

New electoral arrangements for Bolton Council Draft Recommendations

August 2021

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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 Bolton?

7 We are conducting a review of Bolton Council ('the Council') as its last review was completed in 2003 and we are required to review the electoral arrangements of every council in England 'from time to time'.² In addition, the value of each vote in borough council elections varies depending on where you live in Bolton. Some councillors currently represent many more or fewer voters than others. This is 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where votes are as equal as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

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

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

Our proposals for Bolton

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

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

11 The boundaries of all wards should change; none will stay the same.

How will the recommendations affect you?

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

13 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the borough 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 consider any representations which are based on these issues.

² Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 56(1).

Have your say

14 We will consult on the draft recommendations for a 10-week period, from 3 August 2021 to 11 October 2021. We encourage everyone to use this opportunity to comment on these proposed wards as the more public views we hear, the more informed our decisions will be in making our final recommendations.

15 We ask everyone wishing to contribute ideas for the new wards to first read this report and look at the accompanying map before responding to us.

16 You have until 11 October 2021 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 29 for how to send us your response.

Review timetable

17 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Bolton. We then held a period of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the borough. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft recommendations.

18 The review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
5 January 2021	Number of councillors decided
5 January 2021	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
10 May 2021	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
3 August 2021	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
11 October 2021	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
11 January 2022	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and draft recommendations

19 Legislation³ states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors⁴ 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.

20 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.

21 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 Bolton	203,512	213,697
Number of councillors	60	60
Average number of electors per councillor	3,392	3,562

22 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'. Nineteen of our proposed wards for Bolton will have good electoral equality by 2027.

Submissions received

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

Electorate figures

24 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2026, a period five years on from the initially 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 9% by 2026.

25 We considered the information provided by the Council and are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. Due to delays caused by the Covid-19 outbreak, the review will now conclude in January 2022. We are

³ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

⁴ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

content that these figures remain a reasonable forecast of local electors in January 2027 and have therefore used them as the basis of our draft recommendations.

Number of councillors

26 Bolton 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.

27 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 60 councillors.

28 As Bolton Council elects by thirds (meaning it has elections in three out of every four years) there is a presumption in legislation⁵ 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.

29 We received eight submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on ward patterns. Of these, six proposed no change to the current council size, with one proposing a decrease of 10 and another an increase of nine. The submission from Bolton Council provided comprehensive evidence to justify no change from the current 60 councillors. We have therefore based our draft recommendations on a 60-councillor council.

Ward boundaries consultation

30 We received 83 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included two borough-wide proposals from the Conservative Group and the Labour Group. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for ward arrangements in particular areas of the borough.

31 The two borough-wide schemes provided a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards for Bolton. 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 authority and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries.

32 Our draft recommendations also take 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.

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

33 Given the travel restrictions, and the social distancing, arising from the Covid-19 outbreak, there was a detailed virtual tour of Bolton. This helped to clarify issues raised in submissions and assisted in the construction of the proposed draft boundary recommendations.

Draft recommendations

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

35 The tables and maps on pages 8–25 detail our draft recommendations for each area of Bolton. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁶ criteria of:

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

36 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 35 and on the large map accompanying this report.

37 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations, particularly on the location of the ward boundaries, and the names of our proposed wards.

⁶ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Farnworth North, Farnworth South and Kearsley



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Farnworth North	3	-10%
Farnworth South	3	-8%
Kearsley	3	-14%

Farnworth North and Farnworth South

38 We received 37 submissions regarding the wards in Farnworth. Of these, the Conservative and Labour schemes proposed minimal change, maintaining the wards of Farnworth and Harper Green. Both the Labour and Conservative submissions acknowledged the strong links between Harper Green and Farnworth but argued that the current boundaries were adequate.

39 The Farnworth & Kearsley First Party's submission that we received for this area proposed significantly different boundaries. They proposed that the area of Lever Edge should be split from Harper Green and that Doe Hey Brook should be used as the boundary between a Farnworth ward and Great Lever ward. Thirty-four residents also argued that Harper Green ward should be split between Great Lever and Farnworth. The Farnworth & Kearsley First Party and local residents argued that residents on both sides of the green space spanned by Doe Hey Brook used different facilities and local amenities, such as parks, schools and churches. On

virtually touring the area, we found that the lack of road access across this green space further supports these submissions.

40 Additionally, the Farnworth & Kearsley First Party's submission, along with three resident submissions, argued that two Farnworth wards would better represent the communities in Farnworth. As part of this suggestion, Harper Green ward would be split between Great Lever and Farnworth, and a Farnworth North and Farnworth South ward would be created.

41 We were persuaded by the strong community evidence from local residents and the Farnworth & Kearsley First Party. Our draft recommendations are therefore based on the proposals submitted by the Farnworth & Kearsley First Party. Harper Green ward will be renamed Farnworth North to reflect better the new boundaries. We are proposing a slight amendment to the proposed boundary between Farnworth North and Farnworth South to use the more identifiable boundaries of Plodder Lane and King Street. We consider that these wards best reflect local communities.

42 Our draft recommendations for Farnworth North and Farnworth South wards are forecast to have 10% fewer and 8% fewer electors than the borough average by 2027, respectively.

Kearsley

43 We have based our Kearsley ward on the Farnworth & Kearsley First Party's proposed ward in this area, with some changes to reflect community evidence provided by local residents.

44 We received 13 submissions which argued that there are Farnworth residents currently located in Kearsley ward. Long Causeway was identified in these submissions as an area where the local community considers itself part of Farnworth, rather than Kearsley, as these residents use the shops, medical practices and other amenities in Farnworth.

45 We received different proposals for where the boundary between Farnworth South and Kearsley should be. The Farnworth & Kearsley First Party proposed to use Crompton Street as the boundary between Farnworth South and Kearsley. This was also proposed by Councillor Heslop. The Labour Group proposed to run the boundary behind the properties south of Frederick Street. Councillor Flitcroft and two residents argued that Kearsley roundabout should form the boundary. Using the M61 as a boundary between Farnworth South and Kearsley would result in a variance of -22% for Kearsley. While we recognise that this is a strong physical boundary between communities, we are unable to propose this due to the electoral inequality it would create.

46 We were persuaded by community evidence which described Kearsley as a geographically separate community and therefore propose to include the entire area between Long Causeway and the M61 in Farnworth South. The western boundary of Kearsley will run along the M61 until Kearsley roundabout before following the boundary proposed by the Farnworth & Kearsley First Party, which runs up Higher Market Street and Church Street to Farnworth Station. We consider that this area does have links to Kearsley through road access over the M61.

47 We accept that this modification will lead to the ward having 14% fewer electors than the average for the borough by 2027. However, the arrangement more accurately reflects the persuasive community evidence we have received. We further recognise the unique geographic nature of Kearsley at the edge of the borough.

48 Our proposed Kearsley ward will therefore have an electoral variance of 14% fewer electors than the borough average by 2027.

Great Lever, Hulton, Queens Park and Rumworth



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Great Lever	3	8%
Hulton	3	3%
Queens Park	3	3%
Rumworth	3	5%

Great Lever and Queens Park

49 We received eight submissions regarding this area from the Conservative Group, Labour Group and six residents. All six submissions from residents concerned the boundary between Great Lever and Harper Green, which is discussed in paragraph 39. The changes we are proposing in Farnworth have resulted in knock-on changes to the ward of Great Lever. This means that the proposals submitted to us by the Conservative and Labour groups are not viable due to the inclusion of Lever Edge in Great Lever. Including the area of Lever Edge in the Great Lever wards proposed by the Conservative and Labour groups would result in electoral variances of 19% and 32%, respectively. We are therefore proposing a new boundary between Queens Park and Great Lever.

50 Both the Conservative and Labour groups propose a new Queens Park ward centred on Queens Park. The Conservative Group noted that Queens Park is a popular local attraction used by local residents. Due to the increase in electors in Great Lever as a result of the inclusion of Lever Edge, we have proposed to include the properties east of Derby Street and north of High Street and Lever Street in Queens Park ward.

51 Both the Conservative and Labour groups proposed different boundaries between Hulton and Great Lever. The Conservative Group proposed to run the boundary down the entirety of Morris Green Lane. The Labour Group proposed to include all the residents between Morris Green Lane and Romsley Drive, including residents on the south side of Ellesmere Road and the east side of Morris Green Lane, in Hulton ward. Both groups argued that their submission better reflected the communities in this area. Having carefully considered the evidence, we are of the view that the Labour proposal provided for a better balance of our statutory criteria. We also proposed to include the properties at the northern end of Ellesmere Road in Hulton ward due to the sole road access into Hulton Road. We did not receive much localised evidence for this area during consultation and we welcome any comments regarding our draft recommendations for this area.

52 Our draft recommendations are therefore based on a combination of the Conservative and Labour proposals, with a newly proposed boundary between Queens Park and Great Lever. We would be especially interested to hear from local residents about this proposal. We would also welcome comments about the proposed ward name, and in particular whether the area south of the town centre in Queens Park ward should be represented in the ward name.

53 Our proposed Great Lever and Queens Park wards will have electoral variances of 8% more and 3% more electors than the borough average by 2027, respectively.

Hulton and Rumworth

54 We received two proposals for this area from the Conservative Group and Labour Group.

55 In the north of Hulton ward, the Conservative Group proposed to include the estate north of Wigan Road, centred on Cranberry Drive and Baysdale Avenue. As part of our virtual tour of the area, we were able to confirm that the properties north of Wigan Road accessed only to the south, and that Wigan Road may be dividing a community in this area. We are therefore proposing to run the boundary behind the properties fronting directly onto Wigan Road, from Beaumont Road to Dealey Road. We particularly welcome local comments on this view during our consultation on these draft proposals.

56 The Conservative and Labour groups proposed different boundaries between Hulton and Rumworth wards. The Conservative Group proposed to run the boundary down Hulton Lane, whereas the Labour Group proposed to run the boundary behind the properties on the western side of Deane Church Lane. We carefully considered the evidence provided and noted that the Conservative proposal would provide no internal access to Rumworth ward from the properties on the eastern side of Hulton Lane. The proposal would also move Hulton Lane Playing Fields out of Hulton ward. We are therefore adopting the Labour Group's proposals as part of our draft recommendations. We consider this boundary to provide for a better balance of our statutory criteria.

57 In the north of Rumworth ward, the Conservative Group proposed to use the railway line as a boundary before cutting down between Callis Road and Blackshaw Lane to run along Deane Road. The Labour Group proposed to extend the boundary along the railway until Mayor Street. To accommodate the changes made in Queens Park ward, we are proposing to run the boundary along the railway to Moor Lane, before head south-west along Derby Street. This would ensure that Bolton University is united within a single ward, as argued by the Labour Group.

58 Our proposed Hulton and Rumworth wards are therefore a combination of the Conservative and Labour proposals. We received no submissions from local residents and would welcome any views on our draft proposals for Hulton and Rumworth.

59 Our proposed Hulton and Rumworth wards would have electoral variances of 3% more and 5% more electors than the borough average by 2027, respectively.

Brightmet, Halliwell, Little Lever & Darcy Lever and Tonge with the Haulgh



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Brightmet	3	2%
Halliwell	3	3%
Little Lever & Darcy Lever	3	-7%
Tonge with the Haulgh	3	2%

Brightmet

60 We received seven submissions regarding this area from the Conservative Group, Labour Group and five residents.

61 The Labour Group's proposal sought to unite the community of Brightmet by expanding Brightmet northwards to include Top o' th' Brow. Four residents also stated that the area of Top o' th' Brow should be moved from Bradshaw & Bromley Cross ward to Brightmet ward, arguing that this area uses amenities, services and school in Brightmet. This proposal would also result in Brightmet UCAN Centre being placed in Brightmet ward. We agree that the Labour Group's proposed arrangement in the north of Brightmet provides for a good reflection of communities in the area and we have therefore been persuaded to adopt this proposal as part of our draft recommendations.

62 The Labour Group further proposed moving all the properties that front onto Long Lane from Brightmet ward into Little Lever & Darcy Lever ward. This is discussed further in paragraph 75.

63 The Conservative Group proposed to maintain the current boundaries for much of Brightmet ward, with the inclusion of Raikes Road, Raikes Way and Snowhill Lane from Little Lever & Darcy Lever ward. They argued that this area has links to Brightmet. Having visited this area on our virtual tour of the borough, we do not consider this to be a strong or identifiable boundary. We were also concerned that this proposal would unnecessarily split what appears to be a single cohesive community in Darcy Lever. We have therefore not adopted this proposal as part of our draft recommendations.

64 One resident proposed splitting Brightmet along Bury Road. This would result in electoral variances of -54% and -53% for the northern and southern splits, respectively. We have therefore not adopted this proposal as part of our draft recommendations.

65 Our proposed Brightmet ward would have an electoral variance of 2% more electors than the borough average by 2027.

Halliwell

66 We received two submissions regarding this area from the Conservative Group and Labour Group. We are basing our draft recommendations on the proposal from the Labour Group.

67 Both the Conservative and Labour groups proposed a ward centred on the A6099. The Labour Group proposed that the northern and eastern boundary of Halliwell ward should extend to Astley Brook and the River Tonge. They argued that the open land running between Gaskell Street and Valletts Lane, with Mortfield Lodge at the centre, is a natural southern boundary of this ward. In the south-east, they extend the boundary of this ward to St Peter's Way and Trinity Street, arguing that these are major road barriers to what is defined as the town centre.

68 The Conservative Group's proposal for this ward was similar to that of the Labour Group with a different arrangement in the south and west. In the south, they proposed only to extend the boundary as far as Turton Street. Due to the nature of the Conservative submission in this area, which grouped polling districts, the boundaries proposed were often diffuse and difficult to follow. We do not consider these boundaries to be clearer and identifiable and are of the view that the boundaries proposed by the Labour Group are stronger.

69 We are therefore basing our draft recommendations on the proposal from the Labour Group, with a small amendment in the north of the ward to run the boundary

continually along Astley Brook. However, we are recommending maintaining the current ward name of Halliwell, rather than the Labour Group's proposed name of Central Bolton, as we consider that this name accurately reflects the community within this ward. We would be interested to hear the opinions of local people on this ward name.

70 Our proposed Halliwell ward will have an electoral variance of 3% more electors than the borough average by 2027.

Little Lever & Darcy Lever and Tonge with the Haulgh

71 We received four submissions regarding this area from the Conservative Group, Labour Group and two residents.

72 The Conservative Group's proposal included the area of Tonge Moor in Tonge with the Haulgh, arguing that this area has strong links with the existing Tonge with the Haulgh ward. This addition was also proposed by the Labour Group. The Conservative Group further argued that Hall i' th' Wood should be included in Tonge with the Haulgh ward along with the area between the A666 and A58. They stated that these areas have strong links with Tonge with the Haulgh, with the A58 ring road enabling good access. This is in contradiction to a resident submission, discussed further in paragraph 88, which argued that Hall i' th' Wood should be included in Astley Bridge ward. We were persuaded by the resident's submission and are therefore not proposing to include Hall i' th' Wood in Tonge with the Haulgh ward. However, we are proposing to include the area of Tonge Moor in Tonge with the Haulgh ward due to the evidence provided by both the Conservative Group and Labour Group.

73 The Conservative Group further proposed placing the area of Springfield south of Chadwick Street in Little Lever & Darcy Lever ward. They argued that this would provide for a clearer boundary between the wards of Little Lever & Darcy Lever and Tonge with the Haulgh. While we agree that this would provide for a clearer boundary, due to changes in the north of Tonge with the Haulgh discussed in paragraph 72, this would result in an electoral variance of -14% for Tonge with the Haulgh. In our view, this level of electoral inequality cannot be justified by the evidence provided and we are therefore not adopting this proposal.

74 The Labour Group proposed to use the River Tonge as the western boundary for Tonge with the Haulgh ward, with the A58 utilised as the northern boundary and Bradshaw Brook as the eastern boundary. We consider these to be strong and identifiable boundaries, which appear to geographically separate communities, and are therefore adopting them as part of our draft recommendations. However, the Labour Group further proposed to maintain the current boundary between Little Lever & Darcy Lever and Tonge with the Haulgh, which runs behind some of the properties on Wheatfield Street before running between the properties on Kirkwall

Drive and Strawberry Hill Road. We do not consider this to be a clear and identifiable boundary and are therefore proposing to use the River Tonge as the southern boundary. We did not receive much localised evidence for this area during consultation and we welcome any comments regarding our draft recommendations for this area.

75 The Labour Group also proposed moving all the properties that front onto Long Lane from Brightmet ward into Little Lever & Darcy Lever ward. They argued that many in this area consider themselves to be Darcy Lever residents. We noted that by running the boundary behind these properties, residents off Copthorne Drive would have no internal road access into Brightmet ward. Due to this, we were not persuaded to make this change in its entirety. However, we are proposing to place some properties on Long Lane in Little Lever & Darcy Lever to reflect this community evidence. We are proposing to include residents along Long Lane up to the junction with Copthorne Drive in Little Lever & Darcy Lever ward. We consider that this arrangement provides for good internal ward access, while also reflecting the community evidence provided to us by the Labour Group. We would be interested to hear comments from local people about this proposal.

76 We received two submissions from residents who proposed that Little Lever be split from Darcy Lever in a warding arrangement. This would result in an electoral variance of -21% for Little Lever. We do not consider that this level of electoral inequality has been justified by the evidence and are therefore not adopting this proposal as part of our draft recommendations.

77 We are therefore proposing to adopt the Labour Group's proposal for both Little Lever & Darcy Lever and Tonge with the Haulgh wards, with the few amendments discussed above. We are also proposing to maintain the ward names of Tonge with the Haulgh and Little Lever & Darcy Lever as we consider that these reflect the geographical spread of the wards in this area.

78 Our proposed Little Lever & Darcy Lever and Tonge with the Haulgh wards would have electoral variances of 7% fewer and 2% more electors than the borough average by 2027, respectively.

Astley Bridge, Bradshaw & Bromley Cross, Smithills & North Heaton and South Turton



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Astley Bridge	3	5%
Bradshaw & Bromley Cross	3	-4%
Smithills & North Heaton	3	3%
South Turton	3	-2%

Bradshaw & Bromley Cross

79 We received four submissions regarding this area from the Conservative Group, Labour Group and two local residents. All submissions argued for variations of the same proposal: that electors west of Bradshaw Brook should be included in Bradshaw ward.

80 The Conservative Group's proposal sought to include electors south of Printers Lane and east of Turton Road in Bradshaw ward. The proposal also included Timberbottom in a Bradshaw ward, which was supported by a local resident. The submission argued that this would unite Bradshaw within one ward and would also include Bradshaw Cricket Club in a Bradshaw ward.

81 The Labour Group also proposed adding these electors into Bradshaw & Bromley Cross ward but argued that Eagley Brook and the railway in the west would be a more appropriate boundary. Under the Labour proposal, all electors east of Eagley Brook and the railway and north of Canon Slade Secondary School would be included in Bradshaw & Bromley Cross ward. The submission argued that the current ward boundary bisects a community, and that there are natural community and transport links between the existing Bradshaw area and the communities served by Bradshaw Brow and Turton Road.

82 We also received a submission from a resident who argued that the current Bradshaw ward does not include the entirety of Bradshaw, which they define as stretching to Bradshaw Brow around Canon Slade Secondary School and along Turton Road, thereby also including Bradshaw Cricket Club. They argued that Harwood uses these facilities around Turton Road, including the secondary school, cricket club and train station, and that these areas are well connected by local bus routes.

83 We carefully considered the proposals received and were of the view that the Labour Group's proposed ward provided for a good balance of our three statutory criteria, was further supported by a local resident and incorporated many of the arguments made by the Conservative Group. We have therefore adopted the Labour Group's proposal and suggested name for this ward, with a slight adjustment to run the boundary completely down the railway line as we consider this a strong and identifiable boundary. The boundary will cross the railway only once to include electors on Oaks Lane in Bradshaw & Bromley Cross. We are also proposing to run the boundary along Bradshaw Brook behind the properties on Tonge Moor Road to avoid splitting electors across this road.

84 Our proposed Bradshaw & Bromley Cross ward would have an electoral variance of 4% fewer electors than the borough average by 2027.

Astley Bridge and South Turton

85 We received four submissions regarding this area from the Conservative Group, Labour Group and two residents. We have based our draft proposals in this area on the proposals from the Labour Group.

86 The Conservative Group proposed no change to Astley Bridge ward, arguing that the current boundaries accurately represent a strong community, and only a minor change to the current Bromley Cross ward, previously discussed in paragraph 80. Due to the decision taken in Bradshaw & Bromley Cross ward to use the railway as a strong and identifiable boundary, this would result in the Conservatives' proposed Bromley Cross ward having an electoral variance of -19%. We do not consider that the evidence provided justifies this high level of electoral inequality and consequently we have not adopted the Conservative proposal in this area.

87 The Labour Group submission argued that the boundary between Astley Bridge and South Turton splits the community of Eagley. This submission proposed running the boundary along Eagley Brook to Eagley Way, before passing behind the properties centred on Park Row and Staveley Avenue, to Belmont Road in the west. They argued that this proposal would reunite the community of Eagley into a single ward, which they proposed to name South Turton.

88 The Labour Group further proposed to include the area of Hall i' th' Wood in Astley Bridge ward. We note a resident's submission which also argued that the area of Hall i' th' Wood should be included in Astley Bridge ward. This submission argued that Hall i' th' Wood is closely linked to Astley Bridge with residents using the local amenities, train station, schools and bus services.

89 Our draft recommendations are therefore based on the Labour Group's submission, with some alterations to provide for a better balance of our statutory criteria. Horrocks Fold will remain in Astley Bridge ward as we consider that this arrangement more accurately reflects the access routes between Astley Bridge and residents in Horrocks Fold. We are also proposing to adopt the new ward name of South Turton, as proposed to us by the Labour Group.

90 Apart from the borough-wide schemes, we did not receive much localised evidence for this area during consultation and we welcome any comments regarding our draft recommendations for this area. We would be particularly interested in receiving comments about the proposed South Turton ward name.

91 Our draft recommendations for Astley Bridge and South Turton would result in an electoral variance of 5% more and 2% fewer electors than the borough average, respectively, by 2027.

Smithills & North Heaton

92 We received three submissions regarding this area from the Conservative Group, Labour Group and one resident.

93 The Conservative Group proposed changes in the southern end of the ward, including running the boundary down New Hall Lane and around the properties on Dougill Street, Bute Street and Sofa Street. Based on a virtual tour of the area, we concluded that the proposed arrangement around Dougill Street, Bute Street and Sofa Street does not provide clear and identifiable boundaries for electors.

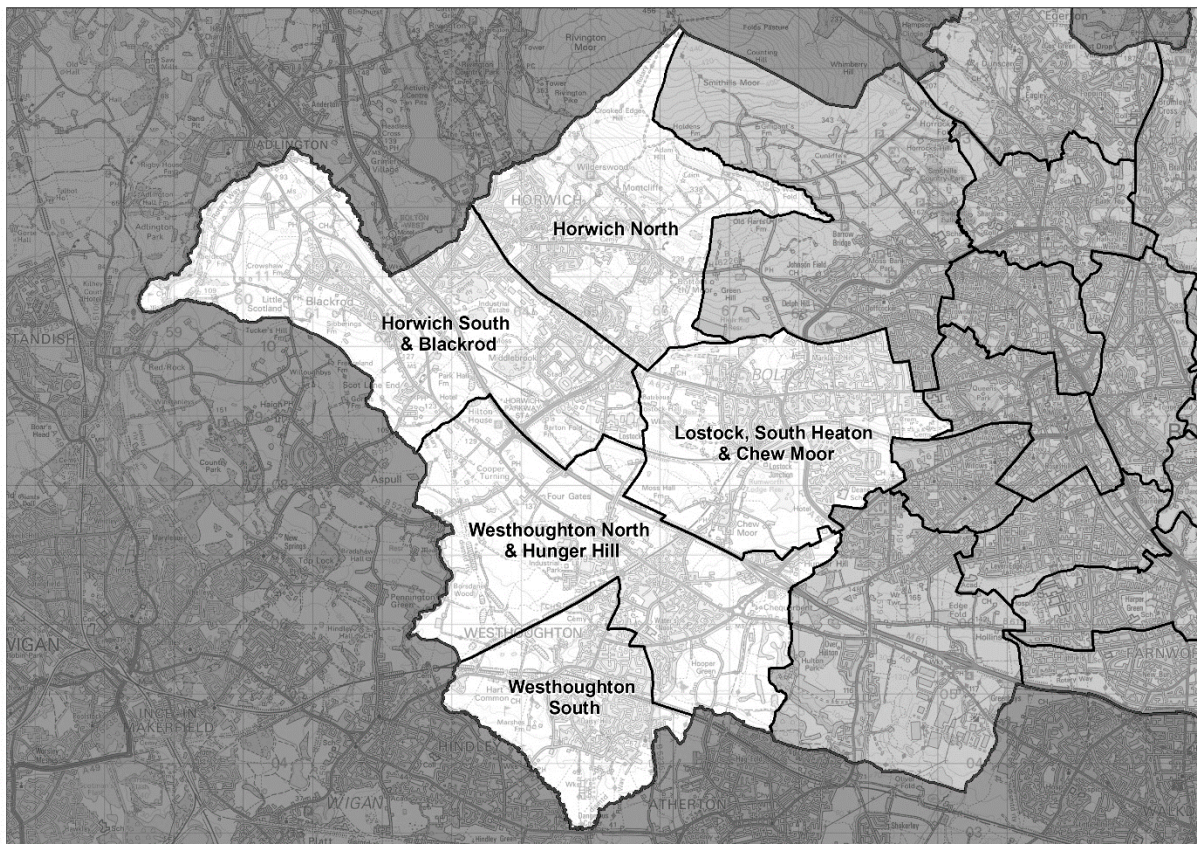
94 The Labour Group proposed to centre this ward on Smithills Country Park and to include Bottom o' th' Moor in this ward, as discussed further in paragraph 102. We were not persuaded to make this change. The Labour Group further proposed to run the boundary along New Hall Lane, Lonsdale Road and Ivy Road.

95 After careful consideration of the submissions we received, we have adopted a combination of both the Conservative and Labour schemes as part of our draft recommendations. We are proposing the Labour Group's suggested boundaries in the south-west of the ward as we are of the view that this provides for clearer and more recognisable boundaries. We are also adopting the Conservative proposal in the west, as discussed in paragraph 102. We have concluded that this provides for a good reflection of communities in this area.

96 Both the Conservative and Labour groups proposed different names for this ward, with the Conservatives proposing the name Smithills and Labour proposing the name Heaton with Smithills Moor. As discussed in paragraph 108, the Conservatives conversely proposed to retain the current ward name of Heaton & Lostock in the ward south of Smithills. The Conservative Group and Labour Group both proposed that the name Heaton should be included in different wards, although neither defined where this community is located. One resident further argued that the Heaton area of Smithills ward should fall under Heaton & Lostock ward, but also did not define the location of Heaton. We have carefully considered the evidence provided and have concluded that the area of Heaton seems to be incorporated across two of our proposed wards and are therefore proposing to include the name Heaton in both. We are proposing to name this ward Smithills & North Heaton, with Heaton also included in the ward name for Lostock, South Heaton & Chew Moor (see paragraph 108). We are keen to hear from local residents whether these proposed names accurately reflect the communities in this area.

97 Our proposed ward would have an electoral variance of 3% more electors than the borough average by 2027.

Horwich North, Horwich South & Blackrod, Lostock, South Heaton & Chew Moor, Westhoughton North & Hunger Hill and Westhoughton South



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Horwich North	3	7%
Horwich South & Blackrod	3	1%
Lostock, South Heaton & Chew Moor	3	1%
Westhoughton North & Hunger Hill	3	1%
Westhoughton South	3	0%

Horwich North and Horwich South & Blackrod

98 We received six submissions regarding this area from the Conservative Group, Labour Group and six residents. Our draft recommendations for Horwich North and Horwich South & Blackrod are based on a combination of the proposals from the Conservative and Labour groups. Both proposed using Chorley New Road as the boundary between the two wards, thereby uniting Horwich town centre in a single ward. A resident also argued that the current ward boundary was unclear but did not propose an alternative.

99 Conversely, one resident proposed splitting the current wards of Horwich & Blackrod and Horwich North East into three wards, with two three-member Horwich

wards and a two-member Blackrod ward, thereby increasing the council size of Bolton Council to 62. This proposal would result in variances of 12% and -36% for Horwich North and Horwich South wards, along with -36% for Blackrod ward. Another resident proposed a similar split of two three-member Horwich wards and one three-member Blackrod ward; however, this would result in variances of 8%, -38% and -59% respectively. In our view, these proposals would result in levels of electoral inequality that have not been justified by the evidence provided. We have, therefore, not adopted these changes as part of our draft recommendations.

100 In Horwich South & Blackrod ward, our proposed ward boundary follows a defaced parish boundary in the area between Skylark Close and Ox Hey Lane, rather than following the boundary proposed by the Labour Group along Ox Hey Lane and behind the properties north of Skylark Close. We are unable to adopt this boundary as it would result in an unviable parish ward with under 100 electors.⁷ As a result, we have adopted the Labour proposals for Horwich South & Blackrod with this minor amendment.

101 In Horwich North, we have adopted the Labour proposal in the south-east of the ward to run the boundary along Fall Birch Road. We were not persuaded by the Conservative proposal that suggested the properties east of Claypool School should be added to a Lostock ward; however, we welcome any comments relating to our draft recommendations in this area.

102 For the northern area of Horwich North, we have adopted the Conservative proposal which follows the parish boundary. We were not persuaded by the Labour proposal which would have moved Bottom o' th' Moor into the neighbouring Smithills ward. We considered that this proposal may not provide the strongest reflection of community links and that a ward based around the Horwich area would reflect local community ties.

103 We have adopted the ward names proposed by the Labour Group for Horwich North and Horwich South & Blackrod. We consider that these names best reflect the communities in these wards. A resident also argued that Horwich should be represented in the names of any wards in which a part of Horwich is located. The Conservative Group proposed naming these wards Blackrod & Middlebrook and Horwich. We welcome any comments regarding the naming of these wards.

104 Our proposed Horwich North and Horwich South & Blackrod wards will have electoral variances of 7% and 1% more electors than the borough average by 2027.

⁷ We will not normally recommend the creation of parish wards that contain no or very few electors (fewer than a hundred) unless it can be demonstrated to us that, within a short period of time, there will be sufficient electors as to warrant the election of at least one parish councillor. This is because each parish ward must by statute return at least one parish councillor. To do so, there must be a reasonable number of local government electors in the parish ward to make the election of a councillor viable.

Lostock, South Heaton & Chew Moor and Westhoughton North & Hunger Hill

105 We received submissions from the Conservative and Labour groups and two residents regarding this area.

106 The Conservative Group proposed little change to the existing Heaton & Lostock ward, with only minor changes suggested to the boundary between Westhoughton North & Chew Moor and Westhoughton South. Conversely, the Labour Group proposed extensive changes to the current Heaton & Lostock and Westhoughton North wards. For Heaton & Lostock, they proposed a ward centred on Chorley New Road, arguing that the Chew Moor community is more closely linked with Lostock via Tempest Road and that the M61 provides a stronger and more identifiable boundary to the south. They proposed to name this ward Lostock & Chew Moor. They further proposed that Westhoughton North ward should only cross the M61 to include the areas of Hunger Hill and Wingates Lane, naming this ward Westhoughton North & Hunger Hill. They argued that the proposed Lostock & Chew Moor ward reflects the extent of Lostock. We received a resident submission which argued that the current Heaton & Lostock ward does not include the entirety of Lostock; however, it did not expand upon where the boundary should be drawn.

107 We were persuaded that the Labour Group's proposed arrangement provides for a good reflection of communities in the area. We have therefore adopted the Labour Group's proposals as part of our draft recommendations, with minor changes to the boundary between Lostock, South Heaton & Chew Moor and Hulton, which is discussed in paragraph 55, and in the north-east where we have adopted the Conservative Group's proposals to retain Heaton Cemetery in this ward. We will also be adopting their proposed ward name of Westhoughton North & Hunger Hill.

108 Having carefully considered the evidence provided, we were not persuaded by any of the ward names proposed. The Conservative Group proposed to retain the ward name of Heaton & Lostock; however, we consider that this name will not reflect the new make-up of communities within the ward. The Labour Group proposed the name Lostock & Chew Moor. However, as discussed in paragraph 96, we are not persuaded that this name reflects the community of Heaton. We therefore recommend naming this ward Lostock, South Heaton & Chew Moor to reflect communities in the area, but we would be particularly interested to hear comments from local people about this proposal.

109 Our proposed Lostock, South Heaton & Chew Moor and Westhoughton North & Hunger Hill wards would have electoral variances of 1% more electors than the borough average by 2027.

Westhoughton South

110 We received two submissions for this area from the Conservative and Labour groups.

111 Our proposal for Westhoughton South is based on the Labour Group's proposal. The Conservative submission included the area north-west of the railway in this ward; however, we consider that the railway provides for a strong and identifiable boundary. In addition, this area would have limited road access to the rest of the ward. We have been persuaded to adopt the proposals from the Conservative and Labour groups, who both suggested using Leigh Road as the boundary between Westhoughton North & Hunger Hill and Westhoughton South. This would transfer the area west of Leigh Road into Westhoughton South. However, we have decided not to adopt the Conservatives' proposed boundary along King Street, as we consider Market Street and Church Street proposed by the Labour Group to be a more identifiable boundary.

112 Our proposed ward would have an electoral variance of 0% more electors than the borough average by 2027.

Conclusions

113 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality in Bolton, 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

	Draft recommendations	
	2020	2027
Number of councillors	60	60
Number of electoral wards	20	20
Average number of electors per councillor	3,392	3,562
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	2	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Draft recommendations

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

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for Bolton Council.

You can also view our draft recommendations for Bolton on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Parish electoral arrangements

114 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

115 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, Bolton Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

116 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Horwich and Westhoughton.

117 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Horwich parish.

Draft recommendations

Horwich Town Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing eight wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Brazley	2
Bridge	2
Church	2
Claypool	2
Lever Park	2
Lostock Park	1
Old Station Park	1
Vale	2

118 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Westhoughton parish.

Draft recommendations

Westhoughton Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing six wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Central	4
Chequerbent	2
Daisy Hill	3
Hoskers & Hart Common	2
White Horse	5
Wingates	2

Have your say

119 The Commission has an open mind about its draft recommendations. Every representation we receive will be considered, regardless of who it is from or whether it relates to the whole borough or just a part of it.

120 If you agree with our recommendations, please let us know. If you don't think our recommendations are right for Bolton, we want to hear alternative proposals for a different pattern of wards.

121 Our website has a special consultation area where you can explore the maps. You can find it at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

122 Submissions can also be made by emailing reviews@lgbce.org.uk or by writing to:

Review Officer (Bolton)
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
PO Box 133
Blyth
NE24 9FE

123 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for Bolton which delivers:

- Electoral equality: each local councillor represents a similar number of voters.
- Community identity: reflects the identity and interests of local communities.
- Effective and convenient local government: helping your council discharge its responsibilities effectively.

124 A good pattern of wards should:

- Provide good electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of voters.
- Reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links.
- Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries.
- Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government.

125 Electoral equality:

- Does your proposal mean that councillors would represent roughly the same number of voters as elsewhere in Bolton?

126 Community identity:

- Community groups: is there a parish council, residents' association or other group that represents the area?
- Interests: what issues bind the community together or separate it from other parts of your area?
- Identifiable boundaries: are there natural or constructed features which make strong boundaries for your proposals?

127 Effective local government:

- Are any of the proposed wards too large or small to be represented effectively?
- Are the proposed names of the wards appropriate?
- Are there good links across your proposed wards? Is there any form of public transport?

128 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all representations will be placed on deposit at our offices and on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

129 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers. This includes your name, postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, no matter who they are from.

130 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with the draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

131 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. The draft

Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the all-out elections for Bolton Council in 2023.

Equalities

132 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

Draft recommendations for Bolton

	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	Astley Bridge	3	10,967	3,656	8%	11,239	3,746	5%
2	Bradshaw & Bromley Cross	3	10,011	3,337	-2%	10,307	3,436	-4%
3	Brightmet	3	10,598	3,533	4%	10,864	3,621	2%
4	Farnworth North	3	9,320	3,107	-8%	9,611	3,204	-10%
5	Farnworth South	3	9,501	3,167	-7%	9,813	3,271	-8%
6	Great Lever	3	11,006	3,669	8%	11,547	3,849	8%
7	Halliwel	3	10,549	3,516	4%	11,045	3,682	3%
8	Horwich North	3	11,054	3,685	9%	11,391	3,797	7%
9	Horwich South & Blackrod	3	9,286	3,095	-9%	10,834	3,611	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 %
10 Hulton	3	10,409	3,470	2%	11,035	3,678	3%
11 Kearsley	3	8,884	2,961	-13%	9,192	3,064	-14%
12 Little Lever & Darcy Lever	3	9,618	3,206	-5%	9,898	3,299	-7%
13 Lostock, South Heaton & Chew Moor	3	10,524	3,508	3%	10,816	3,605	1%
14 Queens Park	3	9,040	3,013	-11%	10,985	3,662	3%
15 Rumworth	3	11,021	3,674	8%	11,260	3,753	5%
16 Smithills & North Heaton	3	10,773	3,591	6%	11,059	3,686	3%
17 South Turton	3	10,110	3,370	-1%	10,489	3,496	-2%
18 Tonge with the Haulgh	3	10,754	3,585	6%	10,918	3,639	2%

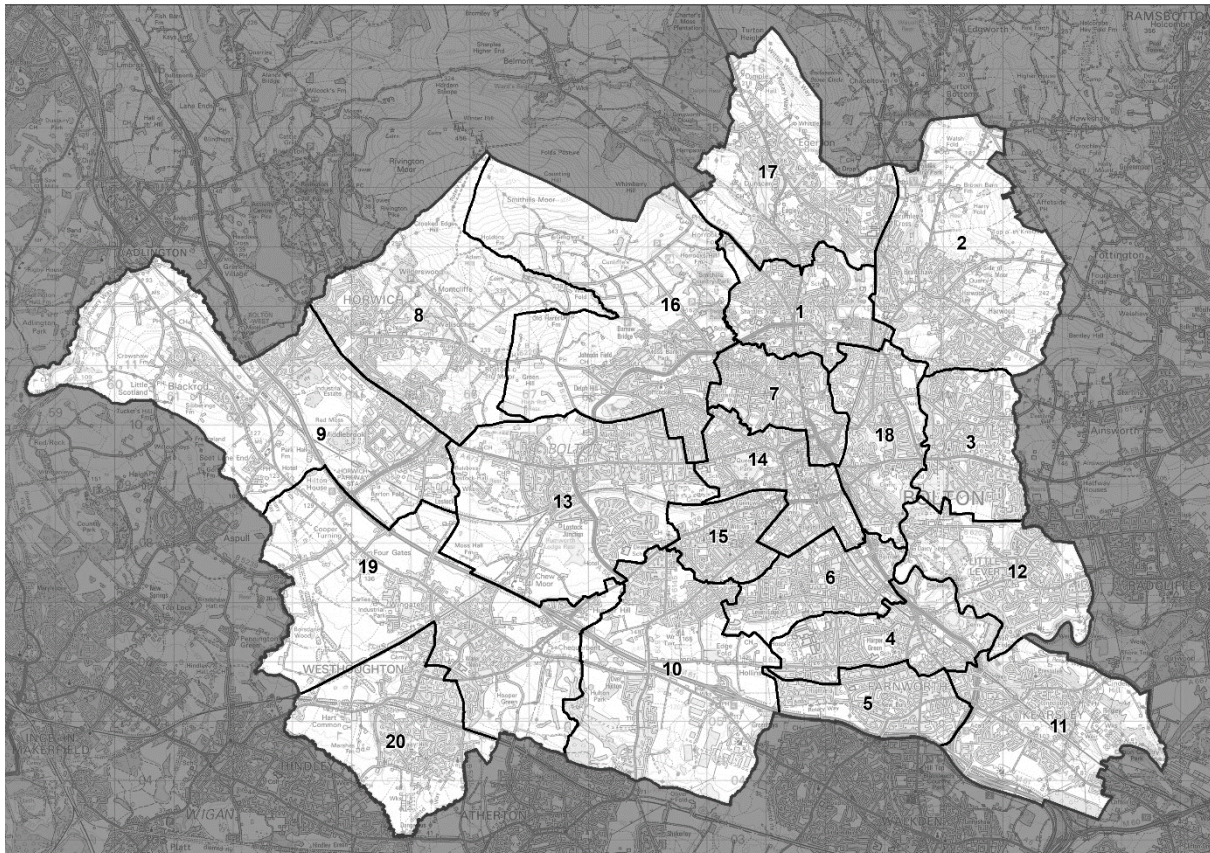
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2020)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
19 Westhoughton North & Hunger Hill	3	9,959	3,320	-2%	10,738	3,579	1%
20 Westhoughton South	3	10,128	3,376	0%	10,656	3,552	0%
Totals	60	203,512	-	-	213,697	-	-
Averages	-	-	3,392	-	-	3,562	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Bolton.

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 borough. 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
1	Astley Bridge
2	Bradshaw & Bromley Cross
3	Brightmet
4	Farnworth North
5	Farnworth South
6	Great Lever
7	Halliwell
8	Horwich North
9	Horwich South & Blackrod
10	Hulton
11	Kearsley
12	Little Lever & Darcy Lever
13	Lostock, South Heaton & Chew Moor
14	Queens Park
15	Rumworth
16	Smithills & North Heaton
17	South Turton

18	Tonge with the Haulgh
19	Westhoughton North & Hunger Hill
20	Westhoughton South

A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the large map accompanying this report, or on our website: www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/north-west/greater-manchester/bolton

Appendix C

Submissions received

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

www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/north-west/greater-manchester/bolton

Political Groups

- Conservative Group
- Farnworth & Kearsley First Party
- Labour Group

Councillors

- Councillor M. Flitcroft (Bolton Borough Council)
- Councillor P. Heslop (Bolton Borough Council)

Local Residents

- 78 local residents

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 fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
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. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections
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 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

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.

Local Government Boundary Commission for
England
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