

New electoral arrangements for Bolton Council Final Recommendations

January 2022

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A note on our mapping:

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

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Introduction

Who we are and what we do

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

2 The members of the Commission are:

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

What is an electoral review?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Why 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 Additionally some councillors currently represent many more or fewer electors than others. We describe this as 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where the number of electors per councillor is as even as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

8 This electoral review 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 electors 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.

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

How will the recommendations affect you?

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

14 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

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

taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums and we are not able to consider any representations which are based on these issues.

Review timetable

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

16 The review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
20 October 2020	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 began analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
18 January 2022	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and final recommendations

17 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.

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

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

	2020	2027
Electorate of Bolton	203,512	213,697
Number of councillors	60	60
Average number of electors per councillor	3,392	3,562

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

Submissions received

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

Electorate figures

22 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2026, a period five years on from the 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.

23 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

24 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.

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

26 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 our statutory criteria would not be reflected by a uniform pattern of wards.

27 We received five submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on our draft recommendations. The submissions all argued for a reduction in the number of councillors. However, they did not argue for a specific number of councillors to represent the Council and did not include accompanying evidence. We therefore based our final recommendations on a 60-councillor council.

Ward boundaries consultation

28 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.

29 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.

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

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

31 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.

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

Draft recommendations consultation

33 We received 175 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included comments from four political groups, 10 councillors, three local organisations and 156 local residents. The majority of submissions focused on specific areas. In particular, we received a large number of objections to our draft recommendations from the Astley Bridge community.

34 We also recommended several further modifications elsewhere in the borough to strengthen boundaries in response to the evidence received. We have made changes to our warding proposals in the areas of Farnworth, Kearsley, Queens Park, Smithills, Bromley Cross and Bradshaw to better reflect community identities. For the remainder of the borough, we have decided to confirm the majority of our draft recommendations as final.

Final recommendations

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

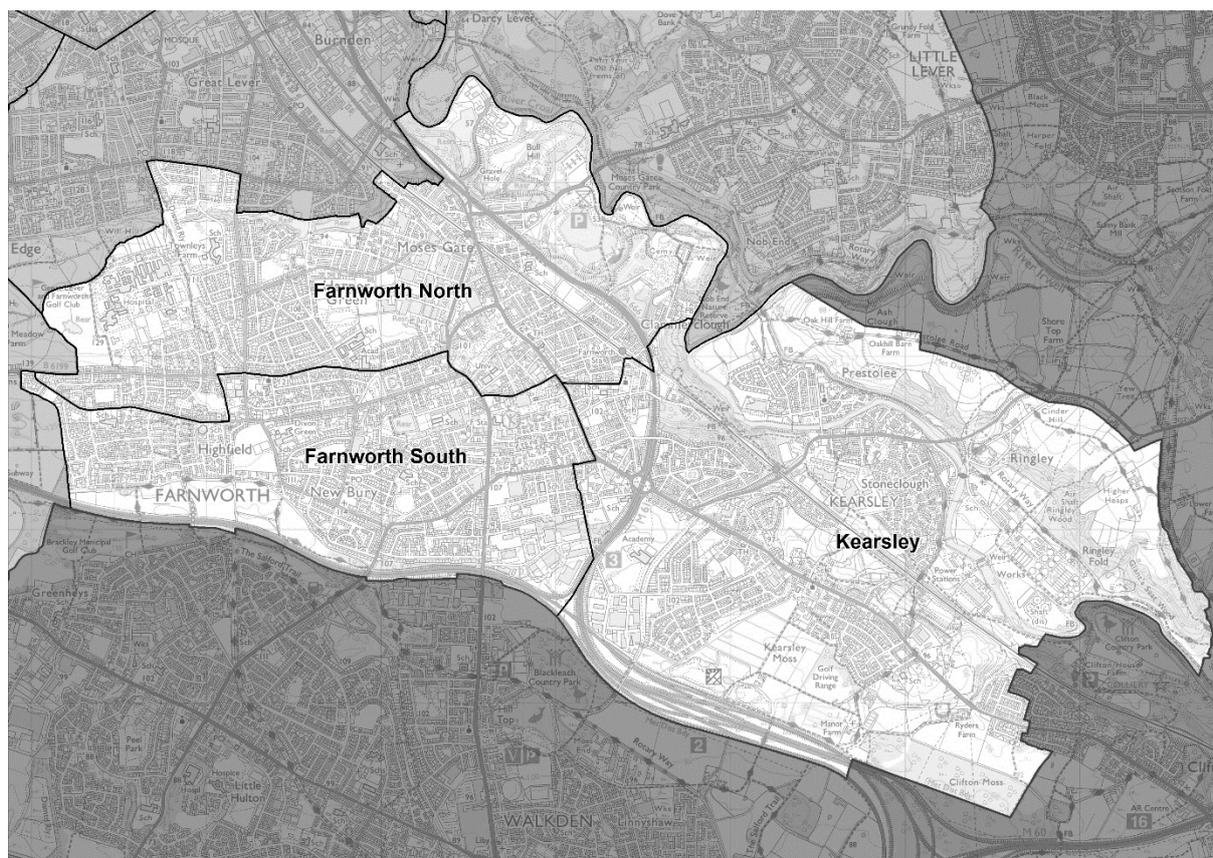
36 The tables and maps on pages 11–23 detail our final recommendations for each area of Bolton. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁶ criteria of:

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

37 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 31 and on the large map accompanying this report.

⁶ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Farnworth and Kearsley



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Farnworth North	3	-6%
Farnworth South	3	-10%
Kearsley	3	-11%

Kearsley

38 We received 16 submissions regarding this area from the Labour Group, Councillor Heslop and 14 residents. Two residents supported our draft recommendations.

39 Councillor Heslop and 10 residents proposed changes to the Kearsley and Farnworth South boundary along the M61 to Kearsley Interchange. They argued that the area centred around Kearsley West School and Primrose Street should not be placed in Farnworth South ward and instead should remain part of the Kearsley community, with Kearsley West School and New Jerusalem Church being focal points. Councillor Heslop argued that the boundary should instead run along Long Causeway and Crompton Street; this was the boundary proposed by the Farnworth & Kearsley First Party during the first round of consultation.

40 Following careful consideration of the evidence received, we have been persuaded to alter the boundary between Kearsley ward and Farnworth South ward to Long Causeway and Crompton Street. We consider that this arrangement better reflects communities in this area by placing the area of Kearsley West in Kearsley ward.

41 Our draft recommendation for Kearsley ward was forecast to have an electoral variance of -14% by 2027. The Labour Group argued that this electoral variance was too high to accept. They therefore proposed to move electors from Farnworth North to Kearsley ward. This proposed boundary would run along Darley Street, Presto Street, West Street and Bridge Street. However, we consider that Church Street provides for a clearer boundary in this area. We also note that the inclusion of the area centred on Primrose Street within Kearsley ward improves the electoral variance for Kearsley ward from -14% to -11%. We were not persuaded that the evidence provided by the Labour Group was strong enough to justify moving 500 electors from Farnworth North ward to Kearsley ward and note that the changes around Primrose Street already improve the electoral equality of Kearsley ward. We are therefore not adopting this change as part of our final recommendations.

42 Having considered the submissions, we confirm our draft recommendations for Kearsley ward as final, subject to the inclusion of the Primrose Street area. Kearsley ward is forecast to have an electoral variance of 11% fewer electors than the borough average by 2027.

Farnworth North and Farnworth South

43 We received 20 submissions regarding this area from the Labour Group, Councillor Haworth, Councillor Mistry, Councillor Khurram, Councillor Silvester and 15 local residents. Four residents wrote to support our draft recommendations.

44 Councillor Haworth, Councillor Mistry, Councillor Khurram and five local residents argued that Farnworth North ward should be extended northwards to include the area bounded by Bradford Road, Green Lane and the disused railway line to the west of Rishton Avenue. They argued that residents in this area use schools and facilities located in Farnworth North ward and have direct access to Farnworth along Bradford Road.

45 The Labour Group also proposed to extend Farnworth North ward to Green Lane, but argued to further extend Farnworth North eastwards along Green Lane to Manchester Road. They argued that this would keep the communities connected by Bradford Road and Greenland Road together, reflecting their strong links to Farnworth. Similarly, Councillor Silvester proposed to place the area south of Green Lane and east of Boscobel Road into Farnworth North to balance the electoral equality of Farnworth.

46 Following careful consideration of the evidence received, we have been convinced by the proposals put forward by Councillor Haworth, Councillor Mistry, Councillor Khurram and five local residents to extend Farnworth North ward to Green Lane. We consider that this would best reflect communities in this area. We were not persuaded to extend Farnworth North ward eastwards to Manchester Road on the basis of electoral equality alone, and note that the community evidence we have received solely defines the area bounded by Bradford Road, Green Lane and the disused railway line as part of Farnworth.

47 One local resident suggested that Plodder Lane should be used as the entirety of the boundary between Farnworth North and Farnworth South wards. However, this change would result in an electoral variance of -15% for Farnworth North. We did not consider the evidence provided justified this high level of electoral inequality and are therefore not adopting this change as part of our final recommendations.

48 Due to the extension of Kearsley ward to incorporate the electors centred around Primrose Street (discussed in the previous section), Farnworth South ward would have an electoral variance of -11%. In order to improve this variance, we are extending the boundary between Farnworth North and Farnworth South slightly along Plodder Lane before cutting south along the public footpath that runs to the west of Highfield Primary School. We consider that this green space provides for a clear boundary between the two wards, while also improving electoral equality for Farnworth South ward.

49 Subject to these changes, we confirm our draft recommendations for Farnworth North and Farnworth South as final. These wards are forecast to have 6% and 10% fewer electors than the borough average by 2027.

Central and South Bolton



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

Great Lever, Queens Park & Central and Rumworth

50 We received six submissions regarding this area from the Labour Group, Councillor Ayub, Councillor Silvester and three residents.

51 The Labour Group, Councillor Ayub and Councillor Silvester all proposed a change to the boundary between Queens Park & Central ward, previously Queens Park in our draft recommendations, and Great Lever ward. They proposed that the boundary should continue along Lever Street and Rose Hill, across Manchester Road. They argued that residents in this area consider themselves part of Great Lever and are physically distant from the rest of Queens Park & Central ward. They also defined Burnden Shopping Centre as separate from the town centre and as part of Great Lever. Following consideration of the evidence received, we have been persuaded to make this change and consider that this warding arrangement better reflects local communities in Great Lever.

52 Councillor Silvester suggested that College Way should be used as the boundary between Queens Park & Central and Rumworth wards. They argued that this is a main north–south access route in Queens Park & Central ward and would provide a more practical boundary. We agree that this boundary would reflect local access routes in the area and are therefore adopting this proposal with one minor change. We are deviating from College Way at the junction with Deane Road to run the boundary behind Bolton University campus on the western side of College Way. This will ensure that the university is united in a single ward, as suggested by the Labour Group during the first round of consultation.

53 Councillor Silvester further suggested that Queens Park & Central ward should be extended north-east to include all electors up until St Peter’s Way. They argued that this would unite Bolton town centre in a single ward. We agree that this is a sensible modification and are therefore adopting this change as part of our final recommendations.

54 A local resident stated that Queens Park ward should be named Queens Park & Central to reflect the geographic extent of the ward. Following the changes discussed above which extend Queens Park & Central ward to encompass the entirety of Bolton town centre, we consider that this name would better reflect the communities present within this ward. We are therefore adopting this name as part of our final recommendations.

55 Following these changes, we confirm our draft recommendations for Great Lever, Queens Park & Central and Rumworth wards as final. These wards are all forecast to have 5% more electors than the borough average by 2027.

Hulton

56 We received six submissions regarding this ward from the Labour Group, Councillor Hewitt, Friends of Longfellow Avenue and three residents.

57 The Labour Group and a local resident supported our draft recommendations. Another resident argued that Wigan Road should remain as the boundary between Hulton ward and Heaton, Lostock & Chew Moor ward, as the estate centred on Cranberry Drive has closer links to the Ladybridge Estate to the north. However, placing this estate in Heaton, Lostock & Chew Moor ward would result in an electoral variance of 14% for Heaton, Lostock & Chew Moor ward. We do not consider that the evidence provided justifies this high level of electoral inequality and are therefore not adopting this change.

58 Councillor Hewitt and the Friends of Longfellow Avenue stated that our proposed boundary between Hulton ward and Rumworth ward splits the field at the north-eastern end of Longfellow Avenue, thereby dividing ownership and hindering

improvement works done there by local community groups. We have been persuaded to make this change. The boundary will now run along the edges of properties on Hudson Close and Deane Church Lane to unite this green space in a single ward.

59 Subject to this minor amendment, we confirm our draft recommendations for Hulton ward as final. This ward is forecast to have 3% more electors than the borough average by 2027.

East Bolton



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Brightmet	3	2%
Halliwell	3	-5%
Little Lever & Darcy Lever	3	-7%
Tonge with the Haulgh	3	2%

Brightmet

60 We received five submissions regarding this ward from the Labour Group, Conservative Group, Bolton North East Conservative Association and two residents.

61 The Labour Group and two residents supported our draft recommendations, stating that the proposed Brightmet ward boundaries take in Brightmet facilities and amenities, such as the Brightmet UCAN Centre.

62 The Conservative Group and Bolton North East Conservative Association argued that the area of Top o' th' Brow should remain in Bradshaw ward. They stated that residents of this area use facilities in Harwood. However, persuasive evidence provided to us in both stages of consultation indicate that Top o' th' Brow is considered part of Brightmet. We also consider that Stitch-Mi-Lane provides for a

stronger and more identifiable boundary. We were not convinced to adopt this change.

63 We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Brightmet ward as final. This ward is forecast to have 2% more electors than the borough average by 2027.

Halliwell

64 We received five submissions regarding this area from the Labour Group, Conservative Group, Councillor Silvester and two residents. The Labour Group and a local resident supported our draft recommendations for Halliwell ward.

65 As discussed in paragraph 75, we were not convinced to place the area bounded by Blackburn Road and Crompton Road in Halliwell ward, as suggested by the Conservative Group.

66 As discussed in paragraph 86, we were persuaded by a local resident to move the boundary between Smithills and Halliwell wards to Valletts Lane to avoid splitting the community of Cope Bank.

67 As discussed in paragraph 53, we were also persuaded by evidence provided by Councillor Silvester to extend Queens Park & Central ward to the north-east to incorporate electors up to St Peter's Way. This area will therefore be moved from Halliwell ward to Queens Park & Central ward.

68 With the exception of the minor amendments outlined above, we confirm our Halliwell ward as final. This ward is forecast to have 5% fewer electors than the borough average by 2027.

Little Lever & Darcy Lever and Tonge with the Haulgh

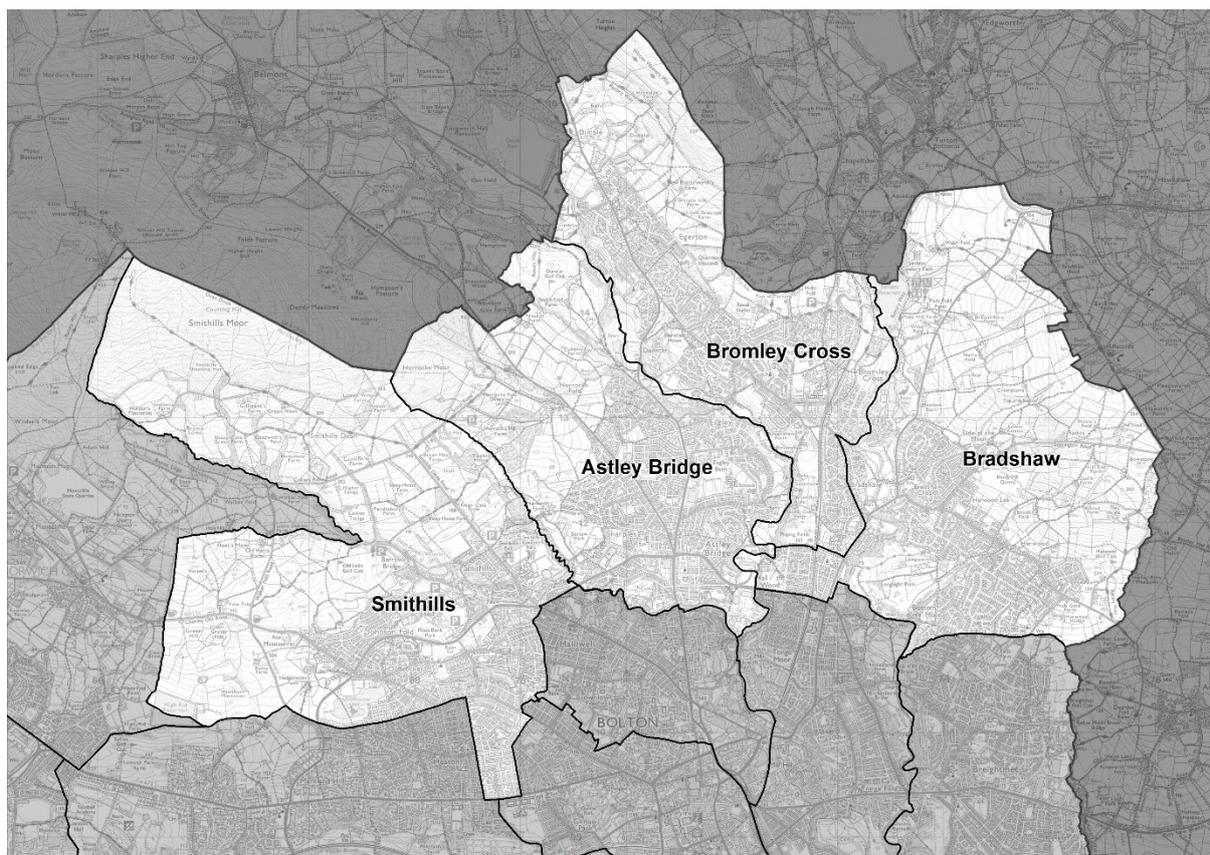
69 We received five submissions regarding this area from the Labour Group, Conservative Group and three residents. The Labour Group and one local resident supported our draft proposals for this ward. The Conservative Group contended that their submission made during the previous stage of consultation provided for better wards; however, they did not provide persuasive evidence as to why this was the case.

70 One resident stated that Hall i' th' Wood is more closely linked to Tonge with the Haulgh ward than Astley Bridge ward and should therefore be placed within Tonge with the Haulgh ward. However, this would result in an electoral variance of 15% for Tonge with the Haulgh ward. We were not convinced that the evidence provided justified this level of electoral inequality and are therefore not proposing to adopt this as part of our final recommendations.

71 A resident argued that Tonge Moor and Tonge Fold should form a ward, and that The Haulgh should be moved into Little Lever & Darcy Lever ward. This would result in electoral variances of 17% for Little Lever & Darcy Lever and -22% for Tonge with the Haulgh ward. We were not convinced that the evidence provided justified this level of electoral inequality and are therefore not proposing to adopt these amendments as part of our final recommendations.

72 We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations for both Little Lever & Darcy Lever ward and Tonge with the Haulgh ward as final. These wards are forecast to have 7% fewer and 2% more electors than the borough average by 2027, respectively.

North Bolton



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Astley Bridge	3	10%
Bradshaw	3	-6%
Bromley Cross	3	-4%
Smithills	3	1%

Astley Bridge

73 We received 114 submissions regarding this area from the Labour Group, Conservative Group, Bolton North East Conservative Association, Councillor Fairclough, Councillor Rimmer, Councillor Walsh, Masjid-e-Salaam & Madrassa Trust and 107 residents. The Labour Group and two residents supported our draft recommendations. All other respondents argued against our draft recommendations.

74 The Conservative Group, Bolton North East Conservative Association, Councillor Fairclough, Councillor Rimmer, Councillor Walsh, Masjid-e-Salaam & Madrassa Trust and 107 residents argued against our draft recommendations for Astley Bridge. All argued that Astley Bridge is a strong and cohesive community, and that our proposal to place the area of Eagley Bank into South Turton ward would negatively impact this community. Respondents informed us that Andrew Lane Park is a focal point for the local community and that residents in northern Astley Bridge

use facilities along Blackburn Road. Following careful consideration of the evidence, we have been persuaded to make changes to our draft recommendations. Our final recommendations revert the northern boundary of Astley Bridge ward to the current ward boundary of Eagley Brook, thereby reuniting the Astley Bridge community in a single ward.

75 In the south of Astley Bridge ward, the Conservative Group argued that the area bounded by Blackburn Road and Crompton Road should be placed in Halliwell to improve electoral equality in Astley Bridge. However, a local resident argued that this area is better represented in Astley Bridge. We also consider Astley Brook to be a clear and identifiable southern boundary for Astley Bridge ward. We were therefore not convinced to adopt this change.

76 Our final recommendations for Astley Bridge will provide for good electoral equality, with 10% more electors than the borough average by 2027.

Bradshaw and Bromley Cross

77 We received seven submissions regarding this area from the Labour Group, Conservative Group, Bolton North East Conservative Association and four residents.

78 The Labour Group and four local residents all supported our proposed Bradshaw & Bromley Cross ward. However, due to the changes to Astley Bridge ward outlined above, our proposed South Turton ward would consequently have an electoral variance of -19%. We do not consider that the evidence received justifies this high level of electoral inequality and are therefore making changes to both South Turton and Bradshaw & Bromley Cross wards.

79 Our final recommendations are for a Bromley Cross ward (previously South Turton ward in our draft recommendations) that extends east over the railway line to reflect the evidence received from the Conservative Group and Bolton North East Conservative Association. They argued that Turton Road should be used as the boundary between Bromley Cross ward and a Bradshaw ward, stating that residents on the western side of the road use facilities and schools over the railway line and are linked by proposed developments behind this area. They further argued that a boundary along Turton Road would allow Bradshaw facilities to be located within a Bradshaw ward, including the cricket club, and that electors on the eastern side of Turton Road have links to Bradshaw through footpaths off Rigby Lane and Printers Lane.

80 We consider that using Turton Road as the boundary between Bradshaw and Bromley Cross wards allows for key Bradshaw amenities and areas to be placed in Bradshaw ward, such as the cricket club, tennis club, Longsight Park and the area of Timberbottom. We also consider that Turton Road provides for good connectivity between residents east of the railway line and the rest of our Bromley Cross ward.

81 Due to the changing boundaries of these two wards, we are reverting to the current names of Bradshaw ward and Bromley Cross ward, as suggested by the Conservative Group and Bolton North East Conservative Association.

82 The Conservative Group proposed that Hall i' th' Wood be placed in Bromley Cross ward. The Bolton North East Conservative Association argued that residents of Hall i' th' Wood use the facilities located along Tonge Moor Road and as such are more closely linked with Tonge with the Haulgh ward, though also accept that Hall i' th' Wood could be placed in Bromley Cross ward. Conversely, a local resident stated that Hall i' th' Wood is more closely linked to Bradshaw and Harwood and the Labour Group support its inclusion in Astley Bridge ward.

83 Placing Hall i' th' Wood in either the modified Astley Bridge ward or Tonge with the Haulgh ward would result in forecast electoral variances of 23% and 15%, respectively, by 2027. While placing Hall i' th' Wood in Bromley Cross ward would result in good electoral equality for Bromley Cross, Bradshaw ward would have an electoral variance of -19%. In order provide for better levels of electoral equality for Bradshaw ward, the Conservative Group and Bolton North East Conservative Association suggested placing Top o' th' Brow back into Bradshaw ward from Brightmet ward. We were not convinced to make this change as we consider our proposed Brightmet ward accurately reflects local communities within the ward. Therefore, in order to provide for good electoral equality for all of the north-eastern wards, we are placing Hall i' th' Wood in Bradshaw ward. This reflects the evidence we have heard that residents in this area access facilities and public transport along Tonge Moor Road and have links with Bradshaw and Harwood, while also providing electoral equality for Bradshaw ward.

84 With these changes, both Bradshaw and Bromley Cross ward would have good levels of electoral equality. Bradshaw and Bromley Cross wards are forecast to have 6% and 4% fewer electors than the borough average by 2027, respectively.

Smithills

85 We received six submissions regarding this area from the Labour Group, Conservative Group, Bolton Liberal Democrats (Heaton & Lostock and Smithills Branch), Councillor Silvester and two residents.

86 A local resident argued that our proposed boundary between Smithills ward and Halliwell ward along Ivy Road split the community of Cope Bank. They instead proposed that the boundary should revert to the current ward boundary along Valletts Lane. We consider that Valletts Lane provides a clear boundary and reflects community identity in this area. We are therefore proposing to adopt this change as part of our final recommendations, thereby uniting Cope Bank in Smithills ward.

87 The Smithills Estate Residents' Association stated that they represent some residents currently located in Horwich North ward and as such Smithills ward should be extended to include these properties. While we are sympathetic to this request, this would mean creating a parish ward within Horwich parish with under 30 electors in order to move these properties from Horwich North ward to Smithills ward. We consider this an unviable parish ward and as such are unable to make this change.⁷

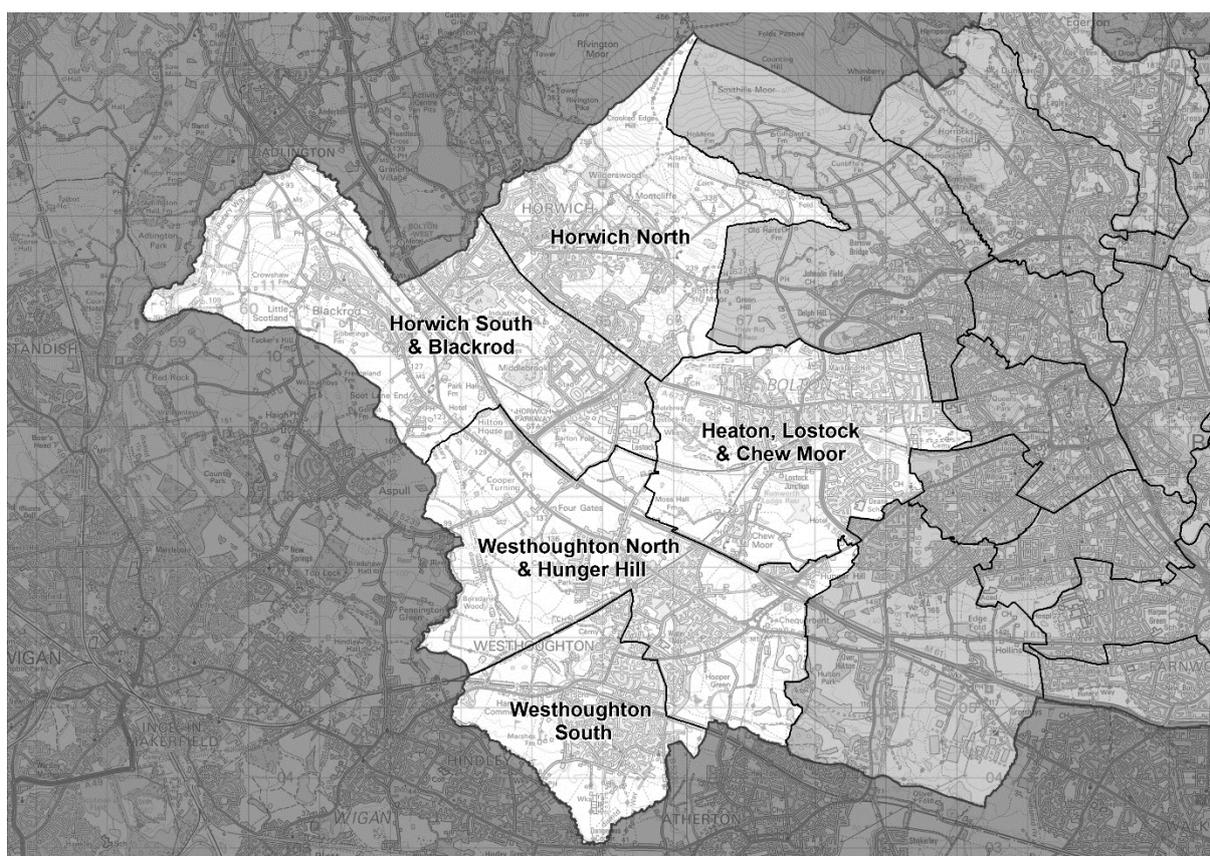
88 As discussed in the Heaton, Lostock & Chew Moor section, we were persuaded to revert the boundary between Heaton, Lostock & Chew Moor ward and Smithills ward to Devonshire Road in order to unite Heaton in a single ward and use a stronger boundary.

89 The Liberal Democrats, Councillor Silvester and a local resident all made a submission regarding the name of this ward. The Conservative Group, Liberal Democrats and a local resident argued that this ward should be named Smithills, whereas Councillor Silvester suggested that this ward should be named Heaton North & Smithills. Following the changes we have made to run the boundary along Devonshire Road, the Conservative Group argued that as this area of north Heaton has been removed from Smithills ward, the ward name should revert to Smithills. Following consideration of the evidence, we have been persuaded to revert to the name Smithills for this ward as we consider that this more accurately reflects the community present within this ward.

90 Subject to these changes, we confirm our draft recommendations for Smithills ward as final. This ward is forecast to have 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.

West Bolton



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Heaton, Lostock & Chew Moor	3	9%
Horwich North	3	7%
Horwich South & Blackrod	3	1%
Westhoughton North & Hunger Hill	3	1%
Westhoughton South	3	0%

Horwich North and Horwich South & Blackrod

91 We received five submissions regarding this area from the Labour Group, Conservative Group, Councillor Silvester and two residents.

92 The Labour Group and Conservative Group both supported our draft recommendations for this ward.

93 Councillor Silvester commented on the proposed parish wards for Horwich parish. They proposed we rename the newly created Old Station Park and Lostock Park parish wards Central and Fall Birch parish wards, respectively. We are adopting these names as part of our final recommendations as we consider they are more identifiable for local people. Councillor Silvester further suggested renaming the current Bridge parish ward and redrawing the parish ward boundaries. We have not

been convinced to make any further changes to the parish wards in Horwich and note that both the renaming and redrawing of existing parish wards can be undertaken following the completion of the electoral review through a Community Governance Review.

94 We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Horwich North and Horwich South & Blackrod wards as final.

Heaton, Lostock & Chew Moor

95 We received six submissions regarding this ward from the Labour Group, Conservative Group, Councillor Silvester and three residents.

96 The Conservative Group and a local resident stated that Chew Moor is separate from Lostock and as such should be placed in a ward with Westhoughton North. Conversely, the Labour Group, Councillor Silvester and a local resident defined Chew Moor as part of Lostock, supporting our draft recommendations. Following careful consideration of the evidence received, we are of the view that our draft recommendations provide for the best balance of our statutory criteria and that Chew Moor should be placed in a ward with Lostock.

97 The Conservative Group and a local resident both stated that Devonshire Road should be used as the boundary between Heaton, Lostock & Chew Moor ward and Smithills ward. The resident argued that this provides for a clearer boundary and the Conservative Group stated that this change would mean Heaton would be united in a single ward. We have been persuaded to make this change and Devonshire Road will continue to be the ward boundary between Heaton, Lostock & Chew Moor ward and Smithills ward.

98 As discussed in paragraph 57, we were not persuaded to use Wigan Road as the boundary between Heaton, Lostock & Chew Moor ward and Hulton ward as this would result in an electoral variance of 14% for Heaton, Lostock & Chew Moor ward.

99 Regarding the name of this ward, we received proposals from the Conservative Group, Liberal Democrats, Councillor Silvester and a local resident. The Conservative Group proposed to retain the current ward name of Heaton & Lostock as they proposed to move Chew Moor into a ward with Westhoughton. The Liberal Democrats argued the Heaton means little to local residents and that the ward should be named Lostock & Chew Moor. Councillor Silvester proposed the name Heaton South & Lostock, stating that as Chew Moor is a sub-part of Lostock, it does not need to be included in the ward name. Finally, a local resident proposed Heaton, Lostock & Chew Moor. We carefully considered all of the options proposed and have concluded that Heaton, Lostock & Chew Moor would best reflect the communities present within this ward.

100 Subject to these changes, we confirm our draft recommendations for Heaton, Lostock & Chew Moor as final. This ward is forecast to have 9% more electors than the borough average by 2027.

Westhoughton North & Hunger Hill and Westhoughton South

101 We received five submissions regarding this area from the Labour Group, Conservative Group and three local residents. The Labour Group supported our draft recommendations.

102 The Conservative Group argued that the boundary between Westhoughton North & Hunger Hill ward and Westhoughton South ward should continue to run along King Street and Lord Street. They stated that any change in this boundary would cause confusion due to development being undertaken in the town centre. However, we do not consider the boundary along King Street and Lord Street to be clear and identifiable and consider that the proposed boundary along Market Street and Church Street provides a stronger boundary for local residents. We are therefore not adopting this suggested change.

103 As discussed above in the Heaton, Lostock & Chew Moor section, we were not persuaded to include Chew Moor in Westhoughton North & Hunger Hill ward.

104 We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for Westhoughton North & Hunger Hill and Westhoughton South wards as final. Westhoughton North & Hunger Hill is forecast to have an electoral variance of 1% more electors than the borough average by 2027. Westhoughton South is forecast to have an electoral variance equal to the borough average by 2027.

Conclusions

105 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our final 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

	Final 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	3	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Final recommendations

Bolton Council should be made up of 60 councillors serving 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 final recommendations for Bolton Council on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Parish electoral arrangements

106 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.

107 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.

108 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.

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

Final recommendations

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

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Brazley	2
Bridge	2
Central	1
Church	2
Claypool	2
Fall Birch	1
Lever Park	2
Vale	2

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

Final recommendations

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

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Central	4
Chequerbent	1
Daisy Hill	4
Hoskers & Hart Common	2
White Horse	5
Wingates	2

What happens next?

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

Equalities

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

Appendices

Appendix A

Final recommendations for Bolton Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2020)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Astley Bridge	3	11,506	3,835	13%	11,788	3,929	10%
2	Bradshaw	3	9,763	3,254	-4%	10,046	3,349	-6%
3	Brightmet	3	10,598	3,533	4%	10,864	3,621	2%
4	Bromley Cross	3	9,847	3,282	-3%	10,229	3,410	-4%
5	Farnworth North	3	9,776	3,259	-4%	10,077	3,359	-6%
6	Farnworth South	3	9,276	3,092	-9%	9,585	3,195	-10%
7	Great Lever	3	10,701	3,567	5%	11,223	3,741	5%
8	Halliwel	3	9,942	3,314	-2%	10,133	3,378	-5%
9	Heaton, Lostock & Chew Moor	3	11,281	3,760	11%	11,595	3,865	9%
10	Horwich North	3	11,054	3,685	9%	11,391	3,797	7%
11	Horwich South & Blackrod	3	9,286	3,095	-9%	10,834	3,611	1%
12	Hulton	3	10,409	3,470	2%	11,035	3,678	3%

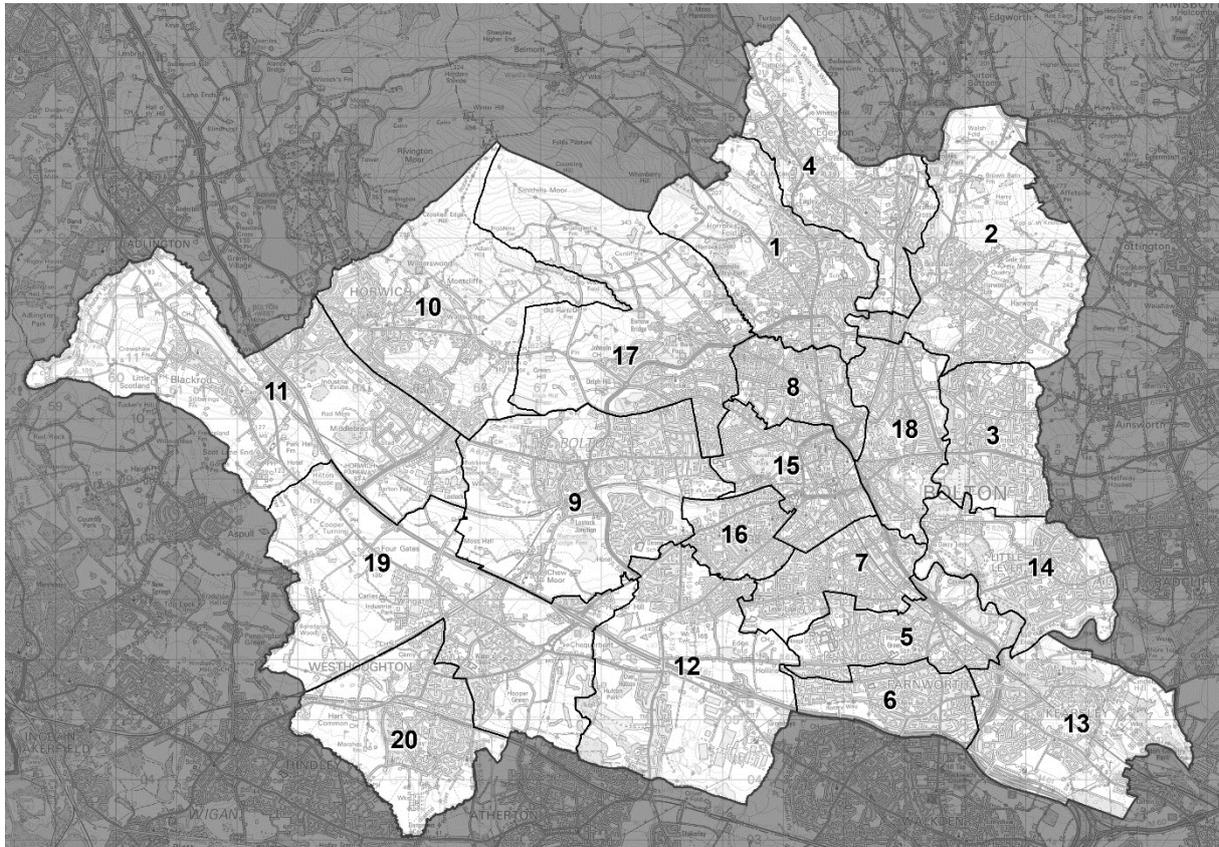
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2020)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13 Kearsley	3	9,170	3,057	-10%	9,482	3,161	-11%
14 Little Lever & Darcy Lever	3	9,618	3,206	-5%	9,898	3,299	-7%
15 Queens Park & Central	3	8,926	2,975	-12%	11,170	3,723	5%
16 Rumworth	3	11,021	3,674	8%	11,260	3,753	5%
17 Smithills	3	10,497	3,499	3%	10,773	3,591	1%
18 Tonge with the Haulgh	3	10,754	3,585	6%	10,918	3,639	2%
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 Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the 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
3	Brightmet
4	Bromley Cross
5	Farnworth North
6	Farnworth South
7	Great Lever
8	Halliwell
9	Heaton, Lostock & Chew Moor
10	Horwich North
11	Horwich South & Blackrod
12	Hulton
13	Kearsley
14	Little Lever & Darcy Lever
15	Queens Park & Central
16	Rumworth
17	Smithills
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

- Bolton Conservative Group
- Bolton Labour Group
- Bolton Liberal Democrats (Heaton & Lostock and Smithills Branch)
- Bolton North East Conservative Association

Councillors

- Councillor M. Ayub
- Councillor H. Fairclough
- Councillor S. Haworth (two submissions)
- Councillor P. Heslop
- Councillor T. Hewitt
- Councillor H. Khurram
- Councillor C. Mistry
- Councillor S. Rimmer
- Councillor R. Silvester (two submissions)
- Councillor J. Walsh

Local Organisations

- Friends of Longfellow Avenue
- Masjid-e-Salaam & Madrassa Trust
- Smithills Estate Residents' Association

Local Residents

- 156 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 inequality	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority.
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. We only take account of electors registered specifically for local elections during our reviews.
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents

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

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

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