

Gravesham Borough Council

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Comment text:

Dear Commissioners, I am pleased to attach a submission on behalf of the Conservative Group (Opposition) at Gravesham Borough Council. If any further explanation is required on the points contained in the attachment, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me. Could you kindly confirm receipt of this email and that our submission has been received? Yours faithfully, Jordan
Cllr. Jordan Meade FRSA Leader of the Opposition [The Conservative Group] at Gravesham Borough Council

Uploaded Documents:

[Download \(https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1641755571 Gravesham Conservatives Final.pdf\)](https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1641755571%20Gravesham%20Conservatives%20Final.pdf)

Date Submitted: 9th January 2022

**THE ELECTORAL REVIEW OF THE BOROUGH OF GRAVESHAM
RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS 2022**

**SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS TO THE
PROPOSED WARDING PATTERN
BY GRAVESHAM CONSERVATIVES**

About this submission:

This submission is presented to the LGBC Commissioners on behalf of the Conservative Group of Councillors at Gravesham Borough Council.

It is submitted by the Gravesham Conservatives Group, which is the largest opposition group (20 Members) on Gravesham Borough Council (the "Council"). It is further endorsed by Gravesham Conservative Association, which together is the Conservative Party within the Borough.

For more information or for clarification please contact:

Councillor Jordan Meade FRSA

Leader of The Conservative Group on Gravesham Borough Council



Introduction and Foreword

This submission is made on behalf of Gravesham Conservatives to the LGBCE consultation on its electoral review of the Borough of Gravesham (the "Borough"). It is submitted by the Gravesham Conservative Group, which is the largest opposition group on Gravesham Borough Council (the "Council"). This submission is made in the name of and with the unanimous agreement of the twenty councillors that make up the Conservative Group on Gravesham Borough Council. This submission is made in response to the LGBCE's Consultation on proposals 2021/22.

The Conservative Group broadly welcomes the new pattern of wards as proposed by the Commission and would like to thank the Commissioners for the way in which the proposed new pattern of wards takes into account many of the suggestions that we justified in our previous submission. That said and after deliberation, we are of the collective view that whilst we support the bulk of the Commission's proposals, that slight changes to the boundaries in certain areas would allow the Commission to better fulfil the objective of meeting the three legal factors.

As with our previous submission, the amendments contained in this report have been founded from the brilliant expertise and highly localised knowledge of every member of the Conservative Group of Councillors, who collectively have an electoral mandate which spans the entirety of the borough's geography. The amendments that we are proposing in this consultation seek to enhance the Commission's proposals by perfecting community boundaries and identities.

In submitting this response, I would like to pay a special thanks to Mr. Jacob Hatch (Gravesham Conservative Association) and the rest of the Conservative Group for their unwavering support and contribution to this submission.

Cllr. Jordan Meade FRSA, Leader of Gravesham Conservatives

Gravesham Borough Councillor for Woodlands Ward and Kent County Councillor for Gravesend East

Summary of our Proposed Amendments

Ward	Seats
Chalk and Westcourt	3
Coldharbour and Perry Street	3
Denton	2
Higham and Shorne	3
Istead Rise, Cobham and Luddesdown	2
Meopham North	2
Meopham South and Vigo	2
Northfleet and Springhead	3
Painters Ash	2
Pelham	2
Riverview	2
Rosherville	2
Singlewell	2
Town	3
Whitehill and Windmill Hill	3
Woodlands	3

Chalk and Westcourt Ward

The Conservative Group broadly supports the Commission's proposal for Chalk and Westcourt Ward; however, we submit that to lose the position of the one councillor ward of Chalk, (an arrangement that has worked well over so many years and that is supported by local residents), would deprive Chalk of its unique historical identity, in what is a happy and contented village area.

From the Commission's rejection of the proposals made by both the Council and the Conservative Group to retain the single councillor for Chalk Ward, we have to assume that the Commission is against the principle of single member wards and on this assumption, we have to agree that Chalk's most natural merger would be with that of the Westcourt area.

Denton Ward

The Conservative Group fully endorses the Commission's proposals for Denton Ward. We believe that the proposals will achieve sound electoral equality, whilst promoting good local governance and the promotion of identifiable communities.

Higham and Shorne Ward

The Conservative Group fully endorses the Commission's proposals for Higham and Shorne Ward. We believe that the proposals will provide for better local governance, whilst the individual parish councils will ensure that each area is able to maintain individuality. We do however submit that the name of the Ward should be "Higham and Shorne Ward" to reflect the fact that Higham is the largest (by population) of the two settlements.

Istead Rise, Cobham & Luddesdown

The Conservative Group fully endorses the Commission's proposal for Istead Rise, Cobham & Luddesdown Ward. We firmly acknowledge that there are of course differences particularly in urbanisation between that of Istead Rise and then Cobham and Luddesdown, however given as the Commission rightly points out that the only public road connection is via the A2 we are certain that this proposal is the only way that electoral equality can be achieved, whilst respecting the community ties between the parishes of Cobham and Luddesdown and the geography of this area.

Meopham North

The Conservative Group partly endorses the Commission's proposal for Meopham North. We do however maintain that there is no justification for the extremity in the Council's forecasted growth for this area. We recommend that the Commission seeks to perfect further the boundary on Wrotham Road as the winding in and out of this area is confusing and will result in poor local governance.

Meopham South and Vigo

The Conservative Group partly endorses the Commission's proposal for Meopham South and Vigo. We do however maintain that there is no justification for the extremity in the Council's forecasted growth for this area. We recommend that the Commission seeks to perfect further the boundary on Wrotham Road as the winding in and out of this area is confusing and will result in poor local governance.

Northfleet West & Springhead Ward

The Conservative Group endorses the Commission's proposals for Northfleet West & Springhead Ward. However, in making the changes below to the other Northfleet Wards, we submit that the name of this Ward should be "Northfleet and Springhead Ward".

Rosherville Ward

Upon reflection and recent visits to the area, the Conservative Group is unable to agree with the Commission's proposal for Northfleet East and Rosherville Ward. Our biggest concern with the Commission's proposal here is that the railway line creates a solid, impassable boundary which separate the communities concerned. We submit that this land boundary running through the centre of the proposed ward would not allow for good local governance and therefore we propose that a new ward of Rosherville should be created. This new 2-member ward would encompass all of the dwellings that are to the north of the railway line that are in the Commission's proposal for the Northfleet East and Rosherville Ward. Using the limited data that we have access to; we predict that this new ward would have 4126 electors in 2027 or 3066 by the 2021 estimates. We affirm that this represents good electoral equality, whilst ensuring good local governance and a boundary that would make sense to local residents. If the Commission are minded to accept this amendment, we propose that the name of this ward should be Rosherville. This is based on the evidence as submitted in our previous proposal.

Coldharbour and Perry Street Ward

If the Commission agrees with our justification to create a two member Rosherville Ward (as described above), we would need to also make changes to the Coldharbour Ward proposals in order to ensure that good electoral equality is maintained borough-wide. We therefore propose that all of the dwellings to the south of the railway line as contained in the Commission's proposal for the Northfleet East and Rosherville Ward, should be added to the Commission's proposal for Coldharbour Ward. We further submit that the electors (144 as of 2021) of Dashwood Road, Farmcroft, the Downage, and Barfield should be removed from Coldharbour and added into Woodlands Ward (this will be justified further below). In making the changes above, we are proposing the creation of a new three-member ward and submit that is ward should be called "Coldharbour and Perry Street". Again, because of limited access to street-by-street data, we have only been able to estimate that the 2027 electors for Coldharbour and Perry Street Ward would be 7,038 or that each Councillor would represent approximately 2,346. Giving that our proposal here better represents community ties and would make more sense to local residents, we believe that this slight variation on electoral equality is acceptable.

Painters Ash Ward

The Conservative Group fully endorses the Commission's proposal for Painters Ash Ward.

Pelham Ward

The Conservative Group endorses the Commission's proposals for Pelham Ward, however we believe that Rathmore Road, Gravesend Railway Station and the Woodville Halls (including Community Square) would be better placed in Town Ward. These are non-residential areas and there would therefore be no change in the electoral equality proposed. Rathmore Road, Gravesend Railway Station and the Woodville Halls are areas that local residents associate with Gravesend Town – not Pelham.

Riverview Ward

The Conservative Group broadly endorses the Commission's proposal for Riverview Ward. We do however recommend that the Commission makes the following changes:

- That the electors of St Hilda's Way, St Dunstan's Drive, Pankhurst Place and St Patrick's Gardens be removed from the Commission's proposal for Riverview Ward and added to Singlewell Ward. These roads do not identify at all with the Riverview Park estate, and we ask that the Commission reevaluates our previous proposal which explained how residents commonly accept that the starting point of the Riverview estate is at the mini roundabout connecting St Francis Ave with St. Hilda's Way.
- We further maintain that The Drive, The Rise and the Warren would be better suited to Riverview Park and that the residents of these roads identify more with the Riverview Park Estate than any other area. As we pointed to in our previous submission, even local estate agents market properties down these roads as being "located on the Riverview Park Estate". With that said however, we understand that the Commission here has been minded to retain these roads in Singlewell Ward to support the electoral equality of Singlewell and given that this will not a change for the residents concerned, we are content with the Commission's justification here.

Singlewell Ward

The Conservative Group broadly endorses the Commission's proposal for Singlewell Ward; however we believe that the amendments below should be made:

- That the electors of St Hilda's Way, St Dunstan's Drive, Pankhurst Place and St Patrick's Gardens be removed from the Commission's proposal for Riverview Ward and added to Singlewell Ward. These roads do not identify at all with the Riverview Park estate, and we ask that the Commission reevaluates our previous proposal which explained how residents commonly accept that the starting point of the Riverview estate is at the mini roundabout connecting St Francis Ave with St. Hilda's Way.
- Hawthorne Close should be removed from the proposal for Woodlands and placed in Singlewell Ward as it can only be accessed through Singlewell.
- We further suggest that the Ifield and Kings Farm School sites should be in Singlewell Ward. Ifield School is actually used as a polling station for Singlewell, and is only accessible through our proposals for Singlewell.
- Additionally, we propose that Popular, Cedar Avenue and Ash Road should be removed from the Commission's proposal for Woodlands and King Farm Ward and included in Singlewell Ward. The residents of these roads do not identify as Woodlands Ward. Many of children living in these roads attend either Kings Farm or Singlewell Primary School.

Town Ward

The Conservative Group broadly endorses the Commission's proposals for Town Ward, however to better reflect community ties and good local governance we submit the following amendments.

- That Rathmore Road, Gravesend Railway Station and the Woodville Halls should be removed from Pelham and added into Town Ward.
- That the electors (approx. 380 as of 2021) of William Street, Wellington Street, Home Mead, Clarence Row, Gravesham Court, Wellington Street and part of Parrock Street should be transferred from the Commission's proposal for White Hill and Windmill Hill Ward into Town Ward. We are making this suggestion on the basis that the residents of these roads do not consider themselves to be part of the Windmill Hill area and are much more likely to rely on the local amenities offered by the town centre than say the shopping parade of Echo Square which is used widely by Whitehill and Windmill Hill residents. The addition of these roads into town ward we submit would improve the electoral equality of Town Ward, whilst allowing for better local governance.

Windmill Hill and Whitehill Ward

The Conservative Group broadly endorses the Commission's proposal for Windmill Hill and White Hill Ward; however, we submit that the changes below would provide for better local governance:

- That the electors (approx. 380 as of 2021) of William Street, Wellington Street, Home Mead, Clarence Row, Gravesham Court, Wellington Street and part of Parrock Street should be transferred from the proposal for White Hill and Windmill Hill Ward into Town Ward. – We affirm that these roads identify more with the Town centre than they do either Whitehill or Windmill Hill.
- That the residents of Queens Road, Elm Road, Gloucester Road, Ash Road and Cedar Avenue (partly) should be removed from Woodlands Ward and added into the proposal for Windmill Hill and White Hill Ward. The residents of these roads strongly identify with Whitehill and utilise the amenities of the Whitehill parade.
- We further suggest that the new development of Admiral Beatty House (90 Whitehill Lane) and Numbers 88 to 44 Whitehill Lane should be taken out of the Commission's proposal for Singlewell Ward and added into the Windmill Hill and White Hill Ward. Given that these residents overlook and are accessed from Whitehill itself, it would be illogical for them not to be included in the Windmill Hill and White Hill Ward.
- We propose that Smarts Road, Malvina Avenue, Ferndale Road, and Portland Avenue should be transferred into a revised Woodlands Ward from Whitehill and Windmill Hill Ward

Woodlands and Kings Farm Ward

The Conservative Group is unable to agree with the Commission's proposal for Woodlands and Kings Farm Ward. Our interpretation here is that the Commission have bolted parts the Kings Farms community onto Woodlands Ward in order to achieve numerical gratification over the two other legal obligations. This has resulted in the identifiable community of Kings Farms being salami sliced illogically between wards. Our proposals above would better protect the identifiable communities of Kings Farm and thus provide for better local governance. As highlighted throughout our proposed amendments we believe that the majority of Kings Farm would be better placed in Singlewell Ward and the Windmill Hill and White Hill Ward.

As explained in our proposal above for Coldharbour and Perry Street Ward, we propose that Gravesend Cemetery, Dashwood Road, Farmcroft, Barnfield and The Downage be removed from Coldharbour and added to Woodlands Ward. All of these roads strongly identify with Woodlands due to their access from and their overlooking of Woodlands Park itself. Residents here have long been confused as to why they are not already part of the existing Woodlands Ward and the Commission here have a real chance to make an amendment which would be highly appreciated by the residents concerned. The addition of the 144 electors here (as of 2021) would help to achieve better electoral equality for Woodlands following the removal of Popular, Cedar Avenue, Ash Road, Queens Road, Elm Road and Gloucester Road.

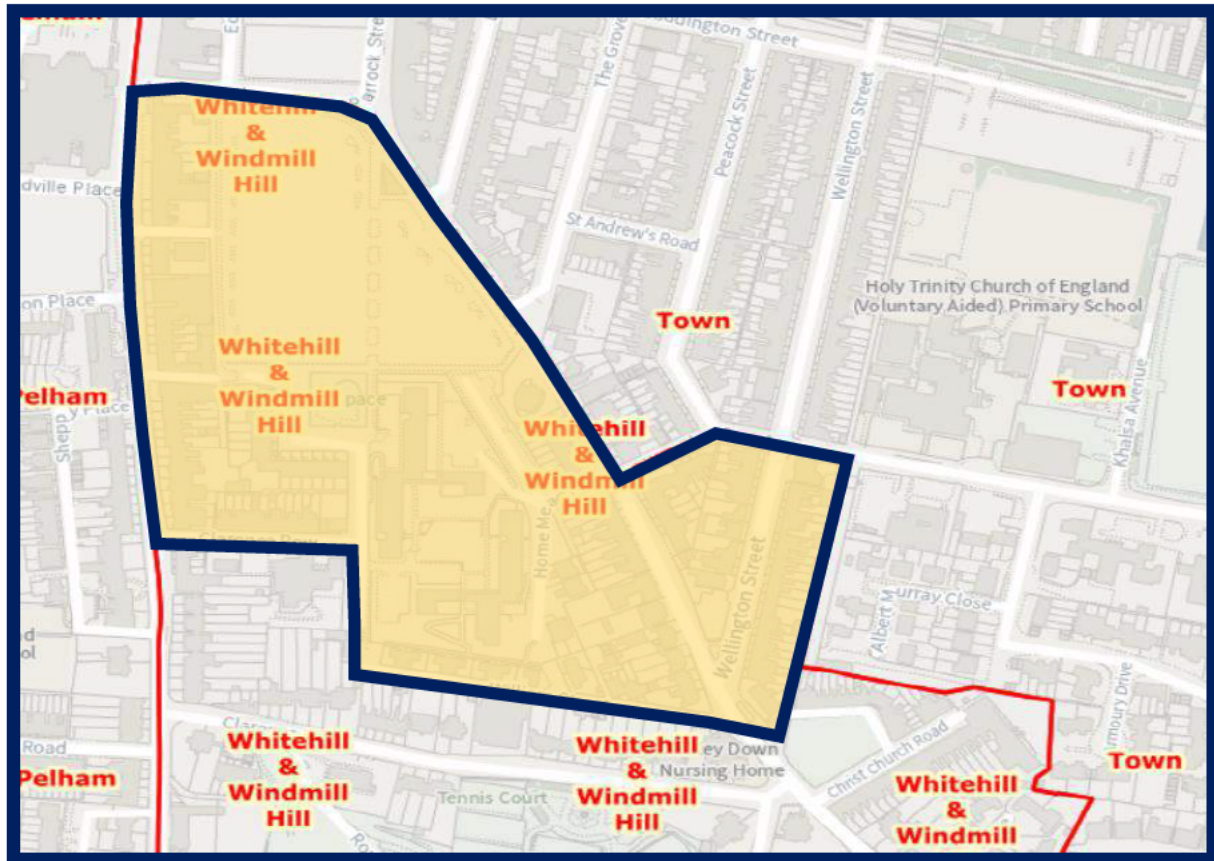
We further propose that numbers 1-137 of Old Road West and the Pinnock's Residences (currently proposed to be in Pelham Ward) again would be better suited and have a stronger affinity to Woodlands. This would see the addition of approximately 255 electors (as of 2021) into the revised Woodlands Ward, which again would support electoral equality and the justification of the revised Woodlands Ward maintaining three councillors.

Hawthorne Close should be removed from the proposal for Woodlands and placed in Singlewell Ward as it can only be accessed through Singlewell. Further still, in order to support electoral equality and good local governance, we propose that Smarts Road, Malvina Avenue, Ferndale Road, and Portland Avenue should be transferred into Woodlands Ward from Whitehill and Windmill Hill Ward. This would result in Woodlands gaining an additional 440 electors (based on 2021) thus further supporting the retention of three members for this ward.

Annex – Maps to detail proposed changes:

Map 1: Removal of roads from Whitehill and Windmill Hill into Town Ward

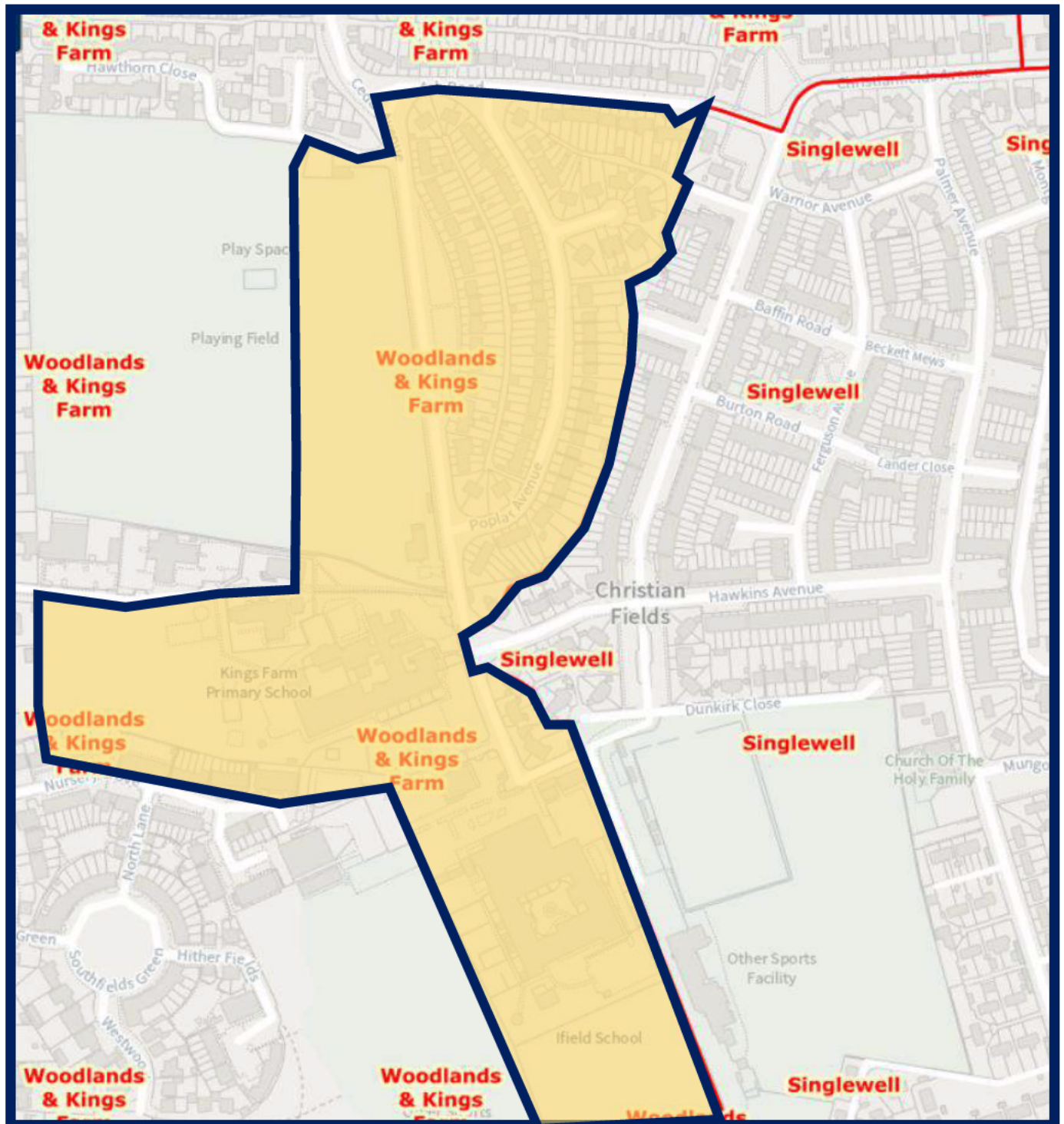
William Street, Wellington Street, Home Mead, Clarence Row, Gravesham Court, Wellington Street and part of Parrock Street should be transferred from the proposal for White Hill and Windmill Hill Ward into Town Ward



Annex – Maps to detail proposed changes:

Map 2: Removal of Part of Woodlands & Kings Farm Ward moved into Singlewell Ward

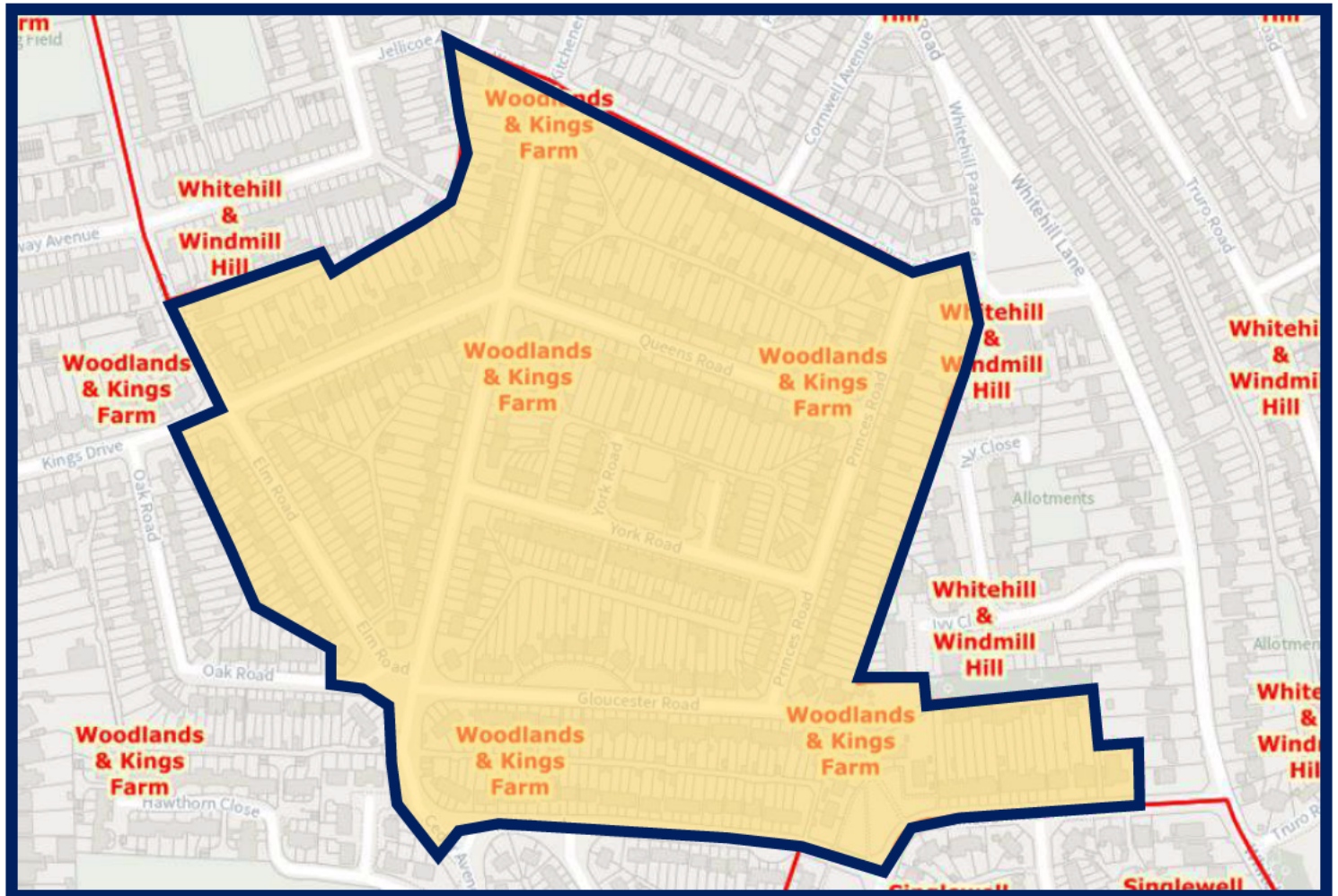
Ifield & Kings Farm School sites, Popular, Cedar Avenue, Ash Road



Annex – Maps to detail proposed changes:

Map 3: Removal of Part of Woodlands & Kings Farm Ward moved into Whitehill and Windmill Hill Ward

Queens Road, Elm Road, Gloucester Road, Ash Road and Cedar Avenue



Annex – Maps to detail proposed changes:

Map 4: Removal of Part of Riverview Ward into Singlewell Ward

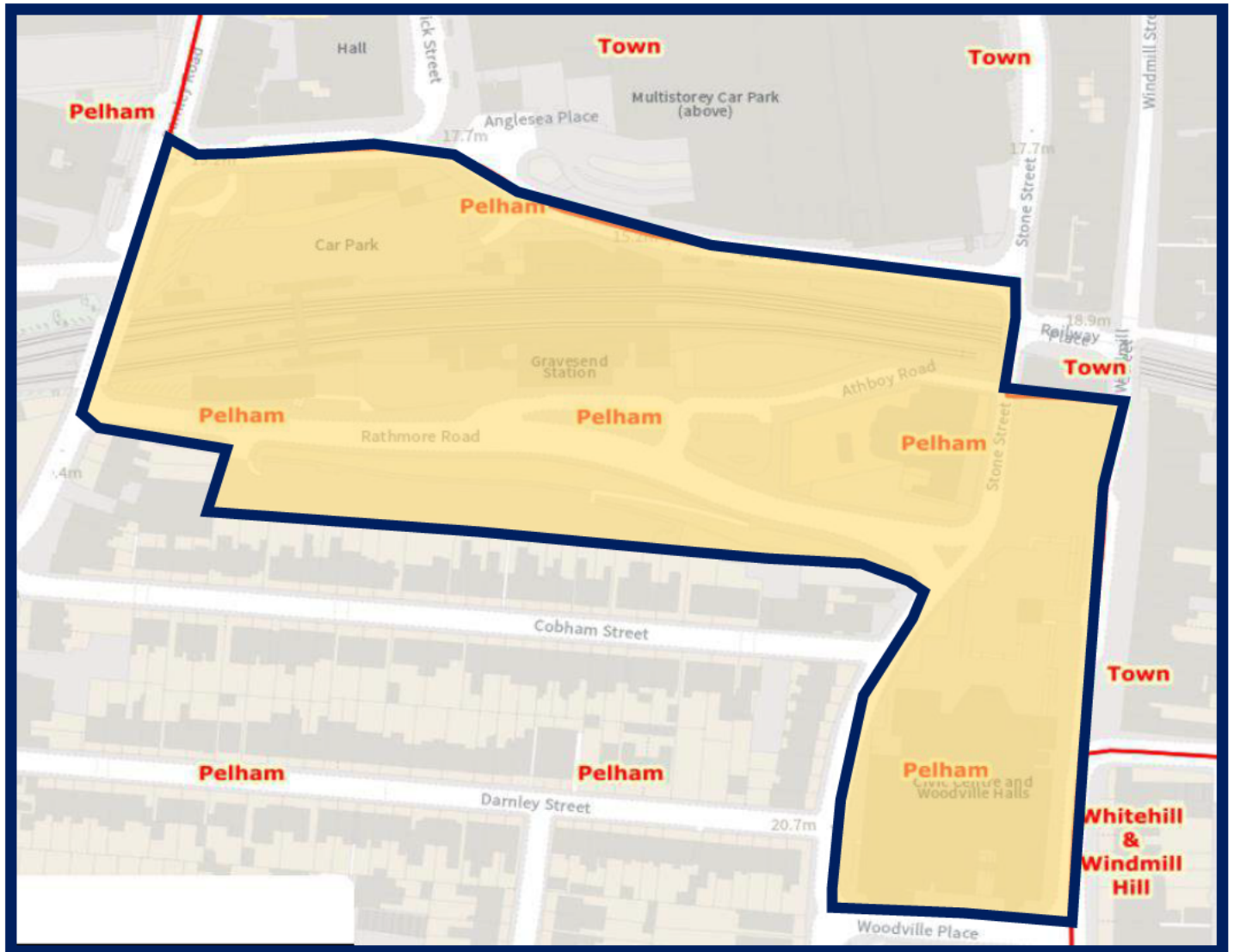
St Hilda's Way, St. Dunstan's Drive Pankhurst Place and St Patrick's Gardens



Annex – Maps to detail proposed changes:

Map 5: Removal of Part of Pelham into Town Ward

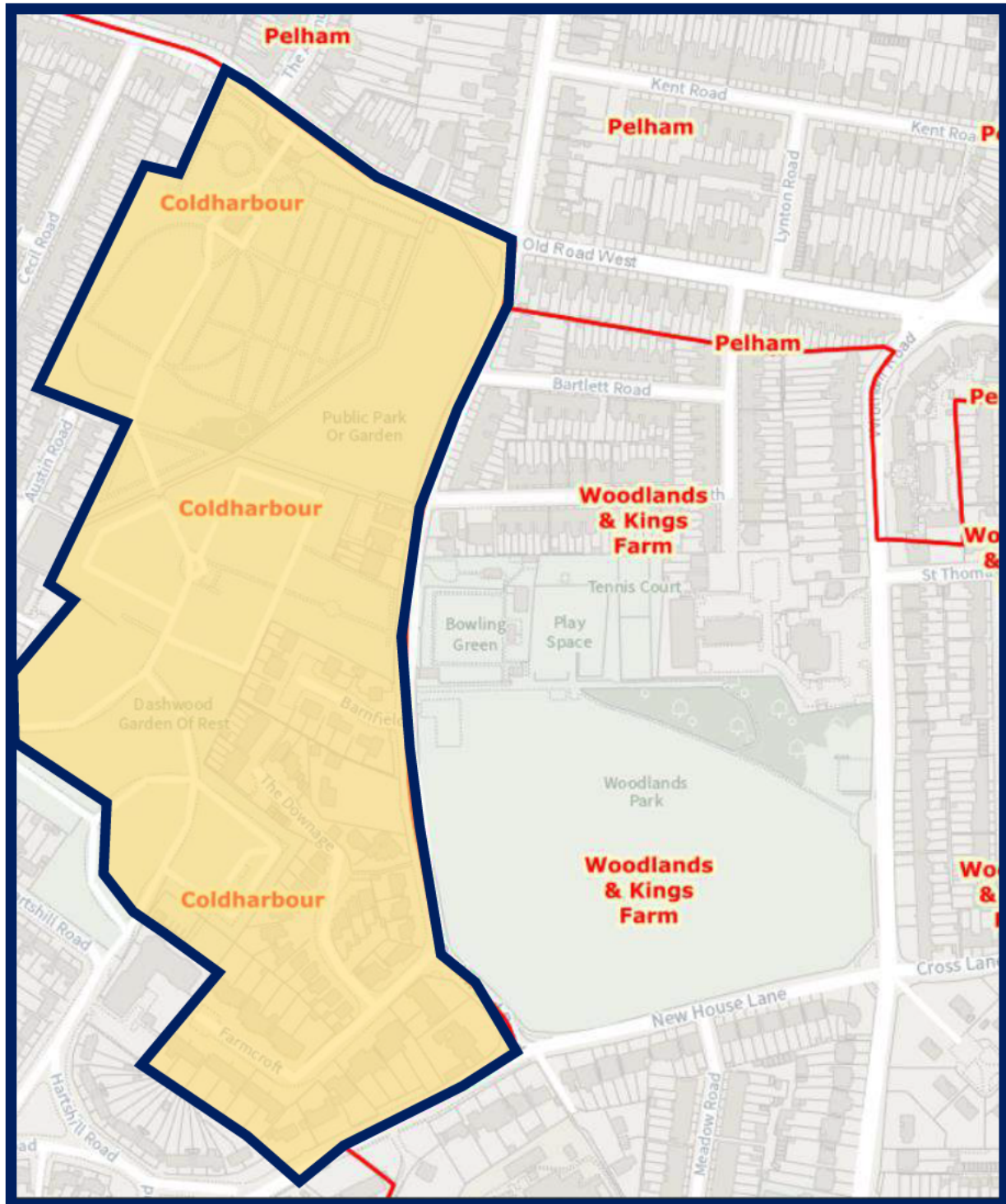
Rathmore Road, Station Area and the Woodville Halls and Civic Centre site



Annex – Maps to detail proposed changes:

Map 6: Removal of Part of Coldharbour into Woodlands Ward

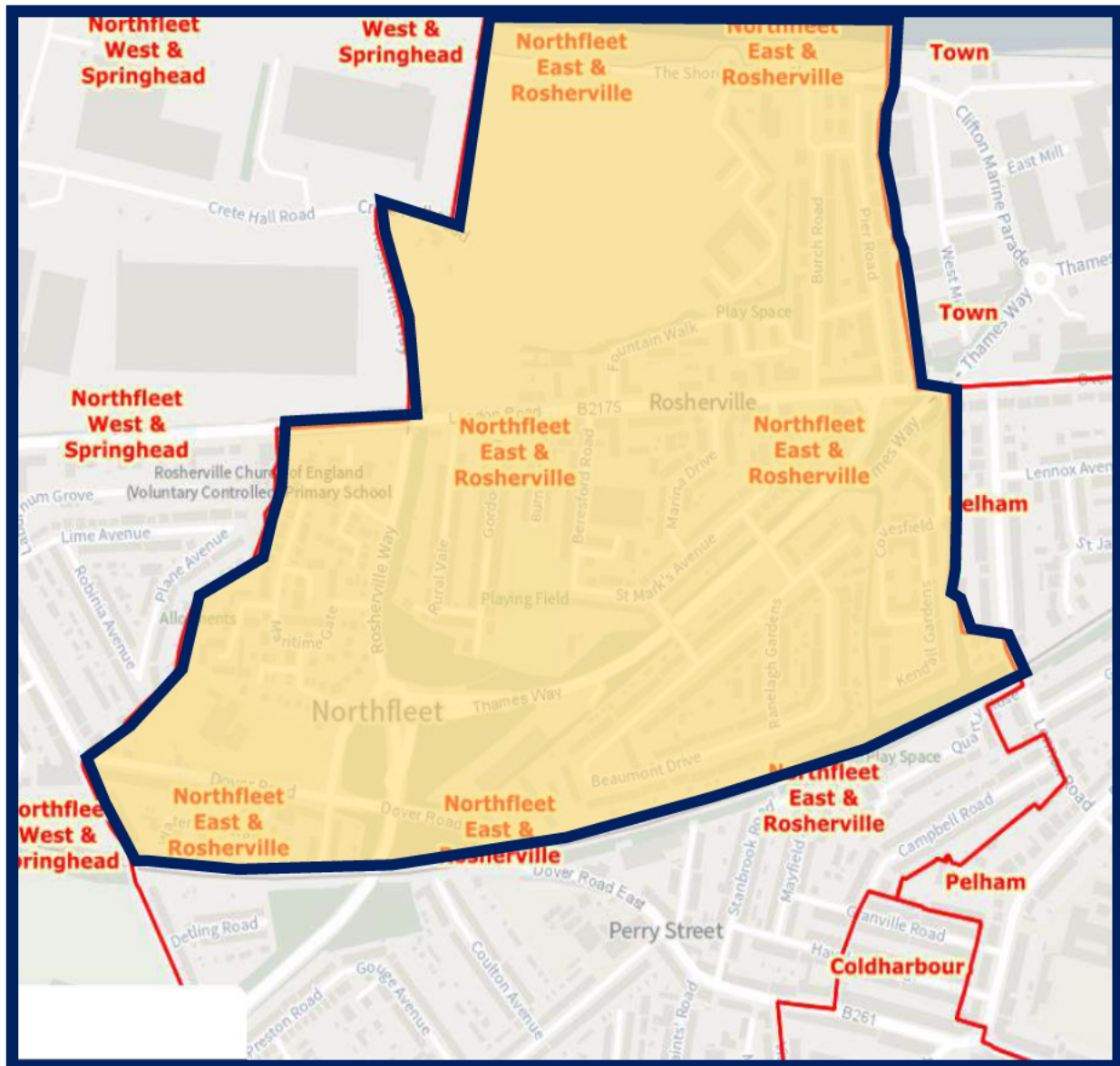
Gravesend Cemetery, Dashwood Road, Farmcroft, Barnfield and The Downage



Annex – Maps to detail proposed changes:

Map 7: New 2 Seat Ward of Rosherville

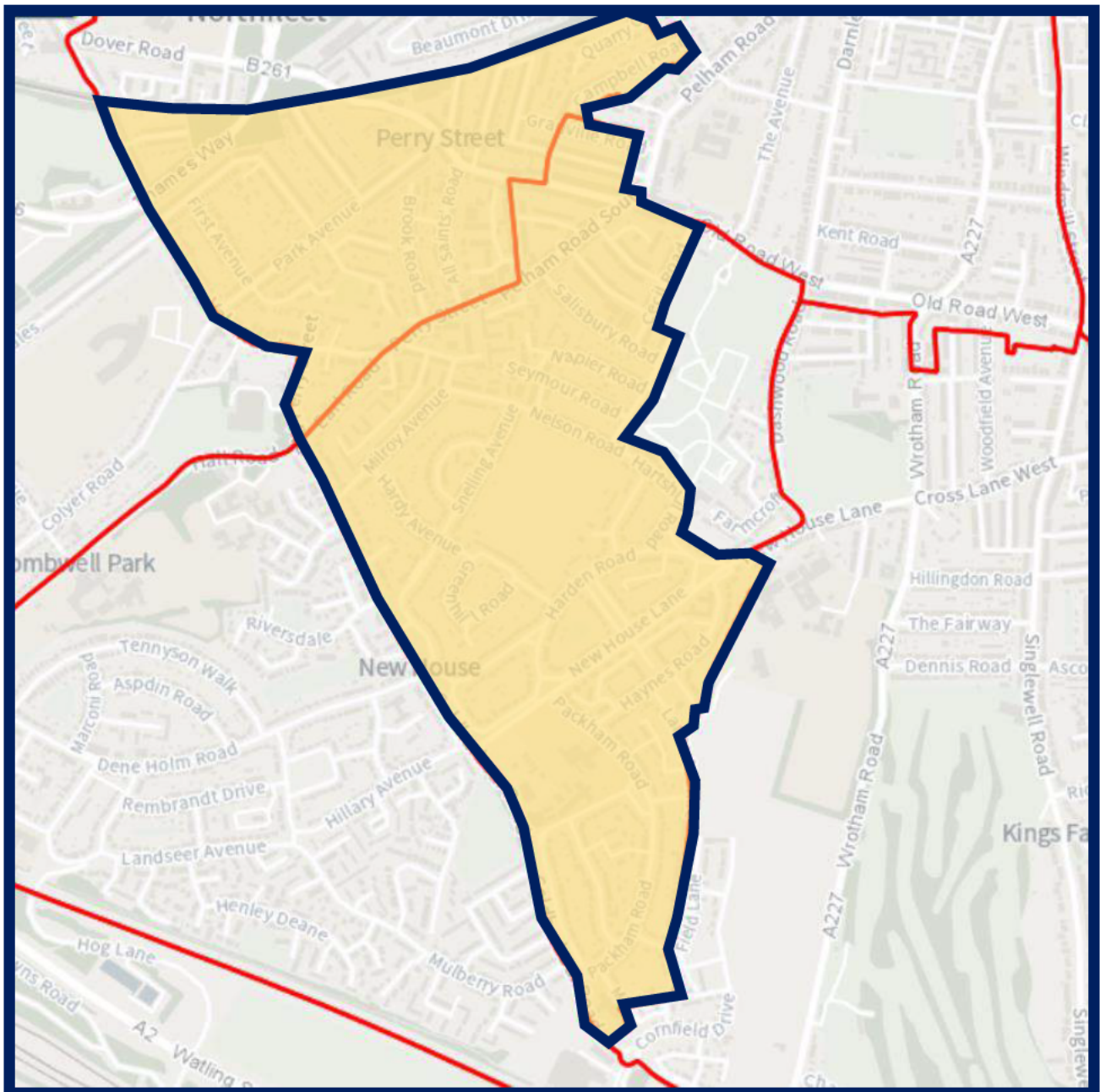
Northfleet East & Rosherville to be split along the railway tracks to create two separate wards of Rosherville (to the North of the railway) and Coldharbour & Perry Street to the South.



Annex – Maps to detail proposed changes:

Map 8: New 3 Seat Ward of Coldharbour & Perry Street

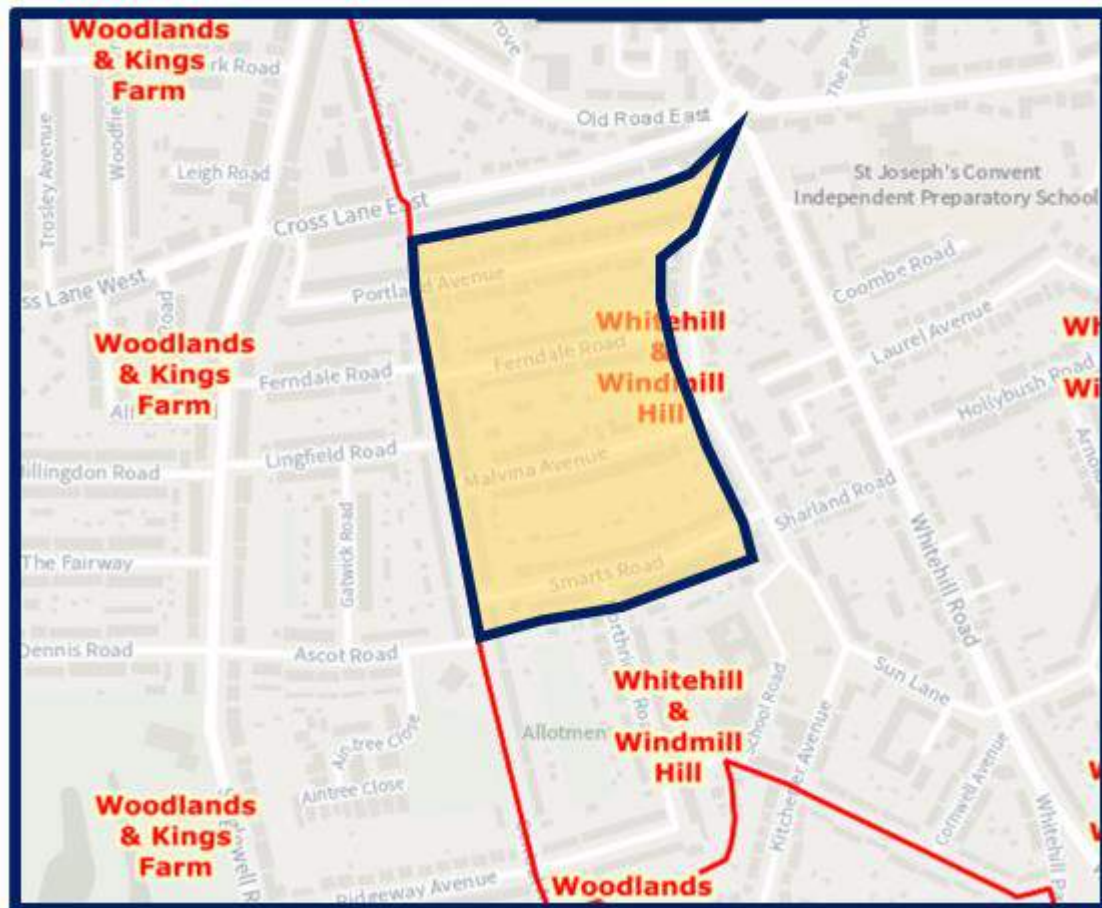
Northfleet East & Rosherville to be split along the railway tracks to create two separate wards of Rosherville (to the North of the railway) and Perry Street & Coldharbour to the South.



Annex – Maps to detail proposed changes:

Map 9: Removal of roads from Whitehill and Windmill Hill Ward into Woodlands Ward

Smarts Road, Malvina Avenue, Ferndale Road, and Portland Avenue should be transferred into Woodlands Ward from Whitehill and Windmill Hill Ward.



Ends

Please note that we have not included maps for all our recommended amendments. The maps above are to provide visual support for some of the more complex changes proposed.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our recommendations.