

Local Government Boundary Commission for England
1st Floor, Windsor House
50 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0TL

27th November 2021

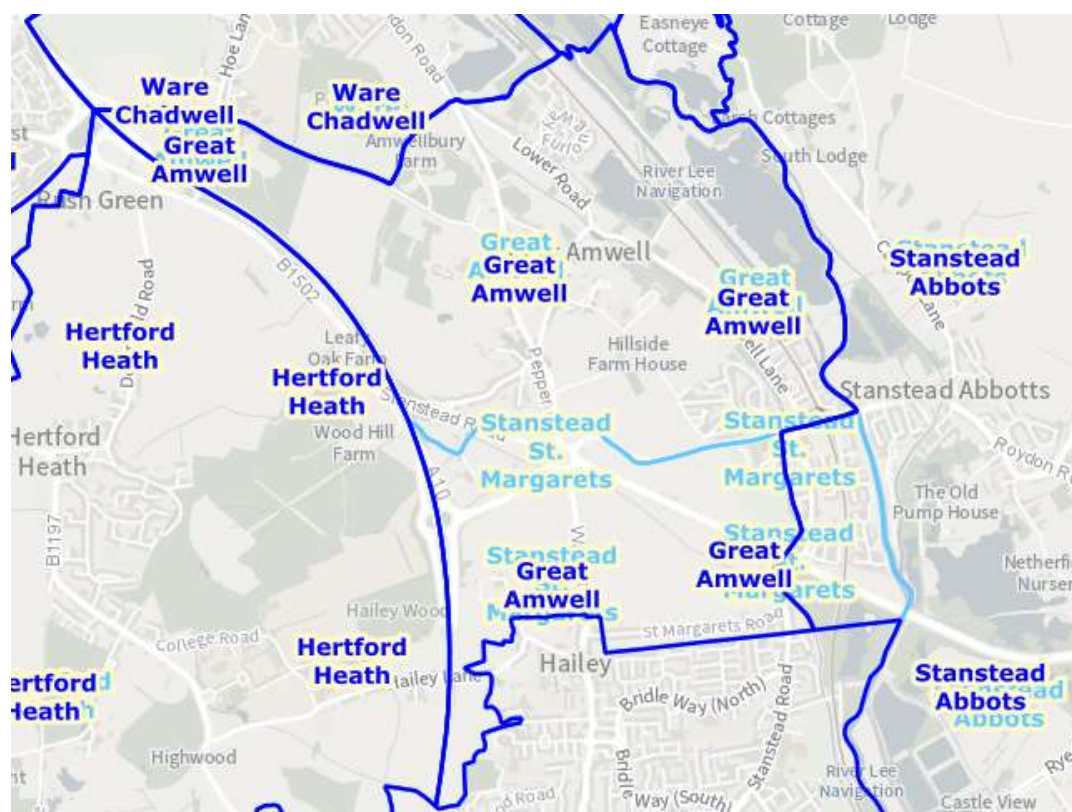
Local Government Boundary Commission Consultation **East Hertfordshire District Council Wards**

This society, which is open to all residents in the village of Great Amwell, has some 300 members, and in addition to our local activities we take an interest in wider issues that may adversely affect the interests of our members.

On behalf of the Amwell Society I would like to make these observations on the LGBCE consultation on the East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC) wards.

Current Boundaries

The current Great Amwell ward boundary is shown below in dark blue; this is the area which is currently represented by Councillor Alex Curtis on EHDC. The civil parish boundaries are shown in light blue and the Eastern part of St. Margaret's Parish Council area is in the Stanstead Abbots district ward.



The parish boundary follows the River Lea but the district ward boundary follows the New River; the properties on Hoddesdon Road (including St. Mary's Church) and Lawrence Avenue are in Stanstead St Margarets West.

The current draft proposal is to keep with 50 councillors on East Herts District Council. There are currently 30 wards; some wards have more than one councillor.

Previous Review

The previous review was in 1998. The report can be read here, though the maps are very corrupted:

https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/lgbce/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/6097/hertfordshire-east-hertfordshire_6448-6052_e.pdf

That report recommended the division of Stanstead St. Margaret's parish into two 'parish wards', with the West parish ward having 4 parish councillors and being in the district ward of Great Amwell and the East part electing 3 parish councillors and being part of Stanstead Abbots district ward.

This was enacted by Statutory Instrument 1998 No. 2553 "The District of East Hertfordshire (Electoral Changes) Order 1998".

Electoral Numbers

EHDC have published current and predicted numbers of the electors per ward on their own web page for this consultation (<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/hertfordshire/east-hertfordshire>).

The current electoral numbers and the predicted average number of electors per councillor across East Herts for 2027 are:

| | 2021 | 2027 |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| <i>Average electorate per councillor:</i> | 2,273 | 2,640 |

These numbers are heavily distorted by very large increases in a small number of wards where the major developments from the 2018 District Plan are happening, notably Buntingford, Bishops Stortford Silverleys (Bishops Stortford North), and Hunsdon (Gilston new town and the Ware North-East development). The district plan can be read here:

<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/east-herts-district-plan-2018>

The electorate number projected by EHDC do not correspond to the District Plan in a number of locations, and we submit that without correcting those the ward boundaries cannot correctly set by the LGBCE.

The table at the end is an annotated copy of the electorate figures from EHDC. Specifically:

- The percentage growth projected per polling district is added;
- The Group 2 villages such as Great Amwell are highlighted to show the inconsistent projected growth despite identical planning policies in the District Plan.

The current and predicted numbers for Great Amwell and the adjacent district wards are shown below, with the variance from the averages above:

| Name of ward | Number of cllrs per ward | Electorate 2021 | Variance 2021 | Electorate 2027 | Variance 2027 |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Great Amwell | 1 | 2,191 | -4% | 2,356 | -11% |
| Hertford Heath | 1 | 2,415 | 6% | 2,512 | -5% |
| Stanstead Abbotts | 1 | 2,339 | 3% | 2,510 | -5% |
| Ware Chadwell | 1 | 2,516 | 11% | 2,646 | 0% |

Clearly there are differences in boundaries between some villages & towns as defined in the District Plan and the electoral wards, but for many of the villages there is a close correlation as the ward includes a village nucleus and then an area of open rural countryside with very low population.

It should be the case in these figures that with the exception of the wards within which the major developments in the District Plan are due to take place, there should be similar percentage growth in each Group 1 village and in each group 2 village.

The District Plan requires Stanstead Abbotts as a "Group 1" village to find space for significantly more new housing than in Great Amwell. As a Group 1 village Stanstead Abbotts is developing a Neighbourhood Plan, involving the Stanstead Abbotts, Stanstead St Margaret's and Great Amwell parish councils. A minimum of 94 new homes are required in order to meet the target set in the District Plan; it is further expected that these will be built in the near future, although the District Plan covers the period to 2033; and should therefore be included in the forecast of electorate in 2027.

The increase of just 171 electors in Stanstead Abbotts does not correspond to the increase expected from a minimum of 94 homes.

Great Amwell in contrast is a "Group 2" village where new houses will be by "limited infill"; yet the forecast of the electorate shows a very similar increase of 165.

These electorate figures provided by EHDC are not consistent with the planned new housing in the district so are not a sound basis for this review. We submit that LGBCE should require EHDC to review and revise the forecast for the electorate and demonstrate that it is then consistent with the District Plan.

We submit that the number of electors projected in 2027 for Great Amwell is slightly high, and the number projected in Stanstead Abbotts is substantially lower than it should be, and our specific proposals later address this.

Dominance of the Urban Voice

There is a fundamental long-term problem with the way that the number of councillors is set and the way that sustainable development is delivered.

The current process is that new development is concentrated mostly on the edge of existing developments, or wholly new developments are created such as 'garden villages'. The required minimum housing density in new developments leads to new developments having a much higher population density than older developments.

If the principle is kept that each councillor represents an equal number of electors, it follows that the wards in new developments and existing urban areas are much smaller than in rural and village areas. To keep the fixed number of councillors as more housing is built, over time the only way to keep to this principle is for the rural areas wards to become larger and larger. The proportion of councillors representing rural electors will get

smaller and smaller. Perhaps there will ultimately be a single councillor for all rural Hertfordshire.

This echoes the problem of the dominance of London and the South-East in the national political voice.

Belonging

The public across Hertfordshire (and no doubt in other rural counties) 'look' to particular towns to provide the services that are not available in their villages. This includes secondary education, shopping, banking and socialising. While people may go to other towns for specific shops, services or access to railways they have defined towns that they regard they 'belong' to in the sense of being in the catchment area of.

In Great Amwell this is Ware and Hertford; neither provides a full range of services but collectively they do. Residents are adamant that they do not look to Broxbourne as that is seen part of the edge of London, emphasised by the EN (Enfield) post codes. Hertford and Ware have the character of rural market towns, not shared by the towns boarding the M25.

[There is grave concern over the planned move under the Boundary Commission for England of Great Amwell to the Broxbourne parliamentary constituency, in case it subsequently led to being transferred to the Borough of Broxbourne, as that is seen as threatening the rural nature of the village. That is however outside the scope of this consultation.]

Solutions

An approach that had a greater ability to avoid the dominance of the urban voice with the unavoidable growth of high-density wards is to combine parts of parishes with high projected house construction according to the District Plan with adjacent rural areas when defining ward boundaries.

While this in some cases requires the creation of more parish wards this is the only way to ensure balanced representation of rural and urban voices in the District Council.

Our specific proposals are:

Wareside

Remove the current parish of Wareside from the Hunsdon Ward. This will alleviate the extreme growth projected in the Hunsdon ward by the combination of the Gilston and Ware North-East developments.

Divide the Wareside parish into two parish wards and combine one each of these with the Ware Christchurch and Ware Trinity wards. The precise boundary division with the Wareside parish would depend on the layout of new infrastructure roads in the 1,000 new houses to be built on the North-East edge of Ware. Both these wards in Ware are currently projected to fall 11% below average by 2027, and this change will resolve that.

The new housing is clearly part of Ware, and as stated above it is essential that rural areas are included together with the higher density areas to keep a balanced representation in EHDC.

Great Amwell

Combine Great Amwell ward with the Stanstead Abbots ward and appoint two councillors. This also achieves the objective of aligning the ward and parish boundaries and removing the need for parish wards in St. Margaret's.

By merging the wards the effect of the increase in electorate in Stanstead Abbots is shared across the whole new ward, and the electors per councillor will be closer to the average.

Even using the current projected electorate figures the new ward would be just 8% below the average number of electors per councillor at 2433. If as we submit the additional houses in Stanstead Abbots deliver a higher increase in that parish than projected by EHDC, this deficit would reduce further.

Rename the ward as Stansteads and Great Amwell, or Great Amwell and Stansteads.



William Brown

Chair

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| What is the polling district code? | Is there any other description you use for this area? | Is this polling district contained in a parish? If not leave this cell blank. | Is this polling district contained in a parish ward? If not leave this cell blank. | Is this polling district contained in a group of parishes with a joint parish council? If not leave this cell blank. | What ward is this polling district in? | What is the current electorate? | What is the predicted electorate? |
|------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|

| Polling district | Description of area | Parish | Parish ward | Grouped parish council | Existing ward | Electorate 2021 | Electorate 2027 | % Growth |
|------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------|
| MHA5 | | Thorley | Rural | | Much Hadham | 52 | 52 | 0.00% |
| TST1 | | Standon | Colliers End | | Thundridge and Standon | 192 | 192 | 0.00% |
| BSS2 | | Bishop's Stortford | Silverleys | | Bishop's Stortford Silverleys | 1867 | 1867 | 0.00% |
| BSS3 | | Bishop's Stortford | Silverleys | | Bishop's Stortford Silverleys | 2422 | 2422 | 0.00% |
| HHE2 | | Brickendon Liberty | | | Hertford Heath | 547 | 548 | 0.18% |
| HUN4 | | Widford | | | Hunsdon | 489 | 497 | 1.64% |
| HCA2 | | Hertford | Castle | | Hertford Castle | 596 | 606 | 1.68% |
| SAW2 | | Sawbridgeworth | | | Sawbridgeworth | 170 | 173 | 1.76% |
| HUN5 | | Gilston | | Eastwick and Gilston | Hunsdon | 579 | 595 | 2.76% |
| WSM3 | | Ware | St Marys | | Ware St Marys | 1552 | 1595 | 2.77% |
| MCO4 | | Great Mundens | | | Mundens and Cottered | 280 | 289 | 3.21% |
| BRA2 | | Braughing | | | Braughing | 1089 | 1134 | 4.13% |
| MHA2 | | High Wyck | | | Much Hadham | 456 | 475 | 4.17% |
| HK2 | | Hertford | Kingsmead | | Hertford Kingsmead | 2334 | 2433 | 4.24% |
| HRS1 | | Bayford | | | Hertford Rural South | 382 | 399 | 4.45% |
| TST4 | | Thundridge | High Cross | | Thundridge and Standon | 471 | 493 | 4.67% |
| WCC1 | | Ware | Christchurch | | Ware Christchurch | 1290 | 1351 | 4.73% |
| WAL3 | | Walkern | | | Walkern | 1154 | 1209 | 4.77% |
| HCA4 | | Hertford | Castle | | Hertford Castle | 574 | 603 | 5.05% |
| HBE3 | | Hertford | Bengeo | | Hertford Bengeo | 2030 | 2134 | 5.12% |
| HHE1 | | Hertford Heath | | | Hertford Heath | 1868 | 1964 | 5.14% |
| WCW1 | | Ware | Chadwell | | Ware Chadwell | 2516 | 2646 | 5.17% |
| TST3 | | Thundridge | | | Thundridge and Standon | 774 | 814 | 5.17% |
| MHA3 | | Much Hadham | | | Much Hadham | 1247 | 1312 | 5.21% |
| BSA2 | | Bishop's Stortford | All Saints | | Bishop's Stortford All Saints | 890 | 937 | 5.28% |
| LHA2 | | Fumeux Pelham | | | Little Hadham | 437 | 461 | 5.49% |
| WTR2 | | Ware | Trinity | | Ware Trinity | 1779 | 1877 | 5.51% |
| HK1 | | Hertford | Kingsmead | | Hertford Kingsmead | 2194 | 2317 | 5.61% |
| BRA5 | | Meesden | | Brent Pelham and Meesden | Braughing | 106 | 112 | 5.66% |
| HRS3 | | Little Berkhamsted | | | Hertford Rural South | 413 | 437 | 5.81% |
| HRN3 | | Sacombe | | | Hertford Rural North | 136 | 144 | 5.88% |
| WAL2 | | Benington | | | Walkern | 721 | 764 | 5.96% |
| BSC4 | | Bishop's Stortford | Central | | Bishop's Stortford Central | 1289 | 1366 | 5.97% |
| BSO3 | | Bishop's Stortford | South | | Bishop's Stortford South | 2051 | 2174 | 6.00% |
| LHA3 | | Little Hadham | | | Little Hadham | 936 | 993 | 6.09% |
| BSC2 | | Bishop's Stortford | Central | | Bishop's Stortford Central | 2148 | 2279 | 6.10% |
| HRS4 | | Tewin | South | | Hertford Rural South | 786 | 834 | 6.11% |
| WAS1 | | Watton-at-Stone | | | Watton-at-Stone | 2044 | 2170 | 6.16% |
| MHA1 | | High Wyck | | | Much Hadham | 162 | 172 | 6.17% |
| HCA6 | | Hertford | Castle | | Hertford Castle | 534 | 567 | 6.18% |
| HRN4 | | Stapleford | | | Hertford Rural North | 464 | 493 | 6.25% |
| DAS2 | | Datchworth | | | Datchworth & Aston | 1264 | 1344 | 6.33% |
| TST2 | | Standon | Standon | | Thundridge and Standon | 1120 | 1192 | 6.43% |
| MCO5 | | Little Mundens | | | Mundens and Cottered | 761 | 810 | 6.44% |
| WSM2 | | Ware | St Marys | | Ware St Marys | 1591 | 1694 | 6.47% |
| HBE1 | | Hertford | Bengeo | | Hertford Bengeo | 2396 | 2552 | 6.51% |
| SAW1 | | Sawbridgeworth | | | Sawbridgeworth | 3689 | 3940 | 6.80% |
| BRA3 | | Brent Pelham | | Brent Pelham and Meesden | Braughing | 158 | 169 | 6.96% |
| BRA1 | | Anstey | | | Braughing | 272 | 291 | 6.99% |
| HRS2 | | Hertingfordbury | | | Hertford Rural South | 525 | 562 | 7.05% |
| BUN1 | | Buckland | | | Buntingford | 226 | 242 | 7.08% |
| SAB2 | | Stanstead Abbots | | | Stanstead Abbots | 1507 | 1614 | 7.10% |
| HRN1 | | Bengeo Rural | | | Hertford Rural North | 502 | 538 | 7.17% |
| GAM1 | | Great Amwell | | | Great Amwell | 1771 | 1904 | 7.51% |
| GAM2 | | Stanstead St Margarets | West | | Great Amwell | 420 | 452 | 7.62% |
| HCA3 | | Hertford | Castle | | Hertford Castle | 1252 | 1348 | 7.67% |
| SAB1 | | Stanstead St Margarets | East | | Stanstead Abbots | 832 | 896 | 7.69% |
| WSM1 | | Ware | St Marys | | Ware St Marys | 999 | 1078 | 7.91% |
| HSE2 | | Hertford | Sele | | Hertford Sele | 690 | 745 | 7.97% |
| HRN2 | | Bramfield | | | Hertford Rural North | 208 | 225 | 8.17% |
| BRA4 | | Hormead | | | Braughing | 590 | 639 | 8.31% |
| LHA1 | | Abury | | | Little Hadham | 479 | 519 | 8.35% |
| HSE3 | | Hertford | Sele | | Hertford Sele | 941 | 1020 | 8.40% |
| WTR3 | | Ware | Trinity | | Ware Trinity | 1403 | 1521 | 8.41% |
| WAL1 | | Ardeley | | | Walkern | 326 | 354 | 8.59% |
| MHA4 | | Much Hadham | | | Much Hadham | 406 | 441 | 8.62% |
| BSM2 | | Bishop's Stortford | Meads | | Bishop's Stortford Meads | 2054 | 2233 | 8.71% |
| WTR1 | | Ware | Trinity | | Ware Trinity | 885 | 963 | 8.81% |
| HCA1 | | Hertford | Castle | | Hertford Castle | 1761 | 1918 | 8.92% |
| HRN5 | | Tewin | North | | Hertford Rural North | 532 | 581 | 9.21% |
| BSA3 | | Bishop's Stortford | All Saints | | Bishop's Stortford All Saints | 2158 | 2358 | 9.27% |
| BUN2 | | Buntingford | | | Buntingford | 5695 | 6247 | 9.69% |
| MCO1 | | Aspenden | | | Mundens and Cottered | 189 | 208 | 10.05% |
| BUN3 | | Wyddial | | | Buntingford | 121 | 134 | 10.74% |
| BSA1 | | Bishop's Stortford | All Saints | | Bishop's Stortford All Saints | 2953 | 3283 | 11.18% |
| MCO3 | | Westmill | | | Mundens and Cottered | 241 | 268 | 11.20% |
| WCC2 | | Ware | Christchurch | | Ware Christchurch | 3015 | 3367 | 11.67% |
| HBE2 | | Hertford | Bengeo | | Hertford Bengeo | 1754 | 1961 | 11.80% |
| PUC1 | | Standon | Puckeridge | | Puckeridge | 2236 | 2511 | 12.30% |
| LHA4 | | Stocking Pelham | | | Little Hadham | 141 | 159 | 12.77% |
| BSC3 | | Bishop's Stortford | Central | | Bishop's Stortford Central | 1891 | 2172 | 14.86% |
| HSE4 | | Hertford | Sele | | Hertford Sele | 1311 | 1578 | 20.37% |
| BSO1 | | Bishop's Stortford | South | | Bishop's Stortford South | 1718 | 2080 | 21.07% |
| BSO2 | | Bishop's Stortford | South | | Bishop's Stortford South | 2958 | 3634 | 22.85% |
| HUN2 | | Hunsdon | | | Hunsdon | 930 | 1145 | 23.12% |
| HCA5 | | Hertford | Castle | | Hertford Castle | 2751 | 3487 | 26.75% |
| BSM1 | | Bishop's Stortford | Meads | | Bishop's Stortford Meads | 2704 | 3646 | 34.84% |
| SAW3 | | Sawbridgeworth | | | Sawbridgeworth | 1184 | 1610 | 35.98% |
| HSE1 | | Hertford | Sele | | Hertford Sele | 1316 | 1803 | 37.01% |
| SAW4 | | Sawbridgeworth | | | Sawbridgeworth | 1887 | 2600 | 37.78% |
| MCO2 | | Cottered | | | Mundens and Cottered | 584 | 817 | 39.90% |
| BSC1 | | Bishop's Stortford | Central | | Bishop's Stortford Central | 2217 | 3244 | 46.32% |
| DAS1 | | Aston | | | Datchworth & Aston | 701 | 1468 | 109.42% |
| HUN3 | | Wareside | | | Hunsdon | 566 | 1226 | 116.61% |
| BSO4 | | Thorley | Urban | | Bishop's Stortford South | 207 | 938 | 353.14% |
| BSS1 | | Bishop's Stortford | Silverleys | | Bishop's Stortford Silverleys | 509 | 3357 | 559.53% |
| HUN1 | | Eastwick | | Eastwick and Gilston | Hunsdon | 109 | 1016 | 832.11% |

Key

| | |
|--|--|
| | Group 2 Village, EHDC District Plan 2018 |
| | Great Amwell |
| | Wards Adjacent to Great Amwell |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| Fill in the name of each ward once | Fill in the number of councillors per ward | These cells will show you the electorate and variance. They change depending what you enter in the table to the left. |
|------------------------------------|--|---|

| Name of ward | Number of cllrs per ward | Electorate 2021 | Variance 2021 | Electorate 2027 | Variance 2027 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Bishop's Stortford All Saints | 3 | 6,001 | -12% | 6,578 | -17% |
| Bishop's Stortford Central | 3 | 7,545 | 11% | 9,061 | 14% |
| Bishop's Stortford Meads | 2 | 4,758 | 5% | 5,879 | 11% |
| Bishop's Stortford Silverleys | 2 | 4,798 | 6% | 7,646 | 45% |
| Bishop's Stortford South | 3 | 6,934 | 2% | 8,826 | 11% |
| Braughing | 1 | 2,215 | -3% | 2,345 | -11% |
| Buntingford | 2 | 6,042 | 33% | 6,623 | 25% |
| Datchworth & Aston | 1 | 1,965 | -14% | 2,812 | 7% |
| Great Amwell | 1 | 2,191 | -4% | 2,356 | -11% |
| Hertford Bengoe | 3 | 6,180 | -9% | 6,647 | -16% |
| Hertford Castle | 3 | 7,468 | 10% | 8,529 | 8% |
| Hertford Heath | 1 | 2,415 | 6% | 2,512 | -5% |
| Hertford Kingsmead | 2 | 4,528 | 0% | 4,750 | -10% |
| Hertford Rural North | 1 | 1,842 | -19% | 1,981 | -25% |
| Hertford Rural South | 1 | 2,106 | -7% | 2,232 | -15% |
| Hertford Sele | 2 | 4,258 | -6% | 5,146 | -3% |
| Hunsdon | 1 | 2,673 | 18% | 4,479 | 70% |
| Little Hadham | 1 | 1,993 | -12% | 2,132 | -19% |
| Much Hadham | 1 | 2,323 | 2% | 2,452 | -7% |
| Mundens and Cottered | 1 | 2,055 | -10% | 2,392 | -9% |
| Puckeridge | 1 | 2,236 | -2% | 2,511 | -5% |
| Sawbridgeworth | 3 | 6,930 | 2% | 8,323 | 5% |
| Stanstead Abbots | 1 | 2,339 | 3% | 2,510 | -5% |
| Thundridge and Standon | 1 | 2,557 | 13% | 2,691 | 2% |
| Walkern | 1 | 2,201 | -3% | 2,327 | -12% |
| Ware Chadwell | 1 | 2,516 | 11% | 2,646 | 0% |
| Ware Christchurch | 2 | 4,305 | -5% | 4,718 | -11% |
| Ware St Marys | 2 | 4,142 | -9% | 4,367 | -17% |
| Ware Trinity | 2 | 4,067 | -11% | 4,361 | -17% |
| Watton-at-Stone | 1 | 2,044 | -10% | 2,170 | -18% |