file containing the shape files of our proposed warding scheme has been submitted as a separate document alongside this proposal. The scenario can also be viewed on Statmap here:

[https://rds.statmap.co.uk/map/map.html?login=stevenage1\\_viewer&scenario=CLP\\_SUBMISSION%2C\\_AUG\\_2022&sid=a1fa4c80246382e46a1d2520c74a2697](https://rds.statmap.co.uk/map/map.html?login=stevenage1_viewer&scenario=CLP_SUBMISSION%2C_AUG_2022&sid=a1fa4c80246382e46a1d2520c74a2697)

Jim Callaghan  
Chair, Stevenage Constituency Labour Party  
02 August 2022

## 2. Proposed Ward Boundaries:



### 3. Proposed Ward Variances:

Ward <b>Elector count</b> (Deviation)	Difference	Councillors: 39
Bandley Hill <b>5559</b> (+138)	+2.6%	3
Bedwell <b>5770</b> (+349)	+6.4%	3
Chells <b>5539</b> (+118)	+2.2%	3
Longmeadow <b>4949</b> (-472)	-8.7%	3
Manor <b>5525</b> (+104)	+1.9%	3
Martins Wood <b>5180</b> (-241)	-4.4%	3
Old Town <b>5472</b> (+51)	+0.9%	3
Pin Green <b>5565</b> (+144)	+2.7%	3
Roebuck <b>5726</b> (+305)	+5.6%	3
Shephall <b>5182</b> (-239)	-4.4%	3
St. Nicholas <b>5354</b> (-67)	-1.2%	3
Symonds Green <b>5501</b> (+80)	+1.5%	3
Woodfield <b>5145</b> (-276)	-5.1%	3

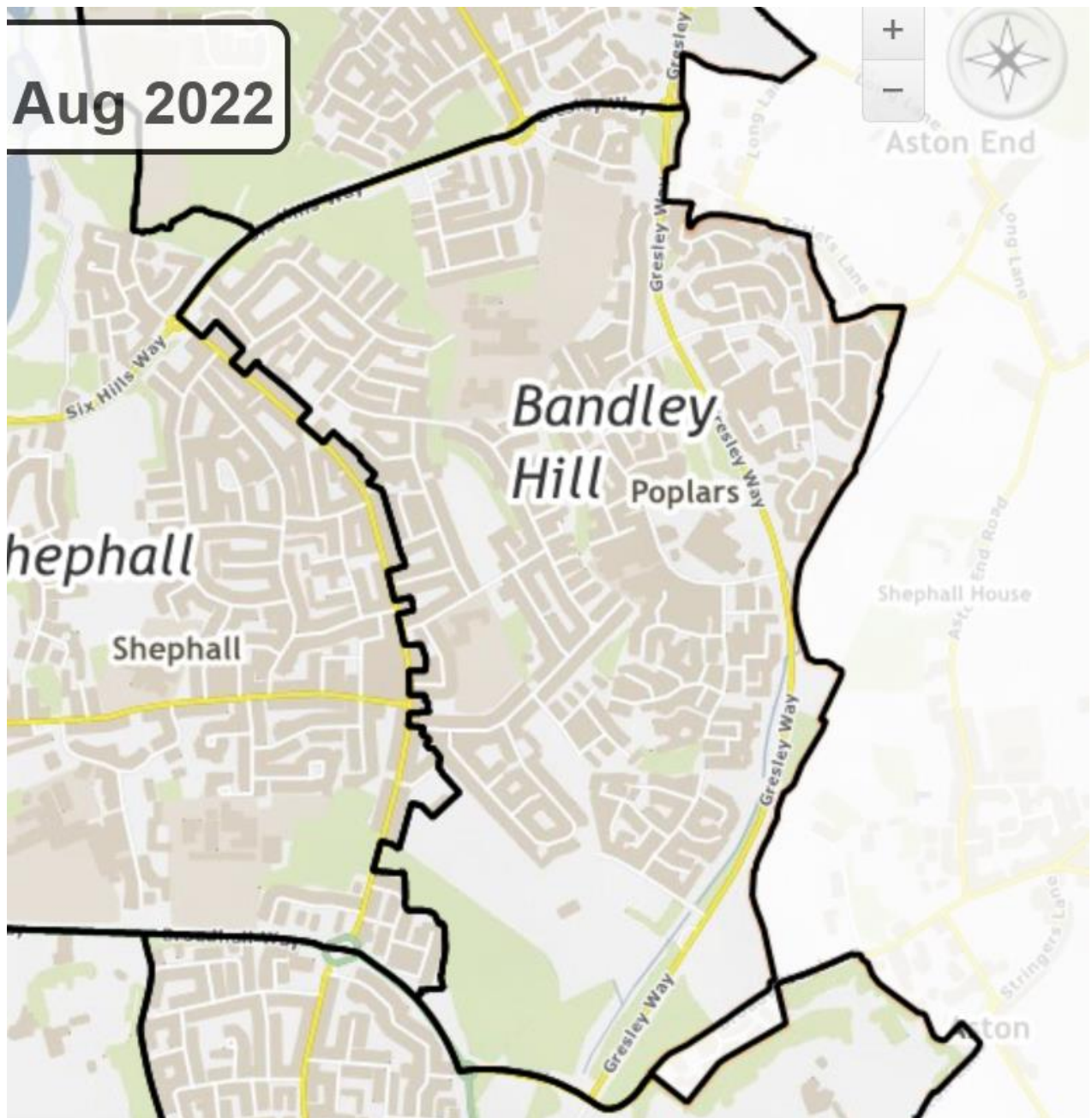
This submission achieves the requirement to attain electoral equality across wards, with an average variance of just 3.66% and just one ward exceeding 8%, compared with the LGBC draft recommendation of an average variance of 5.32% with four wards exceeding 8%.

#### 4. Warding Proposals

Where appropriate, the Stevenage Borough Council Labour Group propose changes to the LGBC's draft recommendations, rationale is provided as follows:

##### 4.1 Bandley Hill Ward

Electorate Numbers	Members	Electorate to Member Ratio	Electoral Equality
5559	3	1853	+2.6%

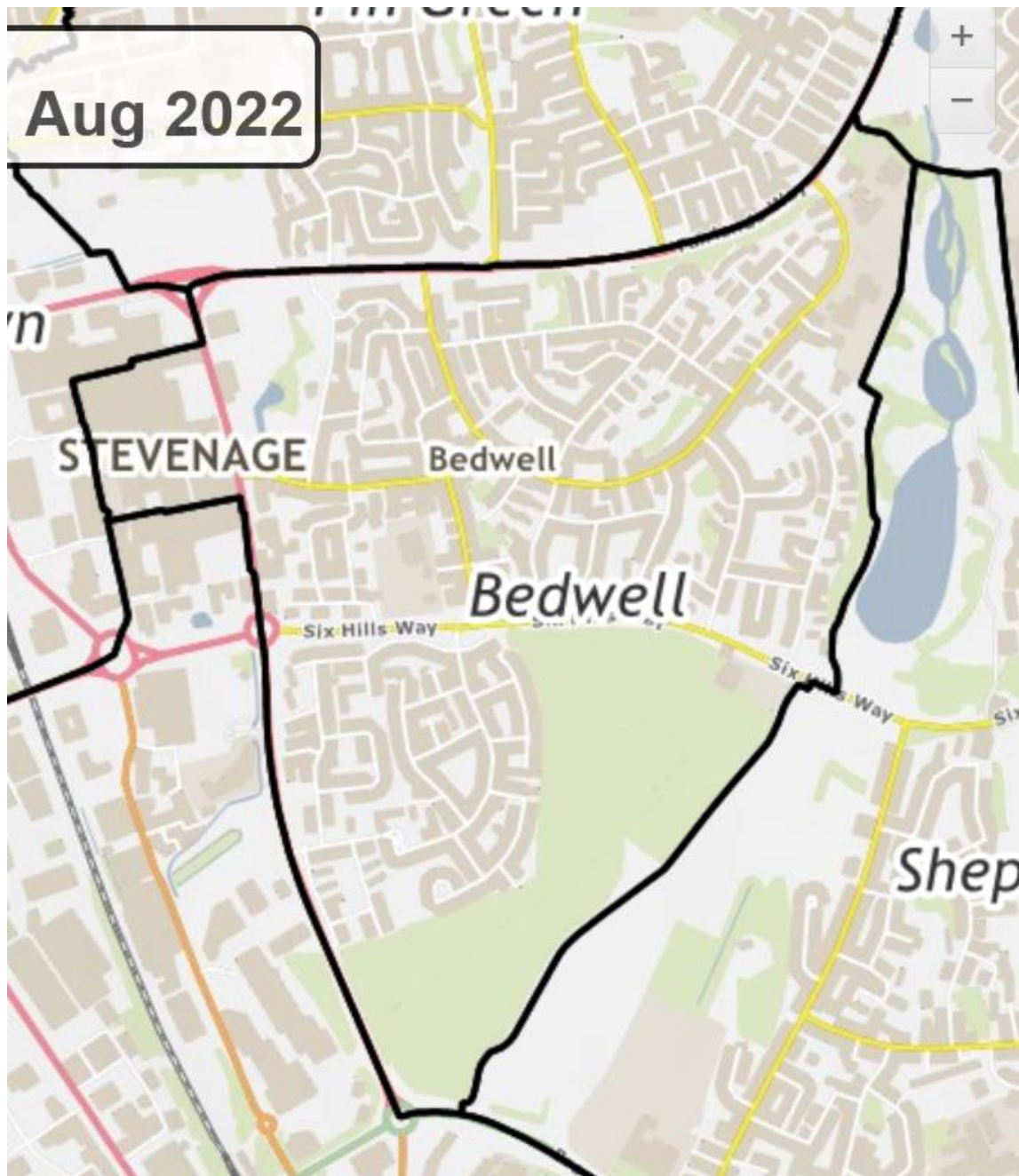


No proposed changes to the LGBC draft recommendation.



#### 4.2 Bedwell Ward

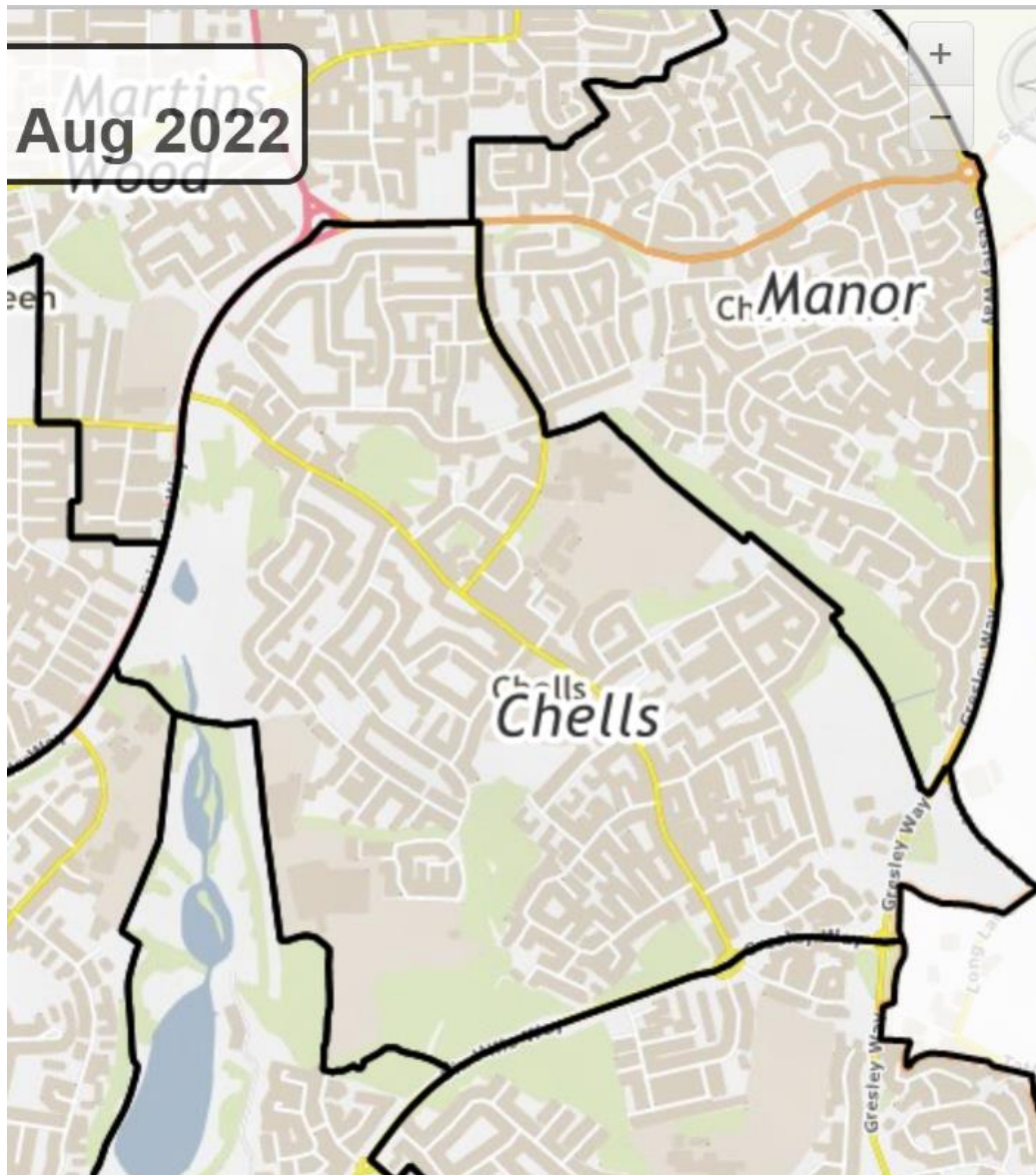
Electorate Numbers	Members	Electorate to Member Ratio	Electoral Equality
5770	3	1923	+6.4%



The LGBC's draft recommendations would put Bedwell at a variance of +9.0%, which potentially accelerates the need for a future ward review if population growth is greater than forecast. To address this we advocate moving the east/west boundary line that runs through the Town Centre further north, decreasing the population of Bedwell and increasing the population of Roebuck. Much of the population concerned will comprise new developments, so community identity amongst residents is yet to be established.

### 4.3 Chells Ward

Electorate Numbers	Members	Electorate to Member Ratio	Electoral Equality
5539	3	1846	+2.2%

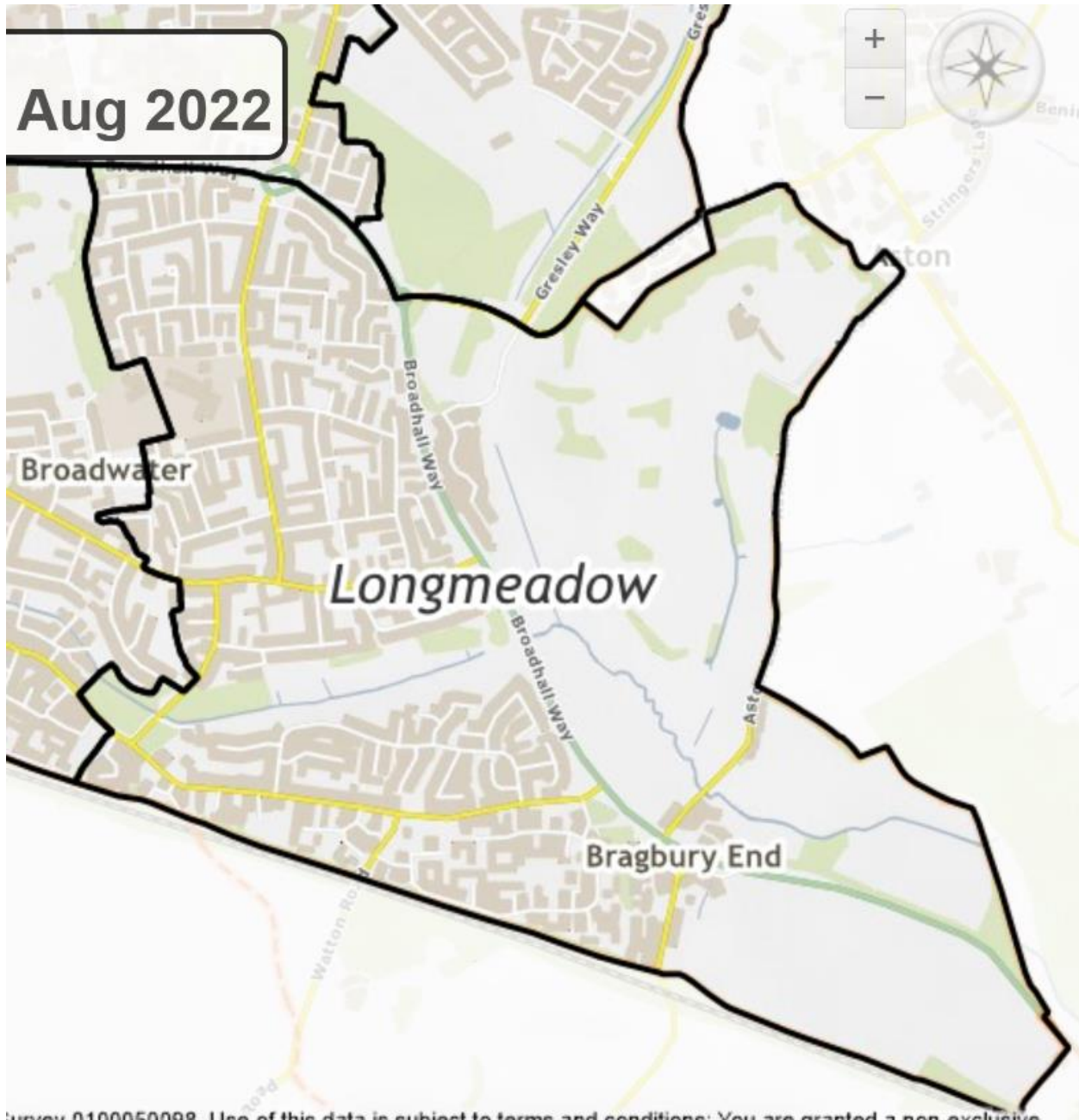


The LGBC's draft recommendations put Chells at a variance of +10.4%, which we consider too high. Our February 2022 submission kept the Poets development (Burns Close, Byron Close, Dryden Crescent, Keats Close, Marlowe Close, and Shirley Close) in Manor Ward. As well as these roads already being in Manor this maintains the strong natural boundary of Mobbsbury Way to the north of Chells and Manor. Retaining these roads in Manor brings Chells variance down to +2.2%



#### 4.4 Longmeadow Ward

Electorate Numbers	Members	Electorate to Member Ratio	Electoral Equality
4949	3	1650	-8.7%

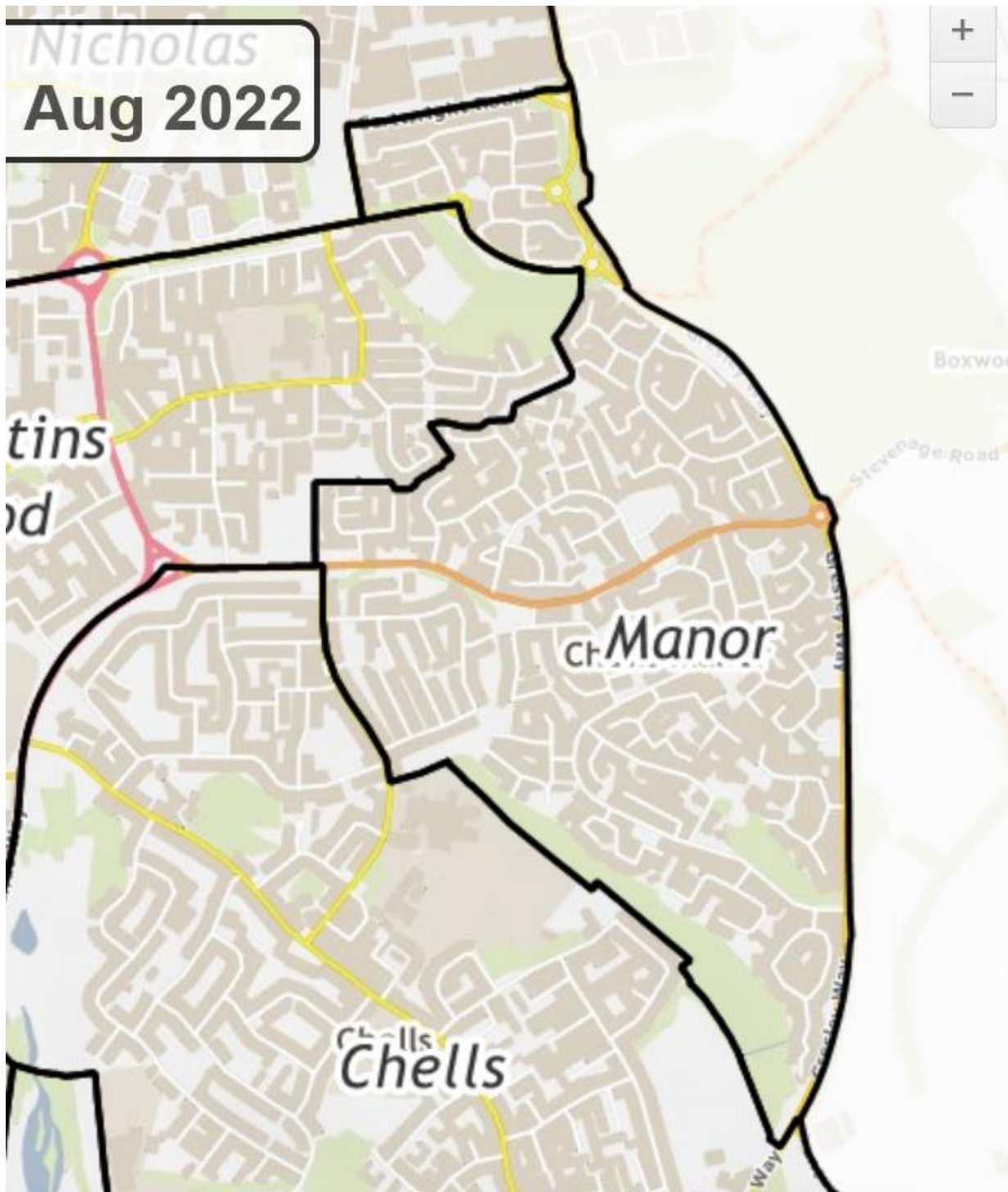


No proposed changes to the LGBC draft recommendation. Although this leaves Longmeadow at a fairly high under-variance, the peripheral nature of the ward provides limited scope for boundary changes. Any adjustment would require splitting Brook Drive, Spring Drive and/or Kimbolton Crescent, which would be undesirable.



#### 4.5 Manor Ward

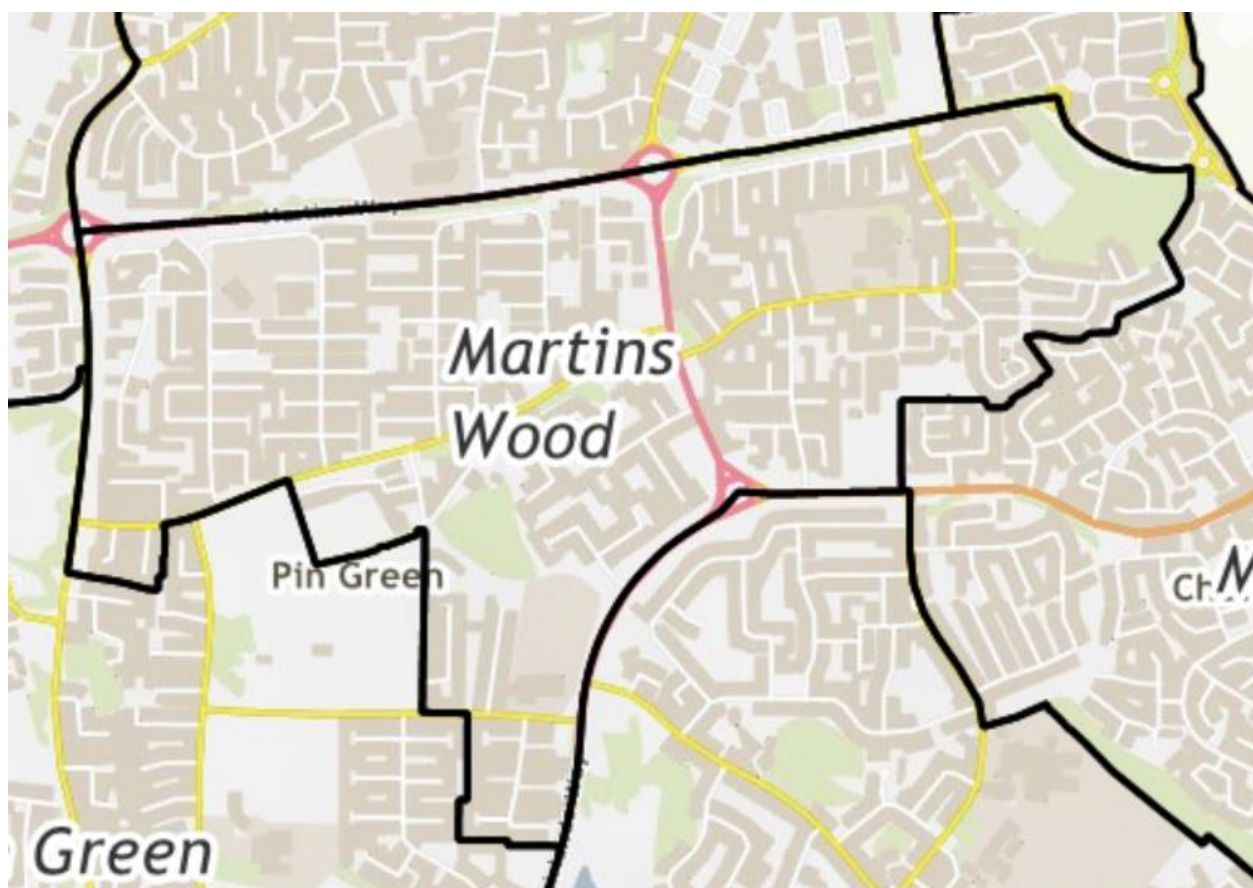
Electorate Numbers	Members	Electorate to Member Ratio	Electoral Equality
5525	3	1788	+1.9%



Manor ward's underweighting of -6.2% under the LGBC draft recommendation is rectified by keeping the Poets development within the ward – See Chells above at 4.3

#### 4.6 Martins Wood Ward

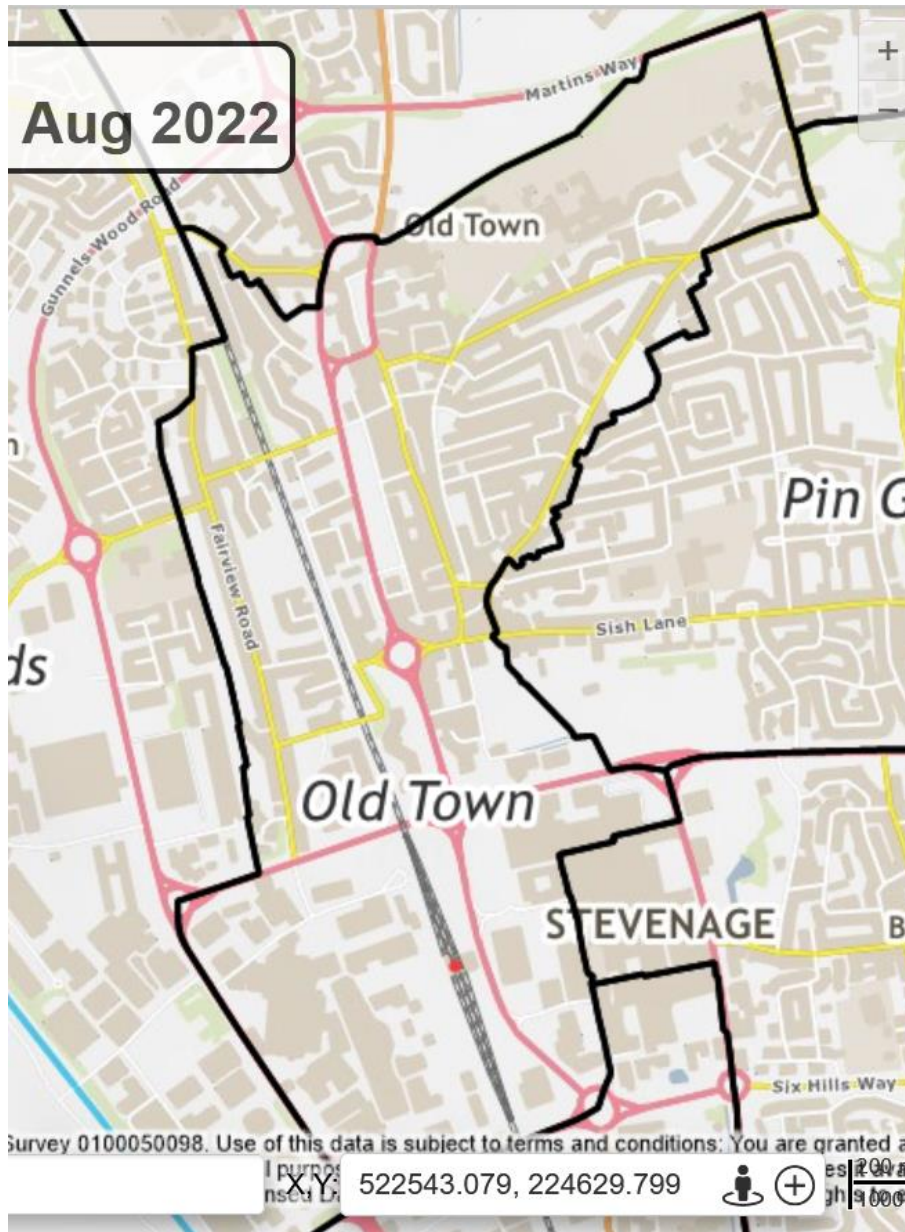
Electorate Numbers	Members	Electorate to Member Ratio	Electoral Equality
5180	3	1717	-4.4%



No proposed changes to the LGBC draft recommendation.

#### 4.7 Old Town Ward

Electorate Numbers	Members	Electorate to Member Ratio	Electoral Equality
5472	3	1824	+0.9%

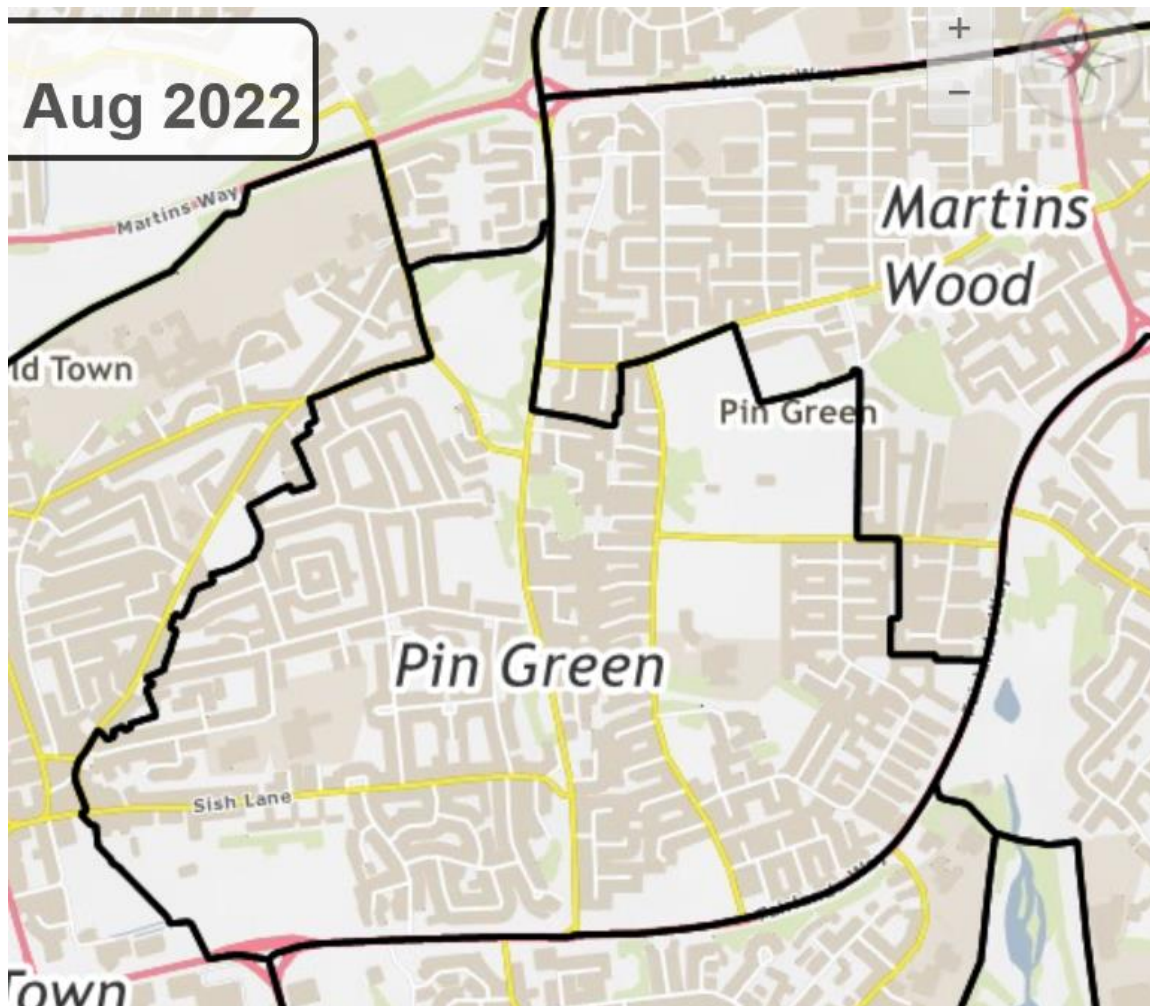


Under the LGBC draft recommendation the Old Town ward has an over-variance of +5.0% whilst the neighbouring Woodfield ward has an under-variance of -9.6%. Stevenage Labour Group's February 2022 submission proposed moving the Cricket Ground development (Headingley Close, Trafford Close and Trent Close) into Woodfield ward. The residents of the Cricket Ground development have a close affinity with the historic St Nicholas church, which forms the focal point of Woodfield ward. As well as reducing the Old Town's variance to near parity at +0.9% this change also maintains the strong natural boundary of Weston Road to the north of the ward.



#### 4.8 Pin Green Ward

Electorate Numbers	Members	Electorate to Member Ratio	Electoral Equality
5565	3	1855	+2.7%

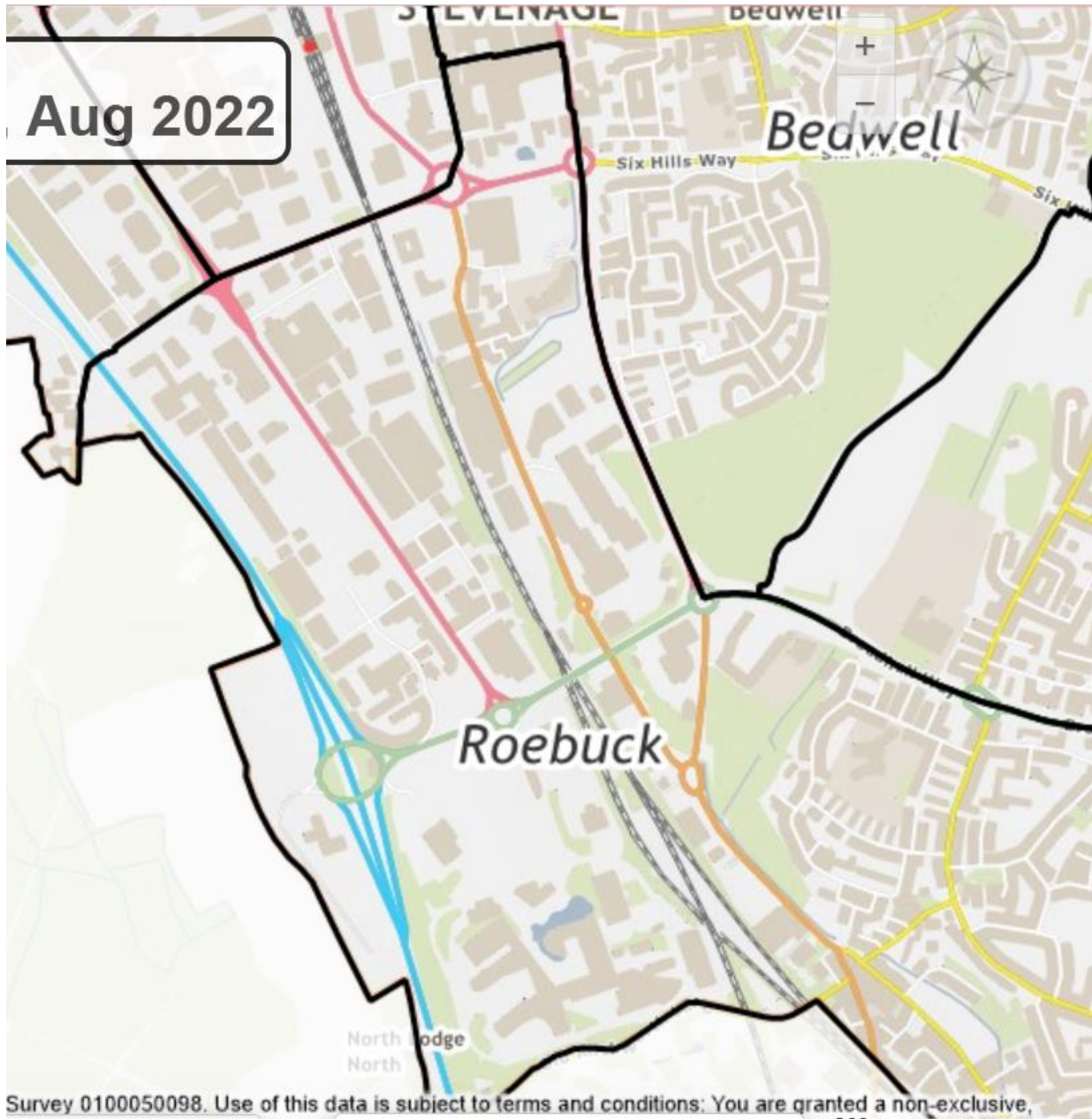


No proposed changes to the boundaries in the LGBC draft recommendation. However, the changes do represent a significant shift away from the original Pin Green neighbourhood which was established almost 60 years ago. It is therefore suggested that the ward name be changed to Almond Spring, which recognises Almond Spring woods, Almond Hill Road and Almond Hill cemetery, all of which are now in the ward. It is understood that this has previously been used as a ward name.



#### 4.9 Roebuck Ward

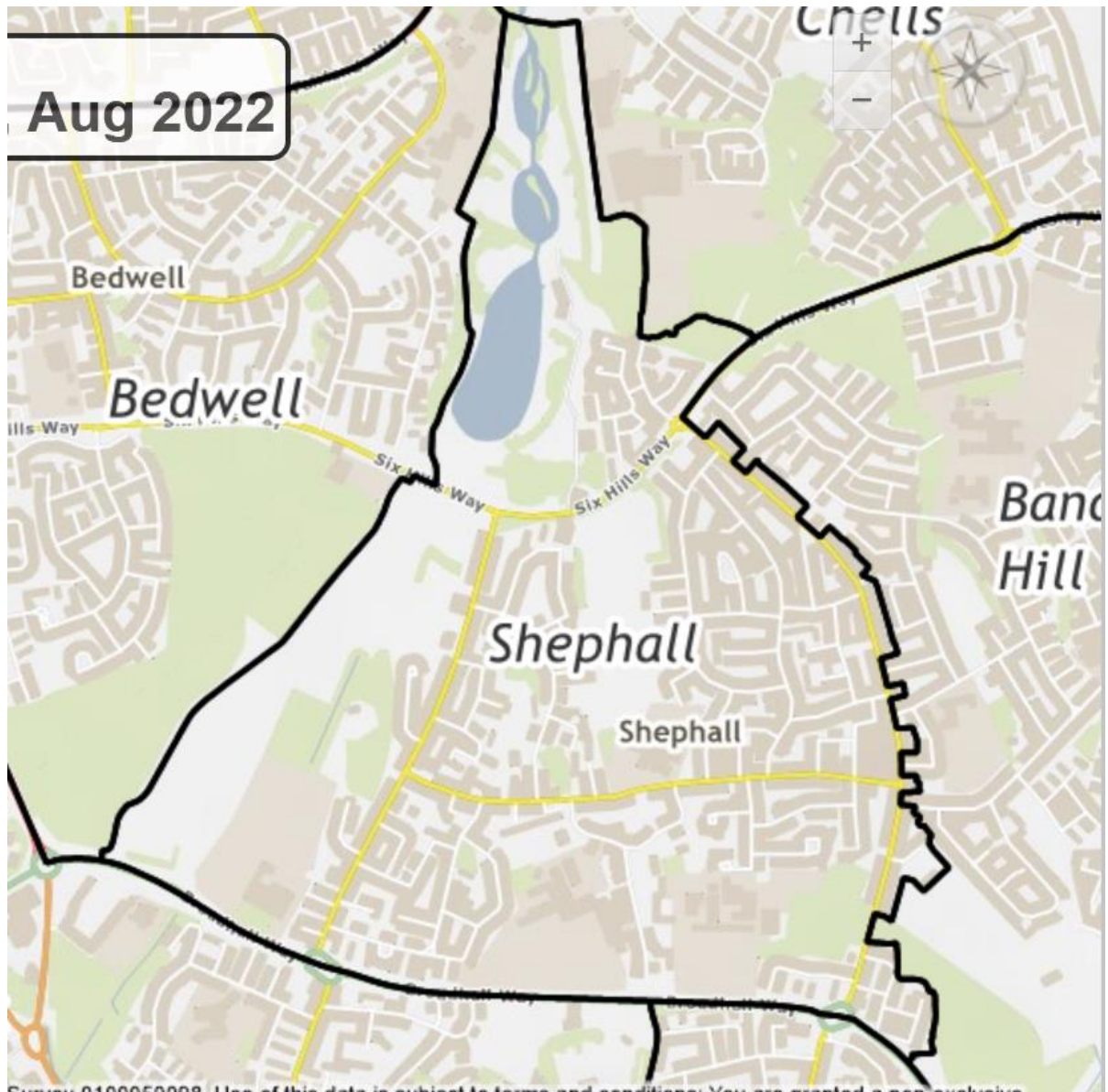
Electorate Numbers	Members	Electorate to Member Ratio	Electoral Equality
5726	3	1909	+5.6%



Roebuck ward's electorate number increases slightly to accommodate the reduction in Bedwell ward's numbers as outlined in 4.2 above.

#### 4.10 Shephall Ward

Electorate Numbers	Members	Electorate to Member Ratio	Electoral Equality
5182	3	1727	-4.4%

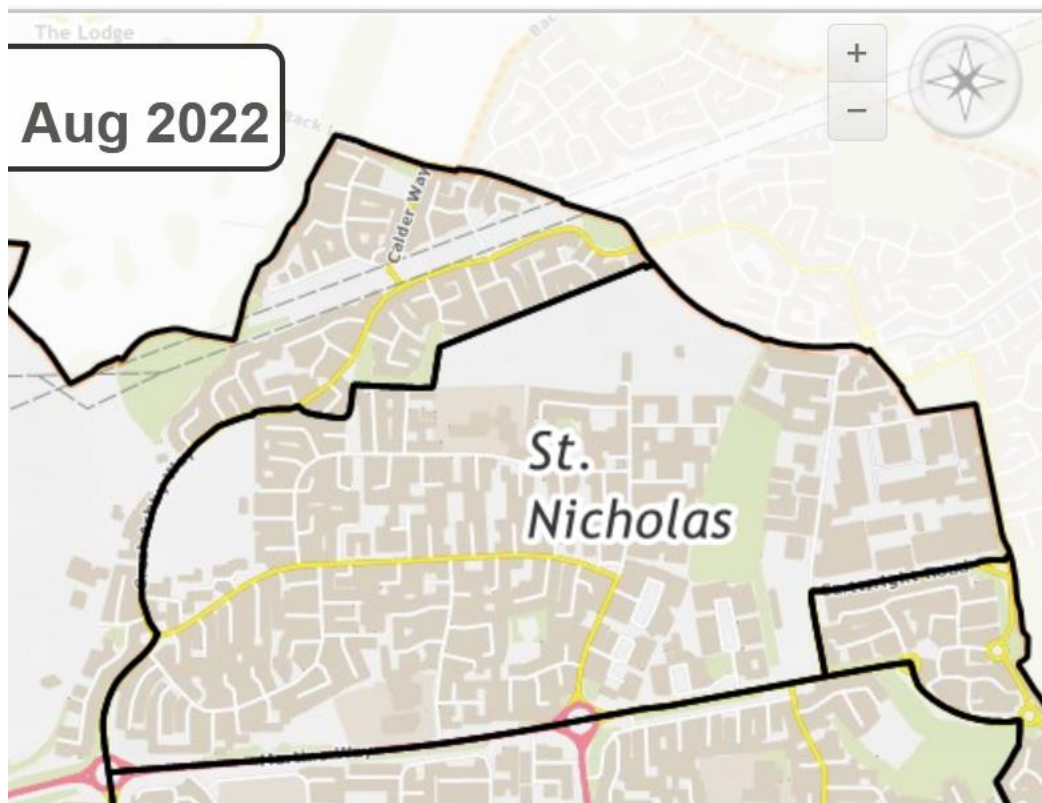


No proposed changes to the LGBC draft recommendation.



#### 4.11 St Nicholas Ward

Electorate Numbers	Members	Electorate to Member Ratio	Electoral Equality
5354	3	1785	-1.2%

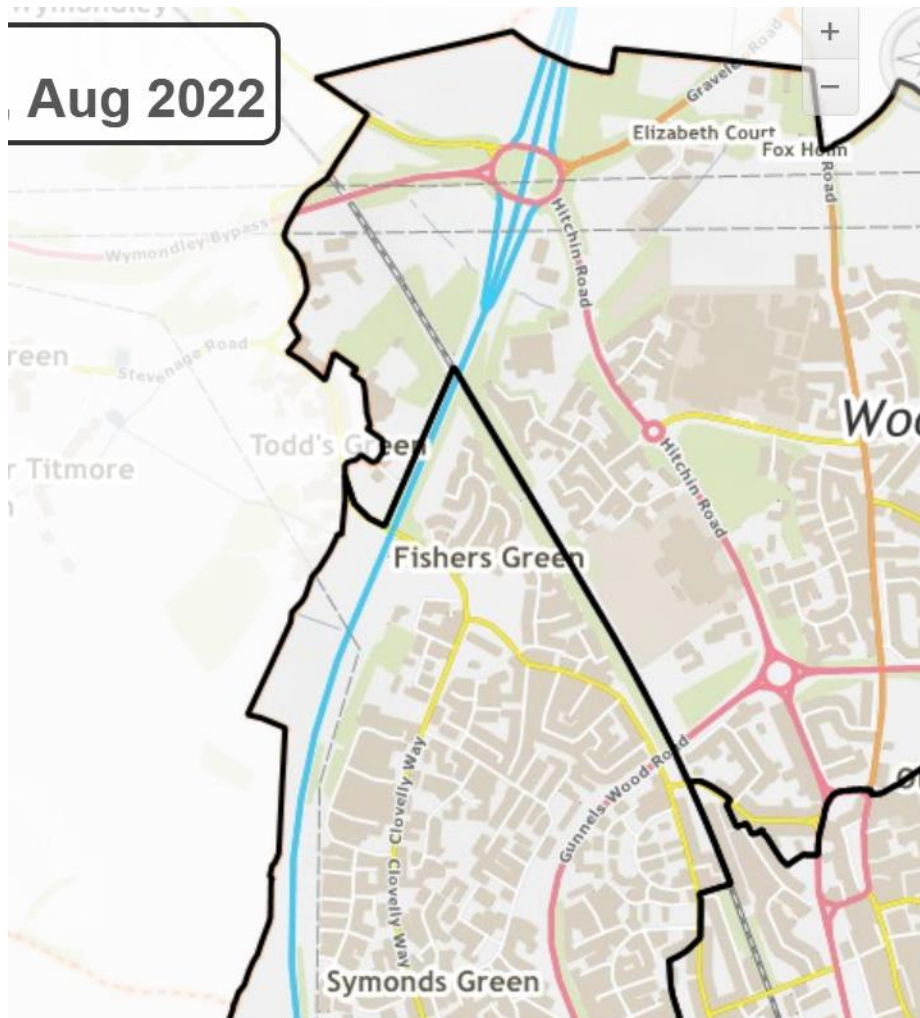


We are pleased that the LGBC draft recommendation put Salisbury Road, Lincoln Road and Winchester Close into St Nicholas. However, we would also make the case for including Guildford Close in the ward, as suggested in our previous submission. Whilst acknowledging that access to Guildford Close is from Gt Ashby Way, this road also forms a natural boundary between the greater St Nicholas ward to the east (including Canterbury Way Park) and Woodfield ward to the west. Car ownership in Guildford Close is lower than average across the town (see photo below), with many residents utilising public transport such as the SB2, SB3 and 390 bus services with drop-off points in Canterbury Way. There is also a direct pedestrian link between Guildford Close and Iona Close, cementing the feeling of community amongst these St Nicholas residents.



#### 4.12 Symonds Green Ward

Electorate Numbers	Members	Electorate to Member Ratio	Electoral Equality
5501	3	1834	+1.5%

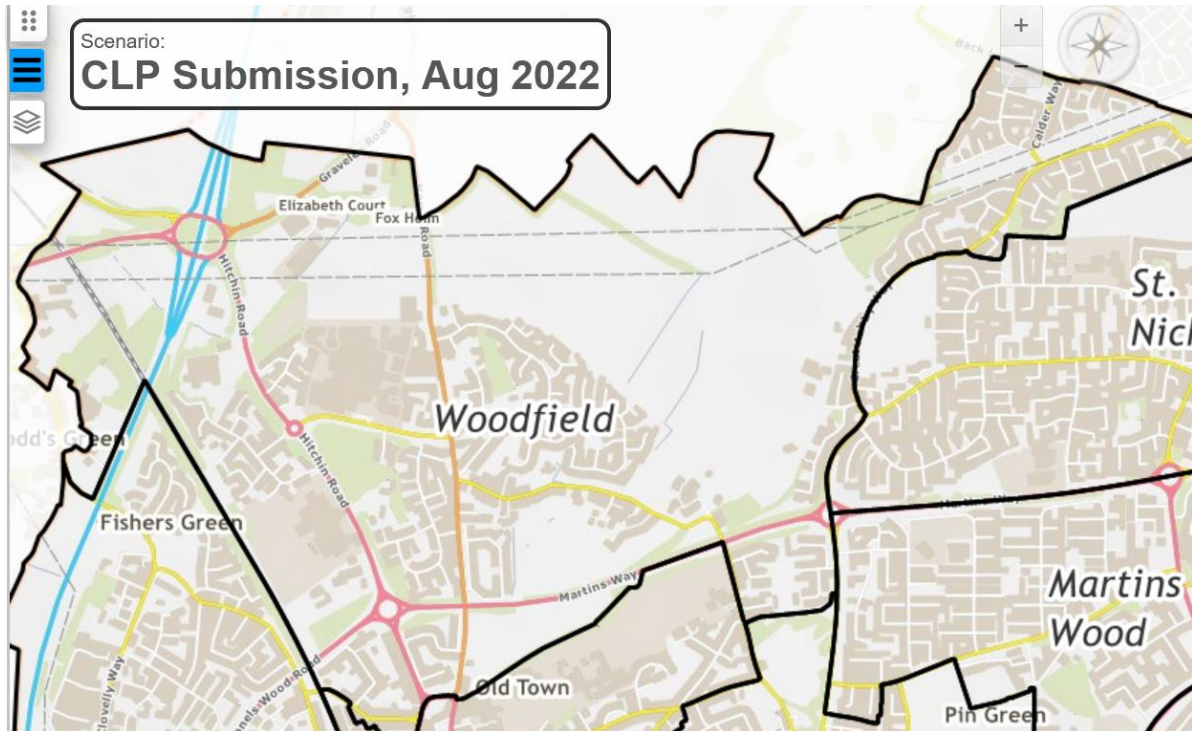


Our only suggested change to Symonds Green is to move the small number of properties in Todds Green, to the north east of the ward, into Woodfield. In part this addresses the underweighting in Woodfield ward. It should also be noted that Todds Green is seen as a distinct community of its own, with most properties falling outside of the Stevenage Borough Council boundaries. This small number of residents have no affinity with Symonds Green, which is divided from Todds Green by the A1(M) motorway. The nearest Symonds Green development is the Seaside roads of Kessingland Avenue, Caister Close and Aldeburgh Close which were all built in the 1970s. The 1950s properties of Todds Green have more in common with the older residences of Woodfield.



#### 4.13 Woodfield Ward

Electorate Numbers	Members	Electorate to Member Ratio	Electoral Equality
5145	3	1715	-5.1%



The LGBC draft recommendation that results in Woodfield having an underweight position of -9.6% raises concerns that the next boundary review may be triggered sooner rather than later. By moving the Cricket Ground development from the Old Town (see 4.7) and the Todds Green properties from Symonds Green (see 4.12) this issue is addressed.