

Bolton Borough Council

Personal Details:

Name: Peter Flitcroft

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Postcode: [REDACTED]

Organisation Name: Farnworth and Kearsley First Political Party

Comment text:

Please find attached the submission of Farnworth and Kearsley First Political Parties submission for the Boundary Commissions review of the boundary of Bolton Council

Uploaded Documents:

https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1620679741_Farnworth+and+Kearsley+First+Boundary+Review+Submission.pdf

The Local Government Boundaries Commission Electoral Review of Bolton

Submission on Behalf of Farnworth and Kearsley First Party

May 10th, 2021

Executive Summary

Farnworth and Kearsley First (F and K F) is a political party registered with the Electoral Commission in 2017. Its aim is to represent the electorate of the wards of Farnworth, Harper Green and Kearsley on Bolton Council.

The strategy for this proposal is based on F and K F's memberships views and on feedback received from the electorate over the course of the last 4 years.

The proposal is based upon the three wards of Farnworth, Harper Green and Kearsley.

Any electorate numbers quoted are based upon the forecast number of electorates for 2026, provided by the Boundaries Commission on their Bolton Electoral Forecasting Proforma issued as part of their briefings on the review, any percentage variances reported are based upon the proposed number of electorates of 3,562 per Councillor in any given Ward, using 3 Councillors per ward as a guide, giving a target electorate number of 10,685 per ward.

This submission is based upon the following criteria.

- The creation of a new Kearsley ward, which follows the original boundary lines of Kearsley Urban District Council Towns boundary, wherever practicably possible
- The creation of two separately identified wards for Farnworth, that sit wholly within the original boundary lines of Farnworth Urban District Council, the makeup of the two wards has been drawn from the existing Polling Station Districts that currently lie within the said Farnworth Town boundary and have been designed to fall within the maximum positive / negative variance suggested allowance from the target electorate number

Introduction

Both Towns have co-existed for hundreds of years as friendly communities, neighbours each with their own strong and unique identities. The electorate of each town knows its own boundaries (complicated that they may be in parts). The descriptive term "Farnworth and Kearsley" has been used by public and private organisations, clubs and societies for countless years, it is well recognised by most residents that the towns have a symbiotic relationship, however there is always the strong recognition that each town has it's separate identity and unique properties and values.

Farnworth lies between Kearsley and Bolton, Kearsley's only order with Bolton Council is with Farnworth.

Farnworth Wards Proposal / Overview

Farnworth has a long tradition since it was first recognised in the land survey of 1278. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the town rapidly grew due mainly to the industrial revolution and coal production. The town was the birthplace of some of the most important industrial pioneers including TB Crompton the pioneer of modern newspaper and media production, who had his production and development site in the north of the town adjacent to the River Croal.

Farnworth became an Urban District in its own right in 1939 and it was famous for its progressive attitude for the provision of high-quality Council Housing for its residents. In 1974, in the major Local Government re-organisation of that year, it became part of Bolton Metropolitan Borough.

Ask any long-term resident of Farnworth where they come from and they won't say Bolton, they will clearly and proudly say that they are from Farnworth.

Farnworth has its own magnificent Town Hall and its own Carnegie Library.

Whilst Farnworthians recognise with pride the town's strengths and weaknesses and their close association, boundary, identity and ties with Kearsley, it does not have anywhere near the same level of recognition of these facets with Bolton.

Farnworth is currently served by the two electoral wards of Farnworth and Harper Green. These have been in place since the boundary review of 1980. Harper Green ward is made up of approximately 65% electoral residents of Farnworth and 35% electoral residents of part of the Bolton district of Lever Edge (part of Great Lever). The two sections of this ward have no affinity and no sense of community identity. Farnworth people use Farnworth's facilities and assets, and Lever Edge residents use Great Lever's and Bolton's facilities and assets, it is as simple as that. By changing this boundary so those in Lever Edge are not included, it will mean that they will be included within a ward that will more likely cater to their needs, which the current setup is unlikely to do, given that Farnworth, and not Great Lever nor Bolton matters, are the priority for most residents.

At approximately 20,911, the total forecast electorate population of Farnworth could fit into two wards and is close to Bolton's average ward population of 10,562, (see Table below)

Polling District	Current Ward	Forecast 2026 Electorate
2JA1	Farnworth	2207
2JB1	Farnworth	1271
2JC1	Farnworth	804
2JD1	Farnworth	3379
2JE1	Farnworth	1696
2JF1	Farnworth	1810
2KA1	Harper Green	1516
2KB1	Harper Green	2758
2KC1	Harper Green	2271
2KE1	Harper Green	521
2LG1	Kearsley	1842
	Total	20075
Average over 2 wards		10038

Our proposals are to make changes to the boundaries once again, to ensure that ward councillors are accurately representing the people and communities of the town. At the present time, we do not feel the boundaries allow for accurate representation of our community identity.

We would like to emphasise the commitment to serving Farnworth residents and communities accurately by altering the ward names too: It is proposed to split Farnworth into the two wards of Farnworth North and Farnworth South, taking away any ambiguity of the areas covered by the six councillors.

Kearsley ward too holds a not insignificant amount of Farnworth residents currently, with approximately numbers at 15%.

Under the proposals we are submitting, this ward would be re-drawn too, so that those residents are represented by the councillors of what is currently Farnworth, and what would become part of Farnworth South Ward.

The traditions of these areas would be maintained, whilst also combining this approach with looking to the future. By looking backwards and including people previously represented by Farnworth and who crucially live in the town, the fortunes and priorities of those people will have a better chance of moving forward, because they will be better served and represented.

Kearsley Wards Proposal / Overview

Kearsley also has its own long traditions; it became an Urban District Council in its own right in 1894 until it also became part of Bolton Metropolitan Borough in 1974. Kearsley also has a long-held tradition of coal mining and paper manufacture,

In its current guise, the ward of Kearsley includes residents who live in Farnworth, south of Frederick Street and in the properties on either side of Longcauseway and Bradford Street in polling Station District 2LG1. Because of their location in Farnworth, they can neither relate to Kearsley, the town centre of which is significantly further away from them than Farnworth's, and because of their location, they use services within Farnworth. For example, they are much closer geographically, and for convenience, to Farnworth Health Centre, and Stonehill Medical Centre than they are to Kearsley Medical Centre. Similarly, as alluded to already, Farnworth town centre is on the doorstep of these residents, who are highly unlikely to go out of their way to use these amenities in Kearsley.

Because of the fact these residents live in Farnworth, they relate to the town, they are loyal to it and want to see it progress, and the current structure of the Kearsley ward puts that loyalty into stark focus; candidate councillors for the ward place much of their energy into canvassing houses within Kearsley, where 85% of the population resides, rather than the 15% of Farnworth residents included. They, understandably, campaign about Kearsley issues. But this runs the risk of isolating the voters who live in Farnworth but are represented by councillors entrenched in Kearsley matters. It makes perfect sense to re-align the boundaries so that councillors in Kearsley are not stuck in a halfway house of never being able to fully satisfy residents based in Farnworth and Kearsley simultaneously; the change will also give Farnworthian's a sense of belonging to the communities and areas to which they live and can most relate to.

If the Polling Station District is relocated to sit in the newly proposed Farnworth South ward, then the electorate population would sit at 9,062 which is slightly outside of the desired positive/negative variance of 10,685 electoral residents but Kearsley is plainly and simply it's own town with its own community Identity, see table below.

Polling District	Proposed Wards	Forecast 2026 Electorate
2LA1	Kearsley	836
2LB1	Kearsley	1095
2LC1	Kearsley	1717
2LD1	Kearsley	1466
2LE1	Kearsley	1804
2LF1	Kearsley	2144
	Total	9062

The proposals

In light of all this, we would like to see the following:

Kearsley – This should include the traditional town of Kearsley and the border with Farnworth should be moved back to the original Kearsley Urban District Councils town boundary by the movement of Polling Station District 2LG1 to Farnworth ward.

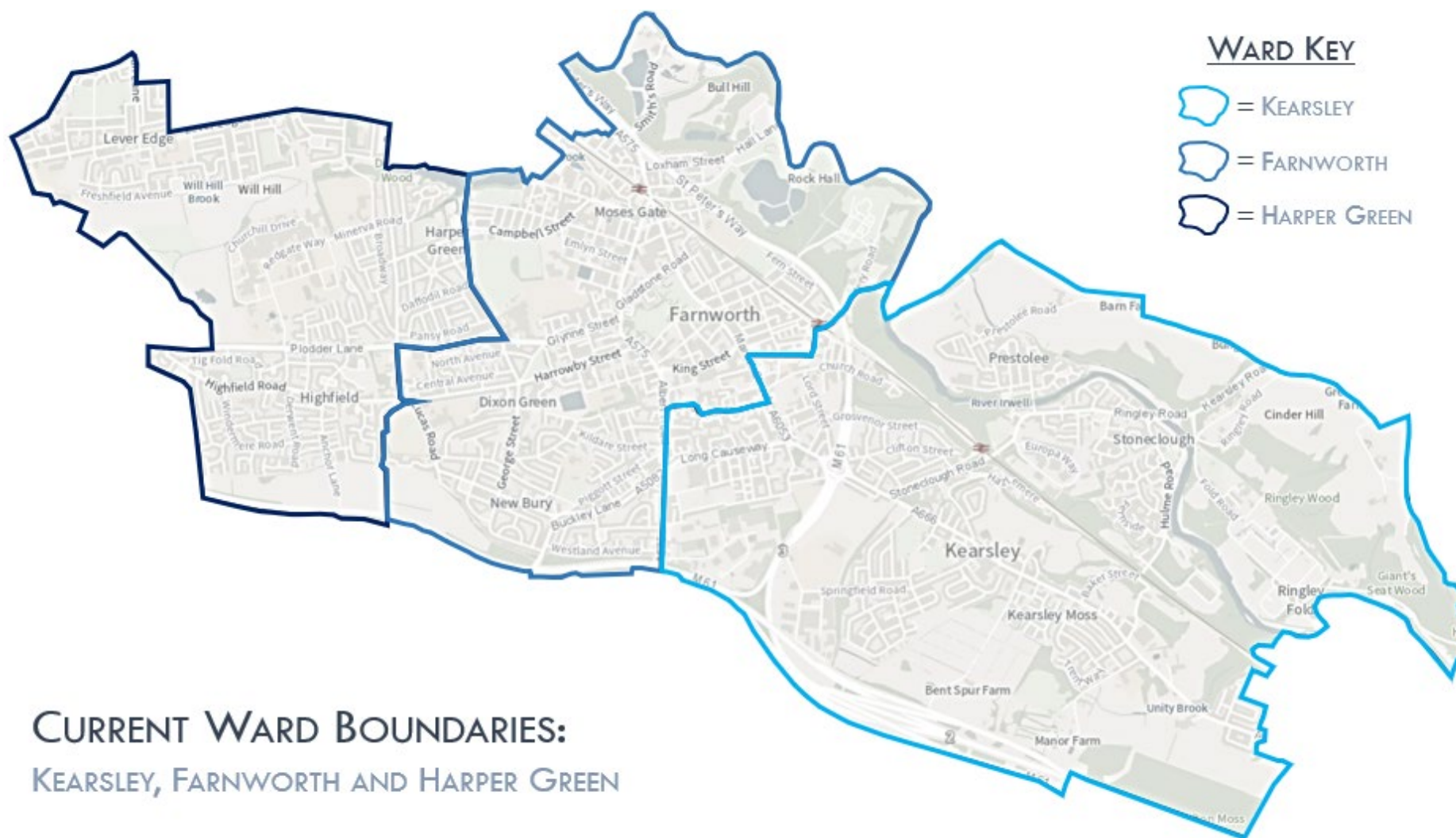
Harper Green – This should have the Polling Station District reference 2KD1 (Lever Edge, Great Lever, Bolton) returned to the Great Lever ward with a balancing change to surrounding ward make ups to ensure that Great Lever Ward itself stays within allowed variances of the desired number of Electoral Residents per ward. The remainder of the ward should be merged with the existing Farnworth ward and then divided into two separate wards of Farnworth North and Farnworth South

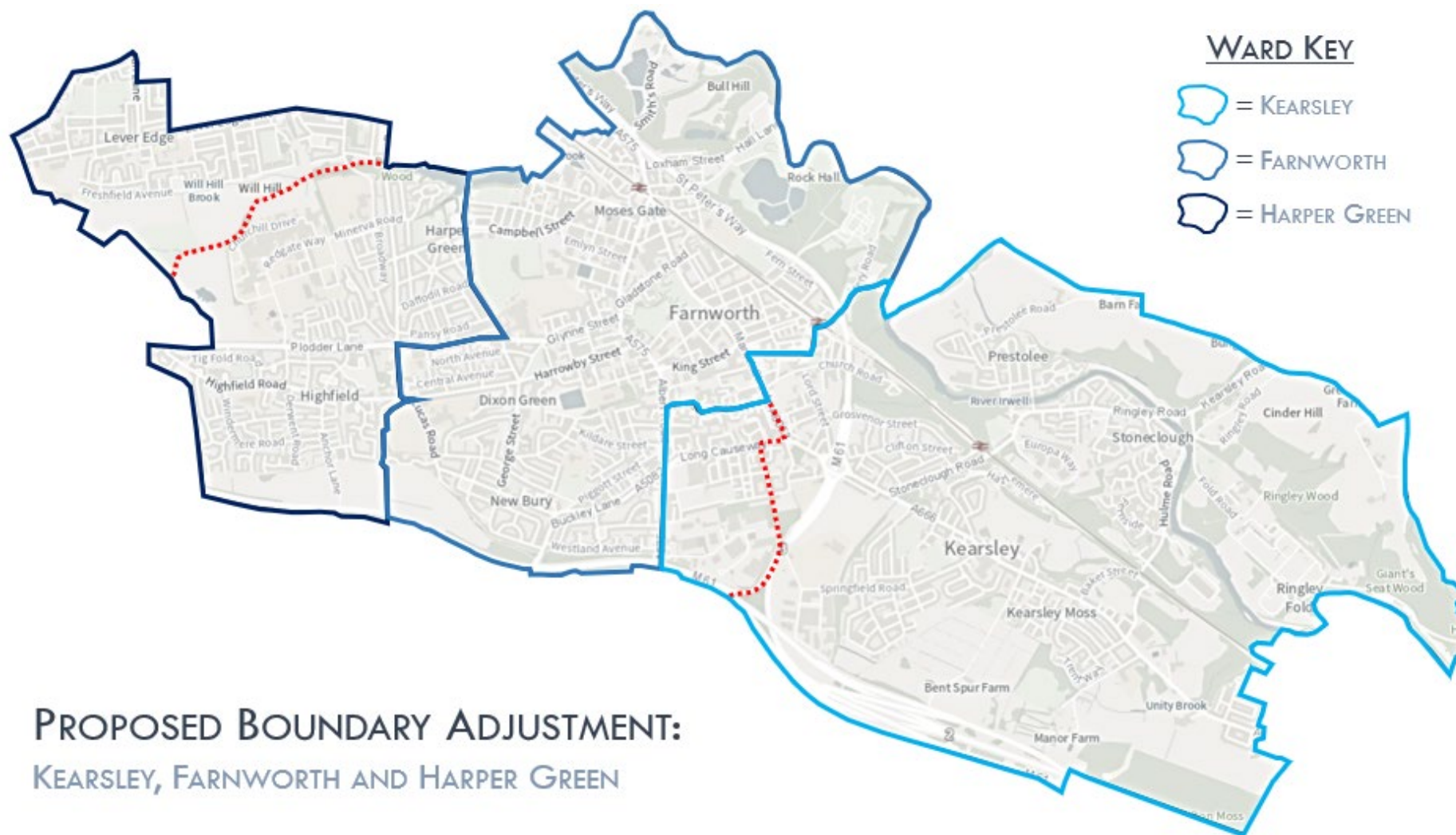
Farnworth- This should receive the Polling Station District reference 2LG1 and should be merged with the remainder of current Harper Green ward that is located within the original Farnworth Urban District Council Town Boundary and then separated into two separate wards of Farnworth North and Farnworth South.

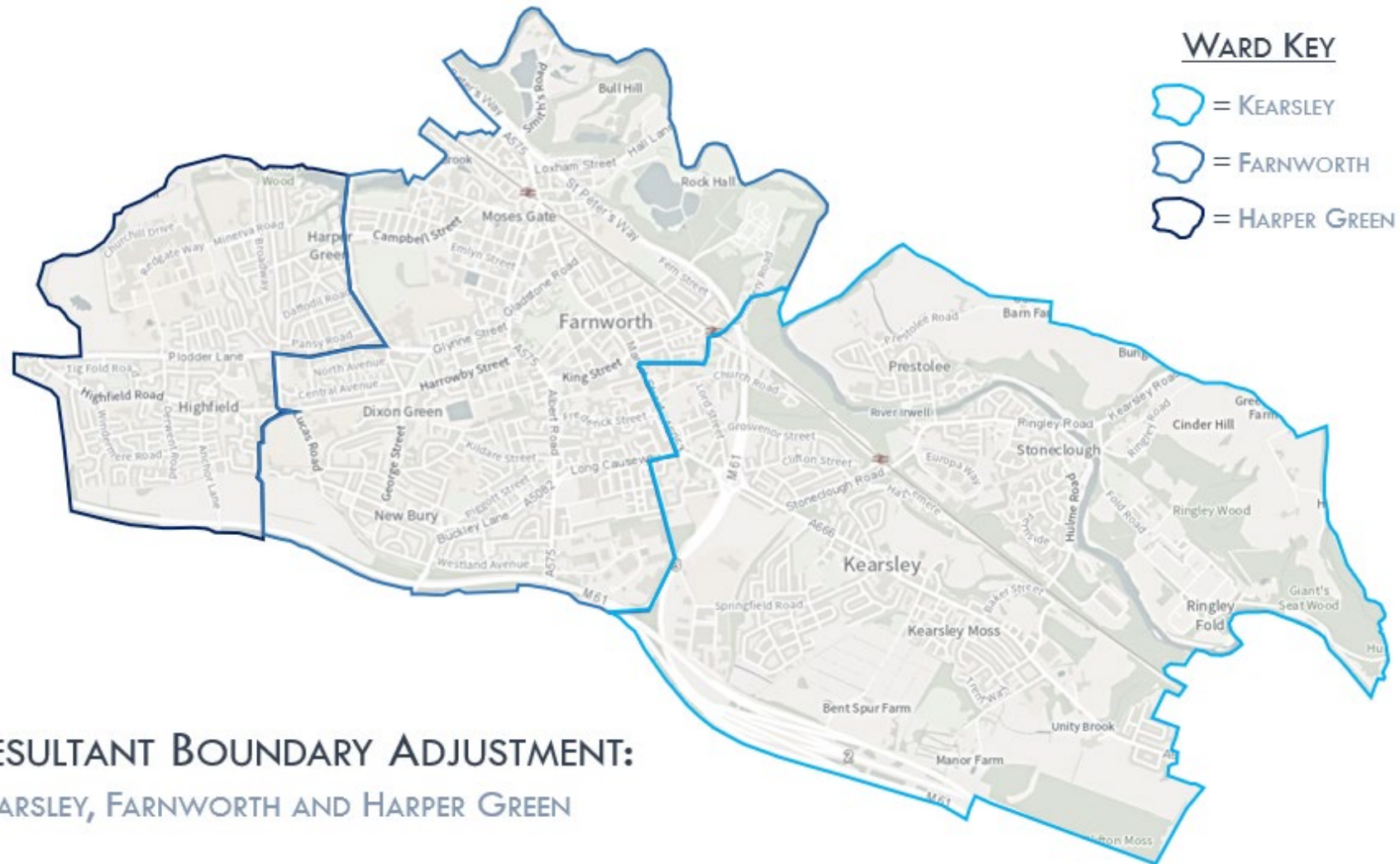
We believe that the proposed changes will uphold the principles set out by the council; the integrity of the democratic process will be better served by the boundary changes set out, because it ensures that residents of each ward are made up of people from Farnworth North, Farnworth South, and Kearsley respectively.

This also serves the wider important point of guaranteeing that council members are representing individuals and collective communities. The current boundaries do not satisfy this criterion because there are people entrenched in the local community of Farnworth, who live mere minutes away from the town centre, yet whose views are represented by councillors in Kearsley, who will understandably prioritise their own town ahead of Farnworth. Similarly, the current make-up of Harper Green ward incorporates residents who live in Great Lever. Their community experiences will be different from those of Farnworth residents because they don't live in the area and instead would be better represented by the collective community of Great Lever ward.

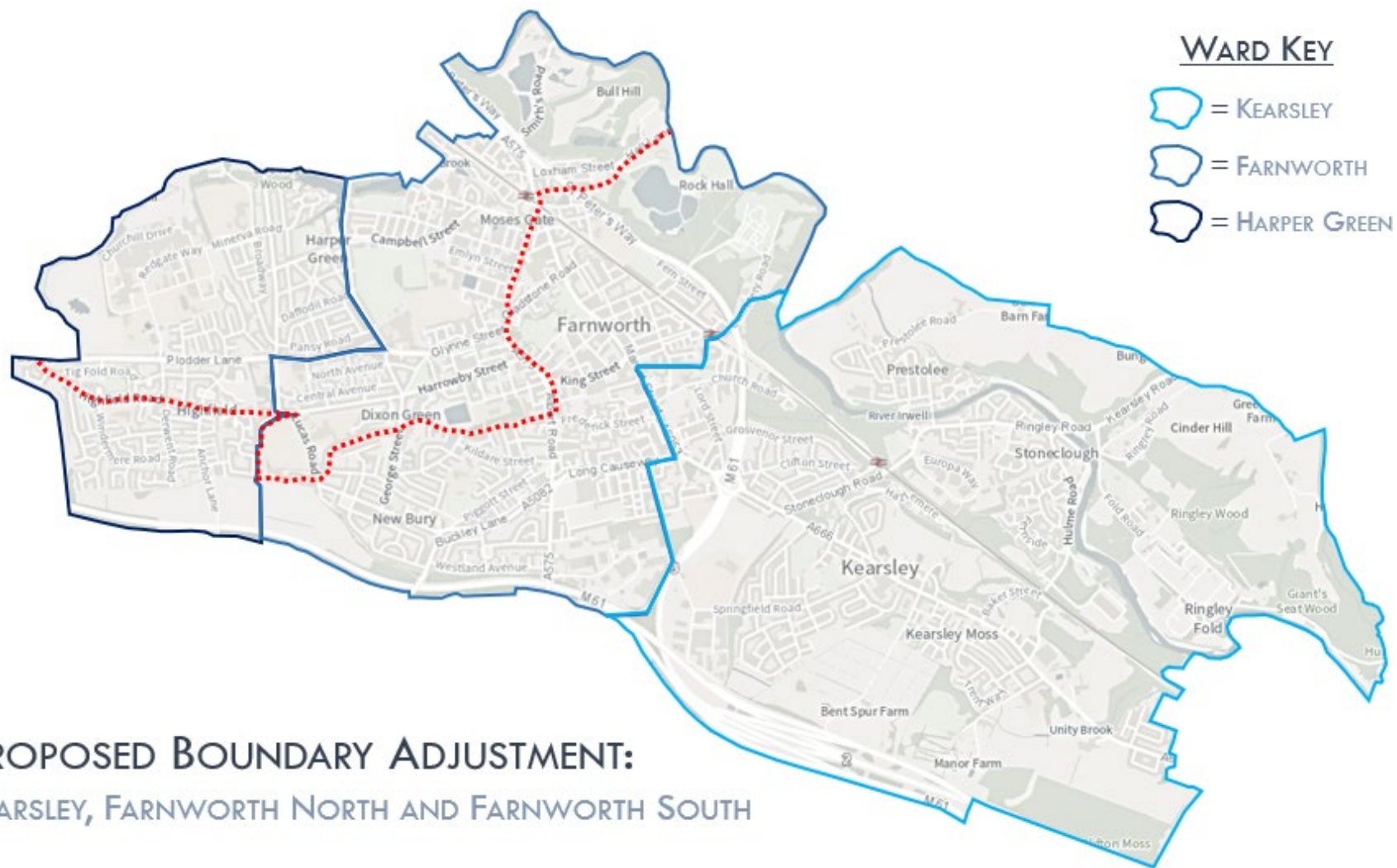
In the following pages, we have provided some graphics, which describe the current position and the proposed changes followed by some supporting data tables.







RESULTANT BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT: KEARSLEY, FARNWORTH AND HARPER GREEN



PROPOSED BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT: KEARSLEY, FARNWORTH NORTH AND FARNWORTH SOUTH

Proposed Ward Build ups

Proposed Farnworth North Ward		
Polling District	Ward	Forecast 2026 Electorate
2JA1	Farnworth	2207
2JC1	Farnworth	804
2JF1	Farnworth	1810
2KA1	Harper Green	1516
2KB1	Harper Green	2758
2KE1	Harper Green	521
	Total	9617

Proposed Farnworth South Ward		
Polling District	Ward	Forecast 2026 Electorate
2JB1	Farnworth	1271
2JD1	Farnworth	3379
2JE1	Farnworth	1696
2KC1	Harper Green	2271
2LG1	Kearsley	1842
	Total	10459

Proposed Kearsley Ward		
Polling District	Ward	Forecast 2026 Electorate
2LA1	Kearsley	836
2LB1	Kearsley	1095
2LC1	Kearsley	1717
2LD1	Kearsley	1466
2LE1	Kearsley	1804
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