

New electoral arrangements for City of Wolverhampton Council Final Recommendations

January 2022

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A note on our mapping:

The maps shown in this report are for illustrative purposes only. Whilst best efforts have been made by our staff to ensure that the maps included in this report are representative of the boundaries described by the text, there may be slight variations between these maps and the large PDF map that accompanies this report, or the digital mapping supplied on our consultation portal. This is due to the way in which the final mapped products are produced. The reader should therefore refer to either the large PDF supplied with this report or the digital mapping for the true likeness of the boundaries intended. The boundaries as shown on either the large PDF map or the digital mapping should always appear identical.

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Introduction

Who we are and what we do

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament.¹ We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

2 The members of the Commission are:

- Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)
- Andrew Scallan CBE (Deputy Chair)
- Susan Johnson OBE
- Peter Maddison QPM
- Amanda Nobbs OBE
- Steve Robinson
- Jolyon Jackson CBE (Chief Executive)

What is an electoral review?

3 An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority. A local authority's electoral arrangements decide:

- How many councillors are needed.
- How many wards or electoral divisions there should be, where their boundaries are and what they should be called.
- How many councillors should represent each ward or division.

4 When carrying out an electoral review the Commission has three main considerations:

- Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents.
- Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity.
- Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.

5 Our task is to strike the best balance between these three considerations when making our recommendations.

¹ Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

6 More detail regarding the powers that we have, as well as the further guidance and information about electoral reviews and review process in general, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why Wolverhampton?

7 We conducted a review of City of Wolverhampton Council ('the Council') as some councillors currently represent many more or fewer electors than others. We describe this as 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where the number of electors per councillor is as even as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

8 This electoral review was being carried out to ensure that:

- The wards in Wolverhampton are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- The number of electors represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the city.

Our proposals for Wolverhampton

9 Wolverhampton should be represented by 60 councillors, the same number as there are now.

10 Wolverhampton should have 20 wards, the same number as there are now.

11 The boundaries of 14 wards should change; six will stay the same. Those staying the same are Blakenhall, Graiseley, Merry Hill, Penn, Tettenhall Regis and Tettenhall Wightwick

12 We have now finalised our recommendations for electoral arrangements for Wolverhampton.

How will the recommendations affect you?

13 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in and which other communities are in that ward. Your ward name may also change.

14 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the city or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. The recommendations will not have an effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums and we are not able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Review timetable

15 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Wolverhampton. We then held two periods of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the city. The submissions received during consultation have informed our final recommendations.

16 The review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
20 April 2020	Number of councillors decided
19 January 2021	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
29 March 2021	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
29 June 2021	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
6 September 2021	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
11 January 2022	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and final recommendations

17 Legislation² states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors³ there are now, but also on how many there are likely to be in the five years after the publication of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for our wards.

18 In reality, we are unlikely to be able to create wards with exactly the same number of electors in each; we have to be flexible. However, we try to keep the number of electors represented by each councillor as close to the average for the council as possible.

19 We work out the average number of electors per councillor for each individual local authority by dividing the electorate by the number of councillors, as shown on the table below.

	2020	2027
Electorate of Wolverhampton	183,681	190,477
Number of councillors	60	60
Average number of electors per councillor	3,061	3,175

20 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having 'good electoral equality'. All of our proposed wards for Wolverhampton will have good electoral equality by 2027.

Submissions received

21 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

22 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2026, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2021. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 3.7 % by 2026.

23 In addressing delays to the progress of this review, the Council revisited its initial forecast in order to better reflect current information about housing development likely to take place in the next few years. Whilst this reassessment has not altered the forecast change in the total number of electors in Wolverhampton,

² Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

³ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

it has changed expectations of the relative distribution of those electors around the city. In particular, the forecasts for Bilston East, Bushbury South & Low Hill and Ettingshall now indicate a greater number of electors than shown in initial forecasts.

24 We considered the updated information provided by the Council and have used these figures to produce our final recommendations. In re-scheduling the publication of these final recommendations from November 2021 to January 2022, we are content that the updated figures continue to represent the best forecast available for the period of five years following publication.

Number of councillors

25 The City of Wolverhampton Council currently has 60 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and have concluded that keeping this number the same will ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

26 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 60 councillors. As the Council elects by thirds (meaning it has elections in three out of every four years) there is a presumption in legislation⁴ that the Council have a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. We will only move away from this pattern of wards should we receive compelling evidence during consultation that an alternative pattern of wards will better reflect our statutory criteria.

27 We received five submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on ward patterns. The submissions proposed reductions to the number of councillors with resultant council sizes ranging from 20 to 40 councillors. None of these submissions gave us evidence regarding the ability of the Council to represent people in Wolverhampton with adequate governance, scrutiny or community engagement. We therefore based our draft recommendations on a 60-member council.

28 In response to the consultation on our draft recommendations, two submissions suggested that each ward be represented by two councillors. Neither proposal addressed implications for effective governance and representation arising from a reduction to 40 councillors. Nor did they have regard to the principle that electors should have the opportunity to exercise their vote at each local election. We have therefore maintained 60 councillors for our final recommendations.

⁴ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 2(3)(d) and paragraph 2(5)(c).

Ward boundaries consultation

29 We received 18 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included four city-wide proposals. The Council, the Conservative Group on the Council ('the Conservatives') and the City of Wolverhampton Liberal Democrats (the Liberal Democrats') each proposed uniform schemes of 20 three-councillor wards. A scheme submitted by a resident proposed that the city be represented by 10 two-councillor wards. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for ward arrangements in particular areas of the city.

30 We carefully considered the proposals received and were of the view that the proposed patterns of wards resulted in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the city and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries.

31 Our draft recommendations also took into account local evidence that we received, which provided further evidence of community links and locally recognised boundaries. In some areas we considered that the proposals did not provide for the best balance between our statutory criteria and so we identified alternative boundaries.

32 Given the travel restrictions, and the social distancing arising from the Covid19 outbreak, we undertook a detailed virtual tour of Wolverhampton. This helped to clarify issues raised in submissions and assisted in the construction of the proposed draft boundary recommendations.

33 Our draft recommendations were for 20 three-councillor wards. We considered that our draft recommendations would provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

Draft recommendations consultation

34 We received 231 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included 196 submissions about our draft recommendation to alter the boundaries of the current Penn ward. Amongst these was a petition bearing 153 signatures. The majority of the other submissions focused on specific areas, particularly our proposals in Oxley where our draft recommendation to include the Akron Gate area in that ward attracted 20 expressions of support. We also received suggestions for alternative ward names for some areas.

35 Our final recommendations are based on the draft recommendations with a modification to the wards of Penn and Oxley based on the submissions received. We have also accepted proposals for alternative names for the Bilston East, Ettingshall and Spring Vale wards which formed part of our draft recommendations.

Final recommendations

36 Our final recommendations are for 20 three-councillor wards. We consider that our final recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

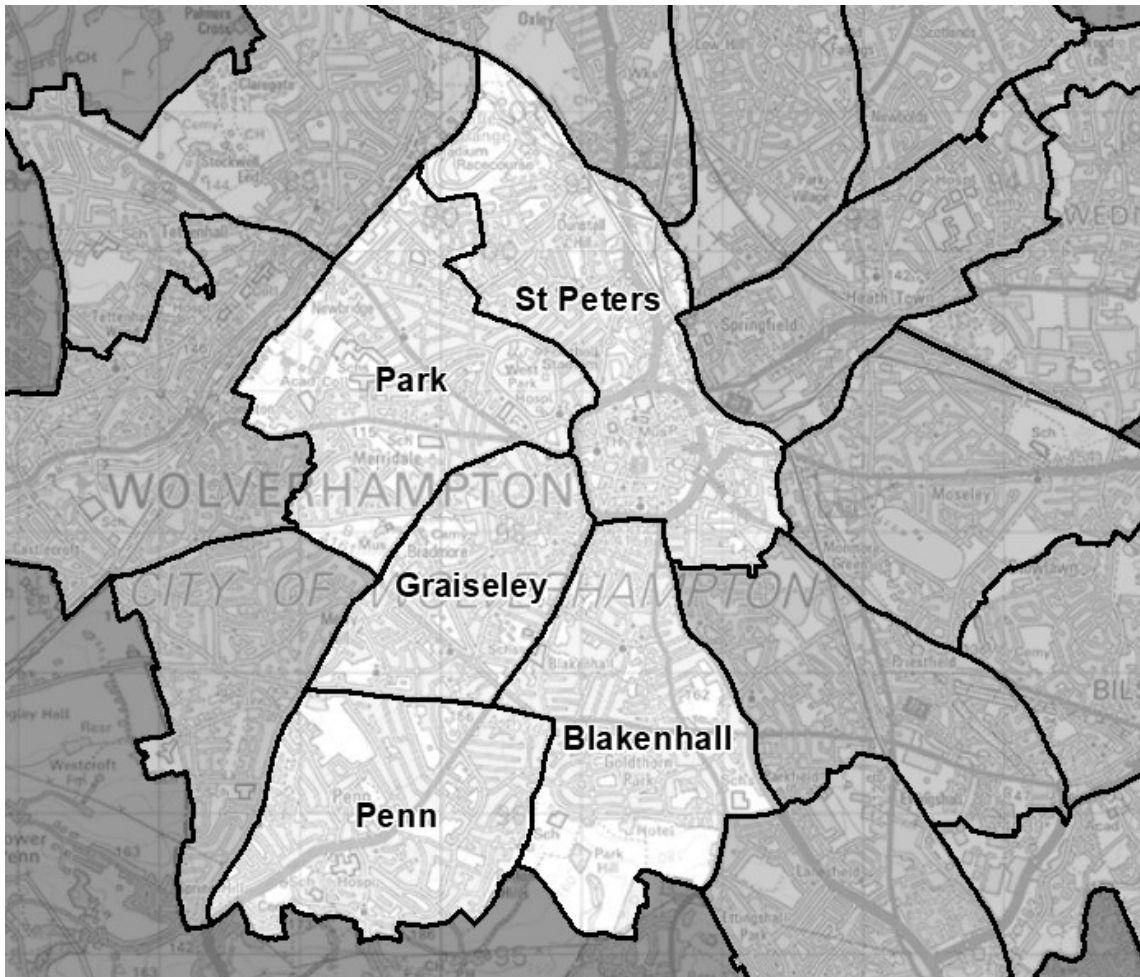
37 The tables and maps on pages 9–22 detail our final recommendations for each area of Wolverhampton. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁵ criteria of:

- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

38 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 27 and on the large map accompanying this report.

⁵ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Wolverhampton Central



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Blakenhall	3	-7%
Graiseley	3	-9%
Park	3	-2%
Penn	3	7%
St Peters	3	-4%

Blakenhall, Graiseley and Penn

39 Blakenhall stretches southwards from the city centre ring road to the city's boundary with Dudley. Graiseley is an inner-city, largely residential ward which extends out of the city in a south-westerly direction and gradually takes on a more suburban aspect. Penn ward lies to the south, between Graiseley and the city boundary.

40 The Council proposed an amendment to the current boundary of Penn ward, suggesting that houses on both sides of Coton Road and Goldthorn Hill be included in Blakenhall ward and that houses on both sides of Coalway Road be included in Graiseley ward. In accepting these proposals as part of our draft recommendations, we declined to make more substantial changes to these wards proposed by the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats.

41 Although our draft recommendations for these wards received support from the Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, they attracted many objections from residents who proposed that the current Penn ward boundary which runs along Coalway Road, Goldthorn Hill and Coton Road be retained. Their suggestion was supported by Councillor Hibbert and by Monsignor Mark Crisp of St Michael's Catholic Church. Most respondents referred to the strength of community identity in the existing Penn ward, the importance of the church in community life and the clarity of the current ward boundaries.

42 We are persuaded by evidence of community identity, set out in responses made by residents of the area, to retain the current boundaries of Penn ward as part of our final recommendations.

43 One resident proposed that the Blakenhall ward be renamed Blakenhall & Goldthorn Park. We note that the name Goldthorn Park is identified in mapping of the area. However, we have not received clear evidence of that name defining local people's sense of community identity. Furthermore, we consider that in making no changes to current ward boundaries, a change from the long-established ward name would not promote understanding of the electoral arrangements for the locality.

Park and St Peters

44 Both of these wards were forecast to have 13% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the city by 2027. However, we also noted that Bushbury South & Low Hill and Ettingshall wards, which lie adjacent to St Peters, are forecast to have considerably more electors per councillor than the average, with variances of 25% and 24% respectively.

45 Neither the Council nor the Conservatives proposed changes to Park ward which would adequately address the forecast level of electoral inequality. The Liberal Democrats proposed that areas to the northeast of Hordern Road should be included in Park ward. We modified that proposal in our draft recommendations, adding the Fardale Avenue area to Park ward to give good electoral equality in both Park and St Peters wards.

46 St Peters ward takes in the whole of the city's civic, shopping and commercial centre, tightly bounded by a ring road. The ward extends northwards to the residential areas of Dunstall Hill. It takes its name from St Peters Church, which is in

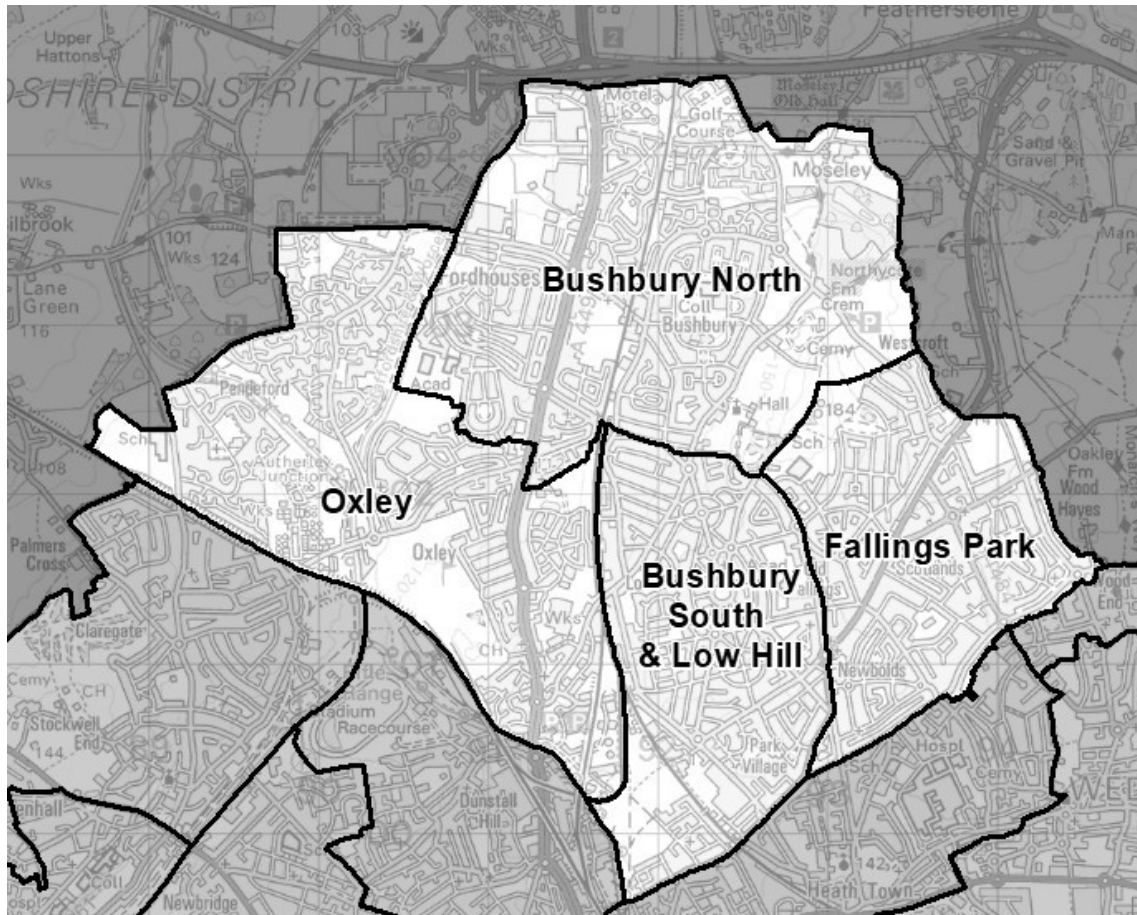
the city centre. Both in response to our initial consultation and to our draft recommendations, one local resident told us that the area contained within the city centre ring road should constitute a ward by itself. Whilst the city centre does have an increasing number of electors as a result of current and planned housing developments, the suggested ward would not give good electoral equality.

47 The Council, Conservatives and Liberal Democrats all proposed changes to St Peters ward to reflect the nature and impact of new developments within and to the east of the city centre, and the inner-city neighbourhoods to the south east. We took elements of all of these proposals in forming our draft recommendations but modified and added to them in ways which we consider will secure good electoral equality, reflect community identities and interests and provide for effective and convenient local government.

48 We received support for our draft recommendations for these wards from the Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats and having regard to the comments described in paragraph 46 above, received no further objections.

49 One resident proposed that our Park and St Peters wards be named Newbridge, Merridale & Park and The City, Dunstall & Molineux respectively. In the absence of corroborating and supporting evidence, we are not persuaded to change the long-standing ward names for these areas.

Wolverhampton North



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Bushbury North	3	9%
Bushbury South & Low Hill	3	1%
Fallings Park	3	-2%
Oxley	3	9%

Bushbury North and Oxley

50 Bushbury North is on the northern edge of the city. It is a largely residential area, although there is an extensive area of industrial and commercial activity at the north-western part of the ward, whilst the eastern parts of the ward predominantly are open space. To the west and south-west of Bushbury North lies Oxley ward, again a predominantly residential ward.

51 The Council proposed very modest changes to the boundaries of Bushbury North at the eastern end of Elston Hall Lane and that the ward boundary should follow the line of a footpath running to the south of the Bushbury Cemetery &

Crematorium. Meanwhile, the Conservatives proposed that Bushbury North ward should include Watson Road, a cul-de sac close to the junction of Marsh Lane and Patshull Avenue. They also proposed that McLean Road and Marsh Lane Parade be included in Bushbury North, bringing all of the local shopping facilities at Stafford Road into one ward.

52 We considered the merit of these proposals and in making some modifications to them to provide clearer ward boundaries, included them as part of our draft recommendations. We also added to those proposals more substantially by proposing that St Anne's Road also be included in Bushbury North. Whilst we considered that this would help to unify the Marsh Lane area, it also meant that we could propose changes to Oxley ward which would reflect the community evidence we had received without introducing severe electoral inequality.

53 The Council proposed a change to Oxley ward, adding the Leverton Rise, Oxley Avenue and The Downs area which lies to the north of the Birmingham Canal and to the west of Stafford Road. The Conservatives proposed a more substantial change to Oxley. This would add the area of a modern and ongoing housing development at Akron Gate. We included both of those proposals as part of our draft recommendations.

54 We received support for our draft recommendations for both wards from the Council and the Liberal Democrats. Seventeen residents supported our proposal to include Akron Gate in Oxley ward whilst another agreed with our inclusion of St Annes Road in Bushbury North ward. Whilst the Council and Liberal Democrats supported our proposed inclusion of the Leverton Rise, Oxley Avenue and The Downs area in Oxley ward, the Conservatives disagreed. They said that retaining the area in St Peters ward would better reflect the direction in which residents look with the city centre being closer to these residents than the heart of the Oxley ward. However, we received no comments from residents of that area in support of the Conservatives' view. We are not persuaded therefore to accept the Conservatives' proposal for that area, but do consider that their suggestion to include the Science Park area in Oxley ward has merit. In using the railway line and canal as boundaries, we are persuaded this will provide a neater, clearer ward boundary and are modifying our draft recommendation in that respect.

55 In response to our initial consultation, one resident proposed that Oxley ward be renamed Pendeford. We did not include this suggestion as part of our draft recommendations as we noted that the Pendeford area contributes less than a third of the electorate of our proposed ward. We have received no further representations regarding the naming of Oxley ward. However, one resident proposed that our Bushbury North ward be named Bushbury North & Fordhouses, whilst another suggested the name Fordhouses & Northwood Park. We do not consider that we

have received sufficient evidence the current ward name is inappropriate and therefore retain the name Bushbury North in our final recommendations.

Bushbury South & Low Hill

56 Bushbury South & Low Hill is forecast to have 25% more electors per councillor than the average for the city. We were not prepared to maintain such a level of electoral inequality in our draft recommendations. We accepted proposals that Akron Gate be included in Oxley ward and that the site of housing development on Bone Mill Lane be included in St Peters ward.

57 Our proposals for Bushbury South & Low Hill attracted support from the Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats with no dissenting comments from residents of the area. The only other comment on our proposed ward was that it should be named Low Hill & Fallings Park. Again, we do not consider that we have received sufficient evidence that the current ward name is inappropriate and therefore confirm as final, our recommendation for Bushbury South & Low Hill.

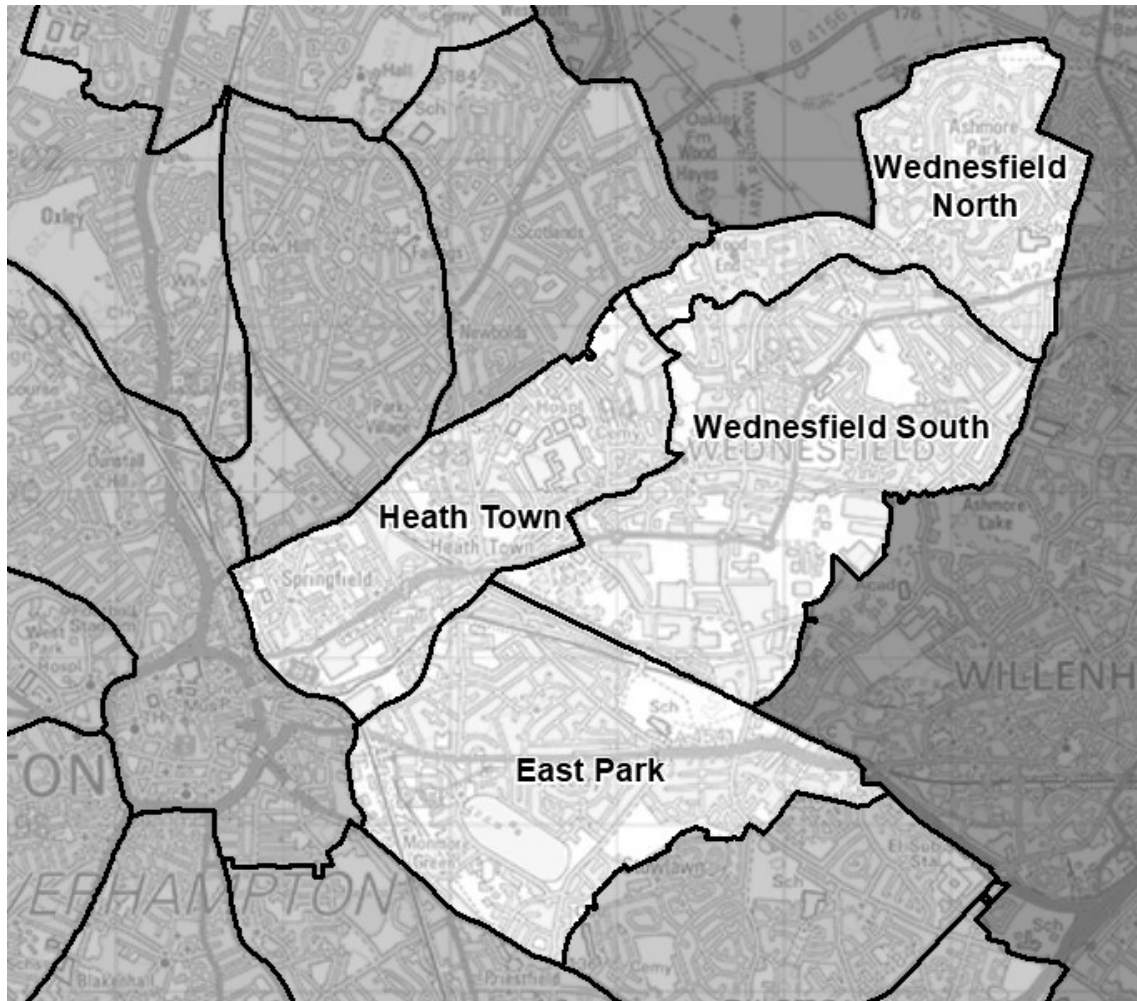
Fallings Park

58 The Conservatives describe Fallings Park as a residential suburb with much of the housing being inter-war council housing with later housing being of mixed tenures. The Council proposed to add to the ward, an area to the south of Park Lane currently in Bushbury South and Low Hill ward but we were not persuaded to include that proposal as part of our draft recommendations.

59 The Conservatives proposed to add an area to the south of Prestwood Road West and Lower Prestwood Road to Fallings Park. We agreed that combining houses on Prestwood Road West and Lower Prestwood Road with those which face them in Fallings Park ward had merit and adopted that proposal part of our draft recommendations.

60 We received support for our draft recommendations for these wards from the Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. One resident proposed, however, that the Blackwood Avenue area be excluded from Fallings Park ward and included in Wednesfield North. That change would result in the Fallings Park ward having 18% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the city by 2027, a level of electoral inequality we are not prepared to recommend. One resident proposed that the ward be named Wednesfield West whilst another suggested the name Bushbury Hill, The Scotland's & Wood Hayes. We are not persuaded by either suggestion that we should change the long-standing name of Fallings Park and therefore confirm as final, our draft recommendation for this ward.

Wolverhampton North-east



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
East Park	3	-2%
Heath Town	3	-4%
Wednesfield North	3	-6%
Wednesfield South	3	-3%

East Park and Heath Town

61 The Council and the Conservatives describe East Park ward in broadly similar terms. The ward is on the eastern edge of the city centre with East Park itself lying between Moseley Village and Monmore Green and Stow Heath. The ward has a mixture of housing types, age and tenure, but there are also some large industrial estates in the west of the ward.

62 The Council proposed modest changes to East Park ward, adding the Alcester Drive housing estate. The Liberal Democrats proposed also adding Lawnsdale

Green and the residential roads to the north of Green Park Drive. The Conservatives went even further, adding Oaklands Green to East Park. We agreed with the submissions in respect of Alcester Drive, but were not persuaded to add those further roads from Bilston North.

63 Heath Town ward lies immediately to the north east of the city centre, extending from the ring road to the edge of Wednesfield. The southwest half of the ward includes the Springfield Estate, the Heath Town High Rise Estate and Park Village estate. It includes university-based housing as well a growing university campus. The north eastern part of the ward is dominated by the campus of New Cross Hospital and either side of this are predominantly private houses built between and after the wars.

64 The Liberal Democrats proposed that the current ward boundaries be retained, The Council proposed that the area between the ring road and the West Coast Main Line be added to St Peters ward and that a small area between the canal and Wolverhampton Road be added to Heath Town ward from Wednesfield South, proposals we accepted. The Council also proposed that the Barbel Drive area be excluded from Heath Town ward and added to Wednesfield South ward. However, we also note that Barbel Drive is at a considerable distance from other residential areas of Wednesfield South, being separated from them by industrial and commercial estates, but is close to the community facilities in Heath Town. For this reason, we did not incorporate this aspect of the Council's proposals in our draft recommendations.

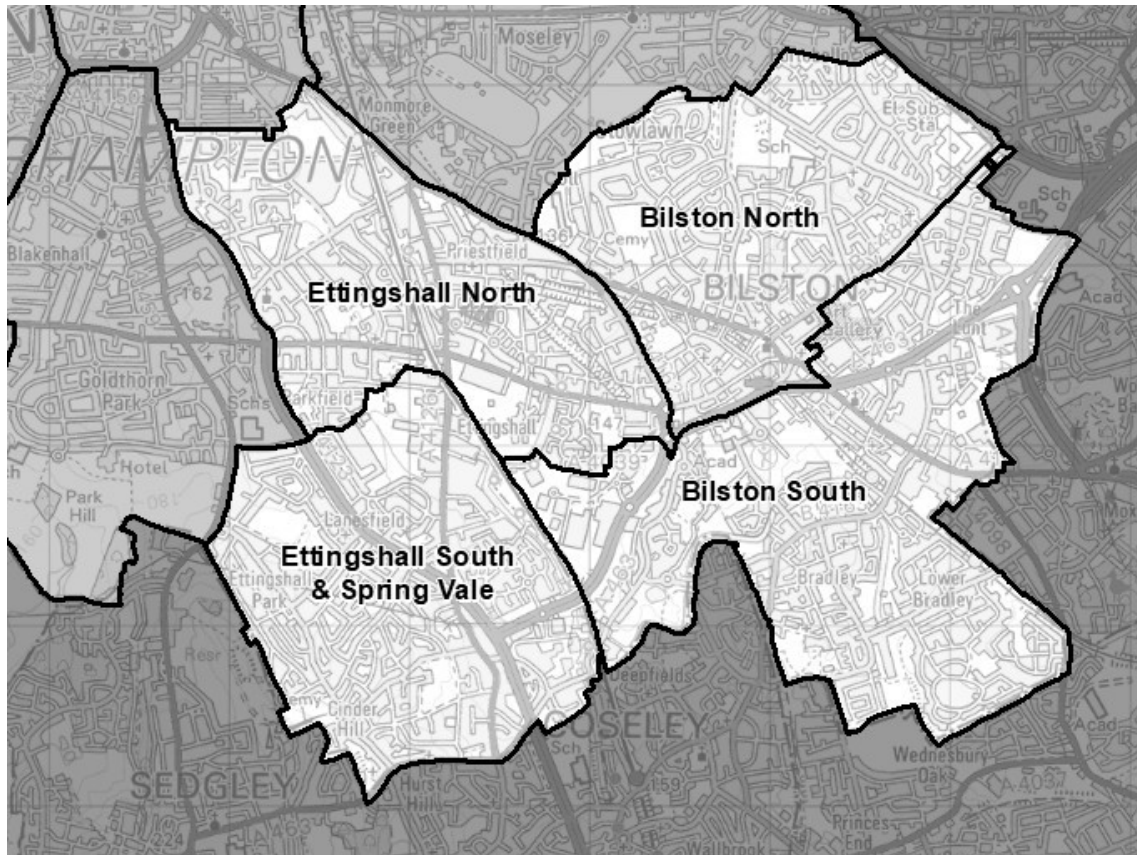
65 We received support for our draft recommendations for these wards from the Council, and the Liberal Democrats. Whilst the Conservatives supported our proposals for East Park, they proposed that the Barbel Drive area be added to Wednesfield South ward. We received no corroborative comments from residents of that area and, for the reasons outlined in paragraph 64, confirm as final, our recommendations for both wards. In doing so, we are not persuaded to substitute the names East Park & Moseley Village for East Park or either Heathfield or Heath Town & New Cross for the equally long-standing name of Heath Town.

Wednesfield North and Wednesfield South

66 Wednesfield North is a predominantly residential ward in the north east corner of the city. Much of the housing to the North east is the large Ashmore Park estate. Other housing is private housing built between the wars, with some more modern development. Wednesfield South ward is split almost into two halves, with the residential portion being in the north of the ward and a large industrial area in the south of the ward. Residential areas are varied, generally comprising traditional early 20th century development, inter war and post war housing, circa 1960's development including apartment blocks and more modern suburban areas.

67 We received support for our draft recommendations for these wards from the Council, and the Liberal Democrats. Whilst the Conservatives, as described above, proposed that the Barbel Drive area be added to Wednesfield South ward, they supported our draft recommendation for Wednesfield North. We received a proposal that our Wednesfield wards be named Ashmore Park & Wednesfield North and March End, The Neachells & Wednesfield South. However, Councillor Bateman asked that Wednesfield North retain its name. He said that it takes many years for residents to understand how they are grouped for elections and that with minimal change being proposed it's important to retain the name. Whilst Councillor Bateman was addressing Wednesfield North in particular, we consider that his comments have relevance when considering the names of other wards where no change, or minimal change to boundaries is recommended. We therefore confirm as final, our recommendations for both wards.

Wolverhampton South-east



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Bilston North	3	3%
Bilston South	3	8%
Ettingshall North	3	1%
Ettingshall South & Spring Vale	3	4%

Bilston North and Bilston South

68 In response to our call for boundary proposals for the Bilston area, we received differing suggestions from the Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, each with potentially significant consequences for electoral equality and the reflection of community identity in Bilston and in neighbouring areas.

69 In forming our draft recommendations, we considered in detail the elements of each proposal to identify those which would reflect community identities and interests, provide electoral equality, and provide for effective and convenient local government through, for example, strong and identifiable ward boundaries.

70 Our draft recommendations proposed Bilston East and Bilston North wards which incorporated elements of all the ward boundary submissions we received but which were consistent with providing suitable wards for neighbouring communities.

71 Whilst we described the campus of the City of Wolverhampton College in our report as Bilston Campus, the Council advised us that it is locally known as the Wellington Road campus. In our draft recommendations, we asked for views about whether it should be included in Bilston North as shown in our draft recommendations, or East Park. The Council provided the only response to this question and were content with the inclusion of the campus in Bilston North ward.

72 The Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats all supported the boundaries of our draft recommendations for this area which we confirm as final. However, we also, invited comments about whether our Bilston East ward should be named Bilston South as initially proposed by the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. Both parties re-iterated their initial view. In particular, the Conservatives referred to the Bilston Urban Village, which we referred to when forming our draft recommendations, as being south-west of Bilston North and the town centre. In accepting the parties' view in respect of ward names, we note that the names Bilston North and Bilston East have been used since, at least, 1979, but consider that our changes to the boundary between the two wards and the way in which the area south of the town centre continues to be developed justifies changing the name of Bilston East ward to Bilston South. In making our final recommendations, however, we were not persuaded that the names Bilston South, Ladymoor & Loxdale or Bilston North, The Crescent & Portobello would increase understanding of the relevant electoral arrangements for the Bilston area. We have therefore not adopted these as part of our final recommendations.

Ettingshall North and Ettingshall South & Spring Vale

73 Ettingshall is an inner-city ward with a mix of industrial, retail and residential land uses. The All Saints area in the north of the ward is composed of older terraced housing. The area also includes the site of the former Royal Hospital, which is under redevelopment, providing a significant element of urban renewal. To the south of All Saints Road the housing tends to be in lower density estates, many being council-built between the wars. Ettingshall extends south-eastwards where it meets Spring Vale, an outer city ward where part of the boundary coincides with the city boundary.

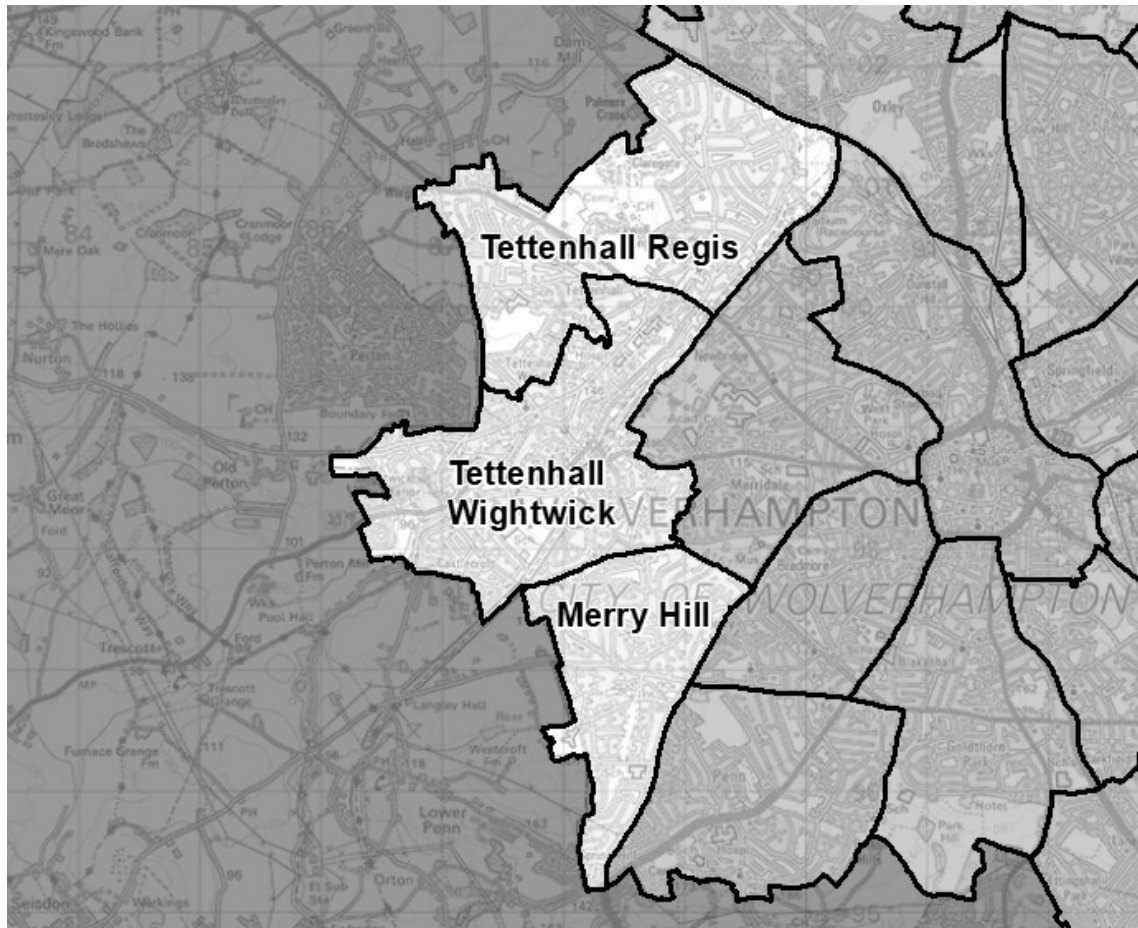
74 As with Bilston, we initially received differing suggestions from the Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, each with potentially significant consequences for electoral equality and the reflection of community identity in neighbouring areas.

75 Again, in forming our draft recommendations, we considered in detail the elements of each proposal to identify those which would reflect community identities

and interests, provide electoral equality, and provide for effective and convenient local government.

76 The Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats all supported our draft recommendations for Ettingshall and Spring Vale wards. One resident identified that our proposed boundary divided the area that people would consider to be Ettingshall. This respondent proposed the ward names Ettingshall North and Ettingshall South & Spring Vale. We are persuaded by the argument to make that change from our draft recommendations for these wards which in all other respects, we confirm as final.

Wolverhampton West



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Merry Hill	3	-1%
Tettenhall Regis	3	2%
Tettenhall Wightwick	3	-3%

Merry Hill, Tettenhall Regis and Tettenhall Wightwick

77 The Merry Hill ward is a predominantly residential ward on the southwest corner of the city. The Conservatives describe the ward as composed of two communities with the Five Ways area, which contains a number of shops, in the centre knitting the two together. The ward is forecast to have good electoral equality, having 1% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the city by 2027.

78 The Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed that the current ward boundaries be retained. The Conservatives proposed only that Bantock Park be included. We noted, however, that a consequence of such a change would be to separate Bantock Park Cottages from their nearest neighbours in Park ward and did

not accept the change proposed by the Conservatives as part of our draft recommendations.

79 Tettenhall Regis and Tettenhall Wightwick are two wards covering the historic village of Tettenhall which, as a whole, has a distinct identity. They are forecast to have electoral variances of 2% and –3% respectively, by 2027. The Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats all proposed that the current boundaries of Tettenhall Regis ward remain unchanged.

80 Whilst the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats also proposed that the boundaries of Tettenhall Wightwick should be retained, the Council proposed that Compton Hill Drive and Alpine Way, currently part of Tettenhall Wightwick, be added to Park ward. We found, however, that making this change would not provide for good electoral equality in Park ward by 2027 and found no other reason to support the change proposed.

81 Our draft recommendations for this area were that the current boundaries of the three wards be retained. The Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats all supported our draft recommendations for this area which we confirm as final.

Conclusions

38 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality in Wolverhampton, referencing the 2020 and 2027 electorate figures against the proposed number of councillors and wards. A full list of wards, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found at Appendix A to the back of this report. An outline map of the wards is provided at Appendix B.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2020	2027
Number of councillors	60	60
Number of electoral wards	20	20
Average number of electors per councillor	3,061	3,175
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	1	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Final recommendations

City of Wolverhampton Council should be made up of 60 representing 20 three-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for City of Wolverhampton Council. You can also view our final recommendations for City of Wolverhampton Council on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

What happens next?

44 We have now completed our review of City of Wolverhampton Council. The recommendations must now be approved by Parliament. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the local elections in 2023.

Equalities

45 The Commission has looked at how it carries out reviews under the guidelines set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It has made best endeavours to ensure that people with protected characteristics can participate in the review process and is sufficiently satisfied that no adverse equality impacts will arise as a result of the outcome of the review.

Appendices

Appendix A

Final recommendations for City of Wolverhampton Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2020)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Bilston North	3	9,512	3,171	4%	9,763	3,254	3%
2	Bilston South	3	9,736	3,245	6%	10,286	3,429	8%
3	Blakenhall	3	8,609	2,870	-6%	8,884	2,961	-7%
4	Bushbury North	3	9,888	3,296	8%	10,360	3,453	9%
5	Bushbury South & Low Hill	3	9,401	3,134	2%	9,648	3,216	1%
6	East Park	3	9,177	3,059	0%	9,330	3,110	-2%
7	Ettingshall North	3	8,971	2,990	-2%	9,592	3,197	1%
8	Ettingshall South & Spring Vale	3	9,713	3,238	6%	9,943	3,314	4%
9	Fallings Park	3	9,153	3,051	0%	9,304	3,101	-2%
10	Graiseley	3	8,487	2,829	-8%	8,670	2,890	-9%
11	Heath Town	3	8,699	2,900	-5%	9,133	3,044	-4%
12	Merry Hill	3	9,280	3,093	1%	9,425	3,142	-1%

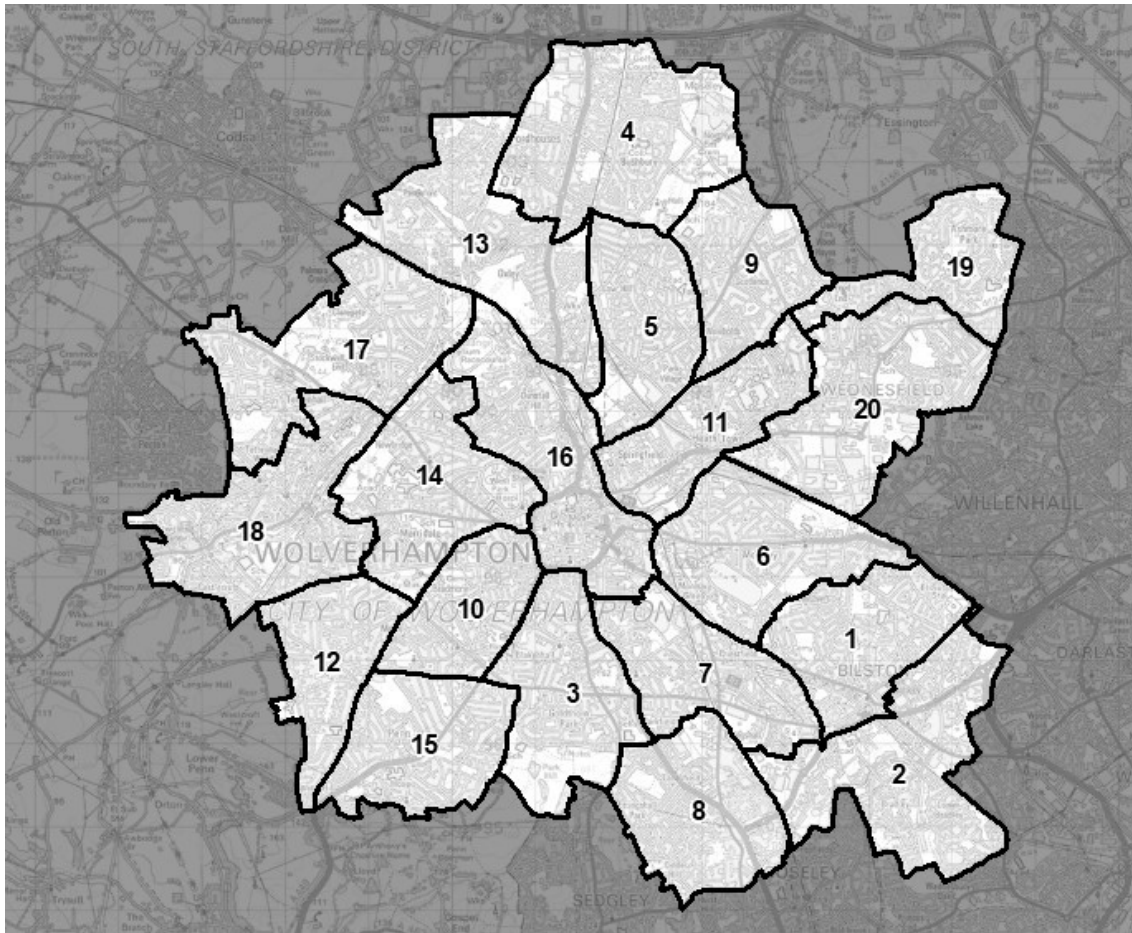
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2020)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13 Oxley	3	9,879	3,293	8%	10,342	3,447	9%
14 Park	3	9,342	3,114	2%	9,376	3,125	-2%
15 Penn	3	9,993	3,331	9%	10,215	3,405	7%
16 St Peters	3	7,844	2,615	-15%	9,167	3,056	-4%
17 Tettenhall Regis	3	9,471	3,157	3%	9,677	3,226	2%
18 Tettenhall Wightwick	3	9,070	3,023	-1%	9,244	3,081	-3%
19 Wednesfield North	3	8,704	2,901	-5%	8,924	2,975	-6%
20 Wednesfield South	3	8,752	2,917	-5%	9,194	3,065	-3%
Totals	60	183,681	-	-	190,477	-	-
Averages	-	-	3,061	-	-	3,175	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by City of Wolverhampton Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the city. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix B

Outline map



Number	Ward name	Number	Ward name
1	Bilston North	11	Heath Town
2	Bilston South	12	Merry Hill
3	Blakenhall	13	Oxley
4	Bushbury North	14	Park
5	Bushbury South & Low Hill	15	Penn
6	East Park	16	St Peters
7	Ettingshall North	17	Tettenhall Regis
8	Ettingshall South & Spring Vale	18	Tettenhall Wightwick
9	Fallings Park	19	Wednesfield North
10	Graiseley	20	Wednesfield South

A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the large map accompanying this report, or on our website:

<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/west-midlands/west-midlands/wolverhampton>

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:

<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/west-midlands/west-midlands/wolverhampton>

Local Authority

- City of Wolverhampton Council

Political Groups

- City of Wolverhampton Council Conservative Group
- City of Wolverhampton Liberal Democrats

Councillors

- Councillor P. Bateman (City of Wolverhampton Council)
- Councillor C. Hibbert (City of Wolverhampton Council)
- Councillor W. Thompson (City of Wolverhampton Council)

Local Organisations

- St Michael's Church

Local Residents

- 223 local residents

Petitions

- 153 Signatures

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral inequality	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority.
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. We only take account of electors registered specifically for local elections during our reviews.
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents

Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) was set up by Parliament, independent of Government and political parties. It is directly accountable to Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. It is responsible for conducting boundary, electoral and structural reviews of local government.

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