

New electoral arrangements for Bath and North East Somerset

Final recommendations

August 2018

Translations and other formats

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Summary

Who we are and what we do

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament. 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.

2 Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

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

Why Bath and North East Somerset?

4 We have conducted a review of Bath and North East Somerset as the value of each vote in district council elections varies depending on where you live in Bath and North East Somerset. Some councillors currently represent many more or fewer voters than others. This is 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where votes are as equal as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

Our proposals for Bath and North East Somerset

- Bath and North East Somerset should be represented by 59 councillors, six fewer than there are now.
- Bath and North East Somerset should have 33 wards, four fewer than there are now.
- The boundaries of 28 wards should change, nine will stay the same. These are: High Littleton, Keynsham East, Mendip, Paulton, Peasedown, Publow & Whitchurch, Radstock, Timsbury and Westfield.

5 We have now finalised our recommendations for electoral arrangements for Bath and North East Somerset.

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

6 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament.¹

7 The members of the Commission are:

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

- Chief Executive: Jolyon Jackson CBE

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

1 Introduction

8 This electoral review was carried out to ensure that:

- The wards in Bath and North East Somerset are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- The number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the district.

What is an electoral review?

9 Our three main considerations are to:

- Improve electoral equality by equalising the number of electors each councillor represents
- Reflect community identity
- Provide for effective and convenient local government

10 Our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Consultation

11 We wrote to the Council to ask for its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Bath and North East Somerset. We then held three periods of consultation on warding patterns for the district. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft, further draft and final recommendations.

12 This review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
18 July 2017	Number of councillors decided
25 July 2017	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
2 October 2017	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
5 December 2017	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
19 February 2018	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
15 May 2018	Publication of further draft recommendations for the city of Bath; start of third consultation
11 June 2018	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations for the city
7 August 2018	Publication of final recommendations

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 town council ward you vote in. Your ward name may also change.

2 Analysis and final recommendations

14 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.

15 In completing our review, we have not been able to create wards with exactly the same number of electors in each; we have been flexible in order to balance the considerations listed in paragraph 9. However, we have sought to keep the number of electors represented by each councillor as close to the average for the council as possible.

16 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.

	2017	2023
Electorate of Bath and North East Somerset	133,162	139,679
Number of councillors	59	59
Average number of electors per councillor	2,257	2,367

17 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 but one of our proposed wards for Bath and North East Somerset will have good electoral equality by 2023. We consider that Bathavon North ward, while having an electoral variance of 11%, reflects community identity and provides for effective and convenient local government in Bathampton, Batheaston and Bathford parishes. However, were we to include Kelston and North Stoke parishes in Bathavon North, as we were requested to do, then the ward would have 15% more electors per councillor than the average for the district. We do not consider that such a high level of electoral inequality is justifiable.

18 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the district 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 were not able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Submissions received

19 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed at our offices by appointment, or on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

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.

Electorate figures

20 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2023, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2018. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 5% by 2023.

21 We examined 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 final recommendations.

Number of councillors

22 Bath and North East Somerset Council currently has 65 councillors. The Council proposed that the total number of councillors be reduced to 59. This proposal was supported by the Liberal Democrat Group. The Liberal Democrat Group presented reasons for their conclusion and argued that the number of councillors should not be reduced by more than six. We have looked at evidence provided by both the Council the Liberal Democrat Group and have concluded that reducing the number of councillors by six will ensure that the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

23 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 59 councillors – for example, 59 one-councillor wards, or a mix of one-, two- and three-councillor wards.

24 We received two submissions about the number of councillors in response to the consultation on our draft recommendations. One submission supported our draft recommendation for 59 councillors, the other opposed it. Neither submission added to the evidence relating to council size on which we based our recommendation. We have therefore maintained 59 councillors for our final recommendations.

Ward boundaries consultation

25 We received 67 submissions to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included three detailed district-wide proposals. The Bath & North East Somerset Conservatives ('the Conservatives') and the Bath & North East Somerset Liberal Democrat Party and Council Group ('the Liberal Democrats') each proposed a pattern of wards to be represented by 59 elected members. The Independents' Group on Bath and North East Somerset Council ('the Independents') proposed a pattern of wards to be represented by 58 councillors. One local resident proposed a pattern of three-councillor wards to represent the city of Bath. Other respondents commented on more localised parts of the district.

26 The Conservatives' scheme would provide predominantly a pattern of two-councillor wards but included one three-councillor and two single-councillor wards. The Independents' scheme included two three-councillor wards in a pattern of predominantly one- and two-councillor wards. The Liberal Democrats' scheme was entirely a mix of one- and two-councillor wards. We carefully considered the

proposals received and concluded that whilst the proposed ward boundaries would generally have good levels of electoral equality, they would include some wards with a higher level of electoral inequality than we are normally prepared to recommend. We also considered that for most areas, they used clearly identifiable boundaries. For some areas, however, we devised our own boundary proposals. Some responses made about specific areas offered views about community identities that differed from the evidence in the district-wide proposals.

27 Our draft recommendations were for one three-councillor ward, 21 two-councillor wards and 14 one-councillor wards. We considered that our draft recommendations would provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests.

Draft recommendations consultation

28 We received 509 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included submissions by the Bath City Charter Trustees, the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat groups, the Green Party, Wera Hobhouse MP (Bath), 14 district and parish councillors, 14 town and parish councils, 16 local organisations and 459 local residents, including a petition with 580 signatories.

29 The majority of submissions received were about the city of Bath and mostly opposing the draft recommendations. In particular, the objections focused on the proposed wards of Claverton Down, Combe Down, Lansdown, Larkhall, Lyncombe, Oldfield Park and Widcombe. Some respondents to our review did support localised aspects of the draft recommendations, particularly with regard to Bathwick and the use of the River Avon to define ward boundaries. There was also a mix of opposition to and support for the draft recommendations for rural parts of the district. In particular, the recommendations for Bathampton attracted opposition. Many representations we received were accompanied by extensive and detailed evidence relating to community identity.

30 We were persuaded by evidence received to make substantial changes to our draft recommendations for wards in the city of Bath. We therefore published further draft recommendations for the city in which we proposed changes to all of our proposed wards to the north of the River Avon, replacing the mixed pattern of single- and two-councillor wards with a pattern consisting entirely of two-councillor wards. To the south of the river, we proposed to combine most parts of the single-councillor wards proposed for Lyncombe with Widcombe to form a two-councillor ward. We also decided to dissolve our proposed single-councillor Claverton Down ward by combining its parts with Bathwick, Combe Down and Widcombe & Lyncombe wards. We decided to respond to objections to the only three-councillor ward we had proposed, Oldfield Park, by providing a single-councillor Oldfield Park ward and a two-councillor Westmoreland ward.

31 One effect of the further draft recommendations would be to increase the total number of councillors for city wards to the north of the river by one, and to decrease the total number for wards to the south of the river by one, when compared with our draft recommendations. We considered that this distribution of councillors would

provide a pattern of wards which better reflected the evidence of community identity we had received.

32 As stated above, these changes represented such a departure from our draft recommendations that we decided to conduct a limited consultation relating to wards covering the city of Bath. The purpose of the consultation was to attract views and evidence about the degree to which the further draft recommendations would reflect community identities and to better inform us when we came to make our final recommendations.

Further draft recommendations consultation

33 We received 167 responses to our consultation on the further draft recommendations. Whilst most of these responses expressed support for, or qualified support for, the further draft recommendations, our proposals for the Bear Flat and Bloomfield areas attracted 34 objections. Some objections were received regarding the Woodland Grove area of Claverton Down, whilst our proposals for Kelston and North Stoke attracted objections which reiterated the views expressed in previous rounds of consultation.

34 Our final recommendations are based on the draft recommendations for the rural areas and on the further draft recommendations for the city of Bath. In each case we have made significant modifications to the pattern of wards we proposed.

Final recommendations

35 Pages 10–29 detail our final recommendations for each area of Bath and North East Somerset. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁴ criteria of:

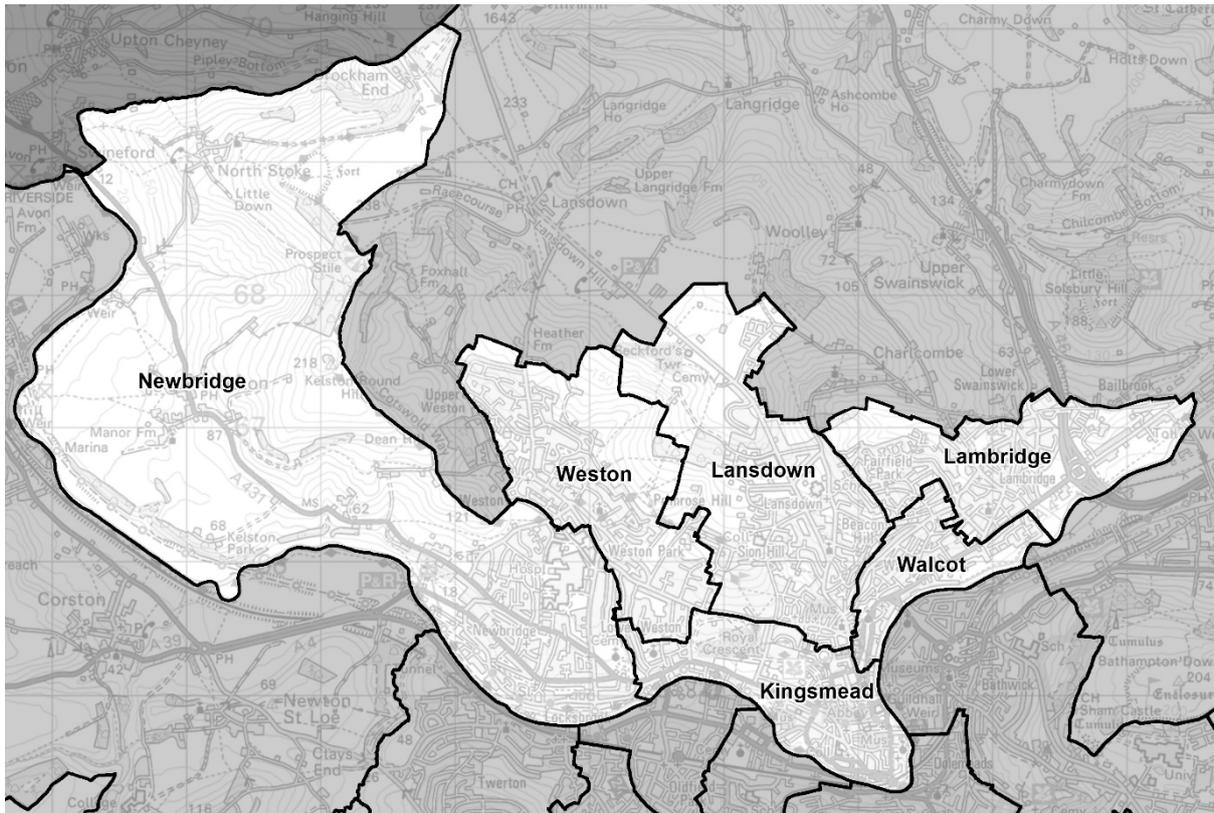
- Equality of representation
- Reflecting community interests and identities
- Providing for effective and convenient local government

36 Our final recommendations are for 26 two-councillor wards and seven one-councillor wards. We consider that our final recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during consultation.

37 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table on page 30 and on the large map accompanying this report.

⁴ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Bath city north



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2023
Kingsmead	2	-6%
Lambridge	2	-9%
Lansdown	2	-9%
Newbridge	2	2%
Walcot	2	-8%
Weston	2	-5%

Kingsmead, Lambridge, Lansdown and Walcot

38 In our draft recommendations we proposed single-councillor Abbey, Lansdown and Larkhall wards and two-councillor Kingsmead and Walcot wards. We received around 20 objections to the draft recommendations about Lansdown and over 80 objections to our proposals for Larkhall and Walcot. Respondents to our consultation provided many examples which clearly outlined the nature and identity of communities in these areas. This evidence persuaded us to consult on further draft recommendations which differed substantially from our earlier proposals.

39 Our proposal to include the Bailbrook area which lies to the east of the A46 in the Bathavon North ward attracted considerable opposition. Respondents to our consultation described the connections which people in the Bailbrook area have with the remainder of the current Lambridge ward which lies to the west. They cited examples of shopping patterns, the role of the New Oriel Hall, shared parks and playing fields and community festival events. Objectors also described Fairfield Park as an integral part of the Larkhall community when opposing our proposal to include Fairfield Park in Walcot ward. Notwithstanding that we had previously received representations which described the A46 as an appropriate boundary, we proposed further draft recommendations which would include Bailbrook and Fairfield Park in a two-member Lambridge ward. This change from our draft recommendations meant that we could make the changes to Bathavon North ward described in paragraphs 74–6 below. Our proposed Lambridge ward would differ slightly from the current ward in the vicinity of Claremont Road in order to ensure electoral equality in this and adjacent parts of Bath.

40 We received around 30 responses which broadly supported our further draft recommendations for Lambridge. Some points of detail were raised: first that, for reasons of community identity, we should include all the properties on Fairfield Park Road in Lambridge ward but exclude from it the allotment gardens at Hampton View. We accept the proposed changes and they are reflected in our final recommendations. We also received comments that our further draft recommendations would split Beaufort Villas between wards, but we consider this to be a misreading of the recommendations. However, we do recommend that Nos. 19 and 20 Chilton Road be included in Walcot ward, along with other Chilton Road properties. It was also suggested that Claremont Road be used as a ward boundary, excluding from Lambridge ward the properties on the west side of Claremont Road and those in Belgrave Road, Beaufort Villas and Southbourne Gardens. However, the effect of this would be an 11% electoral variance in Lambridge ward by 2023. We do not consider we have received sufficient evidence of community identity to justify such a degree of electoral inequality. In that respect, therefore, we confirm our further draft recommendation as final.

41 Objectors to our draft recommendation for a single-councillor Lansdown ward argued that the Lansdown community would be divided, the southern parts being inappropriately linked to Kingsmead. Respondents to our consultation described the area between Cavendish Road and Lansdown Road as part of the community that extends from the periphery of the city centre to its northern boundary. We were persuaded by the representations we received to move away from our draft recommendations. As part of our further draft recommendations, we proposed a two-councillor Lansdown ward which would differ from the existing ward by the inclusion

of the area around St James's Square and Rivers Street, and exclusion of part of Camden Road, thereby placing all of Camden Road in Walcot ward.

42 Whilst our draft recommendation that the River Avon should form the boundary of Walcot ward received support, our proposed inclusion of Fairfield Park in that ward attracted considerable opposition as described in paragraph 39. Our decision to include Fairfield Park in Lambridge ward required further consequential changes to our proposed Walcot ward. We proposed that the lower part of Lansdown Road, The Paragon and Walcot Street be included in Walcot ward. These streets are currently part of Abbey ward. A consequence of our decision to use the River Avon to define ward boundaries is the combination of much of Abbey ward with Kingsmead ward. We proposed to include the whole of Camden Road and Upper Hedgemoor Road in Walcot ward. This reflects the objections to the inclusion of those roads in Kingsmead ward. The inclusion of that area in Walcot would provide a good level of electoral equality and combine the whole of Camden Road in Walcot ward.

43 Whilst we received general support for our further draft recommendations for Lansdown and Walcot wards, we received a suggestion, which we accept, that the whole of Hedgemoor Park be included in Walcot ward. We also received a proposal that Lansdown Road should form the boundary between Lansdown and Walcot wards. Such a change would leave Lansdown ward with a 14% electoral variance. We do not consider that we have received sufficient evidence of community identity to justify such a degree of electoral inequality and therefore do not accept that proposal.

44 Respondents to our consultation on the draft recommendations proposed that our Kingsmead and Abbey wards be combined to create a two-councillor ward linking the city centre and the Kingsmead area along Upper Bristol Road. We also received opposition to the inclusion of Audley Grove, Edward Street and Hungerford Road in Weston ward with objectors arguing that those roads be retained in Kingsmead ward. Our recommendations for Lansdown and Walcot would facilitate these changes.

45 We received a number of comments about Kingsmead ward in response to our further draft recommendations. One proposal supported the inclusion of the area between Bennett Street and George Street in Kingsmead ward as they are commercially and historically better related to Kingsmead than to Walcot. We are persuaded to make this change as part of our final recommendations.

46 In our draft recommendations, Windsor Bridge Road marked the western boundary of Kingsmead ward. In the further draft recommendations, we reverted to the current Kingsmead ward boundary at Chelsea Road and Station Road. We received objections to this based on the role of the local shopping centre formed by Chelsea Road as a focal point for the community surrounding it. We accept the arguments made about Chelsea Road. Whilst we received proposals that we make Windsor Bridge Road the boundary between Kingsmead and Newbridge wards, we consider that the proposals we received to place the boundary at Locksbrook Road have a stronger rationale when linked to the central point about Chelsea Road.

Newbridge and Weston

47 We received little comment about our proposed Weston ward both at draft recommendations and further draft recommendations stage. Some respondents drew our attention to the pattern of roads in the Audley Grove area, suggesting that those roads be included in Kingsmead ward. We have accepted that suggestion as described in paragraph 44. One respondent proposed that Westbrook Park and Westmead Gardens be included in Weston ward. Those roads lie in Charlcombe parish which means that were we to include them in Weston ward, we would be required to create parish wards for the purposes of elections to the parish council. We are not persuaded that we should do so in this instance.

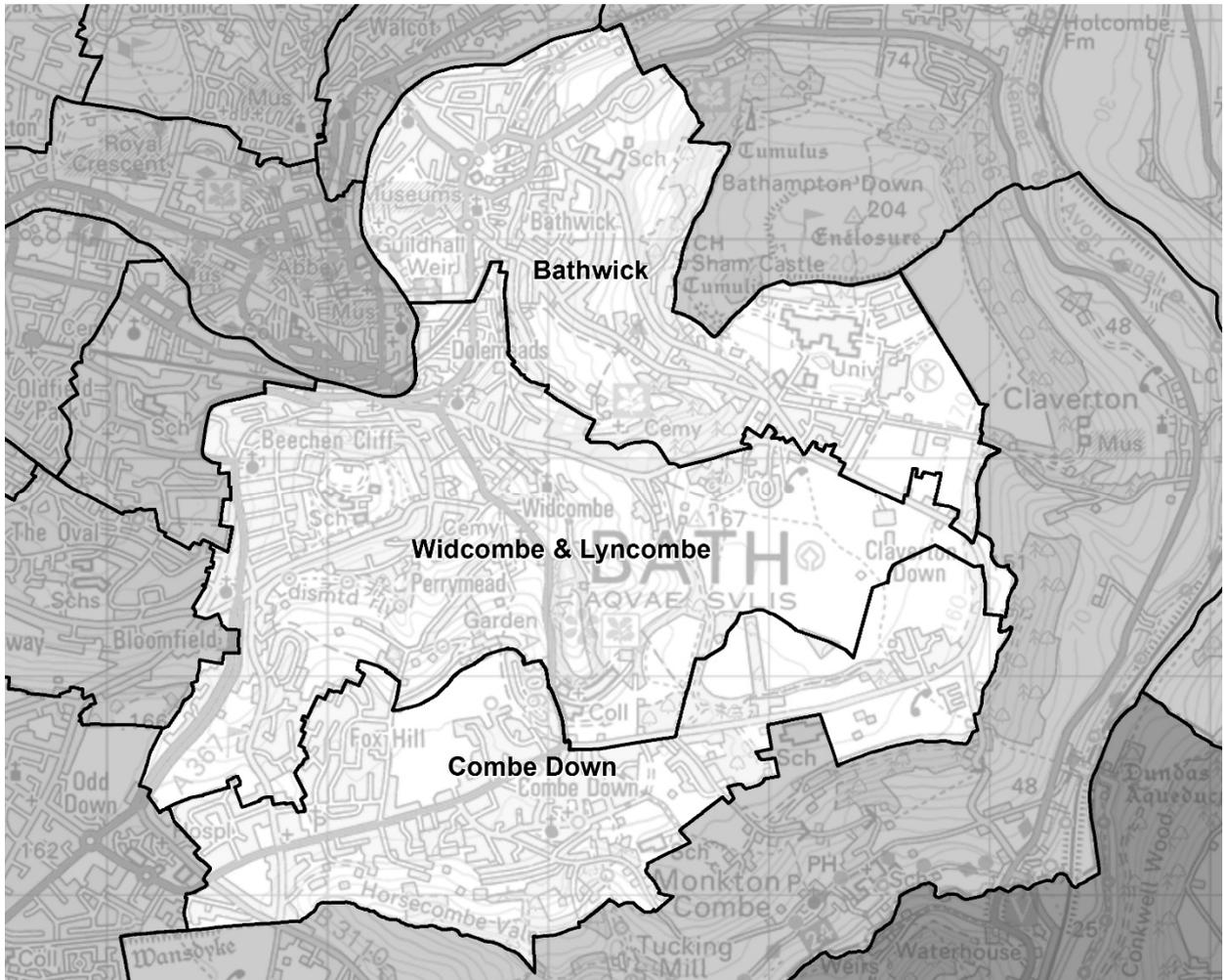
48 In our draft recommendations, we proposed the inclusion of Kelston and North Stoke in Newbridge ward. Those parishes have direct road connections only with Newbridge and with built-up areas on the eastern edge of Bristol but not with other parishes in Bath and North East Somerset.

49 We received objection to the inclusion of these parishes in Newbridge ward from the spokespersons for Parish Meetings in both parishes and two local residents. They argued that the service delivery issues of their area would be marginalised if represented in a Newbridge ward. However, we note the Council's constitution which requires that elected members 'balance different interests identified within [their] ward and represent [their] ward as a whole'. We do not presume to expect elected members to do otherwise. We also received opposition in principle from, amongst others, the Charter Trustees of the City of Bath to the inclusion of Kelston and North Stoke. It was argued that ward boundaries should not breach the unparished area of the district. These objections were reiterated in response to our further draft recommendations. However, we were not persuaded by the argument that governance would be comprised in a ward which included both parished and unparished areas.

50 We remain of the view that Kelston and North Stoke, which connect directly into Newbridge only, should be included in that ward. We have received no evidence of interactions between Kelston, North Stoke and other communities in Bathavon North to alter our recommendations. Furthermore, if we were to include those parishes in Bathavon North ward, the electoral variance for that ward would be 15%, a level of electoral inequality we are not prepared to recommend.

51 We did receive comments about the extent of Newbridge Road with regard to the local shopping centre at Chelsea Road as described in paragraph 46. As part of our final recommendations, we propose that the area to the east of Chelsea Road, as far as Locksbrook Road, be included in Newbridge ward.

Bath city south-east



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2023
Bathwick	2	10%
Combe Down	2	7%
Widcombe & Lyncombe	2	4%

Bathwick, Combe Down and Widcombe & Lyncombe

52 We received many representations regarding this area in response to our consultation on draft recommendations. These objections collectively provided us with an impressive amount of detailed evidence of community identity and interactions. However, respondents did not have a common alternative proposal which would satisfy all the concerns raised.

53 Our proposal that the River Avon form the northern boundary of Bathwick ward received support. However, our proposals to include the Dolemeads area in Bathwick and to exclude the University campus from the ward both attracted opposition. In the case of the Dolemeads area, arguments were made that it should be included in Widcombe ward, to reflect the existing community ties enjoyed by people in the area, centred on the infants and junior schools. We were persuaded by the evidence submitted and included Dolemeads in Widcombe as part of our further draft recommendations. This received a broad measure of support, although we received suggestions that Bathwick Cemetery should be included in Bathwick ward. To provide a clear boundary it was suggested that Smallcombe Farm and Smallcombe Wood should also be included in Bathwick ward. We accept the argument that the cemetery forms part of the Bathwick community and have modified our further draft recommendations accordingly.

54 We proposed a single-councillor Claverton Down ward which would include the University campus and a two-councillor Combe Down ward. This area was the focus for the largest number of objections to our draft recommendations with over 170 representations, including a petition bearing 580 signatures. Criticisms of our Claverton Down ward were that it would divide the Combe Down community and that the inclusion of the campus in a single-member ward would provide an imbalance of community interests. It was argued that the campus is a distinct community and should be represented in a two-member ward. We proposed as part of our further draft recommendations that the University campus should form part of Bathwick ward.

55 Whilst we received support for the inclusion of the campus in Bathwick ward, objectors, including the Woodland Grove Group, argued that the Woodland Grove area should be included in the same ward as the campus. They argued that their area has a relationship with the campus and that its presence raises issues for the area which should be addressed within a common ward. We are persuaded by these arguments and have adopted them as part of our final recommendations.

56 We were also asked by some respondents to include Quarry Rock in Bathwick ward. Respondents argued that by including Horseshoe Walk in our Widcombe & Lyncombe ward, Quarry Rock could be included in Bathwick without creating high levels of electoral inequality in either ward. We have, however, examined the electoral effects of the Quarry Rock proposal and find that it would result in an electoral variance in Bathwick of 14% in 2023. We are not persuaded we have received sufficient evidence to justify this variance.

57 Further criticisms of our draft recommendation for Combe Down came from residents of the Entry Hill area and Perrymead who said that they are part of the Widcombe community rather than Combe Down. Objectors provided clear evidence

of community relationships. We were persuaded to exclude these areas from our Combe Down ward. By including the area extending from Ralph Allen Drive to Brassknocker Hill in Combe Down ward, we would also counterbalance the change at Entry Hill and Perrymead for reasons of electoral equality.

58 Our draft recommendations were for single-councillor Lyncombe and Widcombe wards. We particularly invited comments about the desirability of combining these to make a two-councillor ward. We received over 80 objections to our proposals for Lyncombe and Widcombe, most supporting a proposal from the Widcombe Association for a two-councillor ward. Whilst we considered that the Association's proposal had merits, we would be unable to recommend it in its entirety without compromising either our ability to address objections raised by others and/or electoral equality considerations. However, we did have regard to representations from the Poets Corner, Magdalen Avenue and Entry Hill areas and recommended a two-councillor Widcombe & Lyncombe ward as part of our further draft recommendations which would include those areas. Our proposed ward would, however, exclude the Bloomfield Avenue and Bloomfield Park areas. This proposal attracted representations both of support and objection.

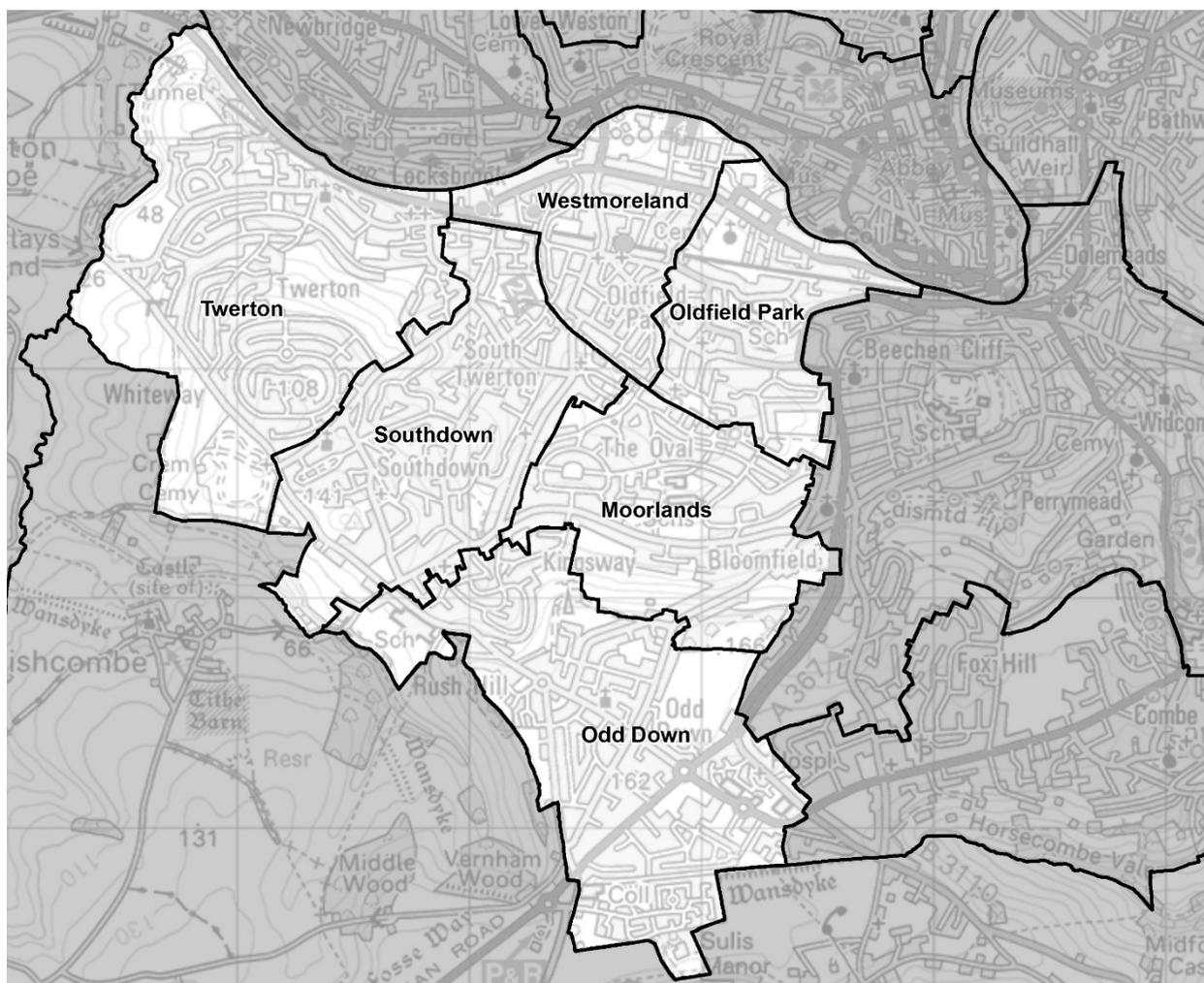
59 Those expressing support for the further draft recommendation supported the inclusion of the Entry Hill, Lyncombe Vale, lower Bloomfield Road, Magdalen Avenue, Perrymead and Poets Corner areas in Widcombe & Lyncombe ward.

60 The Bear Flat Association argued that the Bear Flat area, which includes Poets Corner and the Bloomfield Park/Bloomfield Avenue/Hayesfield Park areas, should be included within a single ward, as they currently are. This proposal was echoed by around 30 residents of the area. One respondent argued that Entry Hill, and Bloomfield, should be included in Oldfield Park ward.

61 The Bear Flat Association proposed a single-member ward which would have an electoral variance of 9% fewer electors per councillor by 2023. However, we were not persuaded to adopt this proposal. Creating such a ward would have consequences for electoral equality in adjoining areas. In particular, Widcombe and the remainder of Lyncombe would have an electoral variance of 48%, while Oldfield Park and Moorlands wards would have variances of 32% and 10% respectively. Given the very high variances that would result, we have concluded that it is not possible to base our recommendations on the Association's proposal.

62 We therefore recommend a two-councillor Widcombe & Lyncombe ward. However, we have modified our further draft recommendation in response to the detailed evidence provided by some respondents who argued that Hayesfield Park and Hatfield Road should be included in Widcombe & Lyncombe ward.

Bath city south-west



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2023
Moorlands	1	4%
Odd Down	2	7%
Oldfield Park	1	-9%
Southdown	2	5%
Twerton	2	-4%
Westmoreland	2	0%

Oldfield Park and Westmoreland

63 The proposal in our draft recommendations for a three-councillor Oldfield Park ward attracted over 60 objections, many accompanied by evidence of the nature of communities in this part of the city and making a broadly similar counter-proposal for a single-councillor Oldfield Park ward and a two-councillor Westmoreland ward.

64 We were persuaded by the evidence received and satisfied that the counter-proposal had merits in terms of reflecting community identity and following clear ward boundaries. However, in order to provide for good levels of electoral equality throughout the southern part of the city, we proposed that the whole of Moorland Road and Beckhampton Road should be included in Westmoreland ward. Our further draft recommendation was, therefore, for a single-councillor Oldfield Park ward and a two-councillor Westmoreland ward.

65 We received around 20 expressions of support for our further draft recommendations for this area although some respondents, including Riverside Community Voice suggested that we include a small area at Albert Crescent and Western Terrace in Westmoreland ward rather than Oldfield Park. We acknowledge that this area lies immediately adjacent to residential parts of Westmoreland but not to the residential parts of Oldfield Park and therefore propose to modify our further draft recommendations in the manner suggested.

66 Some respondents argued that we should revert to our initial draft recommendation for a three-councillor ward but we are not persuaded that we have received sufficient evidence to justify this change.

67 We received some suggestions for alternative names for these wards but were impressed, in particular, by the degree to which the name Westmoreland attracted support. We therefore propose to recommend the names as shown in our further draft recommendations.

Moorlands, Southdown, Twerton and Odd Down

68 In our draft recommendations, we proposed a single-councillor Moorlands ward and two-councillor Southdown, Twerton and Odd Down wards.

69 Our further draft recommendations for this area were that Frome Road, including St Martin's Garden Primary School and Bath Studio School, and the western part of Midford Road, be included in Odd Down ward. Similarly, consequential to our proposals for Widcombe, Bloomfield will be included in Moorlands ward. We also proposed further amendments to our draft recommendations for south-east Bath. To this effect, we are persuaded to recommend that the Innox Road area should lie in Twerton ward and that the Roundhill park area, Cotswold View and the whole of The Hollow should lie in Southdown ward.

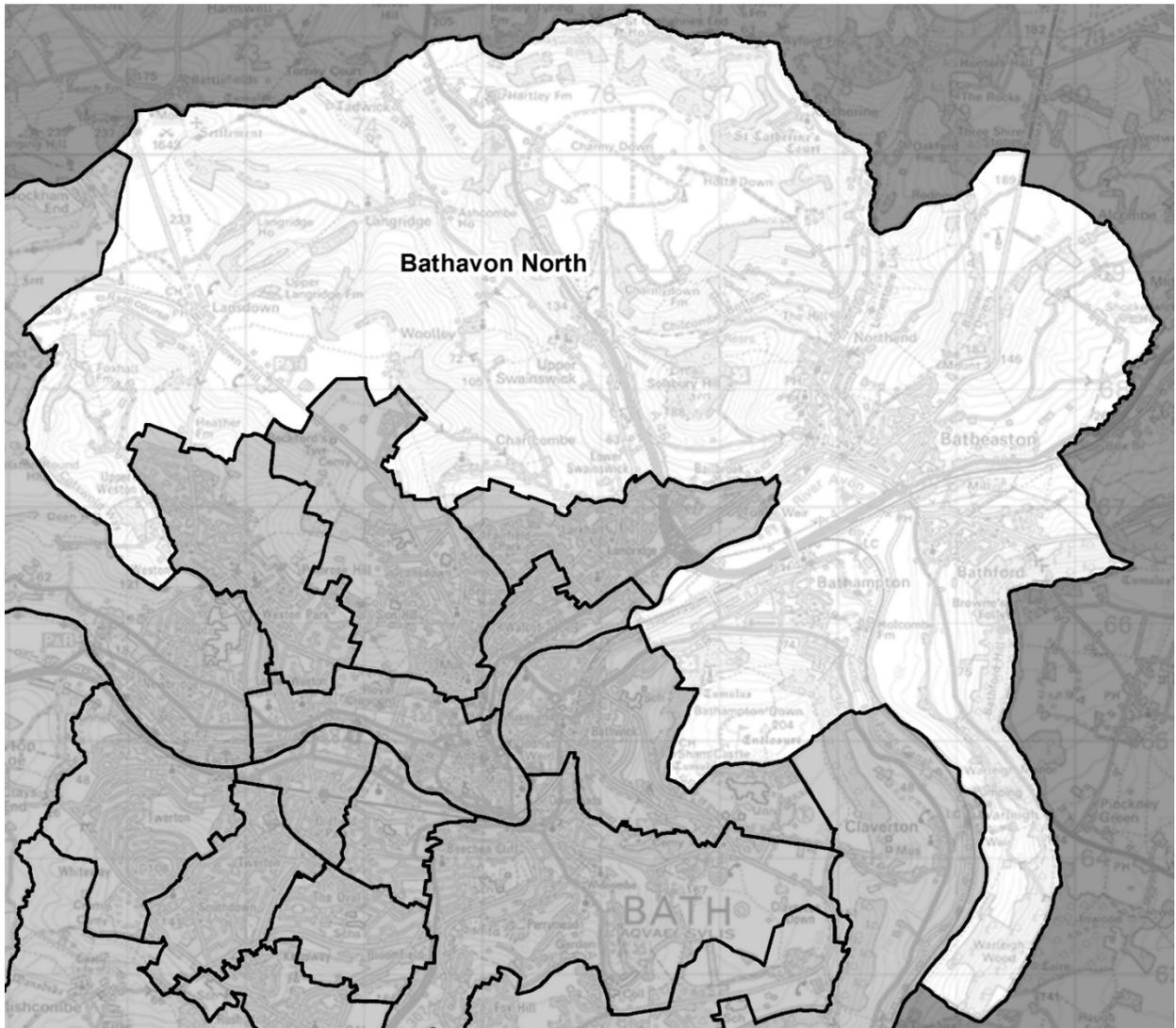
70 We proposed that the whole of Englishcombe Lane which lies to the east of Kingsway and fields to the south of Englishcombe Lane should be included in Moorlands ward whilst that part of Englishcombe Lane to the west of Kingsway should lie in Southdown ward.

71 Two respondents asked us to include parts of Englishcombe parish in our Odd Down and Southdown wards. We were not persuaded to make such a recommendation. To do so would require the creation of parish wards for Englishcombe, but we do not consider that parish wards with fewer than 100 electors would be viable.

72 Most of the responses we received about this area related to our proposal to include Bloomfield Avenue and Maple Grove in Moorlands ward, which we have described in paragraphs 58–61. However, we also received a proposal that Lansdown View, Loxton Drive and King George Road be included in Twerton ward rather than in Southdown ward. Electoral equality would be secured by splitting up the Haycombe Drive area between Twerton and Southdown wards. We do not consider that we should divide Haycombe Drive in what appears to be an arbitrary manner and so confirm our further draft recommendations for this area as final.

73 The Charter Trustees argued that the provision of single-councillor wards for Moorlands and Oldfield Park would make it difficult for councillors representing those wards to fulfil the duties of mayor of the City of Bath. However, we consider we have received sufficient evidence that supports our proposal for single-councillor wards for these areas and therefore confirm our further draft recommendations as final.

Bathavon North



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2023
Bathavon North	2	11%

Bathavon North

74 In our draft recommendations, we proposed to modify the existing Bathavon North ward by excluding from it Bathampton, Claverton, Kelston and North Stoke parishes thereby providing for a two-councillor ward with good electoral equality. Charlcombe Parish Council supported our recommendations. The parish meetings for Kelston and North Stoke opposed their removal from Bathavon North and inclusion in Newbridge ward. The Charter Trustees for the City of Bath, Bath & North East Somerset Labour Group and Bath & North East Somerset Liberal Democrats took a similar view.

75 We received around 10 representations objecting to the separation of Bathampton parish from Batheaston and Bathford parishes. Respondents cited the history of community identity and co-operation between those parishes.

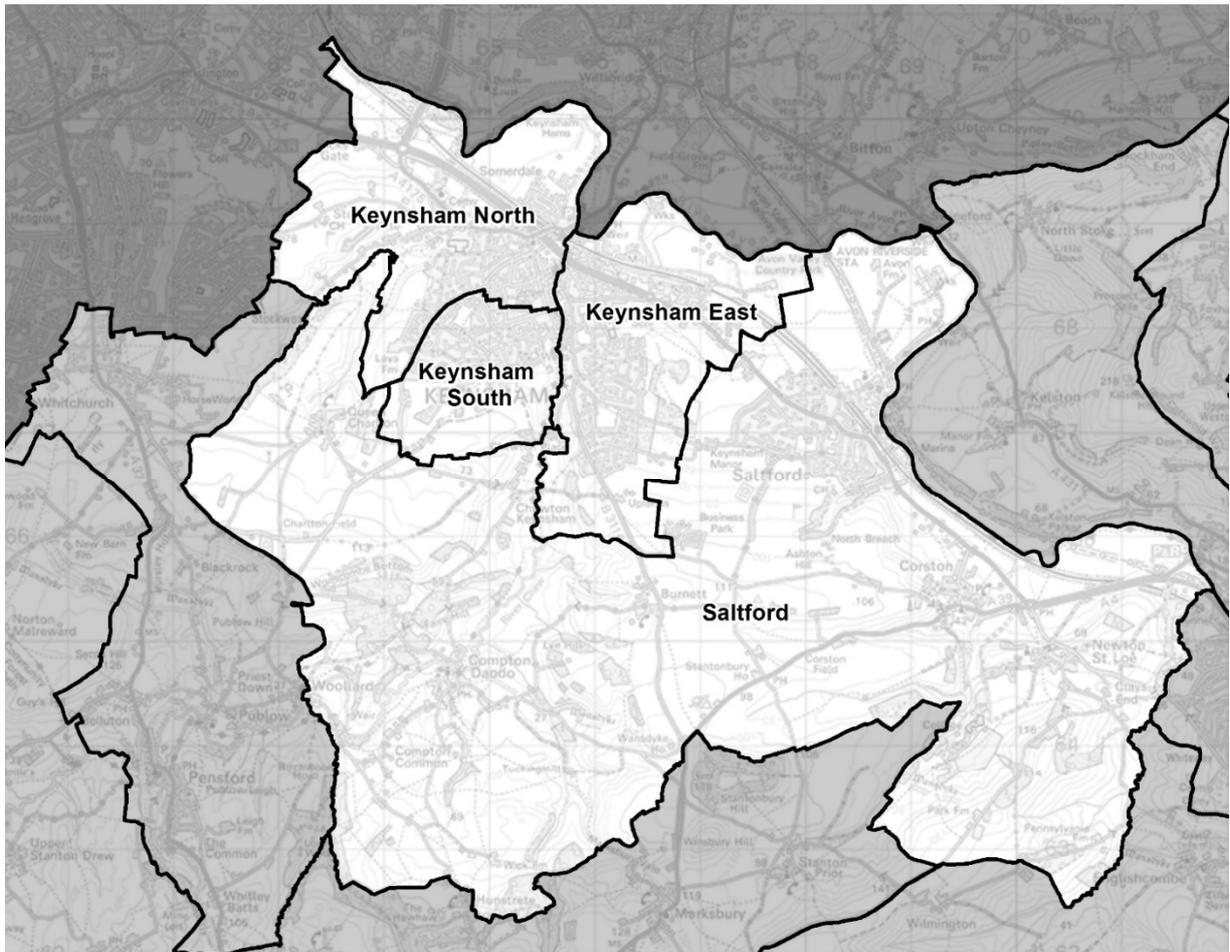
76 We are persuaded by the evidence of parishes working together and local community ties in this area and propose that Bathampton be included in Bathavon North ward. Had we not decided to recommend the inclusion of the Bailbrook area in Lambridge ward, the electoral variance would have been 21% signifying a high level of electoral inequality that we would not be prepared to recommend. Our response to representations regarding Bailbrook therefore enables this change from our draft recommendation for Bathampton.

77 We have described in paragraphs 48–50 our recommendation that Kelston and North Stoke should lie in Newbridge ward.

78 We received a proposal that Westbrook Park and Westmead Gardens, which lie in Charlcombe parish, should be included in Weston ward. To split the parish in this way would require that we establish relatively small parish wards. Whilst we indicate in our guidance that parish wards should have a minimum of 100 electors in order to be electorally viable, we do not consider that we have received sufficient evidence to justify a parish ward at this minimal level.

79 As part of our final recommendations, we therefore propose a two-councillor Bathavon North ward. Our proposed ward will have 11% more electors per councillor than the average for the district. This is a higher variance from the average than we would normally recommend, but we consider this to be justified by the evidence we have received.

Keynsham and Salford



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2023
Keynsham East	2	0%
Keynsham North	2	8%
Keynsham South	2	7%
Salford	2	-2%

Keynsham East, Keynsham North and Keynsham South

80 In our draft recommendations, we proposed that Keynsham should continue to be represented in three two-councillor wards which together are coterminous with the town's boundaries. One resident considered that this would result in the town being over-represented, comparing the extent of our proposed Keynsham wards with that of our proposed Salford ward. However, the numbers of electors in Keynsham warrants a total of six district councillors.

81 Our draft recommendations adjusted the current boundary between Keynsham North and Keynsham South wards. We received no objections to this and therefore confirm, as final, our recommendations for Keynsham.

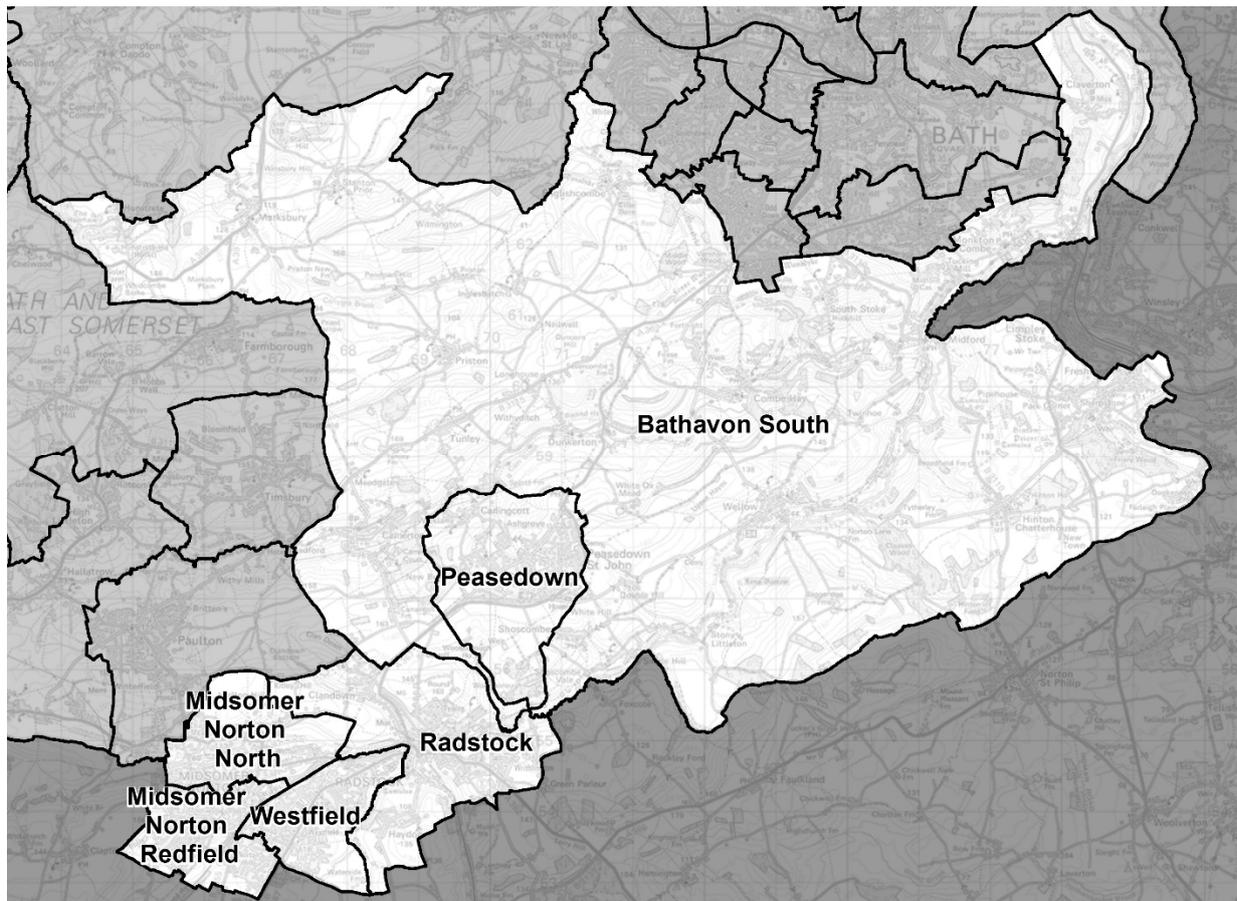
Salford

82 In our draft recommendations we proposed a two-councillor ward comprising the parishes of Salford, Compton Dando, Corston and Newton St Loe.

83 We received a number of objections to our draft recommendations from residents and Salford Parish Council. Objectors said that community interactions are between Compton Dando, Keynsham and Whitchurch rather than with Salford. If we were to include Compton Dando in Publow & Whitchurch ward, it would result in an electoral variance of 20% in that ward and a 12% electoral variance in Salford ward. Furthermore, including Compton Dando in Keynsham South would result in an electoral variance of 18% in that ward. We are not prepared to recommend these very high levels of electoral inequality.

84 Our proposed Salford ward combines distinct communities whilst minimising electoral variances. We therefore confirm, as final, our recommendation for Salford.

Southern wards



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2023
Bathavon South	2	-7%
Midsomer Norton North	2	-4%
Midsomer Norton Redfield	2	1%
Peasedown	2	8%
Radstock	2	-9%
Westfield	2	0%

Bathavon South

85 In our draft recommendations, we proposed single-councillor Bathavon East and Bathavon South wards. Our Bathavon East ward would include Bathampton parish, but as we have described in paragraph 76, we now recommend that Bathampton should form part of Bathavon North ward. This would significantly reduce the number of electors in Bathavon East ward. We therefore propose to add Claverton, Monkton Combe and South Stoke parishes to Bathavon South and increase the representation in that ward from one to two councillors.

86 Camerton Parish Council and Radstock Town Council both objected to the creation of a ward comprising the two parishes. Camerton Parish Council argued that it would be more appropriately represented in a Bathavon South ward. Including Camerton in two-councillor Bathavon South improves electoral equality in the ward, although by an insufficient amount to satisfy our normal tolerance on variances from absolute electoral equality. We therefore recommend that Marksbury parish also be included in Bathavon South ward, maintaining representation of the parish in a ward of similarly sparsely populated rural parishes and resolving the high level of electoral inequality that would otherwise arise.

Midsomer Norton North and Midsomer Norton Redfield

87 In our draft recommendations we proposed to amend the boundary between the current Midsomer Norton North and Midsomer Norton Redfield wards in order to provide for electoral equality and good boundaries. The only objections were about our proposed parish wards, which replicate the district wards we proposed. Midsomer Norton currently has no parish wards. However, we are required by law to recommend parish wards when we recommend that a parish is divided between district wards. We therefore confirm as final our recommendations for Midsomer Norton

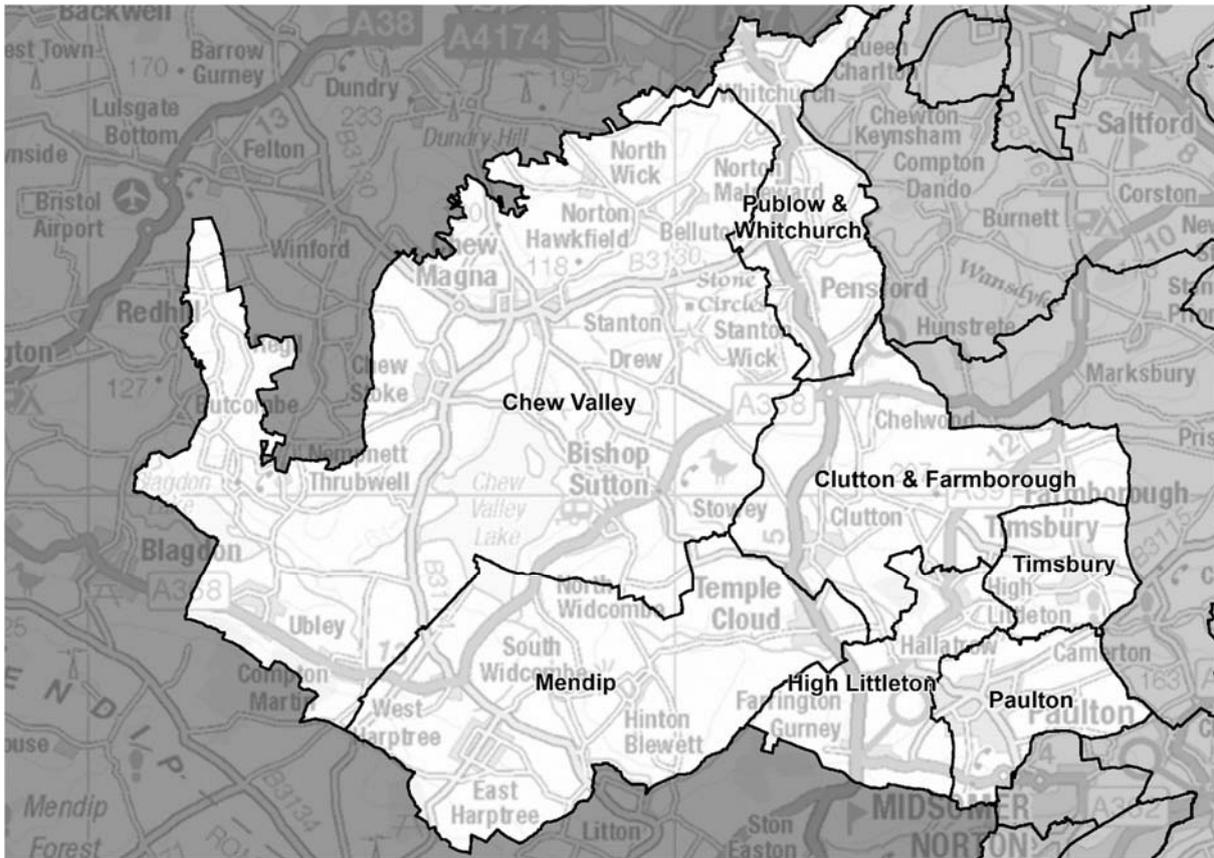
Radstock

88 Radstock parish currently forms a district council ward. As part of our draft recommendations, we proposed it also include the parish of Camerton. As described in paragraph 86, however, we have decided to include Camerton parish in Bathavon South ward. One resident contested our view that Westfield parish ward (which would be required were we to add the eastern end of Wells Road to Radstock ward) would be unviable. This objection did not, however, prove viability of such a parish ward. We propose, as part of our final recommendations, a ward comprising the parish of Radstock, replicating the existing Radstock ward.

Peasedown and Westfield

89 With the exception of a submission regarding parish warding in Westfield, we received only support for our proposals that Peasedown parish and Westfield parish should each form a two-councillor ward. We therefore confirm, as final, our recommendations for those wards, which replicate the existing ward boundaries.

Western wards



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2023
Chew Valley	2	-1%
Clutton & Farmborough	1	-5%
High Littleton	1	-3%
Mendip	1	-3%
Paulton	2	0%
Publow & Whitchurch	1	7%
Timsbury	1	-10%

Chew Valley

90 Chew Valley is currently represented in two single-councillor wards on the western edge of the district which, in a 59-member council, would both have relatively high levels of electoral inequality. In our draft recommendation, we proposed that the two wards, with the addition of Stanton Drew parish, be combined to form a two-councillor ward. We received five representations supporting this proposal. Three respondents opposed it, with one proposing that our Chew Valley and Mendip wards be combined to form a three-councillor ward. Those supporting our proposal referred to the overall character of the area and the interaction between the communities in it. They referred to the impact of visitors to Chew Valley Lake on the area and the management of aspects of tourism associated with it.

91 Compton Martin Parish Council and Ubley Parish Council proposed that the existing single-member wards be retained. They argued that rural areas should enjoy higher levels of representation than urban areas. This would, in effect, mean that votes in rural areas would carry more weight than votes in urban areas. We disagree with that proposition and, in any event, are bound by law to have regard to the need to provide electoral fairness.

92 We therefore confirm as final our recommendations for Chew Valley.

Clutton & Farmborough and Timsbury

93 In our draft recommendations, and in response to Timsbury Parish Council's request that we maintain the present Timsbury ward, we proposed single-councillor wards for this area.

94 A number of respondents to our consultation referred to the difference between the number of electors in our proposed wards, the extent of our Clutton & Farmborough ward and the nature of community interactions between Clutton, Farmborough and Timsbury.

95 As described in paragraph 86, we recommend that Marksbury parish should form part of our Bathavon South ward. This will reduce the extent of our proposed Clutton & Farmborough ward and reduce the difference between the number of electors in that ward and Timsbury. We accept that there are established community links in this area, but note that they have developed in a current pattern of single-member wards and do not consider that those links will be threatened by the maintenance of single-member wards. As part of our final recommendations we therefore recommend a single-councillor Timsbury ward comprising that parish and a single-councillor Clutton & Farmborough ward comprising the parishes of Chelwood, Clutton and Farmborough.

High Littleton, Mendip, Paulton and Publow & Whitchurch

96 These current wards have good electoral equality and appear to reflect community identities. We received no substantial comment on these wards and therefore confirm, as final, our recommendations for these wards.

Conclusions

97 The table below shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2017 and 2023 electorate figures.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2017	2023
Number of councillors	59	59
Number of electoral wards	33	33
Average number of electors per councillor	133,162	139,679
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	10	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	1	0

Final recommendation

Bath and North East Somerset Council should be made up of 59 councillors serving 33 wards representing seven single-councillor wards and 26 two-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for Bath and North East Somerset. **You can also view our draft recommendations for Bath and North East Somerset Council on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>**

Parish electoral arrangements

98 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.

99 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, Bath and North East Somerset 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.

100 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Keynsham and Midsomer Norton.

101 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 Keynsham parish.

Final recommendation	
Keynsham Town Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Keynsham East	5
Keynsham North	5
Keynsham South	5

102 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 Midsomer Norton parish.

Final recommendation	
Midsomer Norton Town Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Midsomer Norton North	5
Midsomer Norton Redfield	6

3 What happens next?

103 We have now completed our review of Bath and North East Somerset. 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 2019.

Equalities

104 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.

Appendix A

Final recommendations for Bath and North East Somerset

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2017)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Bathavon North	2	5,338	2,669	18%	5,255	2,628	11%
2	Bathavon South	2	4,104	2,052	-9%	4,407	2,204	-7%
3	Bathwick	2	4,990	2,495	11%	5,223	2,612	10%
4	Chew Valley	2	4,721	2,361	5%	4,666	2,333	-1%
5	Clutton & Farmborough	1	2,245	2,245	-1%	2,247	2,247	-5%
6	Combe Down	2	4,439	2,220	-2%	5,069	2,535	7%
7	High Littleton	1	2,344	2,344	4%	2,307	2,307	-3%
8	Keynsham East	2	4,446	2,223	-2%	4,746	2,373	0%
9	Keynsham North	2	4,002	2,001	-11%	5,120	2,560	8%
10	Keynsham South	2	4,392	2,196	-3%	5,087	2,544	7%
11	Kingsmead	2	4,248	2,124	-6%	4,458	2,229	-6%
12	Lambridge	2	4,322	2,161	-4%	4,332	2,166	-9%
13	Lansdown	2	3,899	1,950	-14%	4,332	2,166	-9%
14	Mendip	1	2,143	2,143	-5%	2,308	2,308	-3%
15	Midsomer Norton North	2	4,189	2,095	-7%	4,554	2,277	-4%

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2017)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
16	Midsomer Norton Redfield	2	4,591	2,296	2%	4,802	2,401	1%
17	Moorlands	1	2,497	2,497	11%	2,457	2,457	4%
18	Newbridge	2	4,747	2,374	5%	4,813	2,407	2%
19	Odd Down	2	5,074	2,537	12%	5,068	2,534	7%
20	Oldfield Park	1	2,120	2,120	-6%	2,155	2,155	-9%
21	Paulton	2	4,443	2,222	-2%	4,718	2,359	0%
22	Peasedown	2	5,022	2,511	11%	5,098	2,549	8%
23	Publow & Whitchurch	1	2,054	2,054	-9%	2,527	2,527	7%
24	Radstock	2	4,161	2,081	-8%	4,315	2,158	-9%
25	Saltford	2	4,716	2,358	4%	4,641	2,321	-2%
26	Southdown	2	5,049	2,525	12%	4,979	2,490	5%
27	Timsbury	1	2,081	2,081	-8%	2,137	2,137	-10%
28	Twerton	2	4,618	2,309	2%	4,548	2,274	-4%
29	Walcot	2	4,413	2,207	-2%	4,350	2,175	-8%
30	Westfield	2	4,642	2,321	3%	4,757	2,379	0%
31	Westmoreland	2	3,583	1,792	-21%	4,735	2,368	0%
32	Weston	2	4,508	2,254	0%	4,521	2,261	-5%
33	Widcombe & Lyncombe	2	5,021	2,511	11%	4,947	2,474	4%

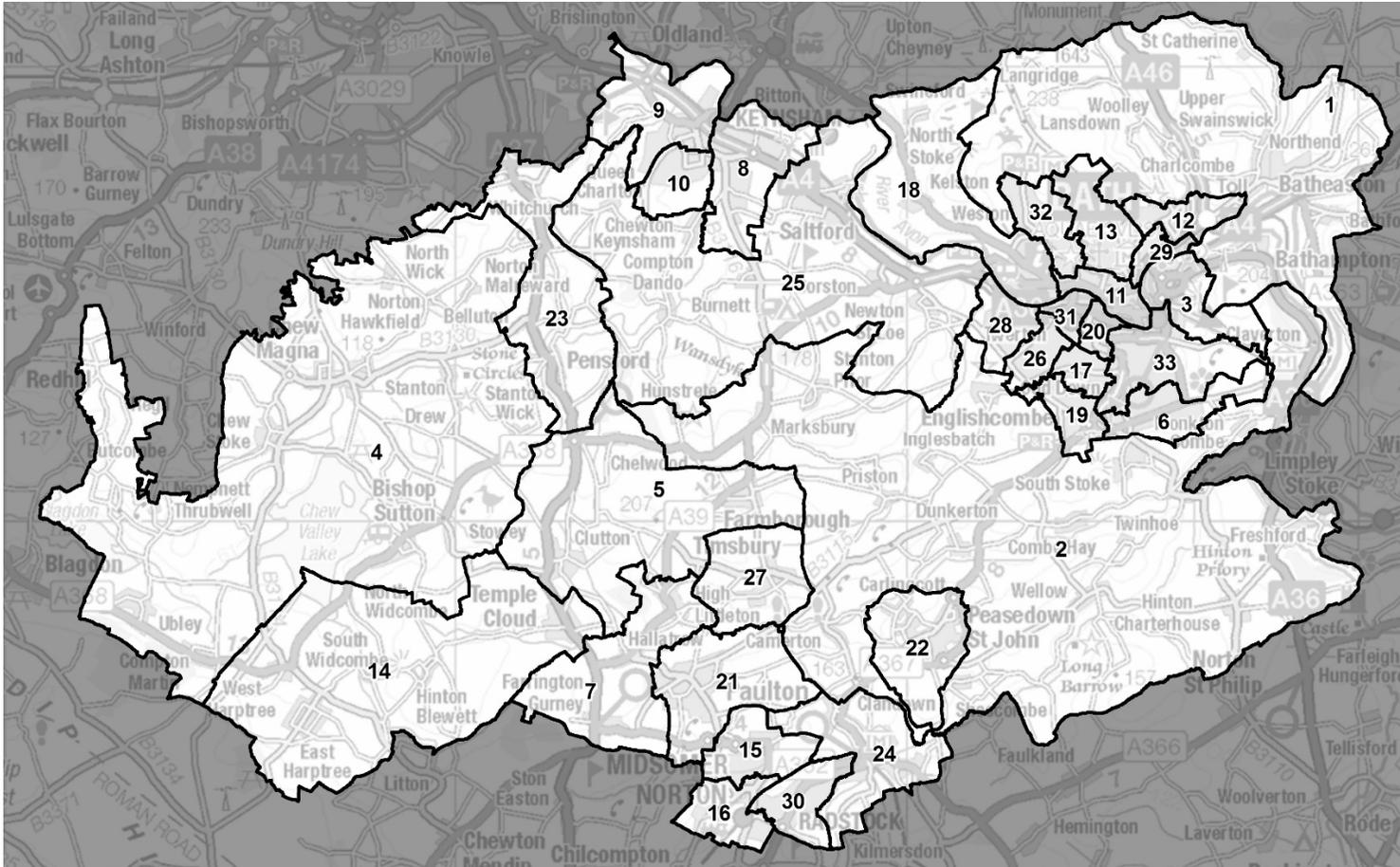
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2017)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Totals	59	133,162	-	-	139,679	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,257	-	-	2,367	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Bath and North East Somerset 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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix B

Outline map



A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the large map accompanying this report, or on our website: <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-west/somerset/bath-and-north-east-somerset>

Key

1. Bathavon North
2. Bathavon South
3. Bathwick
4. Chew Valley
5. Clutton & Farmborough
6. Combe Down
7. High Littleton
8. Keynsham East
9. Keynsham North
10. Keynsham South
11. Kingsmead
12. Lambridge
13. Lansdown
14. Mendip
15. Midsomer Norton North
16. Midsomer Norton Redfield
17. Moorlands
18. Newbridge
19. Odd Down
20. Oldfield Park
21. Paulton
22. Peasedown
23. Publow & Whitchurch
24. Radstock
25. Salford
26. Southdown
27. Timsbury
28. Twerton
29. Walcot
30. Westfield
31. Westmoreland
32. Weston
33. Widcombe & Lyncombe

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-west/somerset/bath-and-north-east-somerset>

Submissions on Draft recommendations

Political Group

- Bath & North East Somerset Conservatives
- Bath & North East Somerset Labour Group, Bath Constituency Labour Party & North East Somerset Constituency Labour Party
- Bath & North East Somerset Liberal Democrats
- Bath & N.E. Somerset Green Party

Councillors

- Councillor P. Anketell-Jones (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- Councillor C. Beath (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- Councillor S. Bevan (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- Councillor C. Blackburn (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- Councillor A. Clarke (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- Councillor I. Gilchrist (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- Councillor R. Goodman (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- Councillor L. Patterson (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- Councillor J. Player (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- Councillor W. Sandry (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- Councillor M. Shelford (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- Councillor Slade (Midsomer Norton Town Council)
- Councillor S. Stephenson-McGall (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- Councillor K. Walker (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- The Charter Trustees of the City of Bath (Bath and North East Somerset Council)

Member of Parliament

- Ms Wera Hobhouse MP

Local Organisations

- Aquarius Homes
- Bath City Forum
- Bath Preservation Trust
- Bathwick Estate Residents' Association
- Bear Flat Association

- Cavendish Road Society
- Combe Down Atone Legacy Trust
- Combe Down Heritage Society
- Combe Down Stone Legacy Trust
- Lansdown Crescent Association
- Larkhall Residents for Lambridge
- New Oriel Hall
- St Saviour's Church
- Transition Larkhall
- Widcombe Association
- Widcombe Parochial Church Council

Parish and Town Council

- Bathampton Parish Council
- Camerton Parish Council
- Charlcombe Parish Council
- Chew Magna Parish Council
- Compton Martin Parish Council
- Corston Parish Council
- Dunkerton & Tunley Parish Council
- Hinton Blewett Parish Council
- Kelston Parish Meeting
- Keynsham Town Council
- Midsomer Norton Town Council
- North Stoke Parish Meeting
- Radstock Town Council
- Saltford Parish Council

Local Residents

- 454 local residents

Anonymous

- Four local residents

Petition

- Combe Down Petition

Submissions on Further draft recommendations

Political Group

- Bath & North East Somerset Council Conservative Group
- Bath & North East Somerset Liberal Democrats

Councillors

- Councillor M. Cochrane (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- Councillor K. Furse (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- Councillor L. Patterson (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- Councillor J. Player (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- Councillor W. Sandry (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- Councillor R. Samuel (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- Councillor S. Stephenson-McGall (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- The Charter Trustees of the City of Bath (Bath and North East Somerset Council)

Local Organisations

- Bathwick Estate Residents' Association
- Bear Flat Association
- Riverside Community Voice
- Save Combe Down
- Widcombe Association
- Woodland Grove Group

Parish and Town Council

- Kelston Parish Meeting

Local Residents

- 149 local residents

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral inequality	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average

Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or Town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average

Ward

A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

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

Local Government Boundary Commission for
England
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50 Victoria Street, London
SW1H 0TL

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www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk
Twitter: @LGBCE