

# Final recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Electoral review

August 2017

## 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 should there be, where are their boundaries and what should they be called
- How many councillors should represent each ward or division

## Why Blackburn with Darwen?

4 We are conducting a review of Blackburn with Darwen as the value of each vote in borough council elections varies depending on where you live in Blackburn with Darwen. 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 Blackburn with Darwen

- Blackburn with Darwen should be represented by 51 councillors, 13 fewer than there are now.
- Blackburn with Darwen should have 17 wards, six fewer than there are now.
- The boundaries of all wards should change, none will stay the same.

**5 We have now finalised our recommendations for electoral arrangements for Blackburn with Darwen.**

# 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.<sup>1</sup>

7 The members of the Commission are:

- Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)
- Peter Knight CBE, DL
- Alison Lowton
- Peter Maddison QPM
- Sir Tony Redmond
  
- Chief Executive: Jolyon Jackson CBE

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<sup>1</sup> 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 Blackburn with Darwen are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- The number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the borough.

## 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](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

## Consultation

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

12 This review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
15 November 2016	Number of councillors decided
22 November 2016	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
30 January 2017	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
11 April 2017	Publication of draft recommendations, start of second consultation
19 June 2017	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
29 August 2017	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 parish or town council ward you vote in. Your ward name may also change.

## 2 Analysis and final recommendations

14 Legislation<sup>2</sup> states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors<sup>3</sup> 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 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.

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	2022
Electorate of Blackburn with Darwen	102,358	103,594
Number of councillors	51	51
Average number of electors per councillor	2,007	2,031

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 17 of our proposed wards for Blackburn with Darwen will have good electoral equality by 2022.

18 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 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](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

### Electorate figures

20 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2022, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2017. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 1% by 2022.

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<sup>2</sup> Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

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

21 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 final recommendations.

## Number of councillors

22 Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council currently has 64 councillors. We looked at evidence provided by the Council and have concluded that decreasing by 13 will still allow the Council to carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

23 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 51 councillors. As the Council elects by thirds this was likely to be 17 three-councillor wards.

24 We received one submission about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on our draft recommendations. The submission detailed changes to governance, service delivery and representational activities identified by the Council that supported their proposal for a reduction in the number of councillors. We therefore based our final recommendations on a 51-member council.

## Ward boundaries consultation

25 We received three submissions to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included one detailed borough-wide proposal from Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council that was based on a pattern of wards to be represented by 51 elected members.

26 The borough-wide scheme provided for a uniform pattern of three-member wards for the borough. Having carefully considered the proposals received, we were of the view that the proposed patterns of wards resulted in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the borough and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries.

27 Our draft recommendations were based predominantly on the borough-wide proposal that we received. 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. We also visited the area in order to look at the various different proposals on the ground. This tour of Blackburn with Darwen helped us to decide between the different boundaries proposed.

## Draft recommendations consultation

28 We received 14 submissions during our consultation on our draft recommendations. These included a response on the whole borough from the Council and a partial scheme, proposing some alternative boundaries in south Blackburn. The majority of the other submissions focused on specific areas, particularly our proposals in Darwen.

29 Our final recommendations are based on the draft recommendations with a modification to the wards in central Blackburn and Ewood based on the submissions received.

## Final recommendations

30 Pages 8–17 detail our final recommendations for each area of Blackburn with Darwen. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory<sup>4</sup> criteria of:

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

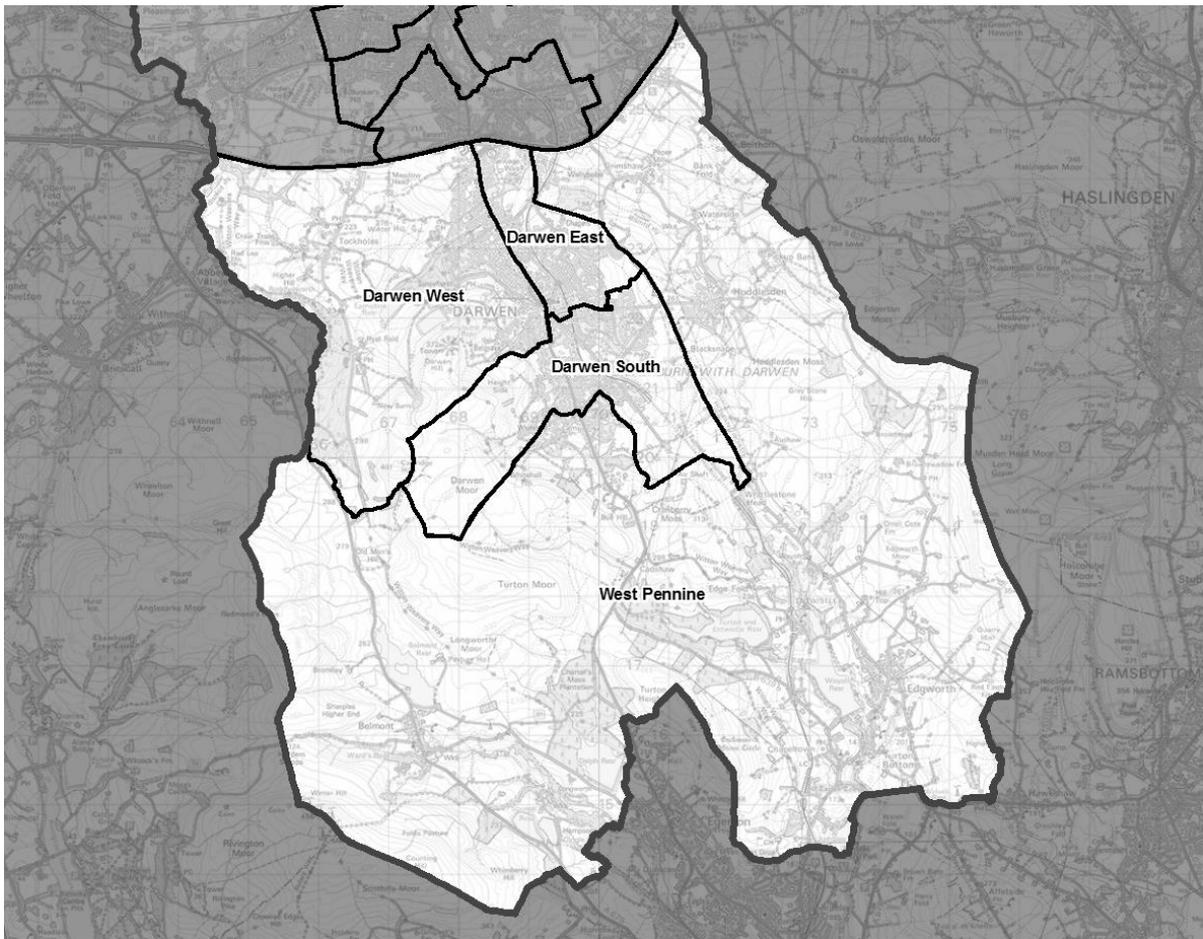
31 Our final recommendations are for 17 three-councillor wards. We consider that our final recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during consultation.

32 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table on page 18 and on the large map accompanying this report.

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<sup>4</sup> Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

# Darwen



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2022
Darwen East	3	5%
Darwen South	3	7%
Darwen West	3	6%
West Pennine	3	6%

### *Darwen East and West*

33 We received two submissions regarding our Darwen East and Darwen West wards, from the Council and Darwen Town Council. Both were supportive of the ward boundaries. We therefore confirm our Darwen East and Darwen West wards as final.

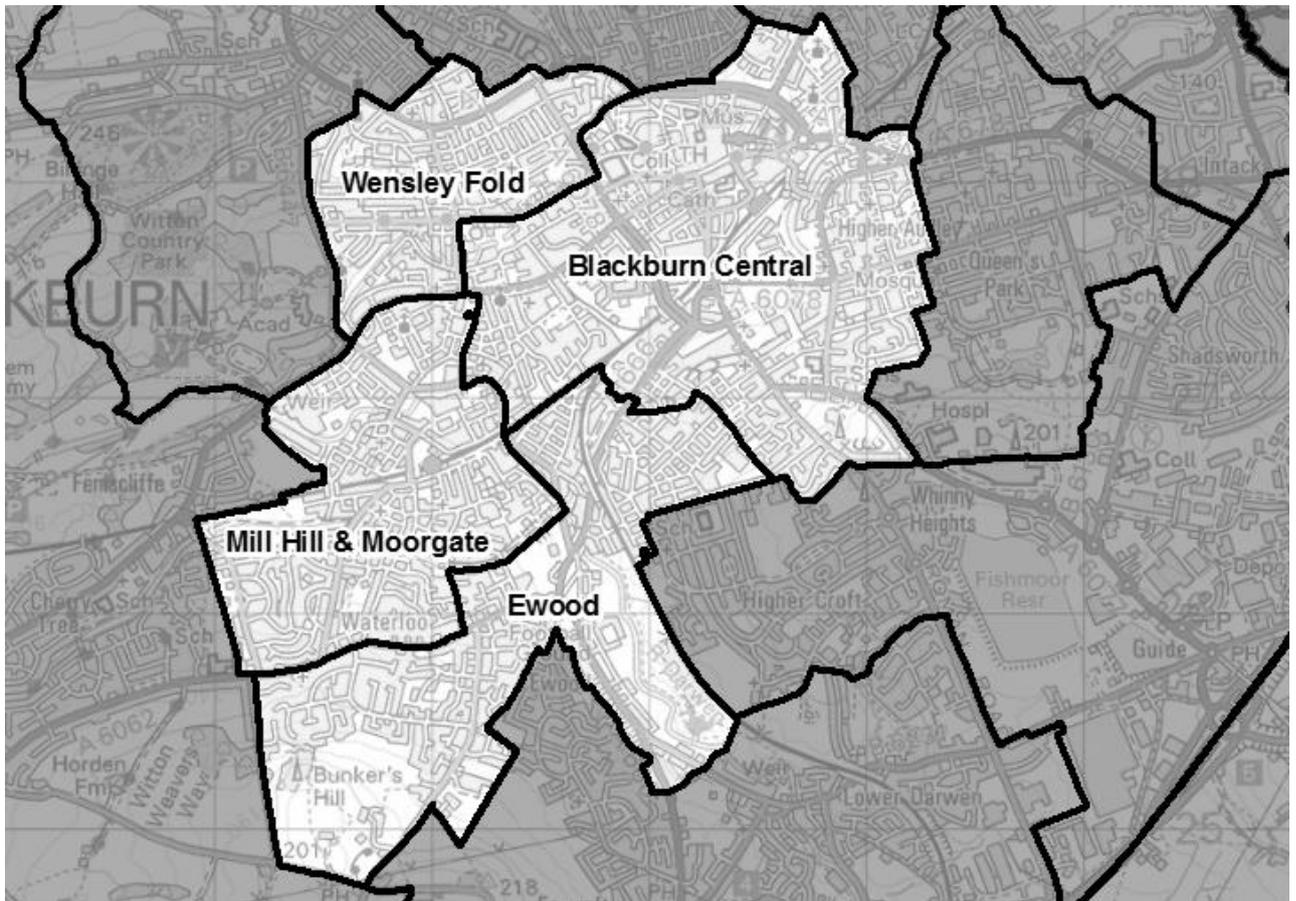
### *Darwen South and West Pennine*

34 We received five submissions regarding our draft Darwen Rural ward. One of these submissions stated that the Whitehall area of Darwen should be included within the Darwen South ward. This move would lead to poor electoral equality in Darwen South, which would have 11% more electors than the borough average by 2022. We did not consider that persuasive enough evidence was supplied to justify this variance. The other submissions we received were supportive of the proposed ward boundaries.

35 The other submissions did, however, comment on the name of the ward. Two submissions requested that North Turton remain in the name of the ward. However, the Council's submission stated that feedback across the proposed ward indicated that there would be support for a name that was more geographically accurate and suggested West Pennine, which we have accepted.

36 With the exception of the name change from Darwen Rural to West Pennine, we are therefore confirming these wards as final.

## Blackburn Central



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2022
Blackburn Central	3	-4%
Ewood	3	4%
Mill Hill & Moorgate	3	-5%
Wensley Fold	3	-3%

### *Blackburn Central, Wensley Fold and Mill Hill & Moorgate*

37 We received two submissions that were supportive of our proposals in this area. One of these submissions, from the Council, requested a name change from Central to Blackburn Central. We have adopted this change. With the exception of the name change, we are confirming these draft wards as final.

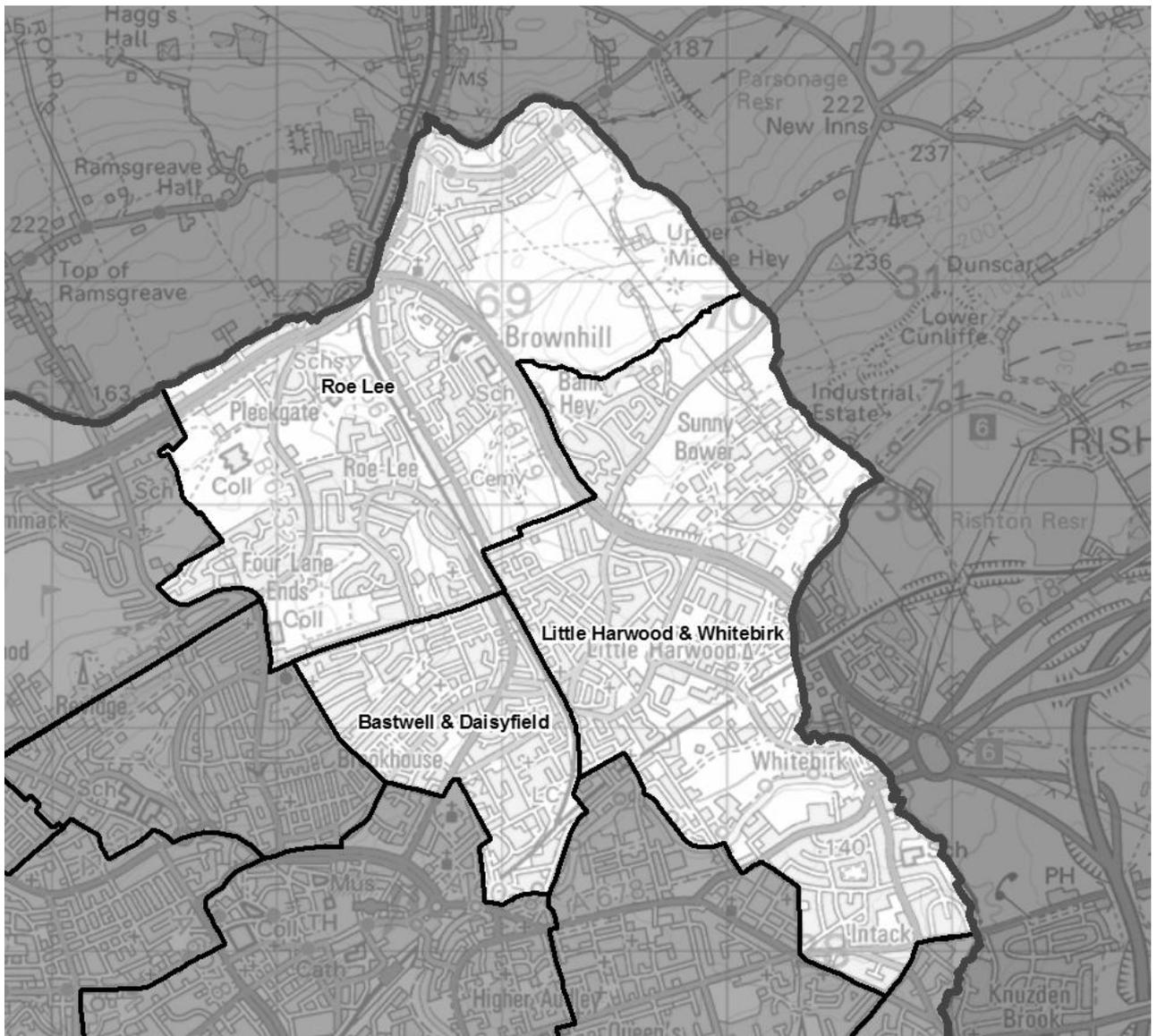
### *Ewood*

38 We received two submissions regarding our proposed Ewood ward. One proposed the abolition of this ward to accommodate the continuation of Meadowhead ward, which exists under the current proposals. This scheme does not use the agreed electorate figures and would result in poor electoral equality in Meadowhead, which would have 11% more electors than the borough average by 2022, and in Blackburn South East, which would have 13% more.

39 The Council's submission suggested small changes to two of the boundaries of Ewood. It proposed an adjustment to the boundary along Heys Lane around the Heights Free School. It argued that as the Heights Free School serves the wider borough, it was not necessarily viewed as a local school. They also stated that Heys Lane is the natural boundary between the two wards. This view was supported by a local community group. However, as road access for the school, Moorland Road, Heyworth Avenue and Bank Hey View is along Heys Avenue, we consider that this area has better links to Ewood than to Blackburn South, and so we have not amended our draft recommendations in this area.

40 The Council also proposed an amendment to the boundary between Ewood ward and Livesey with Pleasington ward along Gib Lane to account for a new development that is being built immediately behind properties on Gib Lane. We consider that this new boundary would provide better access to the new properties and so have made this change to our draft ward.

## North-east Blackburn



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2022
Bastwell & Daisyfield	3	-4%
Little Harwood & Whitebirk	3	-4%
Roe Lee	3	-1%

*Bastwell & Daisyfield and Little Harwood & Whitebirk*

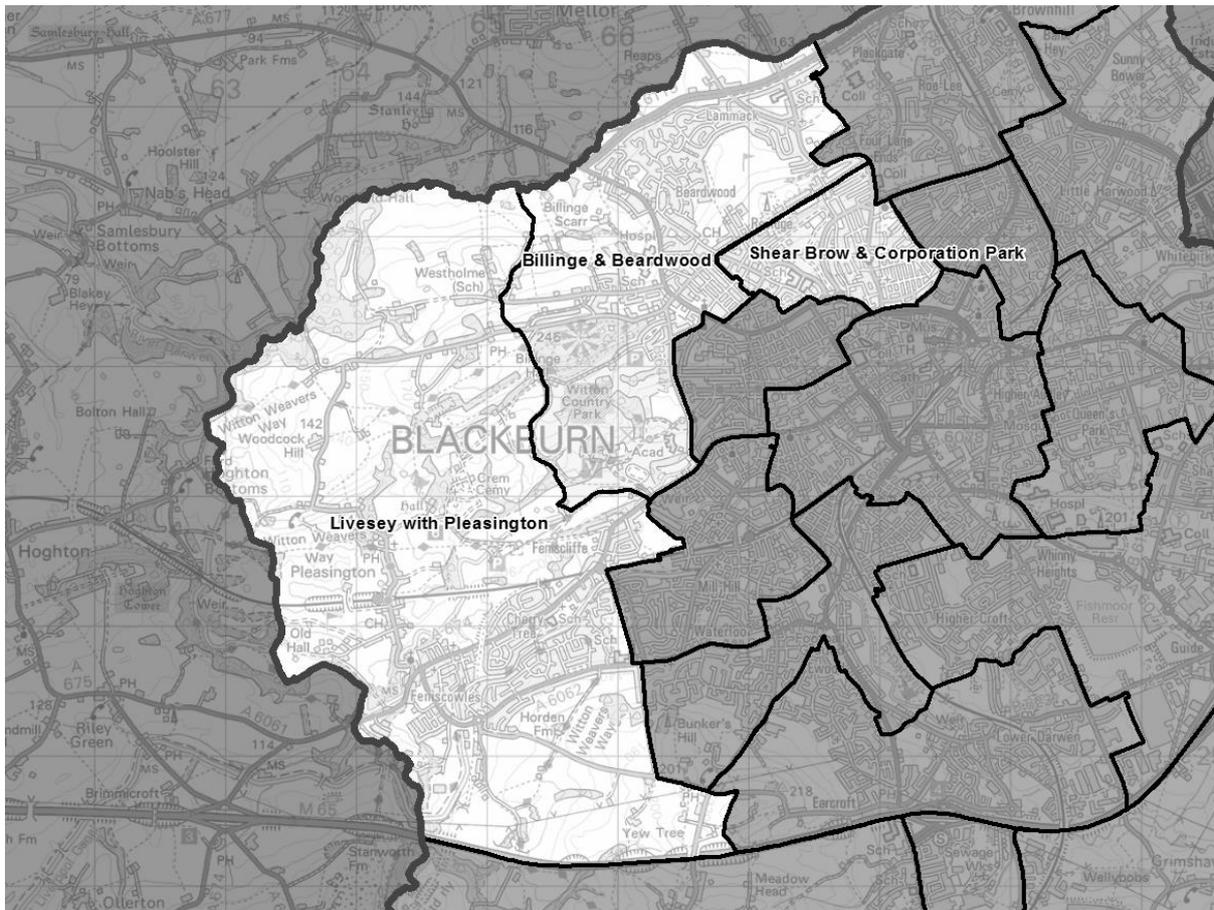
41 We received one submission regarding these two wards from the Council, which supported our proposals. We therefore confirm our Bastwell & Daisyfield and Little Harwood & Whitebirk wards as final. Both will achieve electoral equality by 2022.

*Roe Lee*

42 We received submissions from the Council and a local resident that were supportive of our draft Roe Lee ward. We also received an alternative proposal for this area, which was not based on the agreed electorate figures. The proposal for Roe Lee was part of a wider partial scheme that resulted in poor electoral equality across two other wards. In the absence of significant evidence for these changes, we have not incorporated the suggested changes to this ward.

43 We therefore confirm our draft Roe Lee ward as final. Roe Lee will have good electoral equality by 2022.

## North and West Blackburn



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2022
<b>Billinge &amp; Beardwood</b>	3	-3%
<b>Livesey with Pleasington</b>	3	3%
<b>Shear Brow &amp; Corporation Park</b>	3	-4%

*Billinge & Beardwood and Shear Brow & Corporation Park*

44 We received an alternative proposal for the boundary between Billinge & Beardwood and Shear Brow & Corporation Park from the Council. It argued that the boundary between the two wards should run along the Revidge Road, on the basis that the properties north of Revidge Road identify more with the Billinge and Beardwood area than with Shear Brown & Corporation Park. The Council's proposed boundary would also provide better electoral equality for Billinge & Beardwood. We have accepted the Council's amendment in this area. Billinge & Beardwood and Shear Brow & Corporation Park will have good electoral equality by 2022.

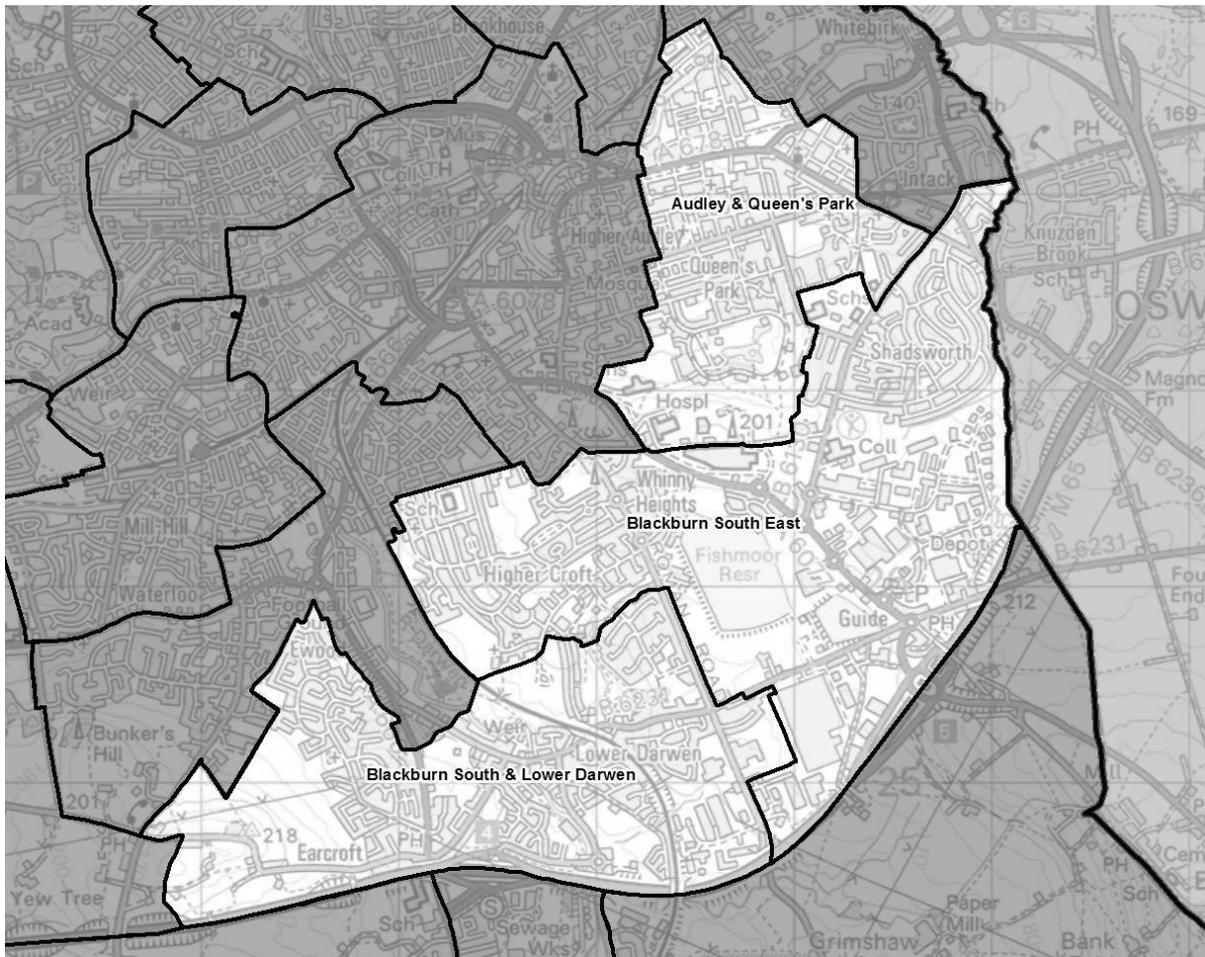
45 We received an alternative partial scheme which included Billinge & Beardwood but was not based on the agreed electorate figures. The scheme resulted in poor electoral equality in other wards and therefore we have not been able to accept these proposals.

46 We also received one submission from Councillor Ali, who suggested further changes to the boundary between Billinge & Beardwood and Shear Brow & Corporation Park in the area of Granville Road. However, no evidence was provided to support this modification. We have therefore not adopted these proposals.

*Livesey with Pleasington*

47 As discussed in paragraph 40, we have made one amendment to the boundary between Livesey with Pleasington and Ewood. This is to allow for access for a development being built behind the houses along Gib Lane. Livesey with Pleasington will achieve good electoral equality by 2022. With the exception of this modification, we confirm our draft Livesey with Pleasington ward as final.

## South-east Blackburn



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2022
Audley & Queen's Park	3	-1%
Blackburn South & Lower Darwen	3	-5%
Blackburn South East	3	1%

*Audley & Queen's Park*

48 We received one submission from the Council that was supportive of this ward. We therefore confirm our Audley & Queen's Park ward as final.

*Blackburn South & Lower Darwen*

49 We received two submissions regarding Blackburn South & Lower Darwen. The Council were supportive of our proposals in this area; however, we received one submission suggesting that the name of the ward be altered to 'Shadsworth & Higher Croft'. As no evidence was submitted to support this change, we are confirming our Blackburn South & Lower Darwen ward as final.

*Blackburn South East*

50 We received one submission, from the Council, that was supportive of this ward. We also received a submission that suggested changing the name of the ward to Highercroft & East. As no evidence was submitted to support this change, we are confirming our Blackburn South East ward as final.

## Conclusions

51 The table below shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2016 and 2022 electorate figures.

### Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2017	2022
Number of councillors	51	51
Number of electoral wards	17	17
Average number of electors per councillor	2,007	2,031
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	0	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

#### **Final recommendation**

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council should be made up of 51 councillors serving 17 three-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 Blackburn with Darwen. You can also view our final recommendations for Blackburn with Darwen on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

## Parish electoral arrangements

52 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.

53 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, Blackburn with Darwen 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.

54 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Darwen Town Council.

55 As 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 Darwen Town parish.

<b>Draft recommendation</b>	
Darwen Town Council should comprise 13 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:	
<b>Parish ward</b>	<b>Councillors</b>
Darwen East	4
Darwen South	4
Darwen South Rural	1
Darwen West	4



### 3 What happens next?

56 We have now completed our review of Blackburn with Darwen. 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 2018.

#### Equalities

57 This report has been screened for impact on equalities, with due regard being given to the general equalities duties as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. As no potential negative impacts were identified, a full equality impact analysis is not required.

## Appendix A

### Final recommendations for Blackburn with Darwen

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2016)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Audley & Queen's Park	3	6,004	2,001	0%	6,013	2,004	-1%
2	Bastwell & Daisyfield	3	5,837	1,946	-3%	5,843	1,948	-4%
3	Billinge & Beardwood	3	5,841	1,947	-3%	5,902	1,967	-3%
4	Blackburn Central	3	5,771	1,924	-4%	5,875	1,958	-4%
5	Blackburn South & Lower Darwen	3	5,717	1,906	-5%	5,792	1,931	-5%
6	Blackburn South East	3	6,166	2,055	2%	6,183	2,061	1%
7	Darwen East	3	6,358	2,119	6%	6,420	2,140	5%
8	Darwen South	3	6,369	2,123	6%	6,545	2,182	7%
9	Darwen West	3	6,421	2,140	7%	6,471	2,157	6%
10	Ewood	3	6,318	2,106	5%	6,332	2,111	4%
11	Little Harwood & Whitebirk	3	5,802	1,934	-4%	5,833	1,944	-4%
12	Livesey with Pleasington	3	6,048	2,016	0%	6,275	2,092	3%

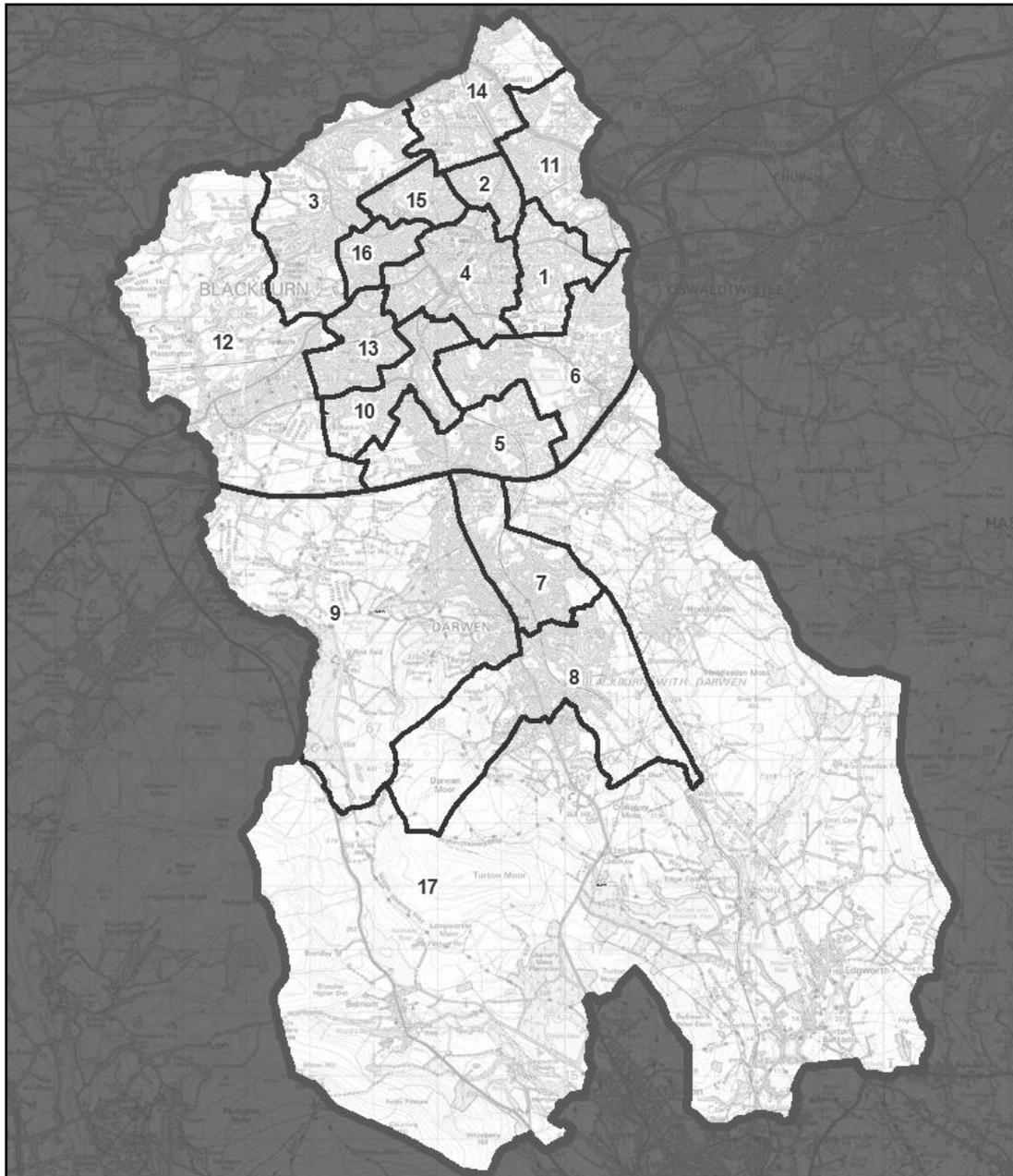
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2016)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13 Mill Hill & Moorgate	3	5,771	1,924	-4%	5,817	1,939	-5%
14 Roe Lee	3	6,009	2,003	0%	6,062	2,021	-1%
15 Shear Brow & Corporation Park	3	5,866	1,955	-3%	5,875	1,958	-4%
16 Wensley Fold	3	5,903	1,968	-2%	5,918	1,973	-3%
17 West Pennine	3	6,157	2,052	2%	6,438	2,146	6%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>102,358</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>103,594</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,007</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,031</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Blackburn with Darwen.

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



A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the large map accompanying this report, or on our website: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/north-west/lancashire/blackburn-and-darwen>

## Key

1. Audley & Queen's Park
2. Bastwell & Daisyfield
3. Billinge & Beardwood
4. Blackburn Central
5. Blackburn South & Lower Darwen
6. Blackburn South East
7. Darwen East
8. Darwen South
9. Darwen West
10. Ewood
11. Little Harwood & Whitebirk
12. Livesey with Pleasington
13. Mill Hill & Moorgate
14. Roe Lee
15. Shear Brow & Corporation Park
16. Wensley Fold
17. West Pennine

# Appendix C

## Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at <https://www.lqbce.org.uk/current-reviews/north-west/lancashire/blackburn-and-darwen>

### Local Authority

- Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
- Blackburn Conservative Association

### Political Group

- North Turton Conservative Association

### Councillors

- Councillor J. Pearson
- Councillor I. Ali
- Councillor V. McGurk

### Local Organisations

- Ewood Community Association

### Parish and Town Councils

- Darwen Town Council
- North Turton Parish Council

### Local Residents

- Six 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 <a href="http://www.nalc.gov.uk">www.nalc.gov.uk</a>
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