



New electoral arrangements for Central Bedfordshire Council Final Recommendations

January 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 Central Bedfordshire?

7 We are conducting a review of Central Bedfordshire Council ('the Council') as the value of each vote in council elections varies depending on where you live in Central Bedfordshire. Some councillors currently represent many more or fewer voters than others. This is 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where votes are as equal as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

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

- The wards in Central Bedfordshire 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 Central Bedfordshire.

Our proposals for Central Bedfordshire

9 Central Bedfordshire should be represented by 63 councillors, four more than there are now.

10 Central Bedfordshire should have 31 wards, the same number as there is now.

11 The boundaries of 19 wards should change; 12 will stay the same.

12 We have now finalised our recommendations for electoral arrangements for Central Bedfordshire.

How will the recommendations affect you?

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

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

Review timetable

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

16 The review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
15 October 2019	Number of councillors decided
22 October 2019	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
24 February 2020	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
30 June 2020	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
7 September 2020	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
12 January 2021	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and final recommendations

17 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.

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

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

	2019	2026
Electorate of Central Bedfordshire	210,228	227,056
Number of councillors	59	63
Average number of electors per councillor	3,563	3,604

20 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having 'good electoral equality'. All but one (Houghton Regis East ward) of our proposed wards for Central Bedfordshire will have good electoral equality by 2026.

Submissions received

21 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

Electorate figures

22 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2025, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2020. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 8% by 2025. This was due to major housing developments in the areas of Biggleswade, Houghton Conquest and Houghton Regis.

23 We received a couple of submissions during consultation that challenged the electoral figures put forward by the Council. These submissions questioned the level

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.

of development expected in Houghton Regis. After discussing the matter with the Council, we are satisfied that the Council's forecast for Houghton Regis is underpinned by reasonable evidence and the level of development in the area is expected to continue at the rate originally forecast at the start of the review.

24 Given a number of delays to this review, not least due to the Covid-19 outbreak, the publication year of our final recommendations has changed to 2021. However, we are content that the original 2025 forecast is a reasonable estimate of the forecast number of electors likely to be present in the authority in 2026. We have used these figures to produce our final recommendations.

Number of councillors

25 Central Bedfordshire Council currently has 59 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and have concluded that increasing the number of councillors by four to 63 will ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

26 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 63 councillors: for example, 63 one-councillor wards, 21 three-councillor wards, or a mix of one-, two- and three-councillor wards.

Ward boundaries consultation

27 We received 97 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included three district-wide proposals from the Council, Councillor Shingler (Barton-le-Clay ward) and a local resident. Councillor Shingler and the local resident broadly endorsed the Council's proposed wards for the towns of Biggleswade, Dunstable, Flitwick, Houghton Regis, Leighton-Linslade and Sandy, but proposed alternative boundaries in the more rural areas. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of Central Bedfordshire.

28 Each of the three district-wide schemes provided for a mixed pattern of one-, two- and three-councillor wards for Central Bedfordshire. We carefully considered the proposals received and were of the view that the proposed patterns of wards resulted in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the authority and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries.

29 Therefore, our draft recommendations were based on a combination of the schemes we received, all of which contained various proposals that reflected our statutory criteria. Our draft recommendations also had regard to more localised evidence, which provided further information 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.

30 As a result of the unprecedented circumstances related to the outbreak of Covid-19, we were unable to conduct a visit to the authority to look at the various proposals on the ground. However, we were able to conduct a detailed, virtual tour of Central Bedfordshire. This helped us to decide between the different boundaries proposed.

31 Our draft recommendations were for 12 three-councillor wards, 10 two-councillor wards and seven one-councillor wards. We considered that our draft recommendations would provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

Draft recommendations consultation

32 We received 180 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included comments from the Council, two political groups, 25 councillors, seven parish and town councils, and 145 local residents. The majority of the submissions focused on specific areas, with a substantial amount opposing the name of our proposed Arlesey ward. Localised submissions were also made in relation to our wards in Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Leighton-Linslade, while some focused on the warding arrangements of the rural parishes throughout the district.

33 Our final recommendations are based on the draft recommendations with modifications to the wards in the towns of Dunstable and Houghton Regis, based on the submissions received. In addition, we have also made changes to the names of several wards.

Final recommendations

34 Our final recommendations are for nine single-councillor wards, 12 two-councillor wards and 10 three-councillor wards. We consider that our final recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

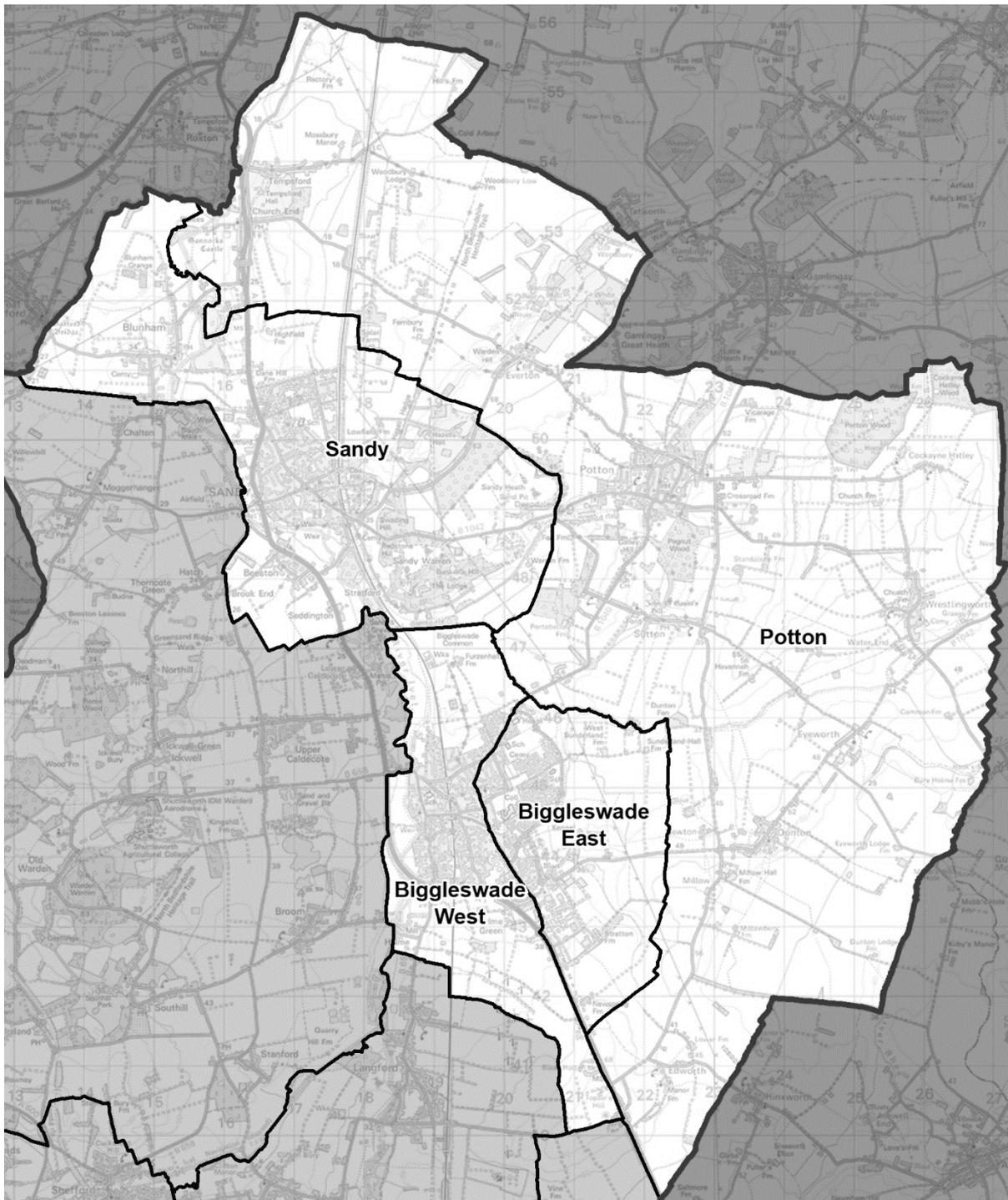
35 The tables and maps on pages 11–30 detail our final recommendations for each area of Central Bedfordshire. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁴ criteria of:

⁴ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

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

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

Biggleswade, Pottton and Sandy

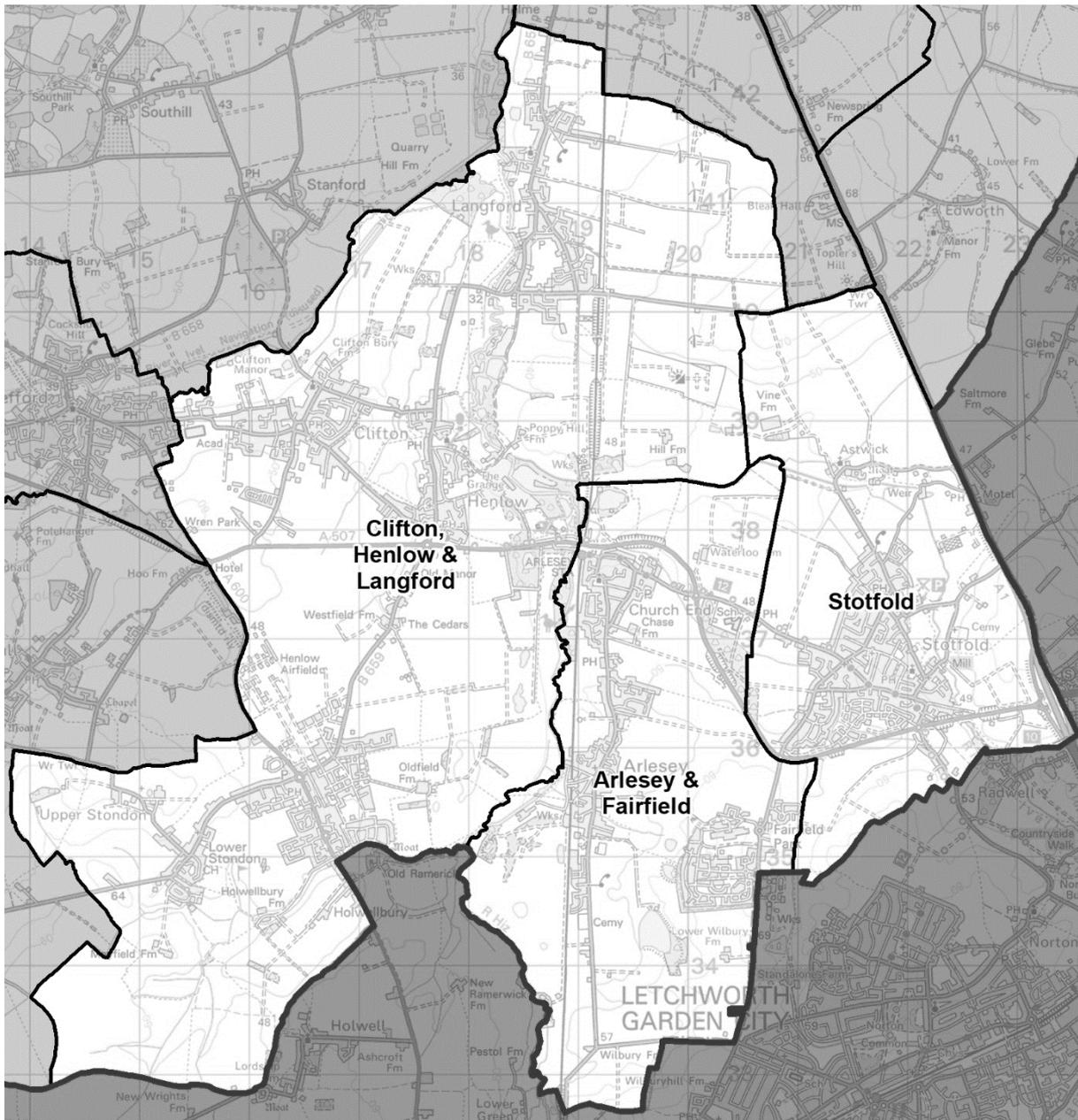


Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2026
Biggleswade East	2	-5%
Biggleswade West	3	-3%
Pottton	2	-7%
Sandy	3	-5%

Biggleswade East, Biggleswade West, Potton and Sandy

37 We received no submissions that related directly to these wards. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final.

Arlesey, Henlow and Stotfold



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2026
Arlesey & Fairfield	2	3%
Clifton, Henlow & Langford	3	3%
Stotfold	2	1%

Arlesey & Fairfield

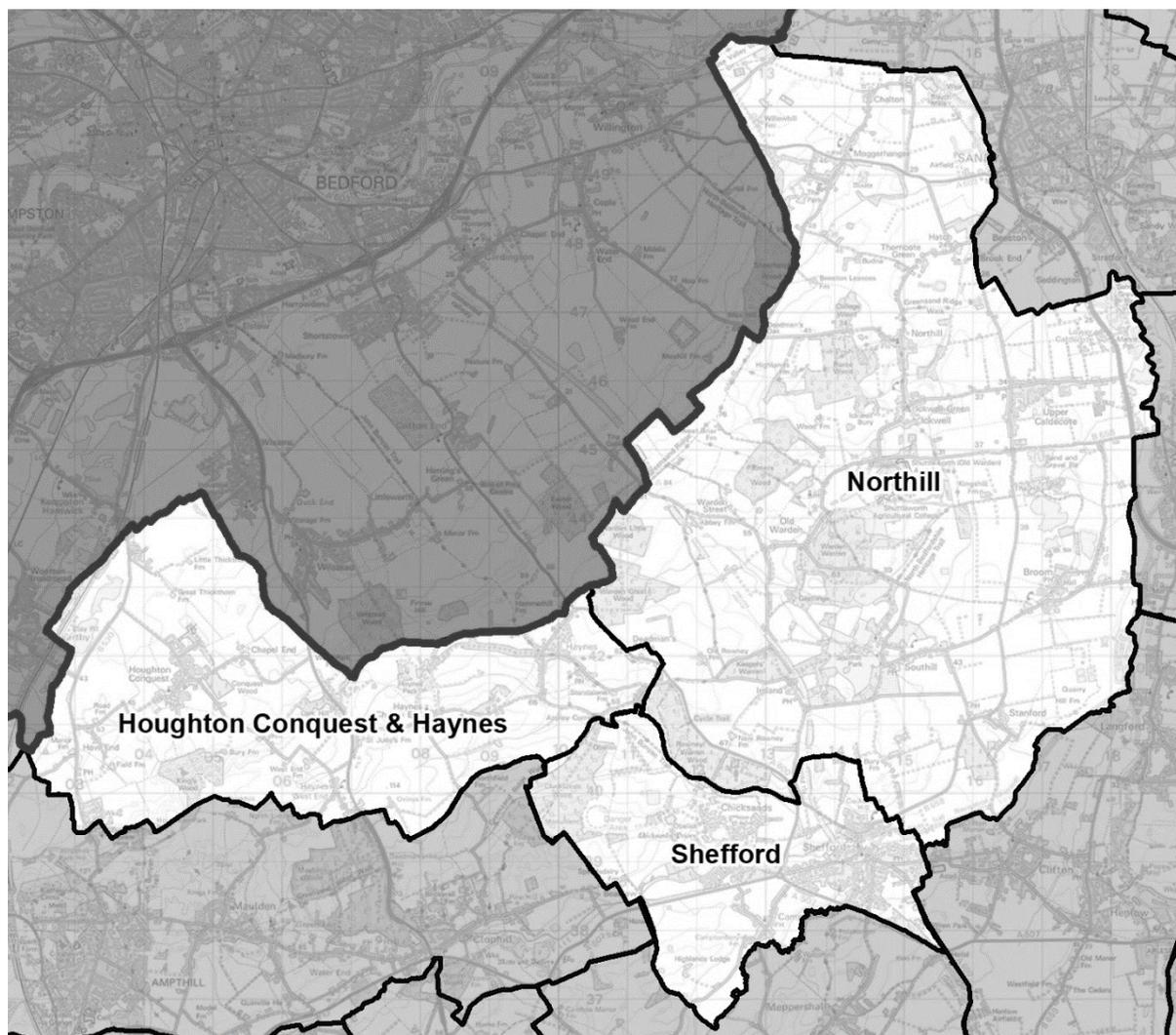
38 We received 121 submissions that related to our proposed Arlesey ward. While a considerable amount of these submissions supported the boundaries of this ward, they all opposed the ward name of Arlesey. Many respondents proposed that the ward be renamed Arlesey & Fairfield, stating that this would be more representative

of the communities that reside within the ward, while also acknowledging the distinct nature of the Arlesey and Fairfield communities. We are persuaded by the evidence received and have decided to rename this ward as part of our final recommendations.

Clifton, Henlow & Langford and Stotfold

39 We received no submissions that related directly to these wards. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final.

Shefford area



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2026
Houghton Conquest & Haynes	1	-1%
Northhill	1	5%
Shefford	2	-10%

Houghton Conquest & Haynes and Northhill

40 We received 10 submissions that related directly to Houghton Conquest & Haynes and Northhill wards. Nine of these submissions were supportive of our decision to retain the existing Houghton Conquest & Haynes and Northhill wards and provided good evidence about how these wards would best reflect our statutory criteria.

41 The other submission, from a local resident, suggested renaming Northhill ward either 'Northhill & Southill' or 'Northhill & Stanford'. However, they did not provide

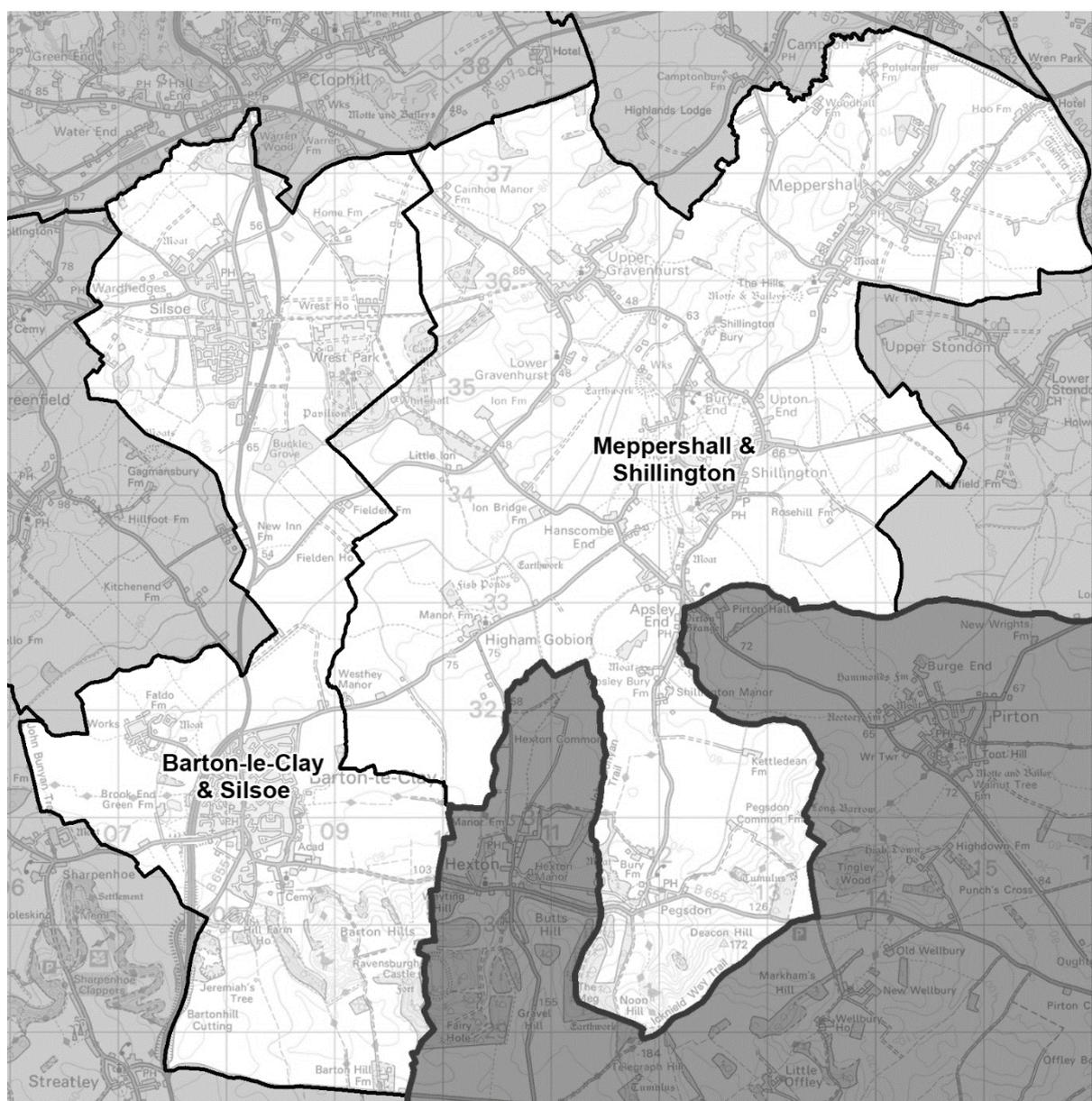
sufficient evidence to support these alternative names, so we have therefore not adopted them as part of our final recommendations.

42 Therefore, given the support received for these two wards during consultation, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for Houghton Conquest & Haynes and Northill wards as final.

Shefford

43 We received one submission in relation to this ward. Councillor Brown, the current Shefford ward councillor, supported our proposed ward, comprising the parishes of Shefford and Campton & Chicksands. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final.

Barton-le-Clay and Silsoe



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2026
Barton-le-Clay & Silsoe	2	-9%
Meppershall & Shillington	1	3%

Barton-le-Clay & Silsoe

44 We received six submissions that related to our proposed Barton & Silsoe ward, which comprises the parishes of Barton-le-Clay and Silsoe. Barton-le-Clay Parish Council, Councillor Shingler (the current Barton-le-Clay ward councillor) and a local resident supported our proposed ward. Barton-le-Clay Parish Council agreed that the ward would effectively reflect our statutory criteria, highlighting the good road access between the constituent parishes via the A6, the shared community facilities and good electoral equality.

45 Two local residents suggested that the ward be split into two single-councillor wards. One of these submissions argued that the two parishes should be warded separately given the distinct nature of the two parishes. Another local resident stated a preference for Barton-le-Clay parish to remain as a single-councillor ward but was content with the proposed two-councillor Barton & Silsoe ward.

46 We therefore examined the possibility of dividing our proposed Barton & Silsoe ward into two single-councillor wards. However, a single-councillor Barton-le-Clay ward would result in an electoral variance of 14%, while a single-councillor Silsoe ward would have an electoral variance of -31%. Given we have an obligation to ensure that electors in Central Bedfordshire have a vote of broadly equal weight, we consider that these variances will not provide for sufficient electoral equality. Consequently, we have not adopted this warding arrangement as part of our final recommendations.

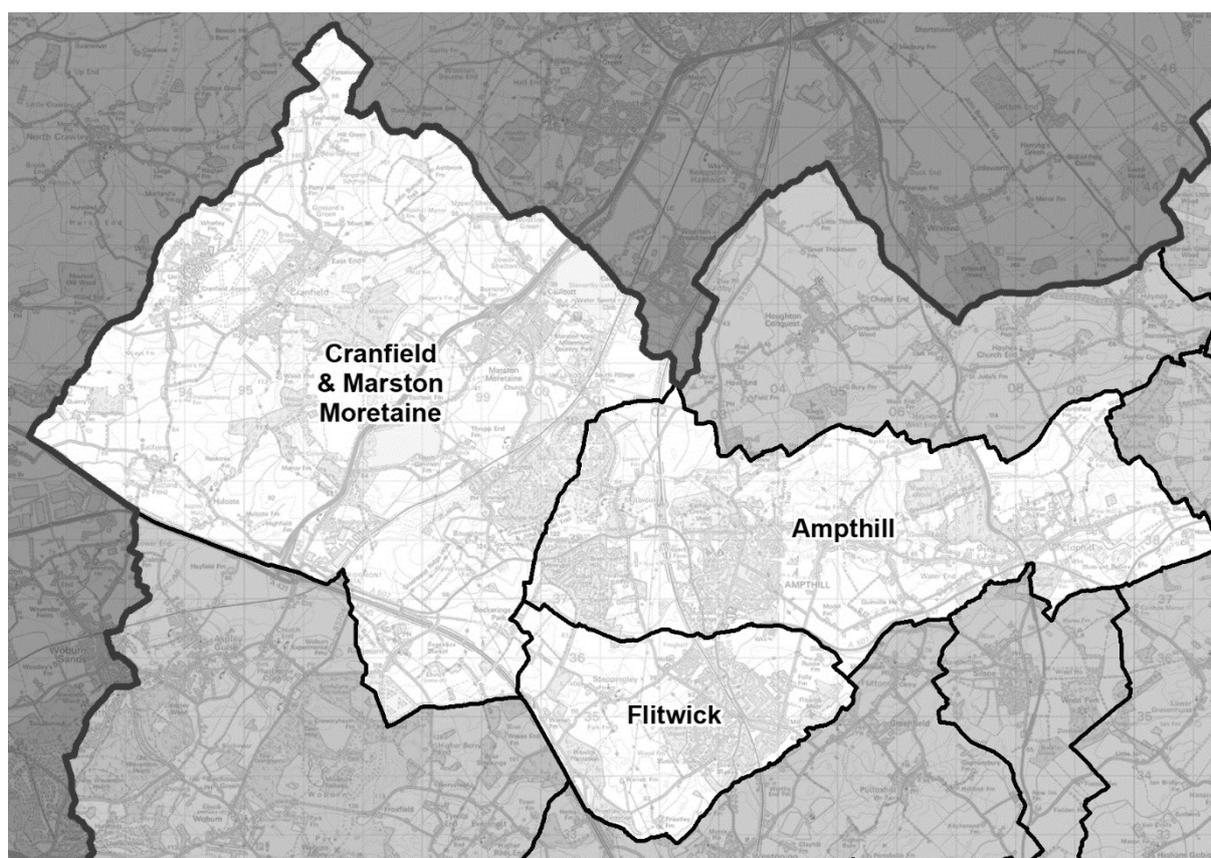
47 Barton-le-Clay Parish Council and Councillor Shingler both requested that we rename the ward 'Barton-le-Clay & Silsoe' in order to recognise the full name of the village. We are content that this ward name change will better reflect community identities and have adopted it as part of our final recommendations.

Meppershall & Shillington

48 Six submissions were received in relation to our proposed Meppershall & Shillington ward. Meppershall Parish Council, Councillor Seaman and two local residents supported our proposed ward, which placed Meppershall parish into a ward with the parishes of Gravenhurst and Shillington.

49 However, two local residents opposed this arrangement, providing evidence that Meppershall should continue to be warded with Shefford. However, transferring Meppershall parish into our proposed Shefford ward would result in electoral variances of 12% for Shefford ward and -42% for Meppershall & Shillington ward, which we consider too high to recommend. In any case, we maintain the view that our proposed Meppershall & Shillington ward will ensure the effective representation of the village communities that comprise the ward. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations for this ward as final.

Flitwick and Ampthill



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2026
Ampthill	3	2%
Cranfield & Marston Moretaine	3	5%
Flitwick	3	1%

Ampthill and Cranfield & Marston Moretaine

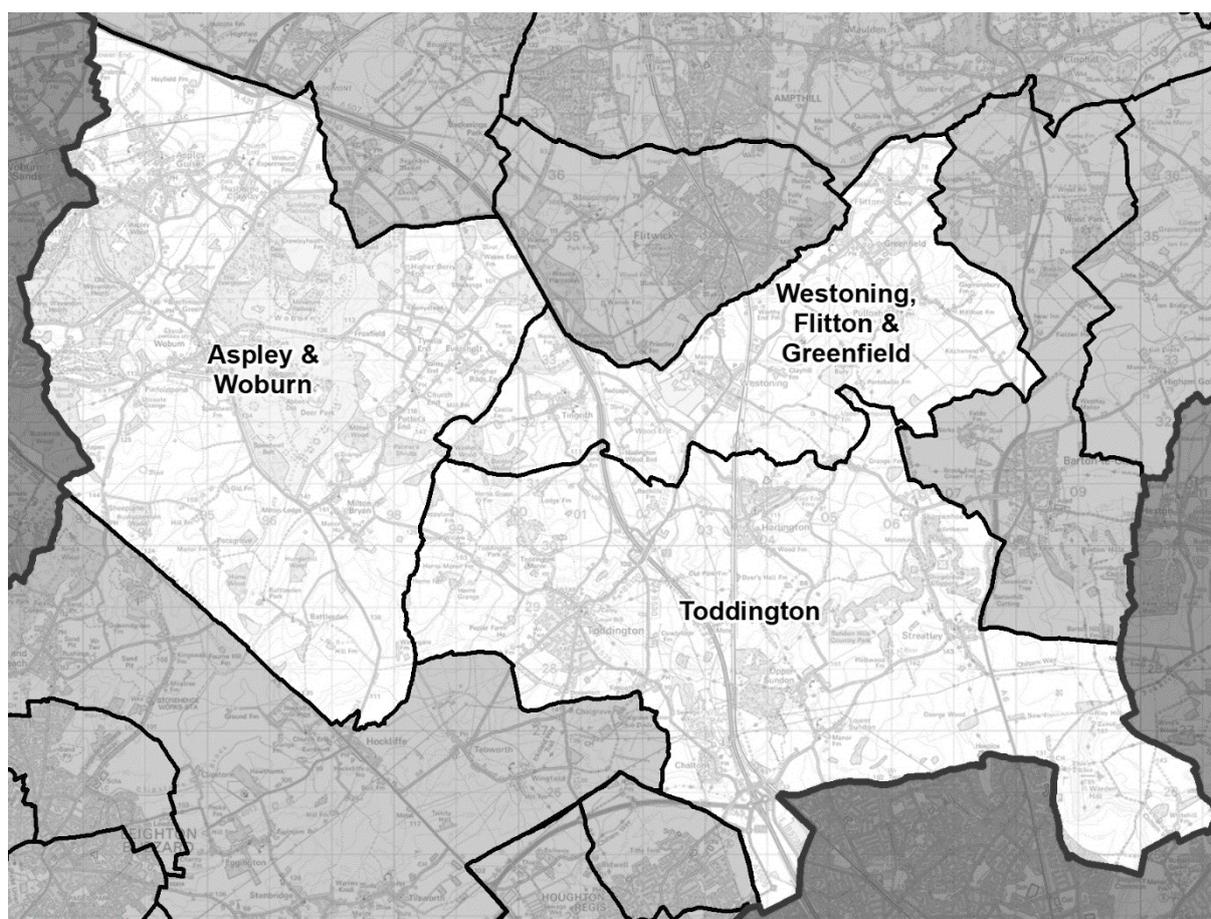
50 We received two submissions in relation to these wards. Councillor Smith supported the decision to include Millbrook parish in Ampthill ward, while a local resident held a contrasting view, arguing that Millbrook is more closely aligned with the communities that comprise our proposed Cranfield & Marston Moretaine ward. The local resident also suggested that if Millbrook parish was to remain in Ampthill ward, we should rename the ward 'Ampthill & Millbrook'.

51 We have decided not to adopt either suggestion made by the local resident. We considered that the community evidence provided was not strong enough to warrant making changes to our draft recommendations here. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Ampthill and Cranfield & Marston Moretaine wards as final.

Flitwick

52 We received no submissions that related directly to this ward. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations for Flitwick ward as final.

Aspley Guise, Toddington and Westoning



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2026
Aspley & Woburn	1	6%
Toddington	2	8%
Westoning, Flitton & Greenfield	1	5%

Aspley & Woburn

53 We received three submissions that related to our proposed Aspley & Woburn ward. The submissions all reiterated their desire for us to retain the existing single-councillor ward for the area, which we proposed as part of our draft recommendations. In light of these responses, we have decided to confirm our draft Aspley & Woburn ward as final.

Toddington

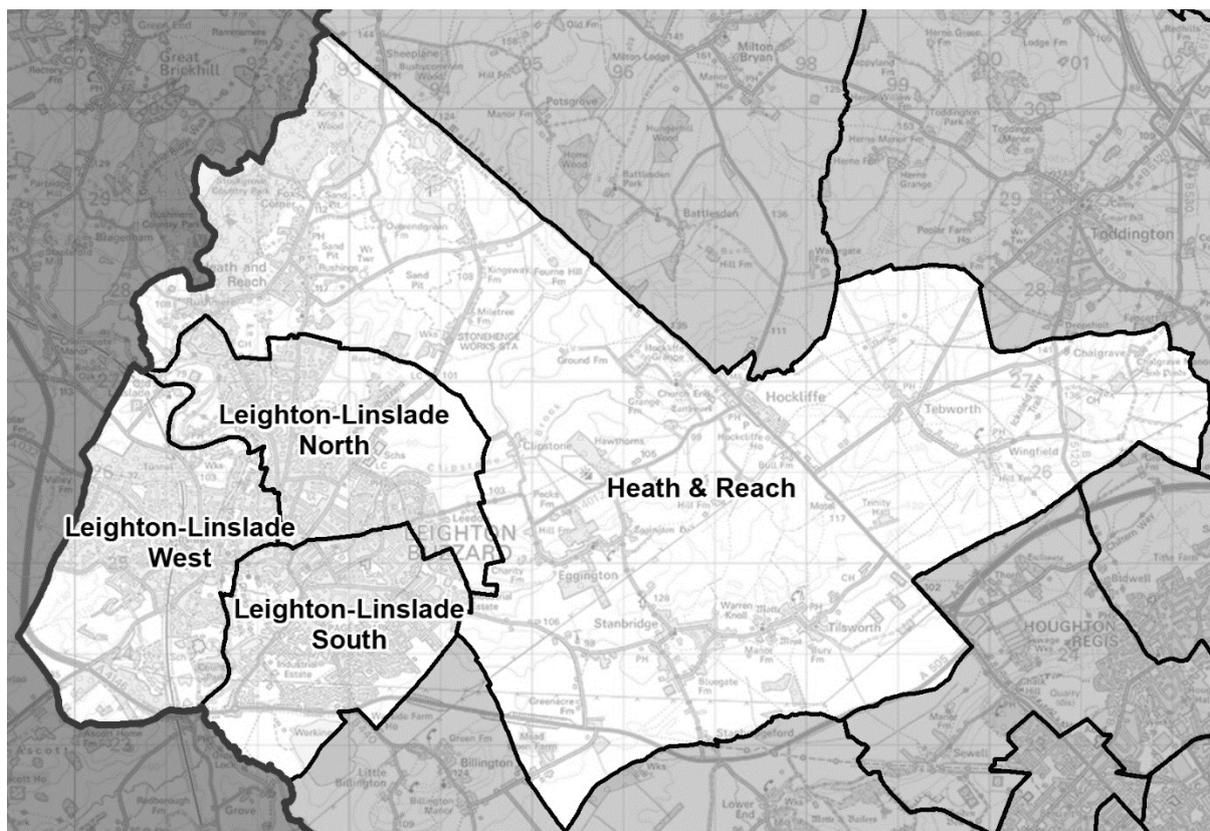
54 We received one submission from a local resident that related directly to this ward, which suggested we split the ward into two single-councillor wards along the M1. While a single-councillor ward comprising Harlington, Streatley and Sundon parishes would result in a ward with good electoral equality, a single-councillor ward containing Toddington and Chalton parishes would result in an electoral variance of 14%. We decided not to adopt this proposal, as we considered the community

evidence provided was not strong enough to warrant an electoral variance above 10% here. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendation for Toddington ward as final.

Westoning, Flitton & Greenfield

55 A local resident suggested that we combine our proposed Barton & Silsoe and Westoning, Flitton & Greenfield wards in order to form a three-councillor ward. While this warding arrangement would provide for good electoral equality, no community evidence was provided to support this change. We have therefore not adopted this proposal as part of our final recommendations and confirm our draft recommendations for Westoning, Flitton & Greenfield ward as final.

Leighton Buzzard and Linslade



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2026
Heath & Reach	1	-2%
Leighton-Linslade North	3	-1%
Leighton-Linslade South	3	2%
Leighton-Linslade West	3	2%

Heath & Reach, Leighton-Linslade North, Leighton-Linslade South and Leighton-Linslade West

56 We received six submissions that related directly to our wards in the Leighton-Linslade area. These submissions all supported our proposed ward boundaries but suggested alternative ward names and parish warding arrangements.

57 Leighton-Linslade Town Council, Councillor S. Jones and Councillor Freeman suggested we rename our Leighton Buzzard North, Leighton Buzzard South and Linslade wards to Leighton-Linslade North, Leighton-Linslade South and Leighton-Linslade West respectively, in order to better reflect the growing coalescence between the two towns. A joint submission from Councillor Bowater, Councillor Berry and Councillor Dodwell agreed with this sentiment, but suggested that Leighton Buzzard North ward instead be named Leighton-Linslade East. We have decided to adopt the ward names proposed by Leighton-Linslade Town Council, Councillor S.

Jones and Councillor Freeman as we consider these names best represent community identities in Leighton-Linslade.

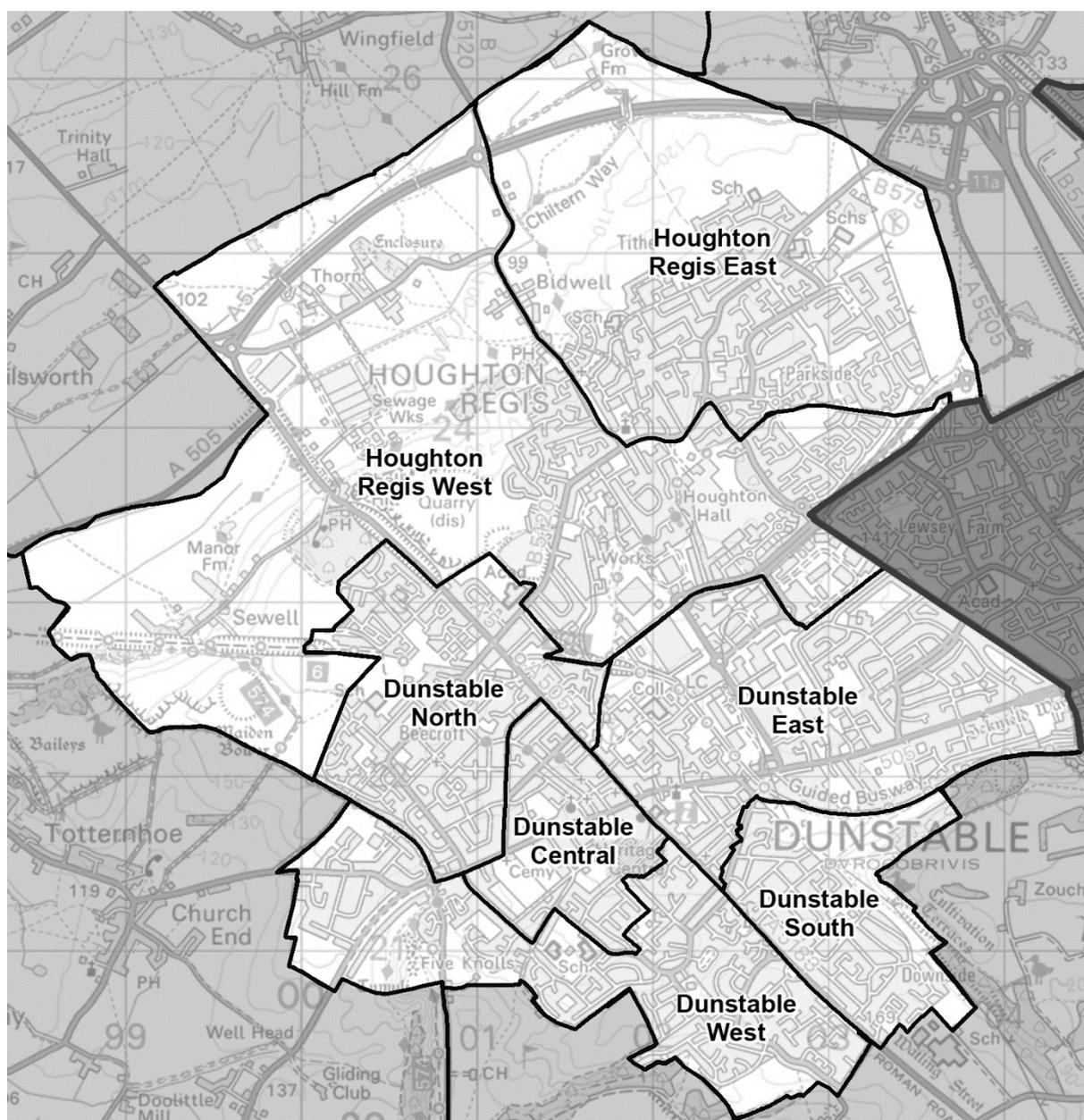
58 A number of submissions, including those from Leighton-Linslade Town Council, the Liberal Democrat Group on the town council, and a number of local councillors proposed revised parish warding arrangements in order to achieve a more equal allocation of town councillors within each district ward. We agree that the changes proposed will provide for effective and convenient local government. We have consequently transferred the area bounded by Soulbury Road and the railway line into Barnabas parish ward, created a single-councillor Bassett parish ward for the area bounded by the River Ouzel, West Street, North Street and Church Street, while also increasing the number of town councillors allocated to Planets parish ward from two to three. We have also adopted the proposal made by the Liberal Democrat Group on Leighton-Linslade Town Council to incorporate electors on Blenheim Road, Drakes Avenue and Wellington Way in St George's parish ward as we concur that this modification will provide a more identifiable boundary. We decided not to adopt the proposal made by Councillor Bowater, Councillor Berry and Councillor Dodwell to rename Southcott and Barnabas parish wards as Linslade West and Linslade East respectively, as we were not persuaded that enough community-based evidence had been provided to support this.

59 We also received submissions which related to the parish warding arrangements for Eggington parish, created as a consequence of our decision to include the Clipstone housing development, which sits within Eggington parish, into our Leighton-Linslade North ward. While supportive of the decision to include the development in a Leighton-Linslade-centric ward, many respondents argued that Clipstone and Village parish wards of Eggington parish should be allocated seven parish councillors each, rather than five and two councillors respectively that we proposed in our draft recommendations. However, we will not normally make recommendations to change the total number of parish councillors elected to a parish council. Our policy is to allocate the current number of total councillors to each parish ward based on the five-year electorate forecast. We consider that changing the total number of councillors for a parish is a matter best resolved locally and that the Council may wish to make such changes via a Community Governance Review. Indeed, the Council has indicated its intention to do so.

60 The Liberal Democrat Group on Leighton-Linslade Town Council suggested we split the Clipstone development between our Leighton-Linslade North and Leighton-Linslade South wards. We decided not to adopt this proposal as we were not persuaded that enough community-based evidence had been received to justify such a proposal.

61 Therefore, apart from revised ward names and the amendments to the parish warding arrangements for Leighton-Linslade parish, we are confirming our draft recommendations for the Leighton-Linslade area as final.

Dunstable and Houghton Regis



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2026
Dunstable Central	1	6%
Dunstable East	2	10%
Dunstable North	2	3%
Dunstable South	1	3%
Dunstable West	2	7%
Houghton Regis East	3	-13%
Houghton Regis West	2	-10%

Dunstable Central, Dunstable East, Dunstable North, Dunstable South and Dunstable West

62 We received eight submissions which directly related to our proposals for Dunstable. Councillor Abbott, Councillor George and two local residents opposed our draft recommendations for the town entirely, while Councillor Ghent and a local resident specifically opposed the creation of the All Saints parish ward, created as a consequence of our proposed Houghton Regis West ward. Two local residents opposed our three-councillor Dunstable East ward, arguing it was too large.

63 After considering the submissions received, we have decided to broadly adopt the proposal made by Councillor Gurney. This pattern of wards is largely based on the existing wards in the area, which Councillor Gurney argued would better reflect our statutory criteria. In particular, we were persuaded by the evidence received that the creation of a two-councillor Dunstable East ward and a single-councillor Dunstable South ward, with the boundary running along the Luton–Dunstable Busway and to the rear of properties on Great North Road, would represent community identities more effectively, while still maintaining good electoral equality.

64 Councillor Gurney also agreed with our previous decision to rename the wards in Dunstable by cardinal direction. We concur that they will be more identifiable to local electors. Consequently, we have also renamed the parish wards on this basis – the town council’s warding arrangements for Dunstable, created as a result of these proposals, can be found on page 32 of this report.

Houghton Regis East and Houghton Regis West

65 We received 10 submissions which related to our proposed wards for the town of Houghton Regis. Houghton Regis Town Council, Central Bedfordshire Liberal Democrats, Councillor Farrell, Councillor Goodchild, Councillor D. Jones and two local residents all opposed our Houghton Regis East ward, providing evidence that we should retain the existing Parkside and Tithe Farm wards, given their distinct community identities.

66 We had previously examined the possibility of retaining the existing Parkside and Tithe Farm wards when we formulated our draft recommendations. However, we remained unable to develop a warding pattern that would retain these wards, whilst integrating the housing development that will eventually surround these two estates. Furthermore, as outlined in our draft recommendations, we consider it preferable to combine distinct communities in the same ward, rather than dividing them between wards, to ensure good electoral equality. We are therefore retaining our proposed Houghton Regis East ward as part of our final recommendations, bar a modification in the south-east of the ward, which is detailed further in paragraph 68.

67 We also received several submissions, including representations from the Council and Houghton Regis Town Council, that opposed our decision to include

part of Dunstable parish in our proposed Houghton Regis West ward. We had justified this on the basis of providing good electoral equality across wards. However, it was argued that such a proposal would not reflect community identities or contribute to effective and convenient local government, given that electors in this area would be represented by Dunstable town councillors at parish level and Houghton Regis West councillors at district level. We are persuaded by the evidence received and have therefore transferred this part of Dunstable parish, which contains the All Saints Academy, into our Dunstable North ward.

68 The Council and Houghton Regis Town Council also opposed the boundary between our proposed Houghton Regis East and Houghton Regis West wards, which runs along Park Road North, stating that this would not represent a strong and identifiable boundary. We were persuaded by the evidence received and have instead placed the boundary between our Houghton Regis wards along the Houghton Brook, which we consider to be more identifiable to local electors.

69 The Council and Houghton Regis Town Council also disputed our decision to use the B5120 as the boundary between the two Houghton Regis wards. However, we have decided to retain this boundary, as we consider the B5120 a stronger and more recognisable feature to use as a ward boundary than Tithe Farm Road.

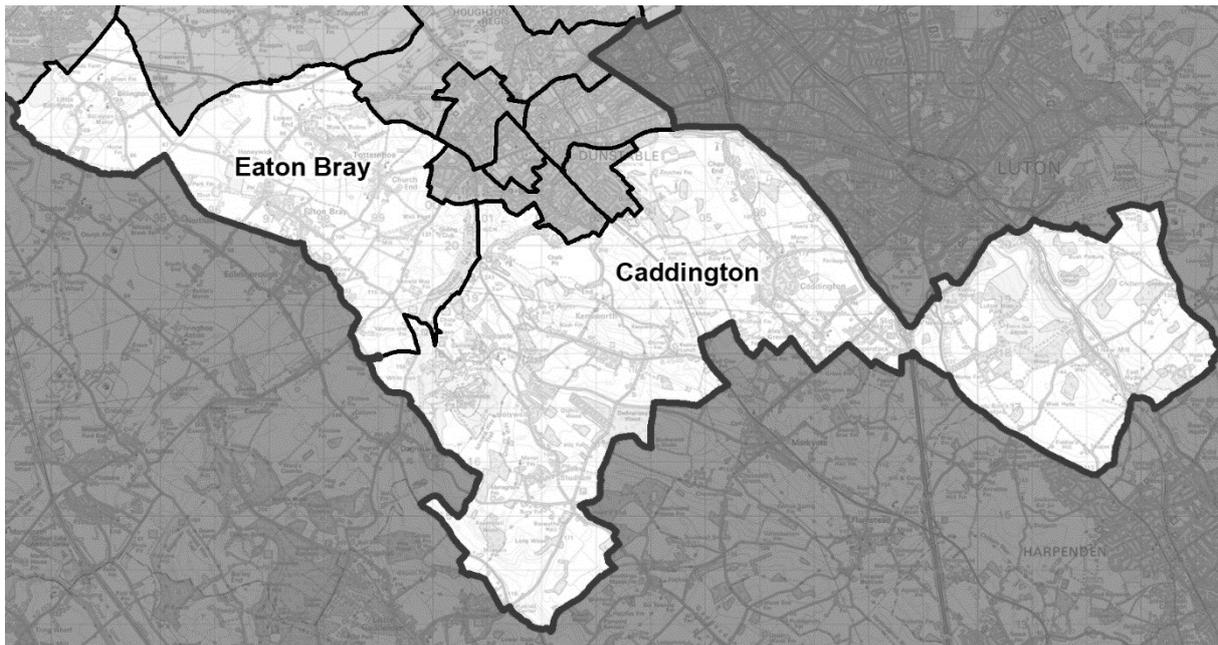
70 One local resident proposed extending the existing Tithe Farm ward westwards up to the B5120 and renaming the ward Houghton Regis North. They also proposed expanding the current Parkside ward southwards to Park Road North and including the part of the Woodside Industrial Estate that is in Houghton Regis parish. This ward would be named Houghton Regis East. The remainder of the town would form a Houghton Regis West ward. We decided not to adopt these proposals as they would result in high electoral variances that would not provide for sufficient electoral equality. Nonetheless, we agree with the local resident's suggestion to follow the B5120 as a boundary between wards, as detailed in the previous paragraph.

71 Two local residents suggested that the existing Houghton Hall ward, which is broadly similar to the proposed Houghton Regis West ward, be split into two single-councillor wards. We were not persuaded to adopt this proposal as we were not convinced that enough compelling community-based evidence had been received to justify it.

72 Another local resident proposed that we follow the A5 and the M1 as the boundary between our proposed Houghton Regis East and Toddington wards. We did not adopt this proposal, instead following the Houghton Regis parish boundary. Following these roads would result in the creation of parish wards for Chalton parish with little or no electors, which would not be conducive to effective and convenient local government.

73 Our final recommendations for Houghton Regis East and Houghton Regis West wards will result in electoral variances of -13% and -10%, respectively, by 2026. While the former variance is slightly higher than we would normally recommend, we consider that, after careful consideration of all the evidence received in relation to Houghton Regis, these two wards will provide the most effective balance between our statutory criteria.

Caddington and Eaton Bray



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2026
Caddington	2	8%
Eaton Bray	1	-4%

Caddington and Eaton Bray

74 We received no submissions that related directly to these wards. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final.

Conclusions

75 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality in Central Bedfordshire, referencing the 2019 and 2026 electorate figures. A full list of wards, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found at Appendix A to the back of this report. An outline map of the wards is provided at Appendix B.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2019	2026
Number of councillors	63	63
Number of electoral wards	31	31
Average number of electors per councillor	3,337	3,604
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	9	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	2	0

Final recommendations

Central Bedfordshire Council should be made up of 63 councillors serving 31 wards representing nine single-councillor wards, 12 two-councillor wards and 10 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 Central Bedfordshire. You can also view our final recommendations for Central Bedfordshire on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Parish electoral arrangements

76 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.

77 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, Central Bedfordshire 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.

78 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 Biggleswade, Dunstable, Eggington, Houghton Regis and Leighton-Linslade.

79 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Biggleswade parish.

Final recommendations

Biggleswade Town Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Holme	5
Ivel	4
Stratton	6

80 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Dunstable parish.

Final recommendations

Dunstable Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing five wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Central	2
East	5
North	4
South	2
West	5

81 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Eggington parish.

Final recommendations

Eggington Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Clipstone	5
Village	2

82 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Houghton Regis parish.

Final recommendations

Houghton Regis Town Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Houghton Hall	5
Parkside	4
Tithe Farm	5

83 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Leighton-Linslade parish.

Final recommendations

Leighton-Linslade Town Council should comprise 21 councillors, as at present, representing nine wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Barnabas	3
Bassett	1
Brooklands	2
Grovebury	4
Leston	1
Planets	3
Plantation	2
Southcott	3
St George's	2

What happens next?

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

Equalities

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

Appendices

Appendix A

Final recommendations for Central Bedfordshire Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2026)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Aspley & Woburn	1	3,729	3,729	12%	3,826	3,826	6%
2	Ampthill	3	10,362	3,454	4%	11,037	3,679	2%
3	Arlesey & Fairfield	2	6,354	3,177	-5%	7,431	3,716	3%
4	Barton-le-Clay & Silsoe	2	6,226	3,113	-7%	6,567	3,284	-9%
5	Biggleswade East	2	5,758	2,879	-14%	6,848	3,424	-5%
6	Biggleswade West	3	9,966	3,322	0%	10,459	3,486	-3%
7	Caddington	2	7,387	3,694	11%	7,752	3,876	8%
8	Clifton, Henlow & Langford	3	10,103	3,368	1%	11,115	3,705	3%
9	Cranfield & Marston Moretaine	3	10,575	3,525	6%	11,390	3,797	5%
10	Dunstable Central	1	3,723	3,723	12%	3,833	3,833	6%
11	Dunstable East	2	7,357	3,679	10%	7,897	3,949	10%
12	Dunstable North	2	6,989	3,495	5%	7,432	3,716	3%
13	Dunstable South	1	3,611	3,611	8%	3,699	3,699	3%

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2026)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
14 Dunstable West	2	7,504	3,752	12%	7,698	3,849	7%
15 Eaton Bray	1	3,357	3,357	1%	3,443	3,443	-4%
16 Flitwick	3	10,500	3,500	5%	10,961	3,654	1%
17 Heath & Reach	1	3,431	3,431	3%	3,545	3,545	-2%
18 Houghton Conquest & Haynes	1	2,317	2,317	-31%	3,562	3,562	-1%
19 Houghton Regis East	3	8,181	2,727	-18%	9,436	3,145	-13%
20 Houghton Regis West	2	4,934	2,467	-26%	6,475	3,238	-10%
21 Leighton-Linslade North	3	9,600	3,200	-4%	10,717	3,572	-1%
22 Leighton-Linslade South	3	10,422	3,474	4%	11,080	3,693	2%
23 Leighton-Linslade West	3	10,707	3,569	7%	11,021	3,674	2%
24 Meppershall & Shillington	1	3,422	3,422	3%	3,723	3,723	3%
25 Northhill	1	3,500	3,500	5%	3,784	3,784	5%
26 Potton	2	6,269	3,135	-6%	6,731	3,366	-7%
27 Sandy	3	9,873	3,291	-1%	10,250	3,417	-5%
28 Shefford	2	6,105	3,053	-9%	6,476	3,238	-10%

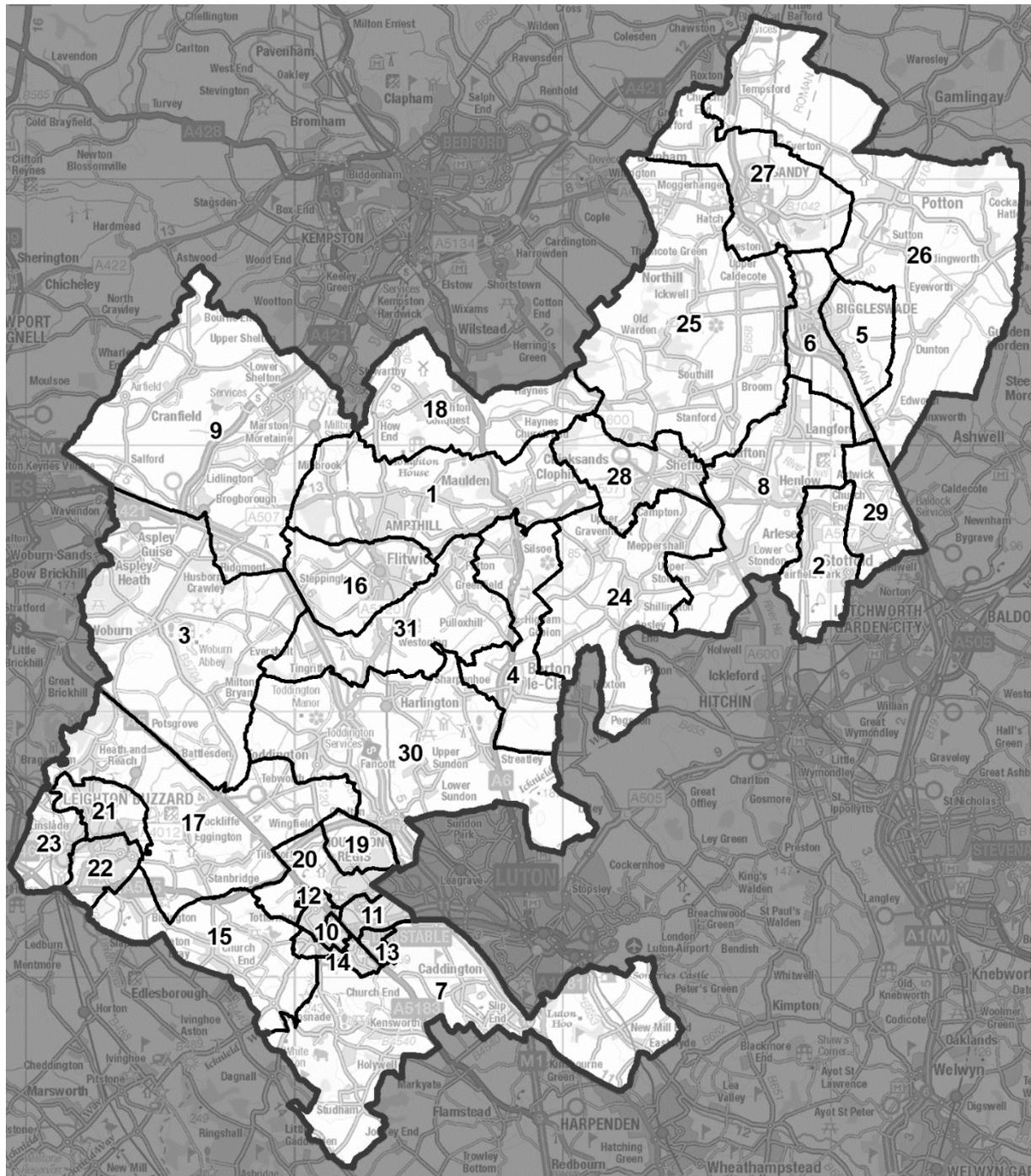
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2026)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
29 Stotfold	2	6,755	3,378	1%	7,295	3,648	1%
30 Toddington	2	7,532	3,766	13%	7,798	3,899	8%
31 Westoning, Flitton & Greenfield	1	3,679	3,679	10%	3,775	3,775	5%
Totals	63	210,228	–	–	227,056	–	–
Averages	–	–	3,337	–	–	3,604	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Central Bedfordshire 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



Number	Ward name
1	Amphill
2	Arlesey & Fairfield
3	Aspley & Woburn
4	Barton-le-Clay & Silsoe
5	Biggleswade East

6	Biggleswade West
7	Caddington
8	Clifton, Henlow & Langford
9	Cranfield & Marston Moretaine
10	Dunstable Central
11	Dunstable East
12	Dunstable North
13	Dunstable South
14	Dunstable West
15	Eaton Bray
16	Flitwick
17	Heath & Reach
18	Houghton Conquest & Haynes
19	Houghton Regis East
20	Houghton Regis West
21	Leighton-Linslade North
22	Leighton-Linslade South
23	Leighton-Linslade West
24	Meppershall & Shillington
25	Northill
26	Potton
27	Sandy
28	Shefford
29	Stotfold
30	Toddington
31	Westoning, Flitton & Greenfield

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/eastern/bedfordshire/central-bedfordshire

Appendix C

Submissions received

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

www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/bedfordshire/central-bedfordshire

Local Authority

- Central Bedfordshire Council

Political Groups

- Central Bedfordshire Liberal Democrats
- Liberal Democrat Group, Leighton-Linslade Town Council

Councillors

- Councillor S. Abbott (Dunstable Town Council)
- Councillor J. Baker (Central Bedfordshire Council)
- Councillor D. Bowater, Councillor R. Berry & Councillor A. Dodwell (Central Bedfordshire Council)
- Councillor A. Brown (Central Bedfordshire Council)
- Councillor P. Daffarn (Fairfield Parish Council)
- Councillor Y. Farrell (Central Bedfordshire Council)
- Councillor F. Firth (Central Bedfordshire Council)
- Councillor M. Freeman (Leighton-Linslade Town Council)
- Councillor G. George (Dunstable Town Council)
- Councillor P. Ghent (Dunstable Town Council)
- Councillor S. Goodchild (Central Bedfordshire Council)
- Councillor J. Gurney (Dunstable Town Council)
- Councillor R. Hares (Central Bedfordshire Council)
- Councillor A. Hunt (Fairfield Parish Council)
- Councillor D. Jones (Houghton Regis Town Council)
- Councillor S. Jones (Leighton-Linslade Town Council)
- Councillor S. Reader (Fairfield Parish Council)
- Councillor N. Reynolds (Fairfield Parish Council)
- Councillor A. Ryan (Central Bedfordshire Council)
- Councillor A. Seaman (Meppershall Parish Council)
- Councillor I. Shingler (Central Bedfordshire Council)
- Councillor M. Smith (Central Bedfordshire Council)
- Councillor M. Versallion (Central Bedfordshire Council)
- Councillor M. Walsh (Central Bedfordshire Council)

- Councillor A. Zerny (Central Bedfordshire Council)

Parish and Town Councils

- Barton-le-Clay Parish Council
- Fairfield Parish Council
- Houghton Regis Town Council
- Leighton-Linslade Town Council
- Meppershall Parish Council
- Northill Parish Council
- Southill Parish Council

Local Residents

- 145 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

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Tel: 0330 500 1525

Email: reviews@lgbce.org.uk

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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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