

New electoral arrangements for Gravesham Borough Council Draft Recommendations

November 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 Gravesham?

7 We are conducting a review of Gravesham Borough Council ('the Council') as some councillors currently represent many more or fewer electors than others. This is 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where the number of electors per councillor 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 Gravesham 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 Gravesham

9 Gravesham should be represented by 39 councillors, five fewer than there are now.

10 Gravesham should have 16 wards, two fewer than there are now.

11 The boundaries of all but one ward should change.

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.

Have your say

14 We will consult on the draft recommendations for a 10-week period, from 2 November 2021 to 10 January 2022. 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 10 January 2022 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 22 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 Gravesham. 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
18 May 2021	Number of councillors decided
25 May 2021	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
2 August 2021	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
2 November 2021	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
10 January 2022	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
29 March 2022	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and draft recommendations

19 Legislation² states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors³ 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.

	2021	2027
Electorate of Gravesham	76,069	85,994
Number of councillors	39	39
Average number of electors per councillor	1,950	2,205

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'. All of our proposed wards for Gravesham 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 2027, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2022. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 13% by 2027.

25 We considered the information provided by the Council and are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our draft recommendations.

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

³ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

Number of councillors

26 Gravesham Borough Council currently has 44 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and concluded that decreasing this number by five 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 39 councillors: for example, 39 one-councillor wards, 13 three-councillor wards, or a mix of one-, two- and three-councillor wards.

28 We received three submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. Two of the submissions argued the number of councillors ought to be reduced further but did not offer further reasoning in support of this position. One submission argued the number of councillors ought to be increased but based this position on the expected increase in the electorate. However, council size is determined through a consideration of several factors, including the Council's governance arrangements and the means by which councillors interact with electors, both of which have changed considerably since the last review was completed in 2001. We have therefore based our draft recommendations on a 39-councillor council.

Ward boundaries consultation

29 We received 21 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included three borough-wide proposals from the Council, Gravesham Conservatives ('the Conservatives') and a resident. A partial scheme of the rural areas beyond Gravesend was submitted by Vigo Parish Council. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the borough.

30 The three borough-wide schemes provided mixed patterns of one-, two- and three-councillor wards for Gravesham. Of these, only the resident's scheme provided good electoral equality for all wards, although it also included proposals for two four-councillor rural wards. While there is no upper limit in legislation regarding the number of councillors that may be returned from each ward or division, we take the view that wards or divisions returning more than three councillors result in a dilution of accountability to the electorate and we will not normally recommend a number above that figure. However, we have adopted the resident's scheme for Gravesend, with minor variations, in our draft recommendations.

31 The Council's submission, by its own reckoning, included three wards with poor electoral equality, which increases to four by our calculation. This discrepancy may be explained by the fact that the total forecast electors in the Council's submission came to 729 more than the actual forecast. Nevertheless, we have adopted the

scheme's boundary between Meopham North and Meopham South & Vigo wards in our draft recommendations.

32 The Conservatives' scheme also contained some numerical discrepancies, which are partly explained in the submission by their disputing the Council's forecast in Meopham and by having to estimate elector numbers in split polling districts. Nonetheless, we have been unable to account for the discrepancies for the proposed Pelham and Singlewell wards, which we calculate to have 24% and 25% more electors than the borough average, respectively, while the Conservatives' calculations are 7% and 9% greater than the borough average, respectively. However, we have adopted the Conservatives' proposal for Istead Rise, Cobham & Luddesdown ward in our draft recommendations, with minor variations.

33 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.

34 Given the travel restrictions, and the social distancing, arising from the Covid-19 outbreak, we took a detailed virtual tour of Gravesham. This helped to clarify issues raised in submissions and assisted in the construction of our recommendations.

Draft recommendations

35 Our draft recommendations are for seven three-councillor wards and nine two-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.

36 The tables and maps on pages 9–18 detail our draft recommendations for each area of Gravesham. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁴ criteria of:

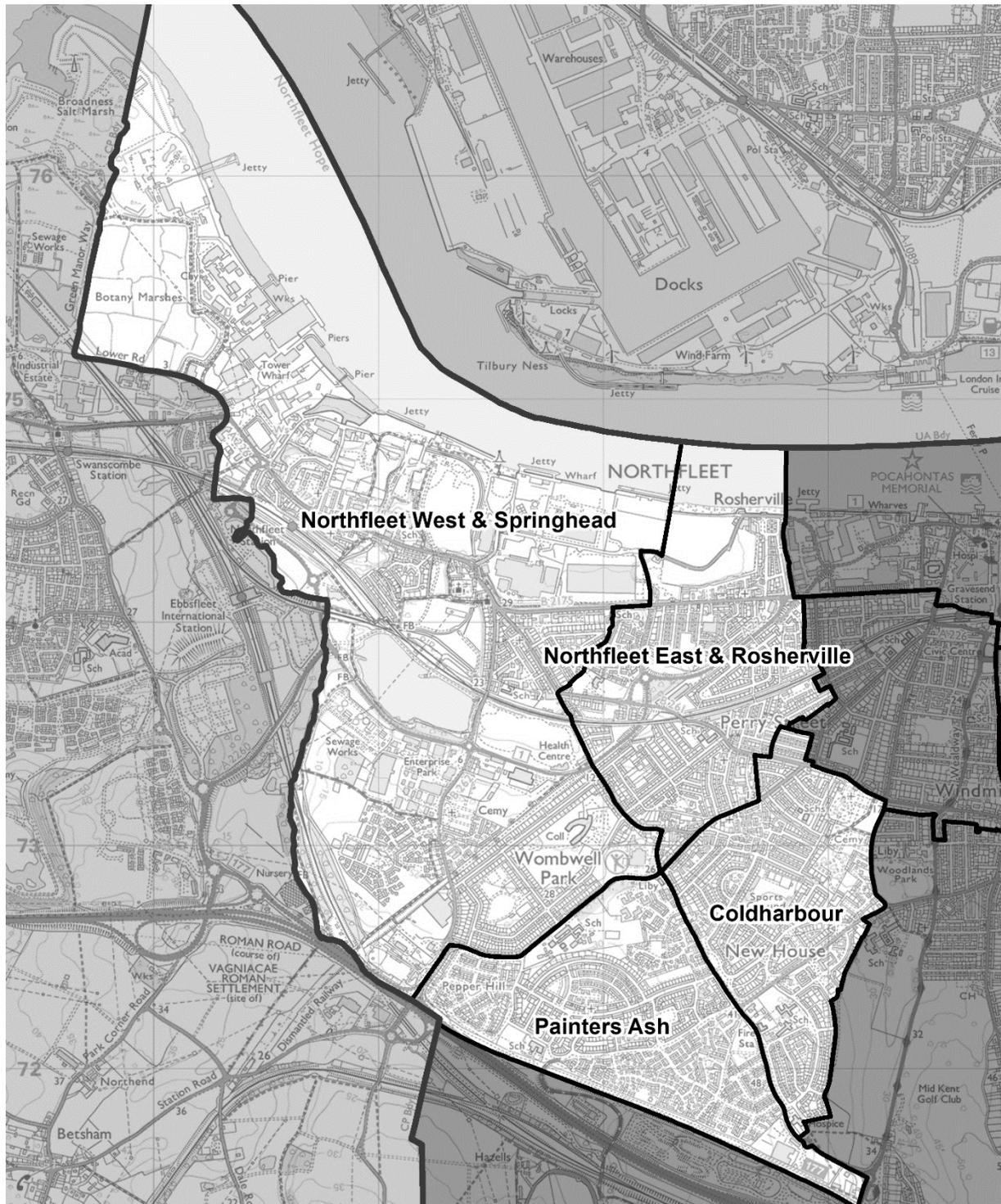
- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

37 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 27 and on the large map accompanying this report.

⁴ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

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

Northfleet



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Coldharbour	2	4%
Northfleet East & Rosherville	3	2%
Northfleet West & Springhead	3	2%
Painters Ash	2	2%

Coldharbour, Northfleet East & Rosherville and Northfleet West & Springhead

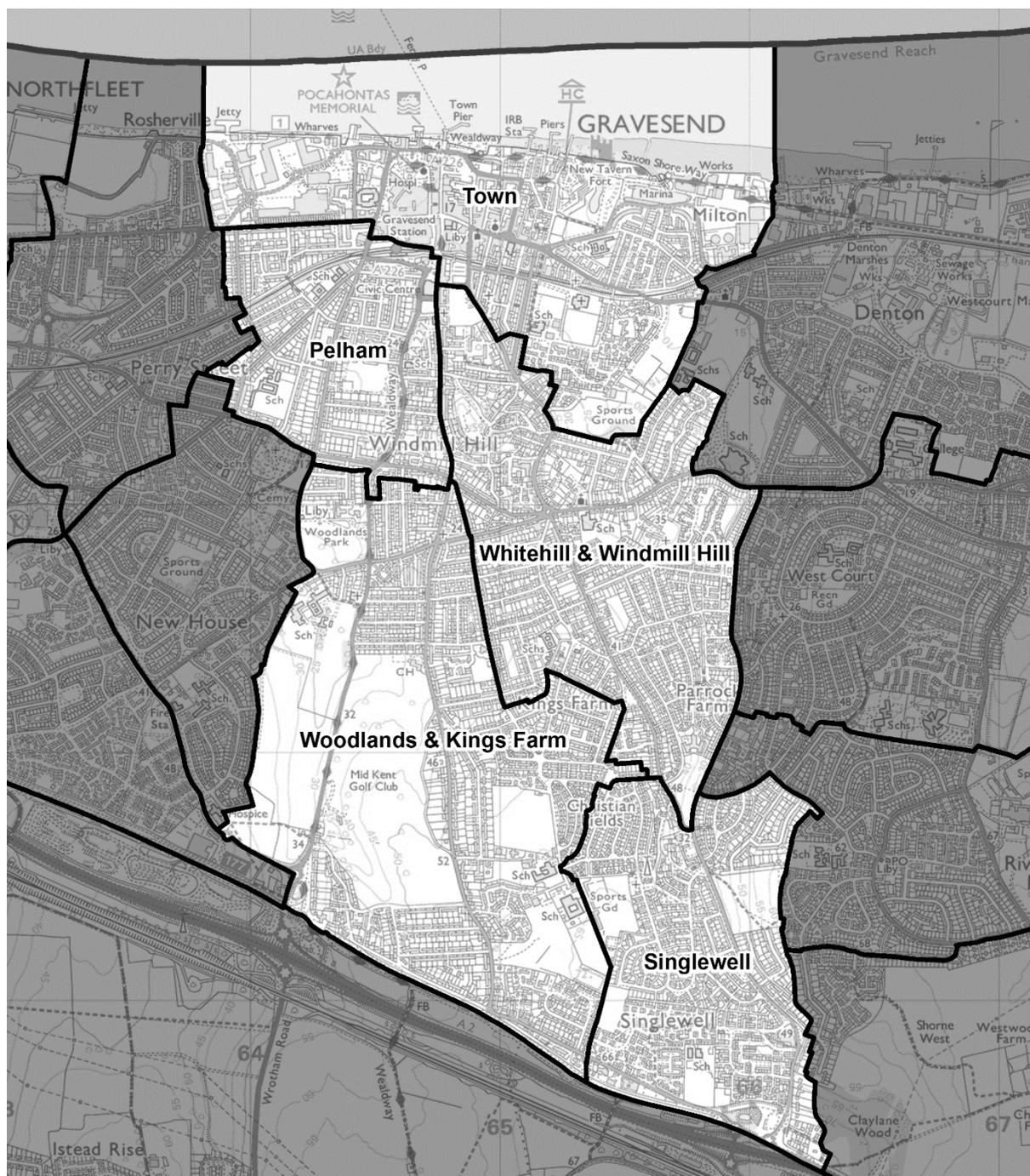
39 Of the three schemes received for this area, only the resident's had good electoral equality for all wards, and so we have adopted these proposals in our draft recommendations. We calculated the Council's Northfleet East ward – made up of the eastern end of the existing Northfleet North ward east of Granby Road and The Hill, including everything west of Rosherville Way plus Laburnum Grove, Burch Road, Pier Road, and West Mill – to have an electoral variance of -15%. We also calculated that its Northfleet South and Coldharbour wards to have acceptable but marginal variances of -9% and 9%, respectively.

40 The Conservatives' Rosherville ward was similar to the Council's Northfleet East ward but included the area between Laburnum Grove, Rosherville Way and Dover Road and excluded Burch Road, Chestnut Road, Lansdowne Square, Pier Road, and West Mill. The Conservatives proposed Rosherville and Northfleet wards would have good electoral equality at -3% and -1%, respectively. However, we calculated that its Perry Street ward – made up of the existing Coldharbour ward with the addition of The Downage, Farmcroft, and the area north of the ward between the railway, the B261, Vale Road and Thames Way – to have an electoral variance of 11%. Given this variance, we have therefore not adopted these proposals.

Painters Ash

41 The Council and Conservative proposals for Painters Ash were identical to the existing ward but with the southern boundary moved down to the middle of the A2 and the number of councillors reduced from three to two. For reasons detailed in paragraph 56, we have not changed the boundary of the ward, though we have reduced the ward's representation to two councillors. The resident's scheme included Painters Ash in a four-councillor Painters Ash & Istead Rise ward with a variance of -9% but, as explained in paragraph 30, we do not normally recommend wards that elect more than three councillors. Our proposed ward will have a variance of 2% by 2027.

Gravesend West



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Pelham	2	4%
Singlewell	2	6%
Town	3	-7%
Whitehill & Windmill Hill	3	5%
Woodlands & Kings Farm	3	7%

Pelham, Town and Whitehill & Windmill Hill

42 Of the three schemes we received for this area, only the resident's provided good electoral equality for all wards. The Council's proposals made minor changes to the existing Pelham and Central wards. It proposed including the area of Riverside ward north of Milton Road and west of Norfolk Road and Russell Road in Central ward, while moving the area south of Old Road East west of Whitehill Road in its proposed Whitehill ward. The Council proposed that the east side of Windmill Street between the railway line and Clarence Place be included in its Town ward, and Burch Road, Chestnut Road, Lansdowne Square, Pier Road, and West Mill move from Pelham ward into Northfleet East ward. Kings Drive, Kitchener Avenue, Lancaster Court, Princes Road and Queens Road were moved from Whitehill to Singlewell wards. However, we calculated an 11% variance for the proposed Whitehill ward, and noted that the Conservatives' and resident's scheme had succeeded in uniting the town centre into a Town ward, so did not adopt these proposals.

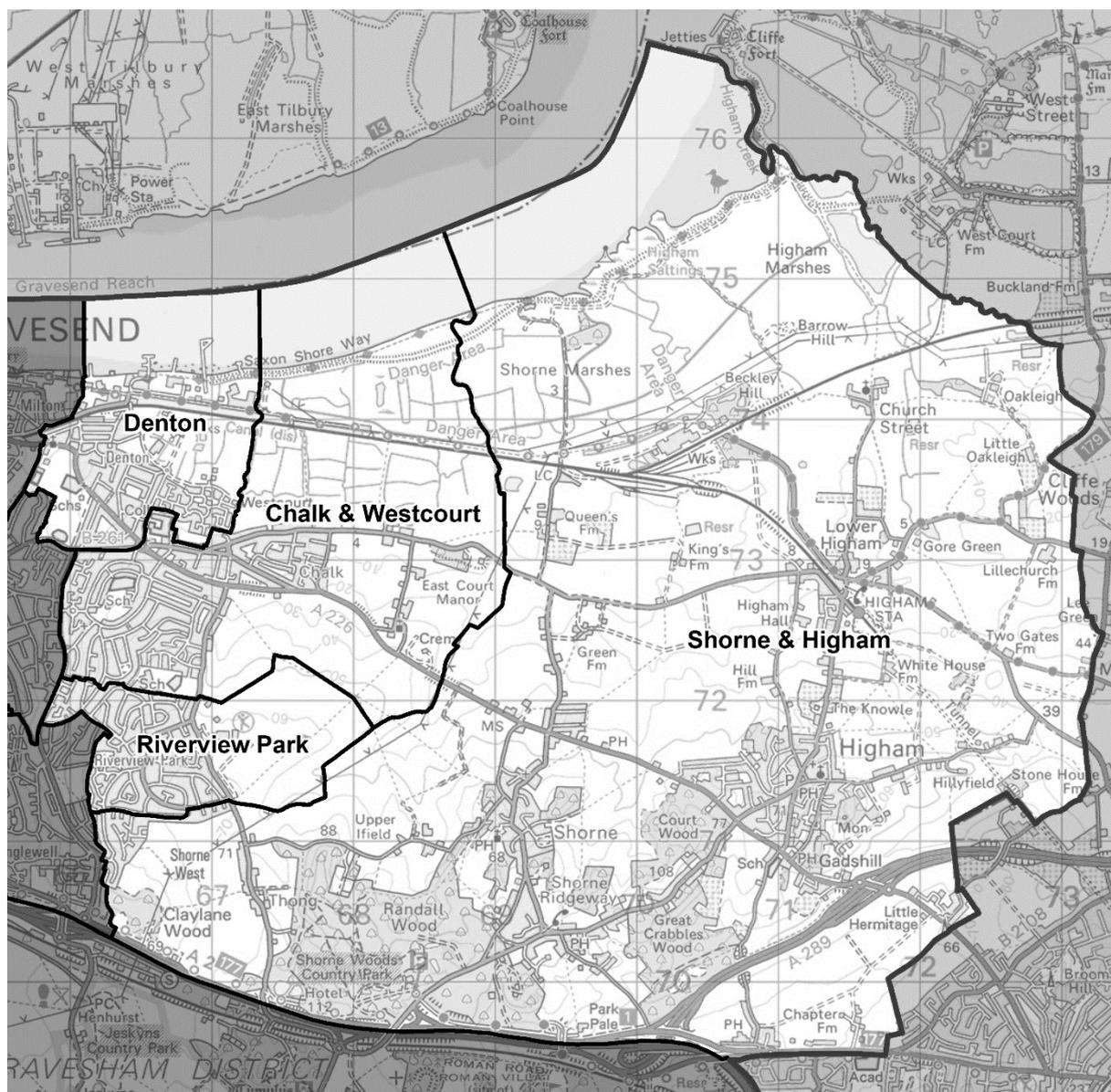
43 The Conservatives' and resident's proposals for these wards had many similarities, and we considered that the creation of a Town ward to unite the town centre – currently split between Pelham and Central wards – better reflected community interests. However, we calculated a 25% electoral variance in the Conservatives' Pelham ward, so have adopted the resident's scheme in our draft recommendations, with minor variations. The resident's scheme uses the middle of Old Road West as the boundary between the proposed Pelham and Woodlands & Kings Farm wards, producing variances of -1% and 10%, respectively. To create better electoral equality in Woodlands & Kings Farm, we have included both sides of Old Road West in Pelham ward, resulting in variances of 4% and 7%, respectively.

44 The resident's scheme also placed Gravesend Grammar School within the proposed Whitehill & Windmill Hill ward. However, on our virtual tour, we were able to see that the entrance to the school is on East Milton Road in the proposed Denton ward. We have therefore included Gravesend Grammar School in Denton ward in our draft recommendations.

Singlewell and Woodlands & Kings Farm

45 All three schemes in this area had broadly similar boundaries but the resident's proposals were again the only ones in which all wards had good electoral equality. We calculated the Council's two-councillor Woodlands ward, similar to the existing ward but without the area north of Cross Lane West, to have an 11% electoral variance, while we calculated the Conservatives' Singlewell ward to have a variance of 24%. We have therefore adopted the resident's proposals in our draft recommendations.

Gravesend East, Higham and Shorne



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Chalk & Westcourt	3	-7%
Denton	2	-3%
Riverview Park	2	-1%
Shorne & Higham	3	-10%

Chalk & Westcourt

46 We received one submission regarding Chalk from a resident in addition to the schemes submitted. This submission described Chalk in detail, as well as its history as a civil parish before 1935, which was made up of much of the existing Chalk and Westcourt wards. This submission recommended either combining these existing wards or combining the existing Chalk ward with Shorne and Cobham parishes.

While the latter would result in a variance of 16% in a two-councillor ward and -23% in a three-councillor ward, the former would result in a 5% variance.

47 The Council and Conservative schemes each made minor changes to the existing Chalk and Westcourt wards, both of which produced good electoral equality. The resident's scheme has instead combined the existing wards, with the exception of Beltana Drive, Cerne Road, Dorset Crescent, Pankhurst Place, St Patrick's Gardens and the adjacent areas of St Hilda's Way and St Dunstan's Drive. These were placed in Riverview Park ward on the basis that they more properly belong to that community. This produces an electoral variance of -7%. On the basis that the resident's scheme was the only one to produce good electoral quality across the urban area of Northfleet and Gravesend, and because this configuration is supported by local evidence, we have adopted this proposal in our draft recommendations.

Denton

48 The Council's, Conservatives' and resident's schemes made similar proposals for Denton. Our draft recommendations for Denton are based on the resident's proposals. The Council's proposals for a Riverside & Denton ward were similar to our draft recommendations with the addition of Admirals Way, Albion Parade, Canal Road, the east side of Russell Road and Suffolk Road. However, we calculated this ward to have an 11% electoral variance, so did not adopt it. The Conservatives' proposals were almost identical to our draft recommendations with the addition of housing between Prospect Grove and Milton Road, with a variance of 2%. As our adjacent Town ward has a variance of -7%, we have adopted the resident's proposals so as not to worsen electoral inequality in this ward.

Riverview Park

49 The proposed wards in the Council, Conservative, and resident schemes were broadly similar for the Riverview Park area though, as previously mentioned, preference was given to the resident's scheme in the urban area of the borough due to it providing uniformly good electoral equality. The Council scheme added Beltana Drive, Cerne Road, Dorset Crescent, St David's Crescent, St George's Crescent, The Drive, The Rise, The Warren, Dobson Road, Read Way and Stacey Close to the existing ward, producing a -2% variance. The Conservatives added only Beltana Drive, Cerne Road, Dorset Crescent, The Drive, The Rise and The Warren, producing a -4% variance.

50 The resident's scheme instead added Beltana Drive, Cerne Road, Dorset Crescent, Pankhurst Place, St Patrick's Gardens and the adjacent areas of St Hilda's Way and St Dunstan's Drive to the existing ward, resulting in a -1% electoral variance. While we recognise that the Council and Conservative submissions have stated that the roads they have added are part of the Riverview Park community, we note that these changes would result in poor electoral equality for adjoining area, and have therefore adopted the resident's proposals in our draft recommendations.

However, we would particularly welcome responses to our proposed wards in this area during the current consultation.

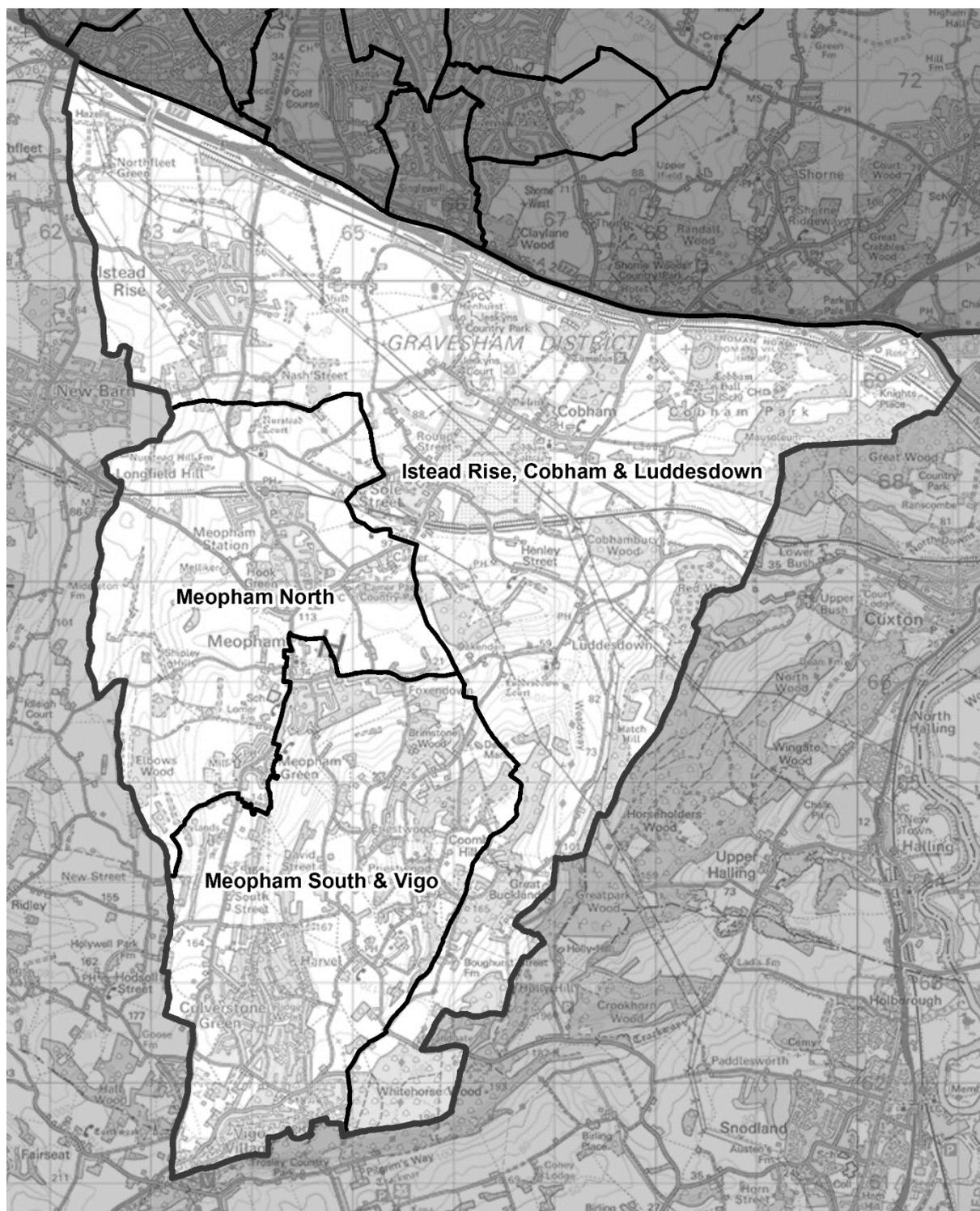
Shorne & Higham

51 We received two submissions regarding Shorne and Higham in addition to the schemes submitted. One, from Cllr Steve Dyer of Cobham Parish Council, suggested including Shorne and Higham parishes in a three-councillor ward with Cobham and Luddesdown parishes. This arrangement was also in the resident's scheme. While this produces an acceptable electoral variance of 9%, the resulting ward would occupy almost half of the borough's geographic area and run along its entire eastern boundary. We were concerned that the size of the proposed ward would make it difficult for elected members to represent and would not be conducive to effective and convenient local government. We have therefore not adopted this proposal in our draft recommendations.

52 The other submission, from Shorne Parish Council, proposed that Shorne be represented as its own ward with one councillor. This was also included in the Council's scheme. While this produces a good electoral variance of -1%, it necessarily leaves Higham as its own two-councillor ward, with a poor electoral variance of -15%. We did not consider there to be enough community evidence in the Council's or any other submission to justify this poor level of electoral equality, and have therefore not adopted the proposal in our draft recommendations.

53 Vigo Parish Council's scheme grouped Higham and Shorne parishes into a single two-councillor ward, with the exception of the area of Shorne parish west of Thong. While we appreciate the possible reasons for this exclusion – the area is essentially an urban overspill of Riverview Park and separated from Thong by a large uninhabited area – this results in a -18% electoral variance for the ward. We have not therefore adopted this proposal. The Conservative scheme adopted a similar approach but included both parishes in their entirety in a three-councillor ward, resulting in an electoral variance of -10%. We consider this to be the only proposal for the area which satisfies our three statutory criteria in that it results in reasonable electoral equality while reflecting the pattern of communities in the area. We have therefore adopted it in our draft recommendations.

South Gravesham



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Istead Rise, Cobham & Luddesdown	2	9%
Meopham North	2	-2%
Meopham South & Vigo	2	-4%

Istead Rise, Cobham & Luddesdown

54 We received five submissions in relation to this area in addition to the schemes submitted. These included one from Shorne Parish Council, one from a resident, and three from parish councillors: Cllrs Noel Clark and Anne Moorhouse from Luddesdown Parish Council and Cllr Steve Dyer from Cobham Parish Council. The submissions from the parish councillors emphasised the close community links between Cobham and Luddesdown parishes, with Cllr Armstrong noting that 60% of Luddesdown residents live one mile from Cobham, on which they are reliant for their amenities.

55 Of the schemes we received, only the Conservatives' and the resident's included both Cobham and Luddesdown parishes in the same ward. The Council's scheme included a two-councillor Istead & Cobham ward with a 5% electoral variance. This ward would be made up of Cobham parish and Istead Rise – the unparished area south of the A2. The Council also proposed a two-councillor Meopham South, Vigo & Luddesdown ward with a 0% variance, made up of Luddesdown parish and the existing Meopham South & Vigo ward with a revised northern boundary. Vigo Parish Council's scheme was similar to the Council's, albeit with the existing boundary between the two Meopham wards. We did not adopt either of these schemes because they split Cobham and Luddesdown parishes between more than one borough ward.

56 As detailed in paragraph 51, we have not adopted the resident's scheme which groups Cobham, Higham, Luddesdown and Shorne parishes in one three-councillor ward. The Conservatives' scheme grouped Cobham and Luddesdown parishes with Istead Rise, moving the boundary with Painters Ash down to the A2, producing a two-councillor ward with an electoral variance of 9%. While we recognise that Istead Rise is a significantly more urbanised and populous area of the borough than either Luddesdown or Cobham, and that the only public road connection is via the A2, we believe this scheme offers the best available balance of our statutory criteria. In particular we were concerned that Cobham and Luddesdown parishes were not separated, given their close community links, and that the ward was geographically manageable for councillors and residents. We have made minor changes to the Conservatives' proposals by moving the northern boundary from the A2 back to its existing position, as well as including the A2 junction within the ward, thus enabling travel between Istead Rise and Cobham without necessitating leaving the ward and re-entering. We would be particularly interested to hear from residents in response to this proposal.

Meopham North and Meopham South & Vigo

57 We received one submission from a resident regarding Meopham in addition to the schemes submitted. This submission suggested that Vigo parish and the village of Harvel be represented by its own ward – though that would result in a -16% electoral variance in a one-councillor ward – but that, if this was not possible, the

existing arrangement was acceptable. As mentioned above, the Council and Vigo Parish Council schemes added Luddesdown parish to the existing Meopham South & Vigo ward – with the Council revising the boundary between the two wards – while the Conservatives maintained the existing boundaries of Meopham North and Meopham South & Vigo wards because they challenged the Council's forecast for the area. We are satisfied with the Council's forecast, however, so the Conservatives' proposals result in variances of 15% for Meopham North and -21% for Meopham South & Vigo.

58 The resident's scheme grouped the two existing wards into one four-councillor ward. While this results in a good variance of -3% we are, as stated previously, not persuaded that wards electing more than three members provides for effective and convenient local government and have therefore not adopted this proposal as part of our draft recommendations.

59 In light of the above, we have adopted the Council's proposals in our draft recommendations, albeit with the exclusion of Luddesdown parish from Meopham South & Vigo ward. Our draft recommendations for Meopham are therefore as the existing wards, with the exception that Cricketers Drive, Pitfield Drive, Steele's Lane, Field Road and the attendant stretches of the A227 have been transferred from Meopham North to Meopham South & Vigo ward. This results in variances of -2% for Meopham North and -4% in Meopham South & Vigo. We consider our recommendations for this area will secure good electoral equality while ensuring that the community identities and interests are reflected.

Conclusions

60 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality in Gravesham, referencing the 2021 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	
	2021	2027
Number of councillors	39	39
Number of electoral wards	16	16
Average number of electors per councillor	1,950	2,205
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	7	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	1	0

Draft recommendations

Gravesham Borough Council should be made up of 39 councillors serving 16 wards representing nine two-councillor wards and seven 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 the Gravesham Borough Council. You can also view our draft recommendations for Gravesham Borough Council on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Parish electoral arrangements

61 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.

62 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, Gravesend Borough 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.

63 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 Meopham.

64 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Meopham Parish Council.

Draft recommendations

Meopham Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Camer & Meopham Green	4
Culverstone & Harvel	4
Nurstead & Hook Green	4

Have your say

65 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.

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

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

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

Review Officer (Gravesham)
LGBCE
PO Box 133
Blyth
NE14 9FE

69 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for Gravesham Borough Council which delivers:

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

70 A good pattern of wards should:

- Provide good electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of electors.
- 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.

71 Electoral equality:

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

72 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?

73 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?

74 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.lqbce.org.uk. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

75 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.

76 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.

77 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 Gravesham Borough Council in 2023.

Equalities

78 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 Gravesham Borough Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Chalk & Westcourt	3	5,928	1,976	1%	6,163	2,054	-7%
2	Coldharbour	2	4,422	2,211	13%	4,568	2,284	4%
3	Denton	2	3,666	1,833	-6%	4,294	2,147	-3%
4	Istead Rise, Cobham & Luddesdown	2	4,070	2,035	4%	4,792	2,396	9%
5	Meopham North	2	2,773	1,387	-29%	4,328	2,164	-2%
6	Meopham South & Vigo	2	4,161	2,081	7%	4,235	2,118	-4%
7	Northfleet East & Rosherville	3	5,405	1,802	-8%	6,740	2,247	2%
8	Northfleet West & Springhead	3	5,503	1,834	-6%	6,727	2,242	2%
9	Painters Ash	2	4,334	2,167	11%	4,484	2,242	2%
10	Pelham	2	4,232	2,116	8%	4,573	2,287	4%
11	Riverview Park	2	4,063	2,032	4%	4,347	2,174	-1%

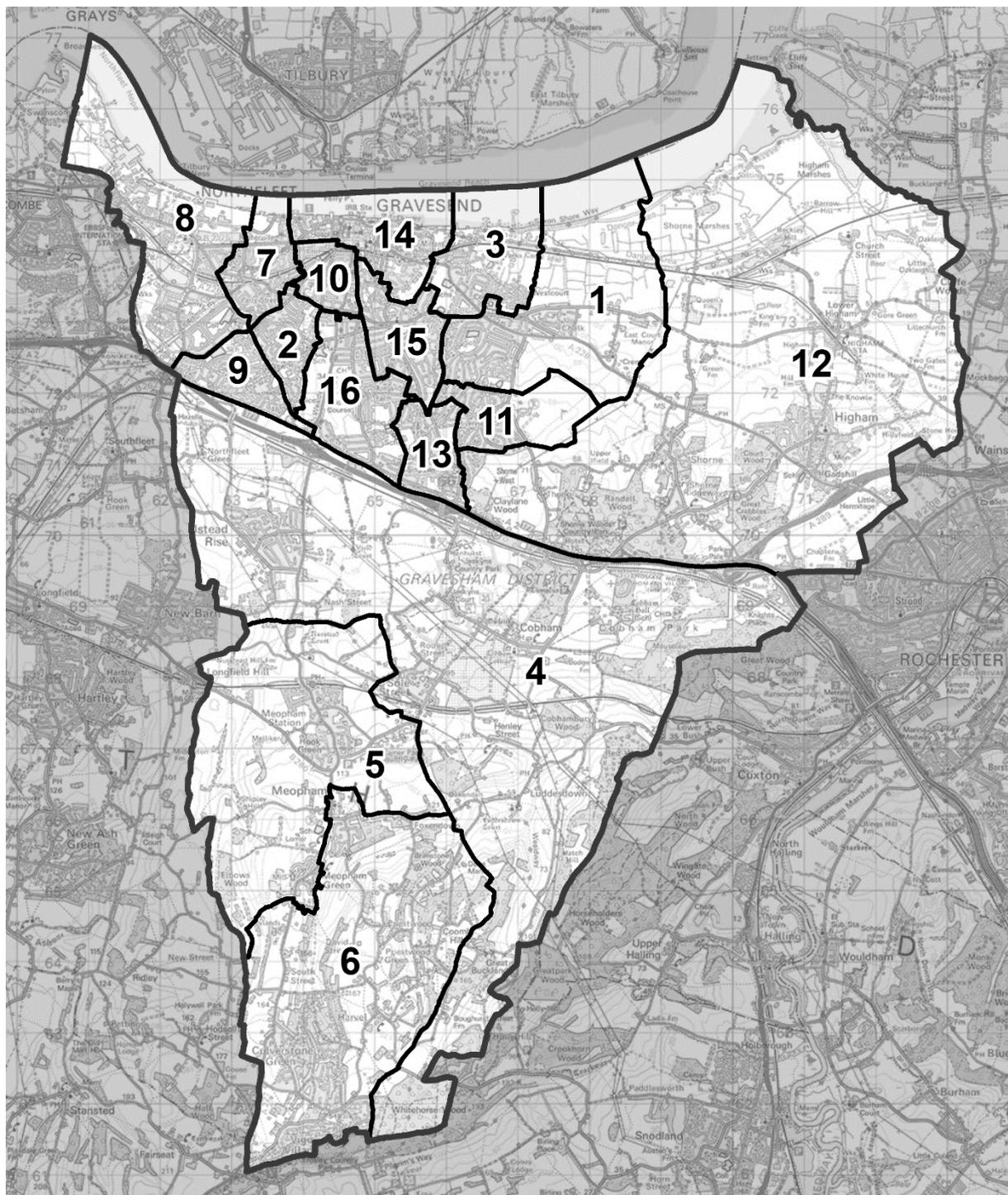
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
12 Shorne & Higham	3	5,154	1,718	-12%	5,933	1,978	-10%
13 Singlewell	2	4,623	2,312	19%	4,653	2,327	6%
14 Town	3	4,928	1,643	-16%	6,176	2,059	-7%
15 Whitehill & Windmill Hill	3	6,674	2,225	14%	6,929	2,310	5%
16 Woodlands & Kings Farm	3	6,133	2,044	5%	7,052	2,351	7%
Totals	39	76,069	–	–	85,994	–	–
Averages	–	–	1,950	–	–	2,205	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Gravesham Borough 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	Chalk & Westcourt
2	Coldharbour
3	Denton
4	Istead Rise, Cobham & Luddesdown

5	Meopham North
6	Meopham South & Vigo
7	Northfleet East & Rosherville
8	Northfleet West & Springhead
9	Painters Ash
10	Pelham
11	Riverview Park
12	Shorne & Higham
13	Singlewell
14	Town
15	Whitehill & Windmill Hill
16	Woodlands & Kings Farm

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/south-east/kent/gravesham

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:
www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/kent/gravesham

Local Authority

- Gravesham Borough Council

Political Groups

- Gravesham Conservatives
- Gravesham Labour Party

Councillors

- Councillor N. Clark (Luddesdown Parish Council)
- Councillor S. Dyer (Cobham Parish Council)
- Councillor B. Lane (Gravesham Borough Council)
- Councillor A. Moorhouse (Luddesdown Parish Council)

Parish and Town Councils

- Shorne Parish Council
- Vigo Parish Council

Local Residents

- 12 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.

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