

[REDACTED]

From: Walsh, Simon <simon.walsh@gravesham.gov.uk>
Sent: 22 December 2021 11:35
To: reviews
Subject: Gravesham - Proposed new pattern of wards
Attachments: GBC Ward Arrangements FINAL Submission - December 2021.pdf

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Dear Sir/Madam

Please see attached a consultation response from Gravesham Borough Council.

Kind regards

Simon

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Draft Warding Arrangements Submission

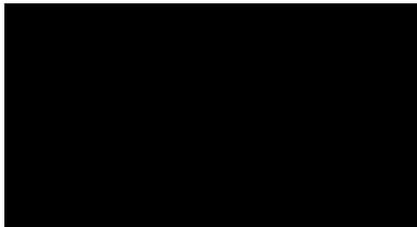
December 2021

Executive Summary

The council notes the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) draft warding arrangement and name proposals and welcomes the opportunity to respond.

Overall, the council broadly supports the majority of the LGBCE's recommendations, although there are a small number of these that the council disagrees with and which it considers do not reflect the local communities. These have been set out within this document with rationale for changes to address this.

This response is supported by the Leader of the Labour Group and the Leader of the Independent Group.



Councillor John Burden

Leader of the Council



Councillor Harold Craske

Leader of the
Independent Group

Introduction

The council made its submission to the LGBCE on the warding arrangement for the borough in July 2021. After considering all submissions made during the consultation, the LGBCE published its drafting warding arrangements in November. It is recognised that some of these draft recommendations do reflect the council's submission and achieve the statutory criteria the commission seeks to achieve, whilst others do not.

There are some instances where the council feels strongly that either the LGBCE's proposals do not reflect the existing community identities of where the suggested boundary lines need to be amended slightly to follow natural boundaries or road lines. For ease of reference the council's response can be grouped into three categories below

The council does not have any fundamental concerns with the LGBCE proposals for the wards listed below:

- Coldharbour
- Istead Rise, Cobham and Luddesdown
- Meopham North
- Meopham South and Vigo
- Northfleet East and Rosherville
- Northfleet West and Springhead
- Painters Ash
- Pelham
- Shorne and Higham

The council proposes minor amendments to the LGBCE proposals for the wards listed below.

- Denton
- Singlewell
- Town
- Whitehill and Windmill Hill
- Woodlands and Kings Farm

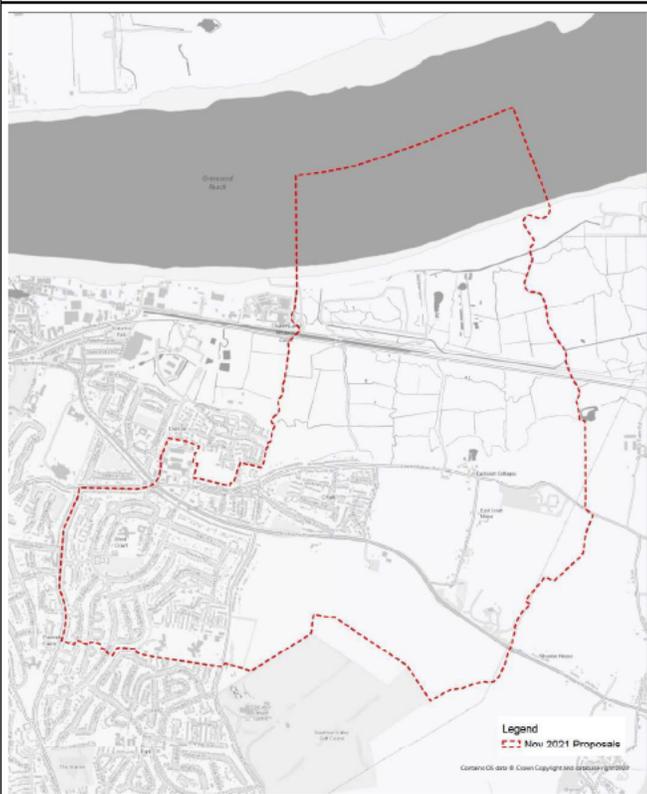
The council requests more substantial amendments to the LGBCE proposals for the wards listed below.

- Chalk and Westcourt
- Riverview Park

The following pages set out the council's response to the LGBCE's draft recommendations on a ward-by-ward basis.

1. Chalk and Westcourt

3 Councillors



GBC Response

The council does not support the proposal for a three-councillor combined Chalk and Westcourt ward.

Whilst from a numerical point of view this provides marginally better electoral equality and it is acknowledged there are historical links between the two areas, they're very different in terms of the community make up now and how the residents within the areas recognise their local areas. The council submission included dwellings on Thong Lane within the Chalk Ward. This is the extent of what is felt is a similarity between both areas, with only a small portion of Westcourt, on the eastern side being suitable for inclusion to the Chalk Ward. The Commission is asked to review the original council submission again to see how this area could be used to close the gap in terms of electoral equality.

Westcourt was initially created with the construction of the school and housing in Hampton Crescent and Jubilee Crescent. This continued with more housing throughout the late 1940s and 1950s to produce the large estate now known as Westcourt. Westcourt has its own schools, doctors, shops, church and community rooms. It is densely populated in comparison to Chalk and it is felt that no regular commuting is undertaken between both wards, because of the separate services that exist in both areas.

Chalk was established in the 1930's slightly before Westcourt. It is a self-contained community and has very distinct characteristics. Services are established such as the surgery practice area, dental practice and the parish hall. The entrance to Chalk by car is via Lower Higham Road or Chalk Road with the entrance to Chalk at Vicarage Lane being blocked off for car access. The A226 intersects the two separate wards and is a major road. There are no major crossings between both wards with the only pelican crossing being at the junction of the A226 and Lower Higham Road.

The unification of both areas thereby creating a three-councillor ward only delivers one statutory criteria of the commission. The community identity of this area is strong, and Chalk specifically is known as a village by its residents.

2. Coldharbour

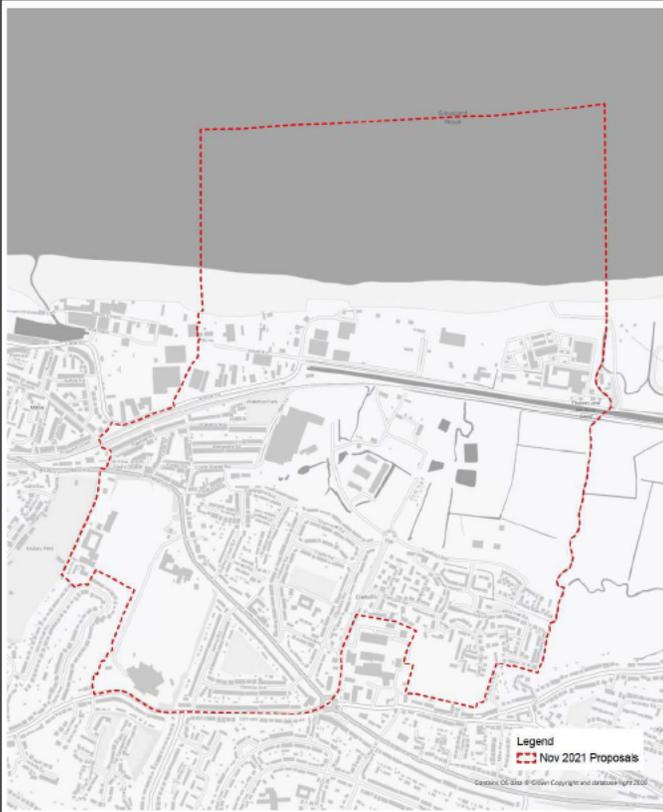
2 Councillors



GBC Response

The council does not have any fundamental concerns regarding the proposals for a two-councillor Coldharbour ward.

The council supports the proposed name of the ward.

**GBC Response**

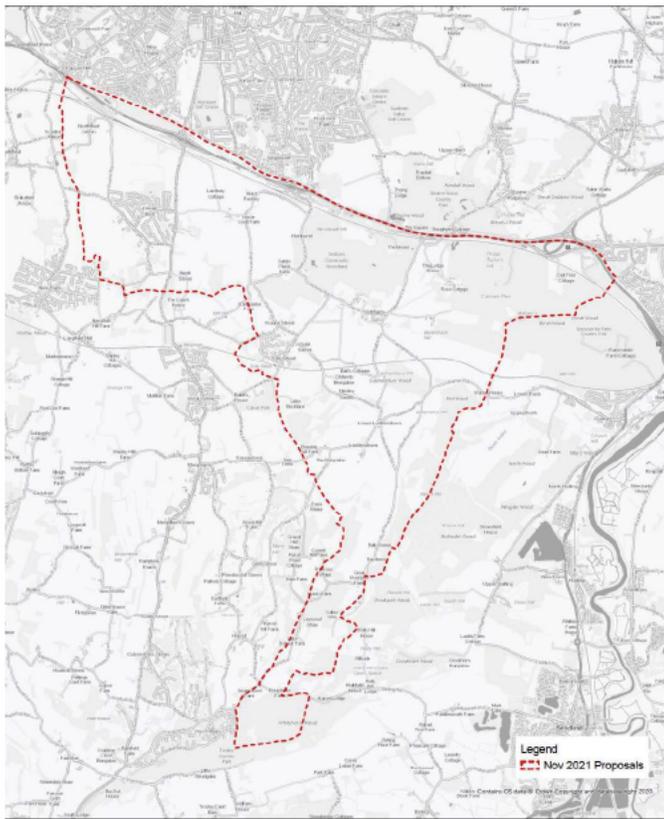
The two-councillor Denton ward does provide some concerns for the council which centre on the location of the proposed boundary to the west of the ward. This boundary currently intersects a large site that is expected to come forward for development and habitation just outside the period to 2027 (which the review is looking to regarding electoral forecasts). The proposed boundary does split that development area directly in two. This will no doubt cause some issues providing effective governance as the boundary will intersect the area.

To avoid this situation, and its impact, it is proposed the boundary is moved directly along Norfolk Road and towards the river along Mark Lane. This will ensure that the whole potential development site is moved into the Town Ward and ensure that the residents will elect and be represented by the same councillors across the whole potential development. It should also be noted that this boundary change would have a negligible effect on electoral equality as the area in question consists mainly of industrial units.

The council supports the proposed name of the ward.

4. Istead Rise, Cobham and Luddesdown

2 Councillors



GBC Response

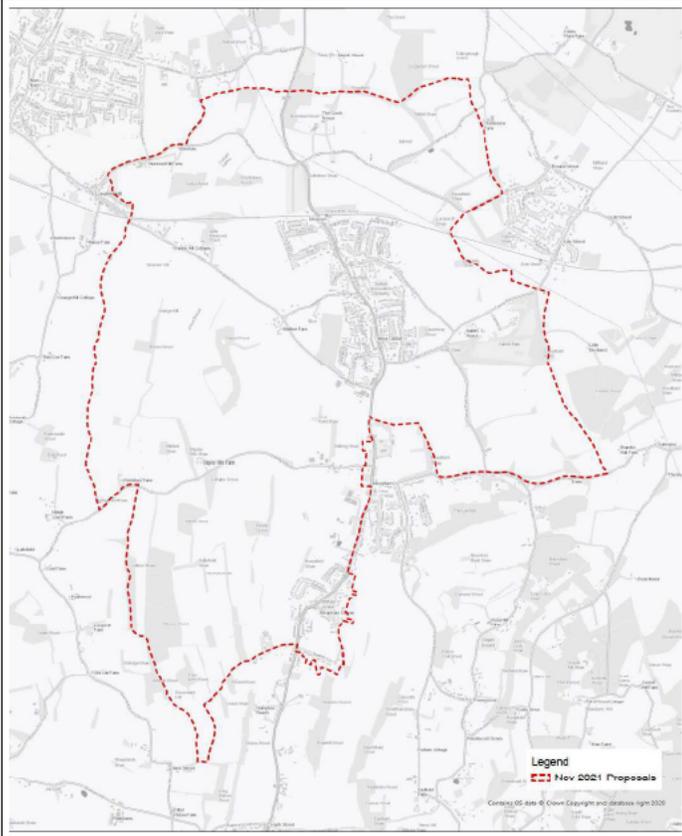
The council does not have any fundamental concerns regarding the proposals for a two-councillor Istead Rise, Cobham and Luddesdown ward. The council proposed the amalgamation of the currently separated areas of Istead Rise and Cobham to achieved electoral equality.

The addition of Luddesdown to that area does not create any concerns in the three statutory areas the commission needs to consider. It is also recognised that there was support from at least one parish council for the inclusion of Luddesdown and Cobham within the same ward.

The council supports the proposed name of the ward.

5. Meopham North

2 Councillors



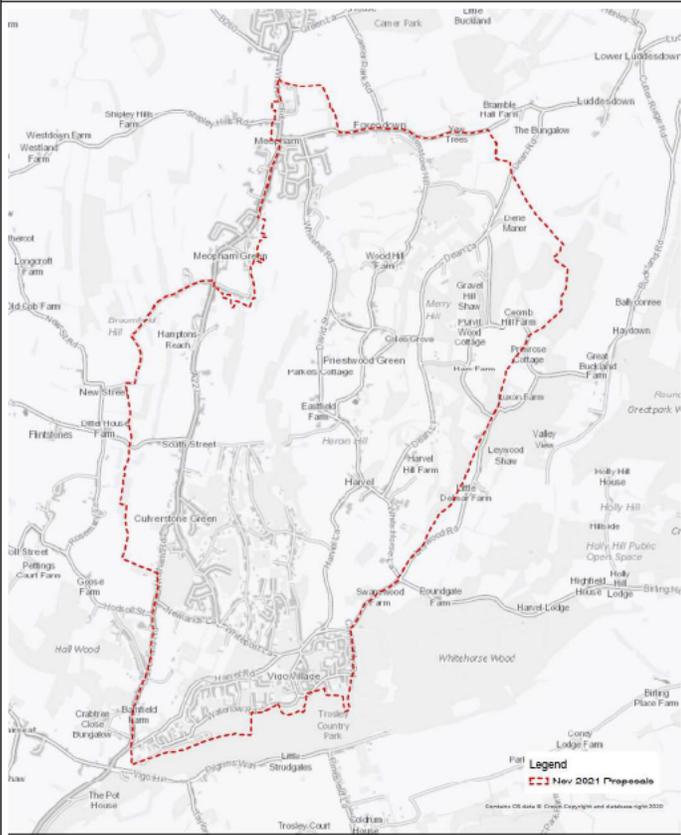
GBC Response

The council does not have any fundamental concerns regarding the proposals for a two-councillor Meopham North ward. The council proposal in this area was considered and adopted by the Commission.

The council supports the proposed name of the ward.

6. Meopham South and Vigo

2 Councillors



GBC Response

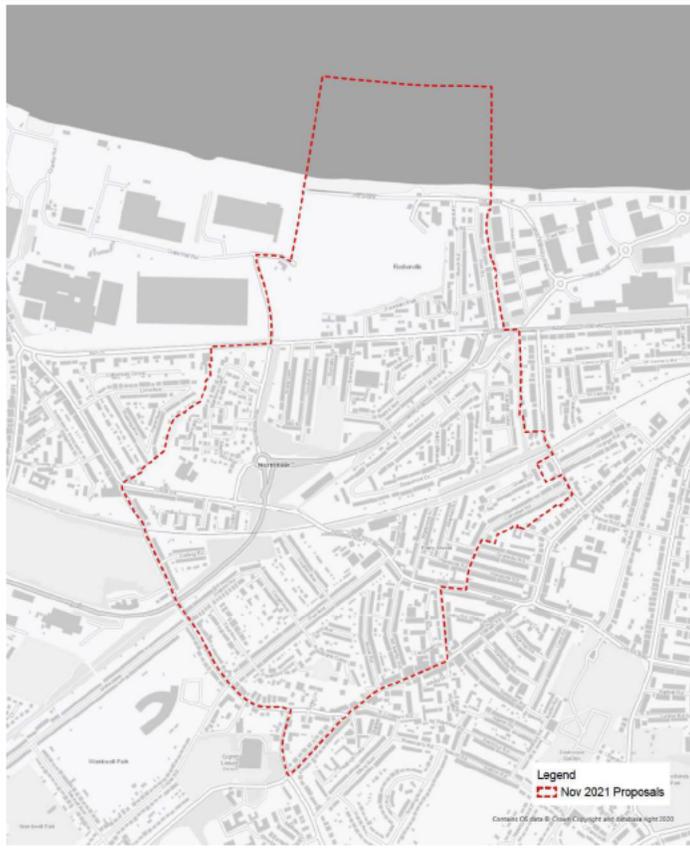
The council does not have any fundamental concerns regarding the proposals for a two-councillor Meopham South and Vigo ward. The council proposal in this area was considered and adopted by the commission.

The council supports the proposed name of the ward.

Polling Districts - CH,CI,CJ,CK (plus 749 from CF)

7. Northfleet East and Rosherville

3 Councillors



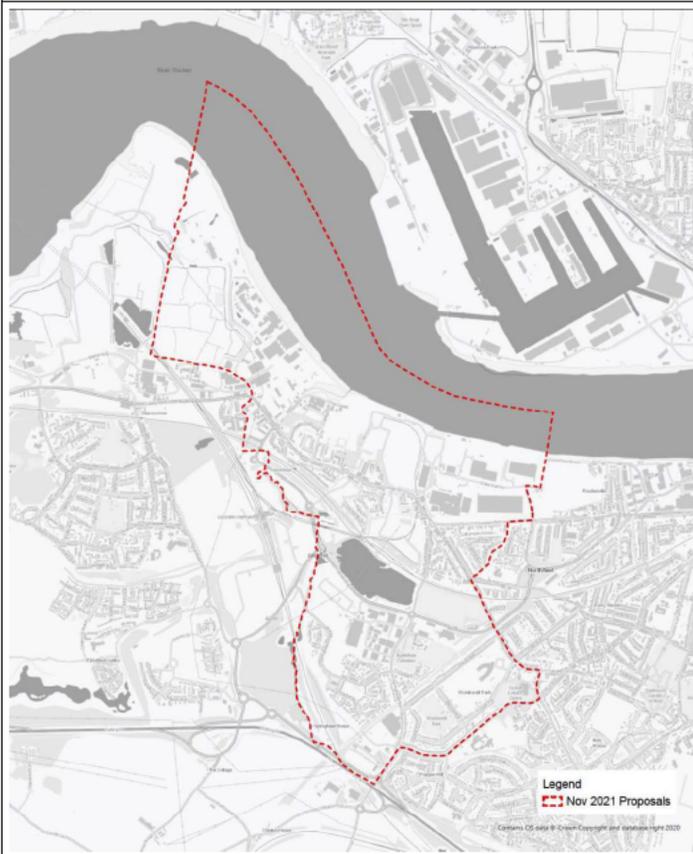
GBC Response

The council does not have any fundamental concerns regarding the proposals for a three-councillor Northfleet East and Rosherville ward.

The council supports the proposed name of the ward.

8. Northfleet West and Springhead

3 Councillors



GBC Response

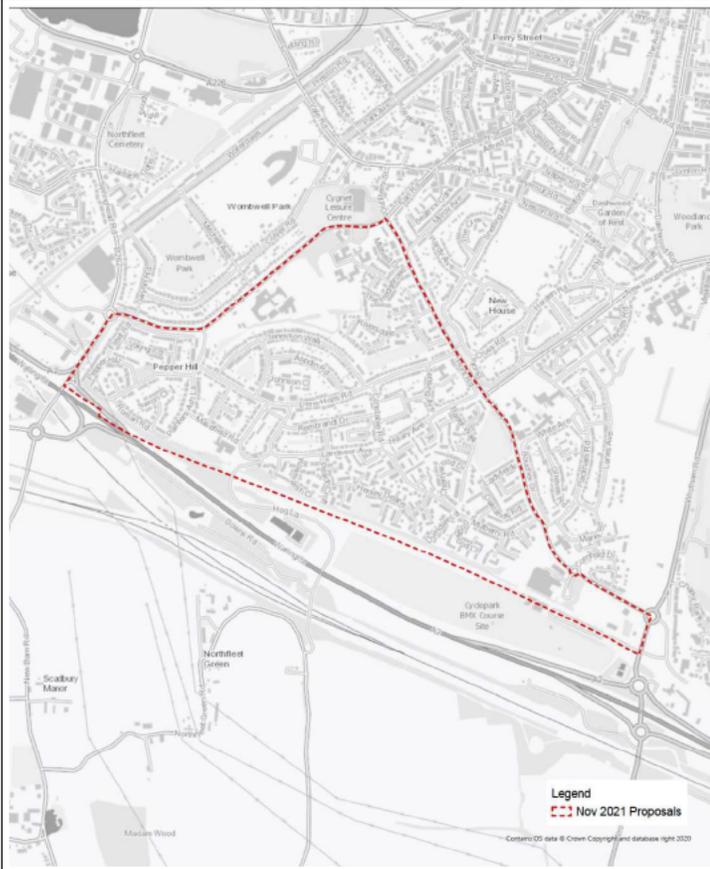
The council does not have any fundamental concerns regarding the proposals for a three-councillor Northfleet West and Springhead ward.

The council supports the proposed name of the ward.

Polling Districts - BB, BC, BD

9. Painters Ash

2 Councillors



GBC Response

The boundary of the ward mirrors the council submission - albeit that the boundary on the south side has been realigned to include the Cyclopark into the Istead Rise, Cobham & Luddesdown ward as it is now.

This change being justified to enable travel between Istead Rise and Cobham without necessitating leaving the ward and re-entering.

As largely this ward does reflect the council submission, it is not intended to suggest any alterations.

The council supports the proposed name of the ward.

10. Pelham

2 Councillors



GBC Response

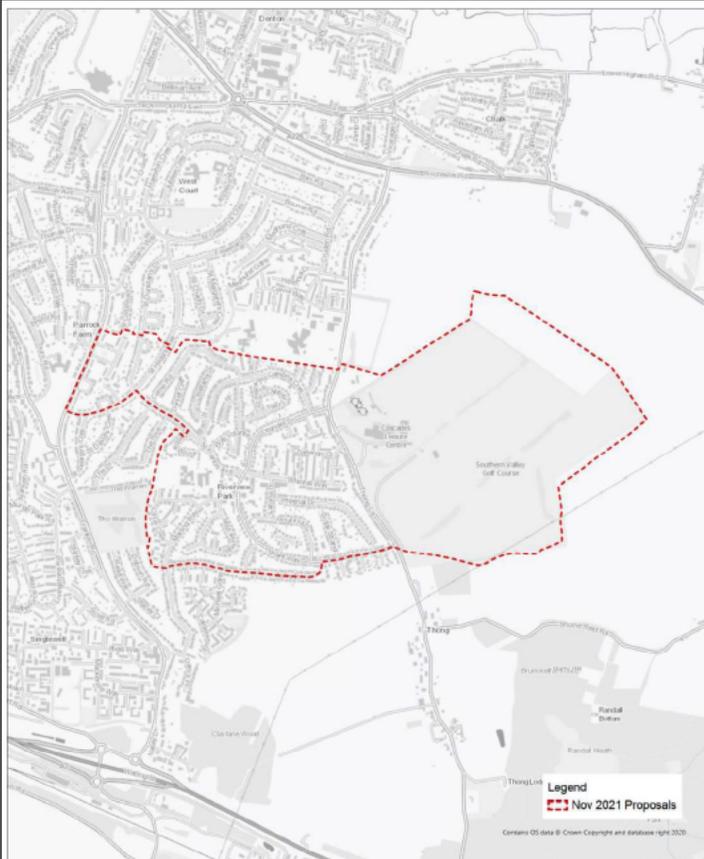
The council supports the recommendation for a two-councillor ward and the according reduction in the size of the Pelham ward. There is recognition that it largely follows the existing southern boundaries.

The council supports the proposed name of the ward.

Polling Districts - B,C and some added from M (203)

11. Riverview Park

2 Councillors



GBC Response

The council supports the recommendation for a two-councillor ward but requests that the boundary on the west is realigned to mirror the council submission – with the boundary running behind the properties in St Hilda's Way and inclusion of properties along the Valley Drive boundary.

The draft recommendations to include part of St Hilda's Way and St Dunstan's Drive does not follow any local community identity. This change is largely due to the entire polling district 'T' being included within this ward. This polling district was formed from an entirely different ward and therefore its inclusion has created what is felt as being one part of a separate ward area being squeezed into another to achieve electoral equality.

The council view remains firmly that the area above and the entirety of polling district 'T' containing St Patricks Gardens and Pankhurst Place should remain within the Westcourt Ward.

A natural break between the Riverview Ward is at the bottom of St Francis Avenue, which is a steep hill and historical boundary between the two areas.

The council is still of the opinion that St George's Crescent, St David's Crescent, The Drive, The Rise, The Warren, Read Way, Dobson Road and Stacey Close should be included with the Riverview Park Ward. These areas are part of the Riverview Park Community.

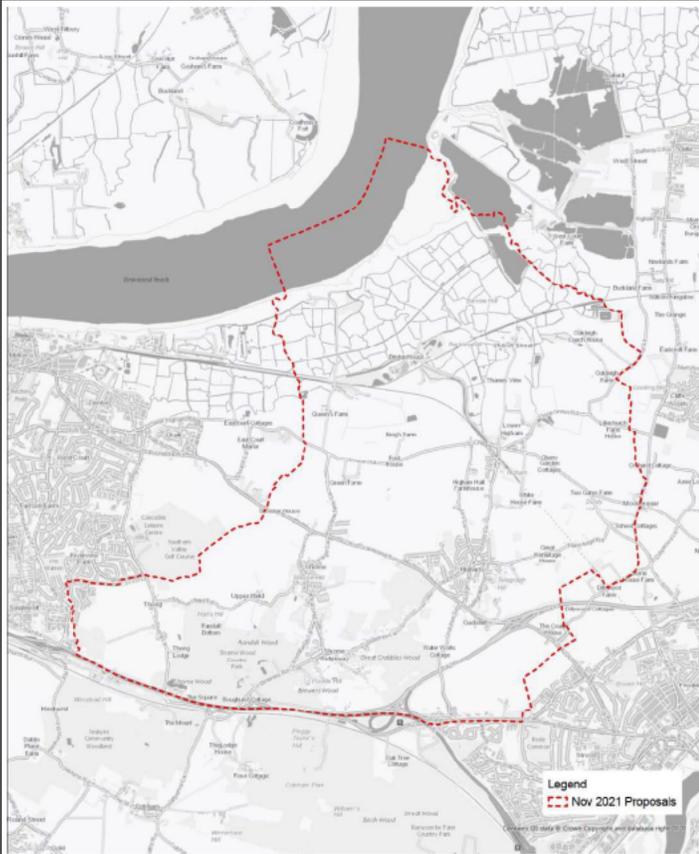
The exclusion of properties included on the Northwest boundary and the inclusion of the properties on the West boundary are in effect cancelling each other out in terms of electoral equality and therefore should be adopted to ensure the community identities are retained.

The council supports the proposed name of the ward.

Polling Districts - T, U, V

12. Shorne and Higham

3 Councillors



GBC Response

The council does not have any fundamental concerns regarding the proposals for a three-councillor Shorne and Higham ward.

The council supports the proposed name of the ward.

13. Singlewell

2 Councillors

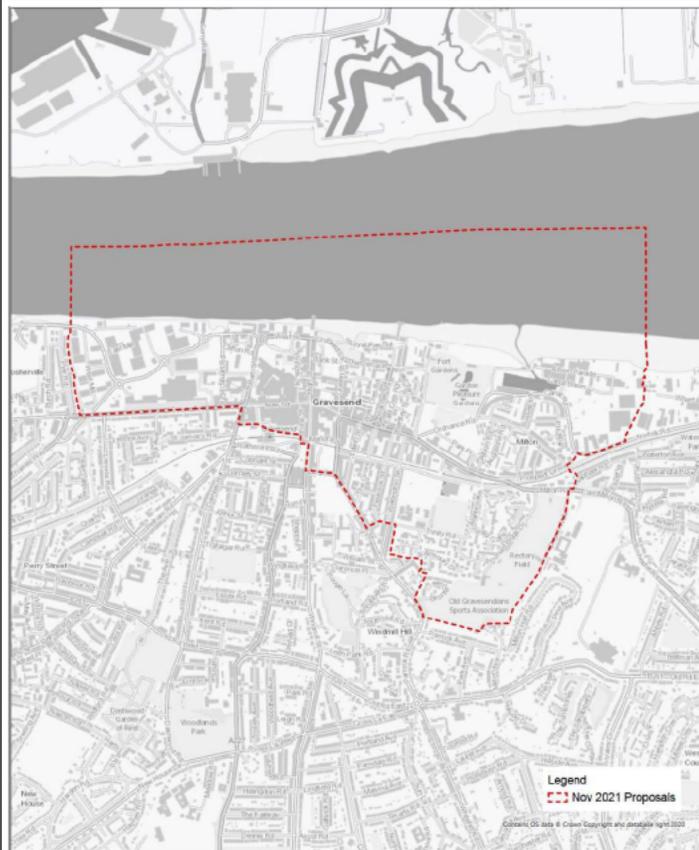


GBC Response

The council does not have any fundamental concerns regarding the proposals for the Singlewell ward.

However, the Ifield School (circled on the map opposite) should be included within this ward and not the Woodlands & Kings Farm ward as the entrance for the school actually falls into the Singlewell ward. As such, the boundary should be redrawn to ensure that the school (and its grounds) are included within the Singlewell ward. Moving this boundary will ensure that if issues were to occur outside the school, that any councillors involved would be representing the area in which the school itself is in and also the external entrances and roads.

The council supports the proposed name of the ward.



GBC Response

The council does not have any fundamental concerns for a three-councillor Town ward but requests an amendment of the proposed boundary to the east of the ward. This boundary currently intersects a large site that is expected to come forward for development and habitation outside the period to 2027 (which the review is looking to regarding electoral forecasts). The proposed boundary does split that development area directly in two. This will no doubt cause some issues providing effective governance as the boundary will intersect the area.

To avoid this situation, and its impact, it is proposed the boundary is moved directly along Norfolk Road and towards the river along Mark Lane. This will ensure that the whole potential development site is moved into the Town Ward and ensure that the residents will elect and be represented by the same councillors across the whole potential development. It should also be noted that this boundary change would have a negligible effect on electoral equality as the area in question consists mainly of industrial units.

The council supports the proposed name of the ward.

15. Whitehill and Windmill Hill

3 Councillors



GBC Response

The council does not have any fundamental concerns for a three-councillor ward but seeks an amendment to the boundary line around which runs along Waterloo Street and around the gardens of the rear of bottom half of Wellington Street. It is not felt this element of the boundary serves to provide a clear distinction to this entire road being either within the proposed Whitehill and Windmill Hill or the newly recommended Town Ward.

It is proposed that the boundary should continue along Parrock Street and then move behind the properties in Christ Church Gardens as it does in the draft recommendations.

It is also proposed by the council that The Old Barrack building which is included within the ward (located off Armoury Drive and only accessible from there) should be removed and placed within the new Town Ward. The boundary would then run along the end of Christ Church Road.

The council supports the proposed name of the ward.

16. Woodlands and Kings Farm

3 Councillors



GBC Response

The council does not have any fundamental concerns regarding the proposals for a three-councillor Woodlands and Kings Farm ward.

Ifield School (circled on the map opposite) should not be included in this ward as the entrance for the school actually falls into the neighbouring ward. As such, it is requested that the boundary should be changed to ensure that the school (and its grounds) are included within the Singlewell ward. Moving this boundary will ensure that if issues were to occur outside the school, that any councillors involved would be representing the area in which the school itself is in and also the external entrances and roads.

Although it is recognised that an area of Kings Farm was included within the draft recommended ward, it is still felt that the Woodlands ward namely sufficiently covers the area within the majority of the ward. Therefore, the council proposes the name of 'Woodlands' for the ward.

Parish Electoral Arrangement

The council does not have any fundamental concerns regarding the revised parish electoral arrangements for Meopham Parish Council.