

East Herts & Broxbourne Liberal Democrats

Response to the Local Government Boundary Commission's first consultation on ward boundaries for East Hertfordshire

December 2021

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1. Introduction

1.1 This submission is made on behalf of the Liberal Democrat group on East Herts Council and the Liberal Democrat local party for East Herts and Broxbourne.

1.2 Calculations of the number of electors in each ward have been made on the basis of the statistical information provided by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and East Hertfordshire District Council. However, this has only been provided at a current polling district level and where the proposed boundaries do not cohere with these polling districts use has been made of a GPS based programme that utilises the current (2020/2021) electoral register. In addition the proposals take into account information on East Herts website relating to Master-planning for major development sites and, where submitted, individual planning applications. However, it is acknowledged that as the compilers of these proposals did not have data regarding smaller developments there will be some inaccuracies in the calculations.

1.3 The proposals conform to the principles of electoral equality, community identity and convenient local governance. (Something about the number of wards and the proportion of these within +/- 5%)

1.4 The review has not sought to continue existing wards where these no longer reflect community identity or widely diverge from electoral equality.

1.5 The proposal is for a mix of one, two and three member wards as at present. In rural areas the proposal is for one member wards across the district. In predominately urban areas the proposal contains a mixture of two and three member wards to reflect community identity.

1.6 The proposals will be set out on the basis of six clusters, five of which are based on the main towns in the district and the other the largely rural area in the west and centre of the district.

2. East Hertfordshire Context

2.1 East Herts is a predominately rural district, mainly comprised of small villages, with a few larger villages between them. There are five towns of varying sizes, which with the exception of Buntingford are located in the south and east of the district. Of these Bishop's Stortford, Hertford and Ware are large towns and Sawbridgeworth and Buntingford considerably smaller. This variety of settlements requires a mixture of ward sizes to reflect the different parts of the district. The proposals provide for single member wards in the more sparsely populated rural areas and a mixture of two-member and three-member wards in the urban areas.

2.2 East Hertfordshire is divided into parish and town councils, which provide local services and shape the identity of communities, especially in the rural parts of the district. These proposals have sought to honour these parish arrangements where they are consistent with maintaining electoral equality, except where changing settlement patterns have created new community identities that over-ride the historic parish connections.

2.3 Since the last review was carried out at the end of the twentieth century there has been considerable growth in the population of East Hertfordshire. This development has not been evenly spread across the district, being concentrated in the urban areas, particularly Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth, located in the London-Cambridge innovation corridor and near to Stansted Airport. In the period to 2027 there will be further residential development in these areas but also to the east of Stevenage in Aston parish and in the initial phase of the Gilston Garden Villages project to the north of Harlow. The latter development is proposed to reach 10,000 dwellings during the 2040s. This has meant that these proposals do not automatically refer back to the current ward pattern, especially in areas of large growth in the electorate.

2.5 In the current review East Herts District Council will continue to have 50 members. The average elector/member ratio will therefore be 2640:1 and these proposals measure variance from this figure. All the proposed wards are within +/- 5% variance of this figure. This has resulted in the proposal for 30 wards.

2.6 The proposals are presented in five groups or segments, reflecting the geographical features of East Herts District. Five of them are centred on the five urban areas in the ward and the last on those area in the west and centre of the district where there are no major urban centres.

4. Buntingford and the Northern Parishes

4.1 Buntingford is a small town and the only large settlement in the north of the district. It therefore serves as the centre for this part of the district, which otherwise consists of a number of rural parishes containing small to medium size villages. This sector covers the parishes north of the A120 in the east of the district and from Ardeley northwards in the west of the district.

4.2 The proposals for this sector of the district include one three-member ward including Buntingford and two single member wards made up of rural villages.

Ward Name	Number of Members	Electorate 2027	Electorate per Member	Variance (%)
Buntingford	3	7794	2598	-1.6%
Braughing	1	2540	2540	-3.8%
Pelhams and Little Hadham	1	2539	2539	-3.8%

Buntingford Ward

4.3 The proposal for Buntingford Ward is for a three member ward, including the town of Buntingford and the parishes of Buckland, Wyddial, Cottered and Ardeley for reasons of electoral equality and community interest. The current Buntingford Ward, comprising of Buntingford and the area to the north of it is projected to be at +25% variance for a two-member ward in 2027 and Buntingford Town alone will be +18% variance. Consideration was given to dividing Buntingford, either between two two-member wards consisting of parts of the town and a large number of adjoining parishes or between a two-member ward covering the majority of the town and a single member ward covering the northern part of the town and the other parishes included within this proposal. Whilst the latter was considered to have some merit, it was preferred to include all of Buntingford in one ward as this recognises the community identity of the town. The proposed ward is projected to be within -2% variance from electoral equality in 2027.

4.4 Buntingford is a small, but rapidly expanding, town with a strong community identity. It has a large shopping centre relative to its size in recognition of the role it plays as a centre for the northern part of the district, including supermarkets, a post office, pharmacies and a range of specialist retailers. Public services include a GP surgery, library, primary schools and a secondary school. Local clubs cater for a range of sports, including youth football and bowls. Buntingford has bus services to Hertford and Bishop's Stortford within East Herts and to Royston, Hitchin, Letchworth, Stevenage and Harlow beyond the boundaries of the district, all of which pass through surrounding villages. Buntingford is the hub for a demand responsive bus service serving the northern segment of East Herts and North Herts District.

4.5 Buckland and Wyddial Parishes are located to the north of Buntingford and form part of the current ward. Both are small villages within 5 miles of Buntingford that have direct routes into the town, Buckland and the smaller settlement of Chipping are on the A10 along which the bus route to Royston passes.

4.6 Cottered is a large village to the west of Buntingford, at the junction of the A507 and B1037. Regular daily buses pass through the village between Buntingford and Stevenage and the village is also served by the demand responsive HertsLynx service and Buntingford Community Bus Service one day per week. It is a residential village, with few shops and other services. There is a village hall and Cricket club.

4.7 Ardeley Parish is to the south of Cottered and contains the small villages of Ardeley and Cromer, with few local services. Ardeley has a primary school, parish church and a farm shop. Both settlements have direct routes to Buntingford via Cottered and are within the area of operation of the HertsLynx service based in Buntingford.

4.8 The north-western boundary of the proposed Buntingford Ward follows the district border from south-western corner of Ardeley Parish north-eastwards to the eastern edge of Buckland Parish. The eastern boundary follows the eastern boundaries of Wyddial Parish and Buntingford Parish. The southern boundary

follows the boundary of Buntingford Parish west and then north to the A507, then westwards along the A507, turning south along the eastern boundary of Cottered Parish south to the Ardeley Parish boundary and then east, south and west along the Ardeley Parish boundary to the District border with Stevenage Borough.

Braughing Ward

4.9 The proposed Braughing Ward is a single member ward encompassing Parishes to the south and east of Buntingford. The ward differs from the current ward of this name by removing the parishes of Meesden and Brent Pelham in the north-east of the District and including the Parishes of Westmill and Aspenden, which are located closer to Braughing. Not only does this improve electoral equality from a projected -11% for the current ward to -4% it also enhances community identity within the ward.

4.10 Braughing is a large village with a primary school, village hall, several restaurants and a tennis club. There is a post office, which is open for two days each week, but the village lacks many shopping facilities due its proximity to Puckeridge and Buntingford. The hamlets of Braughing Friars to the west, Hay Street and Dassells are also located in Braughing Parish.

4.11 The parishes of Anstey and Hormead are located to the north of Braughing. The B1368 runs northward from Braughing through both these parishes, although the small villages of Great Hormead, Little Hormead and Anstey are situated to the east of this road. A primary school is located in Great Hormead. A regular bus service travels between Braughing and Buntingford along the B1368, passing through the Hare Street, a mile to the west of Great Hormead.

4.12 Westmill and Aspenden are both less than 5 miles to the north-west of Braughing on the west side of the A10. Both are small villages without local services due to their proximity to Buntingford. They are agricultural parishes like Braughing Parish and are served by buses that run along the A10 from Puckeridge to Buntingford.

4.13 The eastern boundary of the proposed ward runs southward from the north-east corner of Anstey Parish along the parish boundaries of Anstey, Hormead and Braughing Parishes. The southern boundary is runs from the south-east corner of Braughing ward west along the southern and western boundaries of Braughing Parish to the Westmill Parish boundary and then north-east along the Westmill Parish boundary to the south-west corner of the parish. The western boundary follows the Westmill and Aspenden Parish boundaries north to the A507, turns westward along the A507 as far as the A10 and then south along the Aspenden Parish boundary, east along the Westmill Parish boundary and north along the western boundaries of Hormead and Anstey Parishes. The northern boundary is formed of the district border with North Herts District to the north-east corner of Anstey Parish.

Pelhams and Little Hadham Ward

4.14 The proposed Pelhams and Little Hadham Ward includes the rural parishes located along the eastern border of the district from Meesden in the north to Little Hadham in the south. It is also proposed to include the hamlet of Wellpond Green in Standon Parish owing to its proximity to Westland Green in Little Hadham. The proposed ward encompasses the current Little Hadham ward and is advocated on grounds of electoral equality as the current ward is projected to be at -19% by 2027.

4.15 Little Hadham is a small village and lies in the south of the proposed ward. It has a strong community identity. The main part of the village is located on the A120, with a primary school and church, to the north-east there is a light industrial estate. Hadham Ford is a secondary centre, with the village hall and post office is situated a mile to the south on the road to Much Hadham. To the east of Hadham Ford lies the hamlet of Bury Green and to west the hamlets of Wellpond Green and across the parish boundary Wellpond Green. These latter areas are formed of detached housing and share a similar character. Little Hadham has a long history back to the Roman era and a strong community identity.

4.16 Albury Parish lies between Little Hadham and the Pelhams to the north and consists of several hamlets, including Clapgate, Patmore Heath and Albury itself. To

the north are the Parishes of Furneux Pelham, Stocking Pelham and Brent Pelham. Meesden form a group parish with Brent Pelham and is located to the north. Primary schools are situated in Albury and Furneux Pelham. There are local roads linking the villages within the proposed ward and a daily school bus runs between Meesden, Brent Pelham, Stocking Pelham, Furneux Pelham, Clapgate, Albury and Little Hadham and thence to Bishops Stortford, with additional services on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

4.17 The eastern boundary of the proposed ward follows the County border with Essex from the north-east corner of Meesden Parish southward to the south-east corner of Albury Parish and southwards along the eastern boundary of Little Hadham Parish to the south-eastern corner of the parish. The southern boundary runs westward along the Little Hadham Parish Boundary to Bromley Lane, then west along the field boundary to Hadham Road and along Hadham Road to the junction with the drive to Standon Friars Farm. The western boundary turns north along the Standon Friars Farm drive, passes to the west of Standon Friars, along the farm track running north-west to Froghall Lane and thence to the A120, before turning north east and then west along the A120 to the Albury Parish boundary. The boundary then turns north along the boundaries of Albury, Furneux Pelham, Brent Pelham and Meesden Parishes. The northern boundary runs along the district boundary with North Herts District to the north-east corner of Meesden Parish.

5. Bishop's Stortford and Thorley

5.1 Bishop's Stortford is the largest town in East Herts and is located close to the eastern boundary of both the district and of Hertfordshire. It has a close association with the neighbouring parish of Thorley, such that as it has grown Thorley Street, the main part of the village now lies immediately adjacent to the southern edge of the town and within the Bishop's Stortford bi-pass. The integration of Thorley within the Bishop's Stortford urban area will be significantly increased by the building of the St. James's Park estate south of Whittington Way. Other than Thorley, Bishop's Stortford does not have strong links with other villages in East Herts, as the main transport routes run north into Essex or south to Sawbridgeworth, which has its own strong community identity. Bishop's Stortford town and Thorley parish are therefore considered as a discreet cluster of wards.

5.2 The population of Bishop's Stortford has grown significantly in the two decades since the last boundary review was carried out. This growth will continue in the period to 2027, with the completion of the Stortford Fields and St. Michael's Hurst developments to the north-west and of St. James's park to the south. In addition there are planned developments within the urban area on the Goods Yard, the Bishops Stortford High School site when it relocates to St. James's Park, and Patmore Close.

5.3 The projected electorate of Bishop's Stortford town and Thorley parish in 2027 is 38042, which equates to 14.40 members of the council, which results in wards with above average electorates across the town. These proposals maintain electoral equality by ensuring that all wards are within 5% of the electoral average.

5.4 The proposals for Bishop's Stortford/Thorley are for two three-member wards and four two-member wards. The proposed wards are shown in the table below.

Ward Name	Number of Members	Electorate 2027	Electorate per Member	Variance (%)
Bishop's Stortford All Saints	3	8105	2702	+2.3%

Bishop's Stortford Central	2	5463	2732	+3.5%
Bishop's Stortford Meads	2	5452	2726	+3.3%
Bishop's Stortford Silverleys	2	5470	2735	+3.6%
Bishop's Stortford South	2	5356	2678	+1.4%
Bishop's Stortford Thorley Manor	3	8196	2732	+3.5%

Bishop's Stortford All Saints

5.5 The proposed All Saints ward encompasses the majority of Bishop's Stortford east of the River Stort, which divides Bishop's Stortford along a roughly north-south axis. This area is bounded by the border with Essex to the north, east and south. The electorate of this area in 2027 will be over 10,300 and therefore does not easily cohere to either one three-member ward or two two-member wards. The proposed ward retains the name of 'All Saints' as it largely lies within the parish of All Saints, Hockerill. The alternative historic name for the area of Hockerill was considered but rejected because it is closely associated with a major road junction located on the edge of the ward. The inclusion of the Goods Yard development and the area is proposed on electoral equality grounds, as the current ward is projected to be at -17% variance in 2027, without impacting on the community identity of the ward.

5.6 The area is mostly residential with a mix of dwelling types ranging from large detached properties to terraced houses and a few blocks of apartments. There is a parade of shops, including a pharmacy and post office in the north of the area off Parsonage Lane and a further shop in Dunmow Road. The local hospital is located in the south-east of the proposed ward. There are three secondary schools and three primary schools.

5.7 The proposal retains a single three-member ward covering most of the area, with the western boundary north of the Hockerill junction running along the boundary of the Heath Row estate, Stortford Hall Park, Hockerill Anglo-European College and Sandle and Manor Roads, as with the current ward. South of Hockerill Junction, the

boundary runs down Hockerill Street and The Causeway to bridge over the River Stort and thence southward along the river.

5.8 The proposed boundary encompasses a number of communities, with established residents' associations. Parsonage Residents' Association covers north of the proposed ward, including the Heath Row estate and other roads off Parsonage Lane and the Dunmow Road; Haymeads Residents' Association covering the area between Haymeads Lane and Beldams Lane; and the Gilbey Estate Community Association representing the Warwick Road area. The area between London Road and the River Stort is currently being developed as the 'Goods Yard' site. Whilst the Parsonage Residents' Association also includes properties along Stansted Road following its merger with Hockerill Residents' Association, there are significant community differences between the Stansted Road properties those of the Heath Row estate. The latter consists of a large estate built between the 1950s and 1970s, whereas the properties along the Stansted Road are mostly older, with some recent in-fill.

Bishop's Stortford Central

5.9 The proposed Bishop's Stortford Central is considerably smaller than the current ward with this name. The electorate in the current ward is projected to be at +14% variance in 2027. The proposal to reduce the ward to two-members, and to remove both the area east of the River Stort and the section of Thorley Park estate in the current ward is made in order to reflect community identity reasons.

5.10 The proposed ward covers the current main shopping areas and the older housing areas of Newtown, South Mill and Havers, all of which date from before the middle of the twentieth century. There have been some newer developments in the South Mill area where light industrial areas have been redeveloped for housing and several blocks of flats built alongside the River Stort. The South Mill Arts Centre is located in the south-east of the ward and there are two primary schools, Windhill21 and St. Michael's in the north-west.

5.10 The Havers estate, Newtown and South Mill are established communities. The Havers estate was built as social housing by Bishop's Stortford UDC in the 1940s,

with some parts re-developed following the discovery of structural defects in the 1990s. The high proportion of the properties on the estate are social rented and this gives it a very different character to the 1970s estates to its west, with which there is no road link. Newtown and parts of South Mill date from the late Nineteenth century. The Rhodes Avenue area of South Mill was built in the mid-twentieth century and consists of smaller houses than Thorley Hill to its south with which it has no road link.

5.11 The eastern boundary is formed by the River Stort. To the north the boundary is formed by The Causeway and Bridge Street, running to the rear of properties on the north side of Windhill as does a current ward boundary. The western boundary follows the rear of St. Michael's School and the Havers estate, which has no vehicular connection with the roads to the west other than a bus lane. The southern boundary follows the green space in the south-west, along the rear of properties in Lower Park Crescent, Chinnery Hill and Thorley Hill, on the footpath behind Marlborough Close and Mulberry Court to South Road and thence along South Road and London Road to the natural River Stort.

Bishops Stortford Meads

5.12 The proposed Bishop's Stortford Meads Ward largely has the same boundaries as the current ward with this name and comprises the communities of the Stansted Road east of the River Stort, the Chantry area west of the River Stort and the newly built St. Michael's Hurst at the northern end of Rye Street. The ward is largely residential with some shops in the north of Town Centre, along North Street and in Northgate End. The Grange Paddocks leisure centre is located in the middle of the ward. There are two primary schools located in the west of the ward.

5.13 The north-eastern and north-western boundaries of the proposed Meads ward are formed by the county border with Essex. The eastern boundary follows the existing boundary. The southern boundary following Hockerill Street, The Causeway, Bridge Street and as in for the current ward the rear of properties in Windhill and Regency Close. To the west the boundary follows the rear of properties in Westgrove Road, Grailands and Carters Leys, part of Cricketfield Lane, the northern

boundary of the Tennis and Cricket Clubs and then the footpath to Dane O'Coys Road, east along Dane O'Coys Road, along the west and north boundaries of, along Whitehall Lane and Foxdells Lane and north at the rear of properties in Rye street as far as the Bournebrook stream, then northwest along the Bournebrook to the Essex border.

5.14 The western boundary, whilst complex is well-defined and ensures that the ward includes all of the Chantry area, which is covered by a well-established residents' association and has a strong community identity. The boundary also ensures that all of the new Stortford Fields development is in the adjacent Silverleys ward, except for the housing north of the Bournebrook stream, which will be accessed from Farnham Road and be separated from the rest of the development by a nature reserve.

5.15 The Chantry and Stansted Road areas are both comprised of older properties, with some newer infill developments and share many characteristics. They are connected by Hockerill Street in the south and Michaels Road in the north. A cycle and walking route is under construction from the new Grange Paddocks leisure centre to Cannons Close over the 'Johnson's Crossing' railway bridge. The newly opened Avanti Meadows School in Farnham Road will cater for pupils resident in the north of the town as well as from St. Michael's Hurst.

5.16 There are two development areas within the ward, at St. Michaels Hurst which has partially been constructed and Old River Lane in the south for which planning permission has not yet been sought. The latter will be a mixed development of arts, retail and housing.

Bishop's Stortford Silverleys Ward

5.17 The proposed Bishop's Stortford Silverleys ward is similar to the current ward and retains the same name derived from the sports ground located centrally to the proposed ward, but includes the entirety of the Stortford Fields estate, currently under construction, and removes the part of the ward south of the green wedge created by Bishop's Stortford College playing fields.

5.18 The proposed ward is a two-member ward bounded to the north by the Essex border and to the west by the Bishop's Stortford town boundary. To the west of the A1184 the southern boundary follows a field drainage ditch, to its east the boundary follows existing paths across Bishop's Stortford College playing fields and then a path south to Great Hadham Road. The boundary to the east follows the rear of properties in The Stewarts, Windhill, Regency Close, Westfield Road, Hadham Road and Dane O'Coys Road to Cricketfield Lane. North of Cricketfield Lane it follows the boundary of Ash Grove and the Stortford Fields estate to the Bournebrook stream and then north along this watercourse to the county boundary.

5.19 The proposed ward incorporates the established communities of Bishop's Park and around Maze Green Road in the south and the large new Stortford Fields estate, currently under construction. The ward is largely residential, except for the shopping area at Bishop's Park, which caters for a shoppers from a wide area. Two local centres are due to be built on the Stortford Fields estate. There is one primary school on the Bishop's Park estate and a further primary school and secondary school are planned for Stortford Fields.

5.20 In addition to the large Stortford Fields estate to the north of Hadham Road, a development is planned for the land west of Patmore Close, south of the Hadham Road. These will together bring the electorate to the within 4% variance from the average by 2027.

Bishop's Stortford South Ward

5.21 The Proposed Bishop's Stortford South Ward is smaller than the current ward of this name and is proposed to have two members. The ward would comprise the Thorley Hill area, the 'Old Thorley' estate south of the current Bishop's Stortford High School, the Twyford Road/Proctors Way areas east of London Road, the southern part of Thorley Park estate and the whole of Thorley parish.

5.23 The northern part of the ward is largely residential, with some light industrial units in Twyford Road. There will be two large developments taking place in the

ward before 2027. The St. James's Park development is central to the proposed ward and will be mixed use, including a new replacement Bishop's Stortford High School., a retail area and an employment zone in addition to housing. A further 225 houses are planned for the current Bishop's Stortford High School site once it has relocated to St. James's Park.

5.24 The southern part of the ward comprising Thorley rural ward is largely agricultural and comprises a number of farms that are only accessible from the A1184, which comprises the southern boundary of the current ward. The proposed ward will unite the two halves of Thorley parish, which will remove the anomaly that the Thorley Hall area, including the parish church of St. James the Great, is only accessible by road via Bishop's Stortford but is currently in Much Hadham ward.

5.22 The boundaries of the proposed ward comprise on the east side the River Stort Navigation, south of the London Road Bridge, and the Essex border, and on the south and west the Thorley Parish boundaries. From a point to the east of Premier Court in Thorley Lane the northern boundary follows a marked path to Thorley Lane East, crosses the Lane and around the west and north sides of Thorley Cricket Ground, eastward along Freiburg Avenue, then crosses Thorley park estate along estate paths to the west of Rushleigh Green and Gerard Avenue to Villiers-Sur-Marne Avenue and then to the west of Appleton Fields. The northern boundary continues along the green wedge, along the rear boundaries of properties in Lower Park Crescent, Chinnery Hill and Thorley Hill, on to the footpath behind Marlborough Close and Mulberry Court to South Road and thence along South Road and London Road to the natural River Stort.

Bishop's Stortford Thorley Manor Ward

5.25 The proposed Bishop's Stortford Thorley Manor is a new three-member ward located in the south-west of Bishop's Stortford comprising the neighbourhoods of Bishop's Gate north of the B1004 Great Hadham Road, St. Michaels Mead to the west and Thorley Park to the east and south. The proposed ward name derives from Thorley Manor Residents Association which covers the whole of Thorley Park, including those parts of the estate formerly in Silverleys Ward and South Ward.

5.27 All three neighbourhoods are areas of recent housing, Thorley park estate having been built in the 1970s and 1980s, the other two estates during the 1990s. In the centre of the ward are the Thorley shopping area, including Sainsbury's and Manor Links primary school which serves both the northern section of Thorley Park and St. Michael's Mead. Thorley community centre is located close to the school and in the 'green wedge' that runs across Thorley Park and provides a further focus for community identity across the whole estate.

5.28 St. Michaels Mead forms a discreet community that is separated from the rest of Bishop's Stortford as it only has road access from the A1184 St. James Way. The estate has a community centre but no shops or other facilities. There are good pedestrian links from St. Michaels Mead to Thorley Park and Bishop's Gate, so that the closest links with St. Michaels Mead are with these two areas. This arrangement of communities therefore has greater coherence than the current ward boundaries in which they were in three separate wards.

5.26 The boundaries of Thorley Manor to the west and south-west are formed by the Bishop's Stortford Town boundary. In the south-east the boundary follows a footpath along the edge of Thorley Recreation Ground to Thorley Lane East and then along the west and north sides of Thorley Cricket Ground before crossing the Thorley Park estate along the line of estate paths between Grosvenor Close and Rushleigh Green and then between The Ridings and Gerard Avenue to reach Villiers-Sur-Marne Avenue. The eastern boundary runs from the junction of Villiers-Sur-Marne Avenue and Magdeville Road northwards along a path beside Richard Whittington School, west along the green wedge and then northwards between Thorley Park and the rear of properties in Kent Crescent, Piggotts Way and Ward Crescent and Windhill School. The northern boundary east of the A1184 is marked by paths across the school playing fields from the B1004 west of St. Joseph's Primary School then along the field boundary to the A1184, to the west of this road the follows a drainage ditch along the side of a field to the Town boundary.

6. Sawbridgeworth and the Surrounding Parishes

6.1 Sawbridgeworth is a small town in the south-east of the district, close to the border with Essex. It has a railway station, a library and a shopping area centred in Bell Street, which contains a post office, restaurants and food shops.

6.2 In the South-Eastern segment of the district are Much Hadham, Widford, Gilston and High Wych. These are villages of varying sizes that form local centres. Much Hadham and Widford are located on the B1004 between Bishop's Stortford and Ware. High Wych is located south-west of Sawbridgeworth and is linked to Gilston, made up of the settlements of Pye Corner and Terling Park located near the southern boundary of the district north of Harlow, by the High Wych Road, formerly the A414. Together with the A1184 running from Bishop's Stortford through Sawbridgeworth to Harlow, these form the main north-south routes through the area.

6.3 The proposals for Sawbridgeworth and surrounding area is for one three-member ward covering the town itself and two one-member wards taking in outlying areas within Sawbridgeworth Parish.

Ward Name	Number of Members	Electorate 2027	Electorate per Member	Variance (%)
Sawbridgeworth	3	7808	2603	-1.4%
Much Hadham	1	2595	2595	-1.7%
High Wych & Gilston	1	2618	2618	-0.8%

Sawbridgeworth Ward

6.2 The electorate in Sawbridgeworth Parish has risen over the period since the last review and is projected to rise to 8323 by 2027, which has a variance from the average of +5.1% for a three-member ward. Whilst this is only slightly above the 5% threshold in view of the continuing high level of development in this part of the district located within the London-Cambridge Innovation corridor, the proposal is for the outlying areas of Spellbrook and Redricks Lane to be moved to adjacent wards.

6.3 The strength of community identity within the main town of Sawbridgeworth was recognised and alternatives of dividing the town between two wards were rejected on this basis. There is a thriving community centre at Sawbridgeworth Memorial Hall, with many civic events hosted by the Town Council and voluntary work through local churches. Two primary schools and Leventhorpe Secondary School are located in the town.

6.3 The boundary of the proposed Sawbridgeworth ward runs along the Essex border to the east from the point where the county boundary leaves the River Stort south of Tednambury Farm southwards to a point south-east of Rowneybury House. The southern boundary leaves the river and follows a path northwest to the eastern corner of the grounds of Rowneybury, it continues north-west along the boundary of the gardens of Rowneybury House and to the east of Union Wood until it reaches the A1184 Harlow Road. West of the A1184 the boundary follows Chaseways north-east to Rowney Farm where it runs along the east side of the farmyard and along the field boundary to the north of the farm. The boundary passes to the west of Rowney wood and northward along the field boundary to the join the drive of Rowney Bois Riding Stables and thence to High Wych Road, which it joins to the east of the allotments and passes westward along the road to the Sawbridgeworth Town boundary at the junction of High Wych Road and Broadfields. The boundary on the west follows the Sawbridgeworth Town Boundary northward to Parsonage Lane. The north boundary follows Parsonage Lane to its junction with the A1184, which follows northward for a short section and then continues eastward along the north side of Sawbridgeworth cemetery and the adjacent field to the railway line, then south along the railway to the River Stort at Kecksys Rail Bridge before turning north along the river to the county boundary.

Much Hadham Ward

6.4 The proposed ward includes all of Much Hadham Parish, Widford, Allens Green and Spellbrook. These are all rural villages lying south and south-west of Bishop's Stortford and north-west of Sawbridgeworth.

6.5 Much Hadham Parish is a large village, with a range of shops and services including a post office, village shop, coffee shop and village hall. There is a Primary

School, Nursery and Village Hall. A thriving Sports Association manages the village recreation ground and sports pavilion. Much Hadham parish also includes the hamlets of Kettle Green to the west and Green Tye and Perry Green to the east.

6.6 Widford lies two and a half miles south of Much Hadham along the B1004, along which there is a bus link between the villages. Widford forms a compact village, with a Primary School and Village Hall.

6.7 Allens Green, lying to the southeast of Much Hadham, forms part of High Wych Parish but is remote from the main village and as a rural hamlet shares many features with Perry Green and Green Tye. There is a direct road link to Green Tye and thence to Much Hadham. Allens Green is within the current Much Hadham ward.

6.8 Spellbrook, whilst within Sawbridgeworth Parish is two miles north of the main settlement. It is closer to the southern districts of Bishop's Stortford, especially after the construction of St. James's Park. It forms a small village with its own Primary School. The village also has direct road links with Allens Green and Green Tye and Much Hadham.

6.9 The northern boundary of the proposed ward is defined by the northern boundaries of Much Hadham, High Wych and Sawbridgeworth parishes. The eastern boundary runs along the River Stort navigation south to Kecksys Rail Bridge. The southern boundary follows the railway line north to point directly east of the northern boundary of Sawbridgeworth Cemetery, then west along the north boundary of the field and Cemetery to the A1184. The boundary follows the A1184 south for a short distance and then north–west along Parsonage Lane to the Sawbridgeworth parish boundary. The boundary follows the Sawbridgeworth Parish boundary south to a point north of Tharbies Lodge, then north up the track to Tharbies Farm, west along rook End to Beanfield Road and further west along Chandlers Lane. The boundary continues along Chandlers Lane to a point 0.2 miles beyond the southward bend from whence it turns west along a field boundary to the Much Hadham Parish boundary. The proposed ward boundary follows the southern and western Parish

Boundaries of Much Hadham and Widford Parishes to the northernmost corner of Much Hadham Parish.

High Wych and Gilston Ward

6.10 The new ward of High Wych and Gilston covers the villages of High Wych, Gilston and Eastwick together with sections of Hunsdon and Sawbridgeworth Parishes. These areas will all be greatly affected by the development of the Gilston Garden Villages, which forms part of the expansion of Harlow. The development is planned to include 10,000 dwellings, built over the next 20 years. These will be constructed in Gilston, Eastwick and Hunsdon Parishes, with 3,000 planned to be built by 2033. It is projected that 600 dwellings will be occupied by 2027 in Eastwick and the southern part of Hunsdon included within the proposed ward. The electorate is therefore forecast to grow rapidly to within 1% of the average across the district by this date. Thereafter consideration will need to be given to increasing the representation of this ward to two members.

6.11 The two areas that are separated from the Gilston Garden Villages development area are both linked to it by good road links, the southern part of Sawbridgeworth along Redricks Lane and High Wych along High Wych Road. Both link to Gilston at Pye Corner. There are regular buses travelling between High Wych and Gilston and from the southern end of Sawbridgeworth to High Wych, both of which originate in Harlow.

6.12 High Wych is a small village south-west of Sawbridgeworth, with its own Primary School, memorial hall and village shop. There are two restaurants. The southern section of Sawbridgeworth is purely residential, with a garden centre in Redricks Lane and a Gym on the outskirts of Harlow. Gilston currently consists of three small settlements, Pye Corner, Terlings Park and Gilston Park, which all consist of small residential villages on the outskirts of Harlow as does the very small village of Eastwick.

6.13 The boundary of the proposed ward follows the County border with Essex from a point south-east of Rowneybury House in Sawbridgeworth westwards to the

junction of this border with the western boundary of Hunsdon parish. The boundary then turns north to follow the western boundary of Hunsdon to a point just north of the A414, where it turns north-east along Hunsdon Brook. Where Hunsdon Brook turns to the north-west the ward boundary continues north-east along the edge of a field, crossing Church Lane at a point just south of St. Dunstan's Church. East of Church Lane the boundary continues north-east along the southern edge of the grounds of Hunsdon House to the Eastwick Parish boundary. The boundary follows the Eastwick Parish Boundary northwards until it meets the High Wych Parish boundary and continues north along this boundary for a short distance then turning east along a drainage ditch to join Chandlers Lane. The boundary continues east along Chandlers Lane, Beanfield and Rook End to Tharbies Farm, then south along the track to Tharbies Lodge. The eastern boundary runs south from Tharbies Lodge along the High Wych Parish boundary to the junction of Broadlands and High Wych, after turning east along High Wych road it turns south along the drive of Rowney Bois Riding Stables, along field boundaries and the southern edge of Rowney Wood to Chaseways and thence to the A1184. After crossing the A184 the proposed ward boundary continues south-eastward along the northern edge of the grounds of Rowneybury and east of Union Wood to the River Stort.

7. Ware and Stanstead Abbots

7.1 Ware is the third largest town in East Herts, but has seen relatively low levels of development since the last boundary review and is consequently the projected current wards are all considerably below the average projected electorate for 2027. A major development is now planned on the eastern and northern outskirts of Ware, which will largely be situated in Wareside Parish, whose electorate is projected to double by 2027. South of Ware are the Stanstead St. Margarets and Stanstead Abbots, which form one continuous development that also encompasses parts of Great Amwell parish. To the east lies the village of Hunsdon. The area is bounded on the west by the A10, which separates Ware from Hertford and to the south by the borders with Essex and Broxbourne Borough. The proposal proposes three two-member wards covering Ware, which cover the south, west and east of the town, with a smaller area on the east side of Ware adjacent to the Ware2 development site as part of a one-member ward with Wareside parish.

7.2 The proposed electoral arrangements for this area are for four 2-member wards and one one-member ward.

Ward Name	Number of Members	Electorate 2027	Electorate per Member	Variance (%)
Stanstead Abbotts	2	5161	2581	-2.2%
Ware South	2	5125	2563	-2.9%
Ware St. Mary's	2	5168	2584	-2.1%
Ware Trinity	2	5143	2572	-2.6%
Ware Rural	1	2543	2543	-3.7%

Stanstead Abbotts Ward

7.3 The proposal is to replace the existing arrangement of two one-member wards covering the Stanstead Abbotts and St. Margaret's area, both of which are at or above -5% variance, with a single two-member ward. This also reflects the community identity of Stanstead Abbotts and St. Margarets as a single settlement. The ward includes several estates in the southern part of Great Amwell parish that are adjacent to the St. Margarets. In addition the ward encompasses the village of Hunsdon, 3 miles to the north-east of Stanstead Abbotts, which has good transport links to the rest of the proposed ward.

7.4 Stanstead Abbotts is a large village with a thriving community and High Street, where there are a range of retail outlets including a convenience store, post office, pharmacist, café, restaurants and specialist shops. Also located in the High Street is Stanstead Abbotts and St. Margarets Village Club. The village has a primary school, GP surgery and dentists and serves as a local centre for surrounding areas, including St. Margarets. St. Margarets Parish, a largely residential area lying immediately to the west of Stanstead Abbotts south of the B181, with the boundary being marked only by the River Lee Navigation. Parts of the village are within the current Stanstead Abbotts ward, which means that the Parish is divided between two different wards at present. The main sporting facilities that cater for both villages are located within St. Margarets. St. Margarets railway station, located north of the B181

is within Great Amwell Parish and serves both parts of the village and the adjacent housing in Amwell Lane, the 'Folly Estate' and Gypsy Lane area that are included in the proposed ward.

7.5 Hunsdon is a small village with a Primary School, post office and village hall. The village has a direct road connection to Stanstead Abbots via the B180 and this is a regular bus route. Stanstead Abbots is the closest location within Hertfordshire for a range of shops and services, including the railway station, dentist and specialist shops.

7.6 The southern boundary of the proposed Stanstead Abbots ward runs along the East Herts District border with Essex from a point adjacent to Roydon Lock westward to the A10. The western boundary follows the St. Margarets and Great Amwell Parish boundaries north along the A10 to a point north of the bridge over the B1502, east along the field boundary to the rear of properties in Gypsy Lane, along Gypsy Lane from east of the entrance to the industrial premises to the junction with the A1170. The boundary goes south down the A1170 to the St. Margarets Parish Boundary, east to Hillside Lane, north along Hillside Lane and along the northern boundary of properties in Scott Avenue, French's Close and Gilpin Gallop to the New River. The boundary runs north along New River to a point north of 42 Amwell Lane before turning east along a footpath crossing Amwell Lane, the Railway Line to the River Lee Navigation, northward along the navigation to the Great Amwell Parish boundary. The ward boundary follows this boundary, the northern boundaries of Stanstead Abbots and Hunsdon parishes eastwards, before turning south along the Hunsdon Parish boundary to the southern edge of the grounds of Hunsdon House. The boundary then follows the southern edge of Hunsdon House grounds westward, crossing Church Lane at a point just south of St. Dunstan's Church. West of Church Lane the boundary follows a field boundary and then Hunsdon Brook in a south-west direction to the Hunsdon parish boundary and then south to the County border.

Ware South Ward

7.7 The proposed Ware South ward is a two-member ward that covers the current Ware Chadwell ward, parts of Great Amwell Parish and Ware town centre, which is currently in Ware Christchurch Ward. Whilst the projected electorate of Ware Chadwell Ward has little variance from the average it is situated between Great Amwell Ward and the other Ware wards for which the variance is greater than 10%.

7.8 Ware is a large town, with a wide range of services and community facilities. The Town Council provides a range of cultural facilities and events, based at Ware Priory. Ware has a long history and cultural heritage. The town therefore has a distinct community identity, but is not so large that districts within it have strong separate identities. The area covered by the current Ware Chadwell ward is distinct from the rest of the town by the railway and the River Lea. Nevertheless, there are a number of facilities located in this area, including the railway station and the Ware campus of Hertford Regional College, that are used by residents of the whole town and Amwell End south of the River Lea forms part of the central shopping area.

7.9 North of the River Lea the proposed ward includes the central shopping area along the High Street and Star Street and properties on roads leading off from them. Tee area to the west of the Ware Priory, between the central shopping area and the industrial area to the west of the town, which is in the currently in Ware St. Mary's Ward has been included as it the closest residential properties to this area are in the town centre.

7.10 Great Amwell village and the Furlong Way estate in the north-east of Great Amwell Parish are largely residential areas with other facilities. Great Amwell has a primary school and village hall and there is a large garden centre on the A170. To a degree both areas form part of the suburbs of Ware, with which they are closely connected via the A170 along which run frequent bus services.

7.11 The boundaries of the proposed Ware South ward follow the western parish boundaries of Great Amwell and Ware from the River Lea bridge southwards to a point to the north of the A10 bridge over the B1502, east along the field boundary to

the rear of properties in Gypsy Lane, along Gypsy Lane from the entrance to the industrial premises to the junction with the A1170. The boundary turns south down the A1170 to the southern boundary of Great Amwell Parish, east to Hillside Lane, north along Hillside Lane and along the northern boundary of properties in Scott Avenue, French's Close and Gilpin Gallop to the New River. The boundary runs north along New River to a point north of 42 Amwell Lane before turning east along a footpath crossing Amwell Lane and the Railway Line to the River Lee Navigation. The boundary then follows the navigation northward to the weir opposite Crane Mead Business Park, northwards along the natural River Lea to a point where it is closest to Star Street, east along Star Street to a point east of the junction with Vicarage Road and along the eastern boundary of 99 Vicarage Road. The northern boundary follows Vicarage Road northwards and then west along the back of properties on the north side of Vicarage Road to the junction with King Edwards's Street. The boundary then runs along the back of properties on the south side of King Edward's Road to the junction with New Road, south along New Road, west along Dickenson Way and along the east and south sides of Tesco Car Park and along the path to Church Street. The boundary turns west along Church Street to the junction with the A1170, north along Baldock Road to the junction with Watton Road, west along Watton Road and Park Road, south along Buryfield Way and the eastern boundary of the factory site to Priory Street, west along Priory Street to the River Lea and west to the Town boundary running along the A10.

Ware St. Mary's Ward

7.12 The proposed two-member ward covers the same area as the current ward with the same name, but with the addition of an area to the north, around Heath Drive in order to achieve electoral equality.

7.13 The proposed ward covers the whole of west side of Ware. South of Park Road there are factories, whilst the remainder are residential estates on either side of Westmill and Wadesmill Roads. There is a secondary school and two primary schools. The addition of the Heath Drive area aids community cohesion as it is surrounded by the current Ware St. Mary's ward on two sides. The eastern

boundary of the ward follows the green area west of Milton Road and Clarks Close, which forms a natural edge to the ward.

7.14 The boundaries of the proposed Ware St. Mary's ward follow the Ware town boundary from the A10 Bridge over the River Lea northward and eastward to a point north of Kingsway where the boundary is crossed by a footpath. The boundary turns south across Kingsway into the Upper Bourne green area, before running south along the rear boundaries of houses on the east side of Clarks Close and Milton Road to The Bourne. The boundary then runs west along The Bourne and south along Wadesmill Road, west along Watton Road and Park Road, south along Buryfield Way and the eastern boundary of the factory site to Priory Street, west along Priory Street to the River Lea and thence westward to the Town boundary running along the A10.

Ware Trinity Ward

7.15 The proposed Ware Trinity ward covers parts of the current Ware Trinity and Ware Christchurch wards, both of which are projected to have a variance from electoral equality in 2027 of over -10%. The proposed ward will be within -5% variance. The proposal is to retain the name of Ware Trinity as the larger portion of the ward is in the current Trinity Ward and Trinity Road lies in the centre of the ward.

7.16 Ware is a large town, with a wide range of services and community facilities. The Town Council provides a range of cultural facilities and events, based at Ware Priory. Ware has a long history and cultural heritage. The town therefore has a distinct community identity, but is not so large that districts within it have strong separate identities. The proposed ward covers the bulk of the east side of Ware, less the area adjacent to the planned major development to the east of the town. It consists of predominately residential roads with a mixture of older terraced houses in the south and west of the ward, and post-war estates in the north-east.

7.16 The proposed northern boundary of the ward follows the Ware parish boundary from the point at which the path from Upper Bourne westward to the west boundary of Priors Wood Primary School. The eastern boundary turns south along the boundary of the school, south along Cozens Road for a short distance, west into

Beechfield Road and then south along the rear boundaries of properties on the west side of Cozens Road to a point south of Cobham Road, then west along the rear boundaries of properties on the south of Cobham Road across Upper Clabdens and to Cromwell Road, south along Cromwell Road to the junction with Winton Road. The southern boundary turns south down Winton Road for a short distance, west along the northern boundary of xx Winton Road and then south along the west boundary of houses in Winton Road, then west along the back of properties on the north side of Vicarage Road to the junction with King Edwards's Street. The boundary then runs along the back of properties on the south side of King Edward's Road to the junction with New Road, south along New Road, west along Dickenson Way and along the east and south sides of Tesco Car Park and along the path to Church Street. The boundary turns west along Church Street to the junction with the A1170. The western boundary of the ward follows the A1170 Baldock Road north to the junction with The Bourne, east into the Bourne and then north along the rear boundaries of houses on the east side of Milton Road and Clarks Close, then on to the path northward across Kingsway to the ward boundary.

Ware Rural Ward

7.17 The proposed Ware Rural is a new single member ward that covers the eastern area of Ware Town and the parish of Wareside. A major development is planned for the east of Ware and the part of Wareside parish north of Ware, so that the projected electorate of the proposed ward will be within -5% variance from elector equality by 2027.

7.18 The eastern area of Ware within the proposed ward consists of mostly post-war housing, with a small area of older properties in the south-west. The Priors Wood Primary School is in the far north of this area. This housing area will have a close connection to the emerging community in the first phase of the new development with pedestrian routes through to the new housing. These connections will be with both the planned Widbury neighbourhood to the east and Priors Wood neighbourhood to the north. The existing housing will be integrated into the community identity of these neighbourhoods in this way and through Priors Wood Primary School, which it is planned will be expanded to cater for the children from

these developments. It will also be connected to the western neighbourhoods of the new development located to the north of Ware via the planned spine road running from Widbury Hill through to the A10 north of Wodson Park Leisure Centre.

7.19 Wareside is a large rural parish, which contains the villages of Wareside, Bakers End and Babbs Green. There is currently a Primary school in Wareside village, there are no shops or other services in the villages so that most services are accessed in Ware. The B1004 directly links the village of Wareside with the Widbury Hill area of Ware in the south of the ward. There is a circular bus running from Ware through Babbs Green and Wareside and returning to the town.

7.20

The boundary of the proposed Ware Rural conforms to the boundaries of Wareside parish except in the south west where it bisects Ware. The proposed ward boundary leaves the Wareside parish boundary at the west boundary of Priors Wood Primary School. The western boundary then turns south along the boundary of the school, south along Cozens Road for a short distance, west into Beechfield Road and then south along the rear boundaries of properties on the west side of Cozens Road to a point south of Cobham Road, then west along the rear boundaries of properties on the south of Cobham Road across Upper Clabdens and to Cromwell Road, south along Cromwell Road to the junction with Winton Road. The boundary then turns south down Winton Road for a short distance, west along the northern boundary of xx Winton Road and then south along the west boundary of houses in Winton Road, east along the rear boundary of houses in Vicarage Road and south along Vicarage Road and the east boundary of 99 Vicarage Road before crossing the B1004 to the natural River Lea. The boundary follows the natural river south-west until it meets the River Lee Navigation where it turns south East to the Ware Town boundary, at which point it follows the Town boundary north-east to the Wareside Parish boundary.

8. Hertford and South-West Parishes

8.1 Hertford is the second largest town in East Herts District and is the County Town of Hertfordshire. Historically it has been an important market town and administrative centre for centuries. It has a strong community identity, which is enhanced by the location of a theatre, sports centre and Hertford Museum. However, the geography of the town, divided by several rivers, the mainline railway and the A414 dual carriageway is formed of a number of neighbourhoods that have their own distinctive community identities.

8.2 This segment also covers the surrounding parishes of Hertford Heath, Brickendon, Bayford, Bramfield, Little Berkhamsted and Hertingfordbury, which lie to the south or west of Hertford. The proposals retain one-member wards to the south-east and south-west of Hertford between the town and the District boundaries with Broxbourne Borough and Welwyn-Hatfield District, although we altered boundaries.

8.3 The proposal is for one three-member ward, three two-member wards and two one-member wards in this segment of the district.

Ward Name	Number of Members	Electorate 2027	Electorate per Member	Variance (%)
Hertford Bengoe	2	5368	2684	+1.7%
Hertford Kingsmead	3	8114	2705	+2.5%
Hertford Sele	2	5381	2690	+1.9%
Hertford Castle	2	5088	2544	-3.6%
Hertford Heath	1	2564	2564	-2.9%
Hertford Rural	1	2692	2692	+2.0%

Hertford Bengoe Ward

8.4 The current Hertford Bengoe ward has a projected variance from the average of

-22%. The proposed new ward will address this electoral inequality by reducing the ward from 3 to 2 members and removing the section of the town centre within the ward.

8.5 Bengeo is a well-defined, mainly residential, area located in the north of Hertford, with a strong community identity. It is separated from the Sele estate to its west by the River Beane and the mainline railway and from the Kingsmead district to its south by the River Lea. The housing is a mixture of types and ages. Bengeo has a long history as a settlement, separately from Hertford going back to the Domesday Book. Bengeo has its own neighbourhood plan, adopted in 2021, and there are very active residents associations within the ward, including Molewood Residents Association. In the north of Bengeo there is a primary school and the main leisure centre for Hertford is located in the south of the proposed ward.

8.6 The south of the current ward has been moved to the proposed Castle Ward as it included a large part of the town centre south of the River Beane, which does not form part of the main community of Bengeo. The proposed boundaries therefore ensure both community identity and electoral equality.

8.7 The boundaries of the proposed Hertford Bengeo Ward follow the Hertford Town boundary from the A119 eastward to the A10 Bridge over the River Lea. They then follow the River Lea and then the natural northern channel of the river westward to the Thornton Street Bridge. The boundary continues west along Thornton Street and Hartham Lane to the point where it bends south, from here the boundary follows the path to Hartham Common car park, follows the southern edge of the car park and along the entrance road to Port Hill. The boundary turns south along Port Hill for a short section and then turns west along Sidings Court and along the boundary to the north of George Street and Russell Street to the rear drive between Russell Street and Balfour Street. The boundary turns south down this driveway, across Port Vale and down Pitteway Walk, turning east and then south along the boundary of Mill Mead School which it follows to the northerly channel of the River Beane. The western boundary follows the River Beane to the A119 Bridge and thence northward along the road to the Hertford Town boundary.

Hertford Kingsmead Ward

8.8 The proposed Hertford Kingsmead Ward is larger than the current ward of this name and is a three-member ward. This is better reflect the community identity of the eastern part of Hertford, which is currently divided between the existing Kingsmead Ward and Castle Ward. The proposed ward will also ensure a high level of electoral equality across Hertford.

8.9 Kingsmead is a relatively well-defined community between the King's Meads along the River Lea to the north and the A414 to the south and south-west. It comprises two distinct housing areas, older terraced and semi-detached houses along the Ware Road and newer estates to the south of Ware Road, either side of the B1502. There has been some more recent infill amongst the older properties. To the south-west there are light industrial units and the Medford Retail Park. A further industrial estate lies to the north of the proposed ward next to the River Lea, next to which on the site of a former depot there are plans for a major development of residential properties. The ward contains Hertford East railway station which links the town to Ware and Broxbourne. There is a primary school in the centre of the ward and a post office in Hamel Drive.

8.10 The proposed ward boundary follows Hertford Town boundary south from the A10 Bridge over the River Lea to the A10/A414 roundabout, before turning west and then north along the A414 to the junction with the A119 Ware Road. The boundary follows the A119 northeast for a short distance before turning north along Mill Street, south-west along Railway Street and then north-west along Bircherley Street to the River Lea. The northern boundary follows the River Lea eastward, taking the northerly channel beyond Hartham Leisure Centre, to the Town boundary.

Hertford Sele Ward

8.11 The proposed Hertford Sele Ward is a two-member ward and closely corresponds to the current ward boundaries. There are two changes in the south of the ward, removing the roads accessed from the Hertingfordbury Road and adding the North Road/Sele Road area to the east of the railway line.

8.12 Sele Farm estate forms the core of both the current and proposed Sele Wards. It forms a discreet area to the west of the mainline railway station and north of the A414 Hertingfordbury Road. The only direct road connection to the centre of Hertford is via the A119 North Road. Within the area of the estate there are two primary schools and a secondary school. A supermarket, bakers, post office GP surgery and other shops in the Fleming Crescent district centre. The estate has its own community centre and there is a rare breeds farm to the north of the estate. The area has a strong community identity.

8.13 The proposed ward removes the Valeside and Campfield Road developments from Sele ward. These roads are accessed from Hertingfordbury Road, having no direct road connection to Sele Farm and the only pedestrian connection is either in the extreme east from Campfield Road or well to the west of Valeside. The proposed ward adds the area to the west of the estate to the north of Hertingfordbury Road and south of the River Beane. This area does not easily cohere with any other districts within Hertford. However, these roads are connected directly to Sele Farm by the A119 North Road and by a pedestrian link from Fordwich Hill to Sele Road. There is a regular bus service along the A119. This area is mostly residential, but also contains Hertford North station and Hertford Hospital.

8.14 The proposed ward boundaries follow the Hertford Town boundary westward and southward from the A119 to the A414 Hertingfordbury Road, then east along the A414 to a point west of Valeside to join a footpath running north-east along the rear of properties on the northern side of Valeside and Mount Road. At the point this footpath crosses the railway line, the boundary turns south along the railway to the bridge over the A414, then east to a point level with the junction of Neal Court and North Road where it crosses North Road and follows Neal Court northward to the River Beane. The ward boundary follows the southern channel of the river east to the confluence with the northern channel, where it turns north-west and follows this channel upstream to the point where it passes under the A119 Bridge. From here it follows the road north to the Hertford Town boundary.

Hertford Castle Ward

8.15 The current Hertford Castle ward is projected to have +7.7% variance from the average number of electors by 2027 and lacks community coherence as it incorporates both large sections of dense urban housing on the east of Hertford and semi-rural Hertingfordbury in the west as well as modern estates in the south of Hertford. The proposal replaces this sprawling three-member ward with a two-member ward focussed on the town centre and southern areas of Hertford, by removing the area west of the railway line and east of the A414/A119 junction.

8.16 The northern part of the proposed ward incorporates the central shopping area and most of the cultural centres in Hertford such as the theatre and museum, which were previously divided between Bengeo and Castle wards. Whilst, the A414 Gascoyne Way forms a barrier for pedestrians there are underpasses to cross this barrier. To the south of the A414 the ward consist of a large number of small residential developments that are connected to the centre via the B158 Bullocks Lane and Mangrove Road. This area contains both the East Herts District Council offices and County Hall as well as two secondary schools and a primary school. The residential areas are predominately larger older properties, except the modern estates in the Horns Mill district. There are good transport links from this area to the centre of Hertford.

8.19 The proposal also removes a largely rural area in the south-east of Hertford from Castle ward into Hertford Heath ward. This area has little connection with the centre of the town, consisting largely of farms and is directly connected Hertford Heath by the B1197.

8.17 The southern boundary of the proposed Castle Ward follows the Hertford Town boundary from where it crosses the railway line eastwards to a point east of Mangrove Lane, where it turns northward along a track and then along the east side of Balls Park to Harrisons Lane where it continues north on the west side of the houses on the north side of the lane to London Road. The boundary turns north-west along London Road to the junction with the A414 where it turns west and follows the A414 north-west to the junction with the A119. The boundary follows the

A119 northeast for a short distance before turning north along Mill Street, south-west along Railway Street and then north-west along Bircherley Street to the River Lea, turns north east along the southern channel for a short distance before turning into the northern channel westward to the Thornton Street Bridge. The boundary continues west along Thornton Street and Hartham Lane to the point where it bends south, from here the boundary follows the path to Hartham Common car park, follows the southern edge of the car park and along the entrance road to Port Hill. The boundary turns south along Port Hill for a short section and then turns west along Sidings Court and along the boundary to the north of George Street and Russell Street to the rear drive between Russell Street and Balfour Street. The boundary turns south down this driveway, across Port Vale and down Pitteway Walk, turning east and then south along the boundary of Mill Mead School which it follows to the northerly channel of the River Beane. From this point the boundary bends around the eastern end of the island in the River Beane to a point opposite Neal Court, then south down Neal Court, across North Road to the A414, then turns west along the A414 to the railway bridge before following the railway south to the Hertford Town boundary.

Hertford Heath Ward

8.18 The proposed Hertford Heath ward closely follows the current ward boundaries. The ward consists of the villages of Hertford Heath and Brickendon and the outlying hamlets within Brickendon parish, such as Wormley West End and Monks Green. The only change is the addition of the rural south-west of Hertford.

8.19 Hertford Heath is a large village south-east of Hertford, with a primary school, village hall and several restaurants. South east of the village is Haileybury School. Hertford Heath is a predominately residential area on the B1197 between Hertford and Hoddesdon. Brickendon is an adjacent parish to the south-east. It is an agricultural area with scattered farms and hamlets. The main village is in the west of the parish and linked to Hertford Heath via southern Hertford.

8.20 The southern boundary follows the District border with Broxbourne Borough west and southward from the A10 to the boundary between Brickendon and Bayford

parishes. The western boundary follows the Brickendon parish boundary northward and then eastward to a point east of Mangrove Lane, where it turns northward along a track and then along the east side of Balls Park to Harrisons Lane where it continues north on the west side of the houses on the north side of the lane to London Road. The boundary turns north-west along London Road to the junction with the A414 where it turns east until the A414/A10 roundabout, before turning south along the Hertford Heath parish boundary to the district border.

Hertford Rural Ward

8.20 The proposed Hertford Rural Ward is a new ward that varies significantly from the current Hertford Rural South ward that covers the area to the west and south-west of Hertford. The current ward is projected to have -15% variance by 2027, whereas the proposed ward is well within -5%. The proposed ward includes the rural villages of Bramfield, Bayford and Little Berkhamsted, the hamlets in the Parish of Hertingfordbury located outside Hertford, and Hertingfordbury village and the estates along the Hertingfordbury Road within Hertford Town boundary. The area of Hertford included in the ward is separated from the centre of the town by the barrier of the railway line to the east and has little direct connection to the Sele Farm estate to the north.

8.21 Bayford, Little Berkhamsted and the Parish of Hertingfordbury, centred on Letty Green are made up of small rural settlements south-west of Hertford, south of the River Mimram flood plain. Apart from agriculture they are principally residential areas, although there is a large horticultural nursery in Letty Green. There are few shops or other services, other than primary schools in Birch Green and Bayford. Hertford and Welwyn Garden City, located outside the district, are the main areas for shopping, secondary education and health services. They therefore have close community links to Hertford and good road communication. There are daily buses from Little Berkhamsted and Birch Green to Hertford through Hertingfordbury.

8.22 Bramfield is a similarly small village to the north-west of Hertford, with no local services. There are direct road links to the villages further south and to the west of Hertford. Most services are obtained in Hertford.

8.23 Hertingfordbury is lies within the boundaries of Hertford Town, but the village retains its village character. There has been little development in the village itself and more modern estates have developed to the north on either side of the A414 Hertingfordbury Road. There are close road connections with the settlements in Hertingfordbury parish and the villages to the south-west, whereas the only direct route into the centre of Hertford is via the A414. Hertingfordbury retains a strong community identity as a separate historic neighbourhood within Hertford.

8.24 The boundary of the proposed Hertford Rural ward follows the District border from a point west of Brocket Hill south and eastward to the eastern boundary of Bayford parish, then turning north along the parish boundary to the southern boundary of Hertford Town. Within Hertford the boundary follows the railway line north to the point where it is crossed by the footpath to the south of Hertford North station, before turning south-west along the footpath at the rear of properties on the northern side of Valeside and Mount Road before following the A414 to the Town boundary. The boundary then follows the parish boundaries of Hertingfordbury and Bramfield parishes to the District border west of Brocket Hill.

9. Western and Central Parishes

9.1 This segment of the district covers a large number of rural parishes, with few large villages. There are no towns within this area, which is crossed by the River Beane and River Rib as they flow south to join the Lea near Hertford. The area is largely agricultural in nature, with many residents traveling to Hertford and Ware for shopping and employment or out of the district to Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City to the west and south-west.

9.2 The proposed wards for the western and central parishes are all single member wards.

Ward Name	Number of Members	Electorate 2027	Electorate per Member	Variance (%)
Datchworth and Tewin	1	2759	2759	+4.5%
Watton at Stone	1	2633	2633	-0.3%
Aston and Walkern	1	2677	2677	+1.4%
Bennington and the Mundens	1	2575	2575	-2.5%
Thundridge and Standon	1	2565	2565	-2.8%
Puckeridge	1	2511	2511	-4.9%

Datchworth and Tewin Ward

9.3 The parishes of Datchworth and Tewin are on the western boundary of the District, adjacent to Stevenage Borough in the north and Welwyn-Hatfield District in the south. At present they are in three different wards, Datchworth in Aston and Datchworth ward and Tewin divided between Hertford Rural South and Hertford Rural North. The new ward is proposed on both electoral equality and community identity grounds. Datchworth and Aston ward is projected in 2027 to be at +6.5% variance, whilst the Hertford Rural wards are both projected to be at more than -15% variance. The ward also re-unites Tewin ward and respects the community cohesion between them.

9.4 Datchworth Parish contains the village of Datchworth and the settlements of Bull's Green and Burnham Green in the south. The former is a large village, with a Primary School, post office, village hall and a variety of sports clubs. There is a strong community identity despite its proximity to larger villages and towns, such as Stevenage and Welwyn to the west. On the southern edge of the parish are Bulls Green and Burnham Green, which together comprise an area of dispersed larger detached properties. There are few services provided here, although Burnham Green has a village hall and the area is most closely attached to Welwyn outside the district. Much of this area of housing lies across the boundary in Tewin parish.

9.5 Tewin village is the principal settlement of the parish and lies a few miles further south. Like Datchworth, it has a strong community identity with a memorial hall, bowls club, primary school, local store and cafe, despite being only 3 miles from Welwyn Garden City. The two villages are both set in agricultural settings, with direct roads running between them, via Burnham Green and Bulls Green, along which a daily bus travels from Hertford to Stevenage.

9.6 The proposed ward boundary follows the East Herts district border to the west, the Datchworth parish ward boundary, the Datchworth and Tewin parish boundaries to the east and the Tewin parish boundary to the south.

Watton at Stone Ward

9.7 The proposed Watton at Stone ward includes the parishes of Watton at Stone, excluding the hamlet of Whempstead, and Stapleford and Waterford Parish. This proposal is made on grounds of electoral equality as the current Watton at Stone ward is projected to have -18% variance in 2027. The proposed ward has less than -1% variance. However, Waterford and Stapleford have goods links to Watton as the three villages are connected by the A119 and are all situated on the banks of the River Beane.

9.8 Watton at Stone is a large village and is located in the centre of the parish, it has a range of services and strong community identity. In the village there is a post office, butcher, baker, specialist shops, primary school, nursery and family centre. The village has a GP practice and several churches. There is a railway station and

buses to Hertford, Ware, Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City. The only other settlement of note in the parish is Whempstead, which lies in the north-east corner of the parish and it is proposed to move to Bennington and The Mundens Ward.

9.9 The parish of Stapleford and Waterford lies to the south of Watton at Stone. The two villages are 1.5 miles apart, with Stapleford in the north of the parish and Waterford close to the southern boundary. Both are small villages, there is a primary school at Stapleford and a village hall in Waterford. The villages are located on the A119 between Hertford and Watton at Stone and these are the principle sources of services that cannot be obtained locally.

9.10 The proposed boundary for Watton at Stone Ward follows the eastern parish boundary of Watton at Stone parish southward from Willeycotes Wood to the boundary with Stapleford and Waterford Parish, then south, west and north along the boundary of Stapleford and Waterford parish to the boundary with Watton at Stone, then north along the Watton at Stone parish boundary as far as south-eastern edge of Loefield Grove. From Loefield Grove the boundary runs southward along the edge of the wood for a short distance before turning south-east along a field boundary to Mill Lane, then south along Mill Lane, east along Whempstead Lane for a distance of 0.2 miles and south along a field boundary passing to the west of Bromley Spring, eastward along the northern edge of Lawn Spring and along the path to Whempstead Road, turning north along to the parish boundary at Willeycotes Wood.

Aston and Walkern Ward

9.11 Aston and Walkern Ward is a new ward proposed principally on grounds of electoral equality, although the two villages are closely linked, sharing a proximity to the town of Stevenage to the west and both will be affected by development plans for the north of Aston parish. Aston is currently situated in Datchworth and Aston Ward which is projected to be at +6.5% variance in 2027, whereas the present Walkern ward is projected to be at -11.8% variance. The proposed ward is projected to be well within +5% variance.

9.12 Aston is a village situated immediately to the east of Stevenage, in the centre of a narrow parish oriented north-south. In addition there are settlements at Hooks Cross in the south and Aston End to the north of the village. Aston village is a compact settlement with a primary school, village hall and cricket club, there is an active residents' association. There are no shops or a post office and most services are accessed in Stevenage.

9.13 At the north end of Aston parish there are plans for a major development, known as 'East of Stevenage'. This is planned to be built on the boundary with Walkern parish and will be situated closer to Walkern than Aston village. In the indicative masterplan it is proposed to be a residential development with a new primary school.

9.14 Walkern is a large village with a primary school, post office and a range of shops. There is an active sports and community centre and a history society, celebrating the heritage of the village. There are several hamlets to the west of Walkern village, though no other larger settlements. Walkern and Aston are connected directly via Walkern Road and Ford Lane and via Gresley Way through Aston End.

9.15 The boundaries of the proposed ward follow the Parish boundaries of Walkern Parish in the north, Walkern Parish and Aston Parish in the east, Aston Parish to the south and the district border with Stevenage Borough to the west.

Benington and The Mundens Ward

9.16 The proposed ward of Benington and the Mundens is a new single member ward covering five rural parishes between the Rib and Beane valleys. There are no large villages in the proposed ward, the main settlements being Benington in the north-west, Dane End in the centre and Tonwell in the south. The parishes are connected by local roads, the only parishes served by more major roads are Tonwell and Sacombe. There is a regular bus service between Stevenage and Ware that runs through Benington, Whempstead, Dane End and Tonwell. The proposed ward is projected to be within -3% variance in 2027.

9.17 Benington Parish contains the village of Benington in the north-west of the proposed ward is a small village, which is the largest settlement in the proposed ward and has a primary school, GP surgery, village hall and recreation ground. To the south-east in the parish there is the smaller settlement of Burn's Green. The proposal is to include the hamlet of Whempstead, in Watton at Stone parish, in the ward as it is only a just over one mile from Dane End and the two settlements are connected by a bus link. Dane End is the second largest settlement in the ward and consists largely of an estate of post-war detached and semi-detached houses, it is the main centre in Little Munden parish. To the north of Dane End are the very small villages of Haultwick, in Little Munden parish and Nasty, Levens Green and Great Munden in Great Munden parish. To the south are the parishes of Sacombe and Tonwell parishes, of which Tonwell is the third largest village in the proposed ward and has a primary school.

9.18 The western boundary of the proposed ward follows the Parish boundary of Benington Parish southward as far as south-eastern edge of Loefield Grove. From Loefield Grove the boundary runs southward along the edge of the wood for a short distance before turning south-east along a field boundary to Mill Lane, then south along Mill Lane, east along Whempstead Lane for a distance of 0.2 miles and south along a field boundary passing to the west of Bromley Spring, eastward along the northern edge of Lawn Spring and along the path to Whempstead Road, turning north along to reach the Little Munden Parish boundary at Willeycotes Wood. From Willeycotes wood, the western boundary follows the parish boundaries of Little Munden Parish eastward for a short section and then the Sacombe and Tonwell Parish boundaries southward. The southern boundary follows the parish boundary of Tonwell Parish. The eastern boundary follows the parish boundaries of Tonwell, Sacombe, Little Munden and Great Munden Parishes in a northward direction. The northern boundary follows the parish boundaries of Great Munden, Little Munden and Benington Parishes in a westward direction.

Thundridge and Standon Ward

9.19 The proposed Thundridge and Standon Ward has almost the same boundaries as the current ward with this name and consists of Thundridge Parish and the southern three-quarters of Standon Parish. It is proposed that the north-west of Standon Parish continues to form Puckeridge Ward and that Wellpond Green in the north-east is moved to Little Hadham Ward in view of its proximity to Westland Green in Little Hadham Parish.

9.20 Standon is a large village located on the A120, with a High Street to the south of the main road. Despite being contiguous with the larger village of Puckeridge, following the construction of residential estates on the land between the two settlements during the later twentieth century, it has a thriving High Street, with a local convenience store, post office, bakers, butchers and restaurants. The village has a long history dating back to Saxon origins and has its own Parish Church. A music festival called 'Standon Calling' is held in the village on an annual basis. The village therefore retains its own community identity. Within the part of Standon Parish covered by the proposed ward are the hamlets of Colliers End and Barwick.

9.21 Thundridge Parish is located to the south of Standon. Most of the population of the parish is in the settlements of High Cross, Wadesmill and Thundridge in the west of the parish along the 'old A10', which are now bi-passed by a recently constructed dual carriageway. These centres have a common community identity, with a primary school in High Cross, café and stores in Wadesmill, and a village hall in Thundridge. Further east is the hamlet of Cold Christmas.

9.22 Standon, Thundridge and the other major settlements in the proposed ward along the former A10 are linked by good roads and regular buses travelling between Buntingford and Royston to the north and Hertford.

9.23 The western boundary of the proposed ward follows the parish boundaries of Thundridge Parish and Standon parish northward from the A602 to a point west of Hole Farm where the boundary is crossed by a field drain known as the Puckeridge tributary. From here it turns eastward along the field boundary to Hole Farm, follows the western, northern and eastern boundaries of the farmyard, turning east to follow the line of the Puckeridge Tributary as far as the A10. After turning south along the

A10 for a short distance the boundary follows the A120 eastwards as far as the western boundary of properties in Hammarsfield Close. The boundary turns north along the rear of the properties in Hammarsfield Close, turning east along their northern boundary and then southeast along the eastern boundary of properties on the east of Hammarsfield Close to re-join the A120 Standon Hill as far as South Road. The boundary turns north up South Road, before turning right along the northern boundary of the Saffron Meadow and Vicarage Close developments, south along Station Road for a short distance, east along the northern boundary of properties in Rib Close to the River Rib and north along the river to re-join the Parish boundary. The northern boundary is formed by the Standon Parish boundary from the River Rib eastwards to the point where the parish boundary meets the A120, then turns south-west along the A120 to the junction with Froghall Lane, south-east along Froghall Lane for a short distance, turning to the south along the eastern edge of the small wood south of the road, along the western boundary of Standon Friars Farm, south down Standon Friars drive to Hadham Road, west along Hadham Road for a short distance and then south-east along the field boundary to the parish boundary after crossing Bromley Lane. The proposed eastern boundary follows the parish boundaries of Standon and Thundridge Parishes southward to the A602, with the southern boundary following the A602 to the south-western corner of Thundridge Parish.

Puckeridge Ward

9.24 The proposed Puckeridge Ward retains the boundaries of the current ward of this name. The resulting ward is within -5% variance and retains the community cohesion of the existing ward.

9.25 Puckeridge is a large village with a strong community identity. The High Street has a range of shops including a pharmacy, convenience store, café and specialist shops. There is a GP surgery in Station Road, a village hall a primary school and middle school. Whilst, some services are shared with Standon, such as the village hall the two villages have their own commercial areas and separate identities. The area between them is made up of modern estates and further infill development is occurring in the south of the proposed ward along the A120. Whilst the ward is

projected to have a negative electoral variance of nearly 5% in 2027 this growth is likely to continue beyond this date to reduce this variance.

9.26 The western boundary of the proposed ward follows the Standon Parish boundary southward from the north-west corner of the parish to a point west of Hole Farm where the boundary is crossed by a field drain known as the Puckeridge tributary. From here it turns eastward along the field boundary to Hole Farm, follows the western, northern and eastern boundaries of the farmyard, turning east to follow the line of the Puckeridge Tributary as far as the A10. After turning south along the A10 for a short distance the boundary follows the A120 eastwards as far as the western boundary of properties in Hammarsfield Close. The boundary turns north along the rear of the properties in Hammarsfield Close, turning east along their northern boundary and then southeast along the eastern boundary of properties on the east of Hammarsfield Close to re-join the A120 Standon Hill as far as South Road. The boundary turns north up South Road, before turning right along the northern boundary of the Saffron Meadow and Vicarage Close developments, south along Station Road for a short distance, east along the northern boundary of properties in Rib Close to the River Rib and north along the river to re-join the boundary of Standon Parish. The northern boundary of the ward follows the Standon Parish boundary westward from the River Rib to the north-west corner of the parish.

East Herts Polling District Review

Liberal Democrat Proposals

